

ENGLISH KARATE FEDERATION

THE WORLD KARATE FEDERATION NGB FOR KARATE IN ENGLAND

18th July 2020

Dear Head of Association and Member

COVID Action Plan

As I am sure many of you are aware the government has further eased the lockdown regulations and is allowing the opening of gyms and leisure facilities. This has allowed us to make representations so that we might open our dojo.

Whilst many members have been conducting online sessions, as well as coaching outside, the news that we can begin to train back in our dojo is very much welcomed. However, it is not a case of simply returning to things as they were before lockdown. This pandemic is still very much a threat, and we must all guard against it.

When the government made the announcement to allow gyms and leisure centres to open, many felt they could simply return to their clubs. However, as always, the devil is in the detail.

Whilst the headlines suggested that all sport could return, this was simply not true. Only Community Cricket had been given approval, and football only recently acquired consent for their return to play plan

For karate to return we needed agreement with Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCME), who in turn defer to Sport England. When Sport England (SE) posted a notice that close contact sports could not resume, and specifically mentioned karate, then our planning was thrown into chaos.

We immediately looked to consult with SE and as a result, Karate, was invited to attend a meeting along with several other close contact sports (Taekwondo, Judo, Boxing, and Wrestling), who had similar concerns to our own.

The meeting was very productive, and it was accepted by SE that there are significant difference between training and competition. SE then changed their advice and we looked to improve protocols.

As such, we have adopted a four phase return to training model which helps define the route back to full training and competition

PHASE ONE: A return to non contact training with social distancing compliance, along with a number of safety measure as prescribed in the Return to Training Guidance.

PHASE TWO: Allowing the use of equipment such as makiwara, strike pads, and limited partner work.

PHASE THREE: Return to full, regular training.

PHASE FOUR: Return to Competition

There are no set timelines for when we will move into each phase, and as we do, then various conditions will apply. The current EKF guidance is for Phase One, which all EKF member are expected to comply. Should clubs not follow the guidance, then it is likely insurances will be invalid.

EKF Guidance will be adapted and updated accordingly to meet the conditions required as we move through the phases. It also has to be recognised that whilst we might progress from one phase to another, it is entirely possible that we may have to take a step back as Government directives might dictate. Further, local conditions (such as we recently witnessed in Leicester) will also impact on how dojo can operate and any club that might be in such an area will be compelled to follow that local advice.

Our hope is that we will soon be able to move to Phase two, if not indoors, then possibly outside. Representations are being made to further progress these aims, but equally, we must not under estimate the magnitude of this pandemic and the risks it brings to all of us.

In closing, we wish to assure all members that we are working to ensure the best outcomes for our association, club and members.

Yours Sincerely

Steve Coupland

EKF President

