

APPENDIX 7:

CONTACT IN COMPETITIVE BASKETBALL AND COVID-19 MITIGATION STRATEGIES

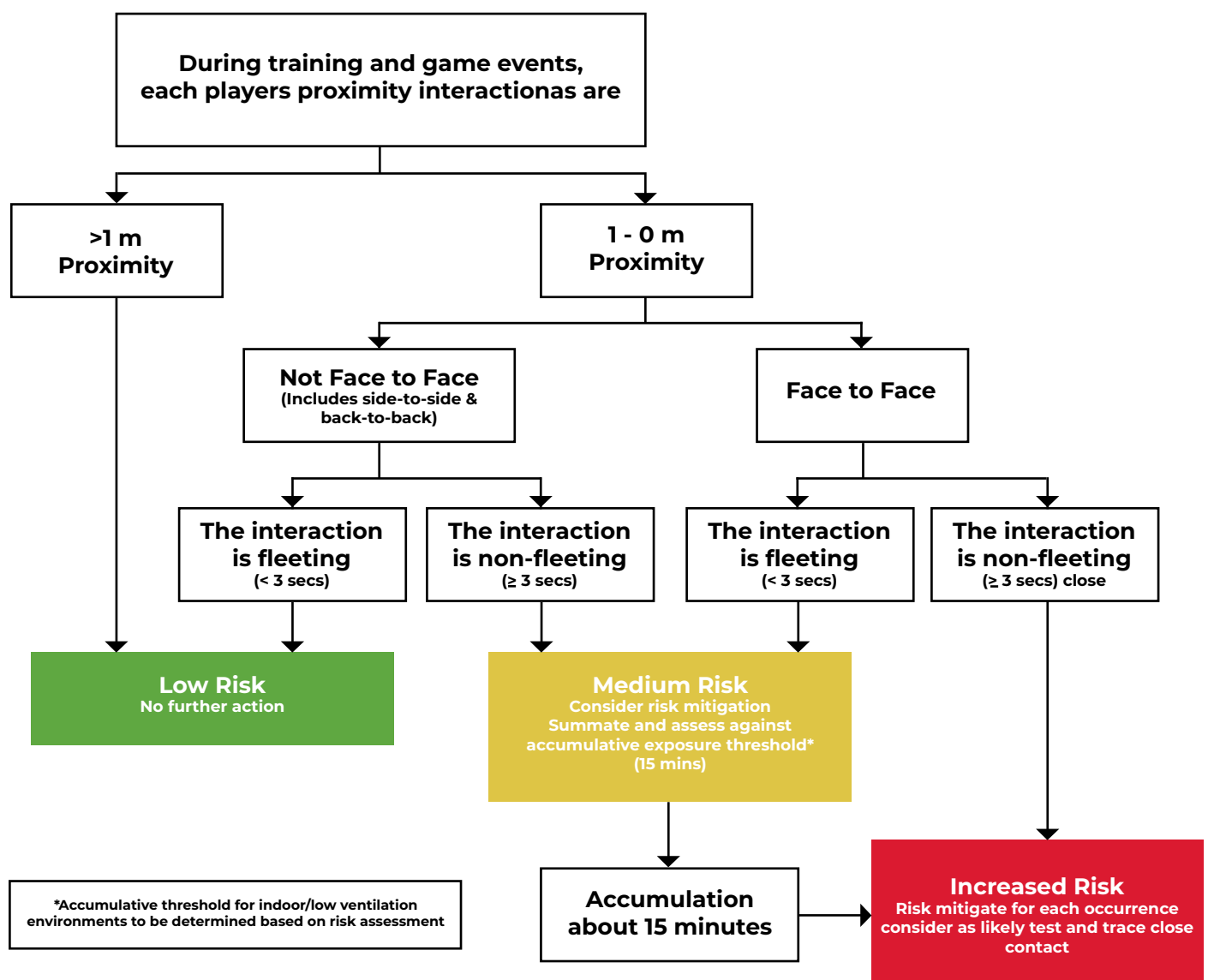
As we have moved through from Level 3 to Level 1 in our Return To Play (RTP) Roadmap we have reintroduced team-based training and competitive basketball.

In addition to the guidance already provided in relation to hygiene, venue and screening we have assessed the level of contact in the game of basketball in comparison to the risk exposure this would open the basketball community up to in the event that our screening processes don't flag up a participant with COVID-19.

In partnership with the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) a group of five team sports (Football, Rugby Union, Netball, Rugby League, Basketball) came together and devised a 'Return to Recreational Team Sport' strategy (May 2020) that is predicated on the below 'Exposure Framework':

A TEAM SPORT RISK EXPOSURE FRAMEWORK TO INFORM RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES & SUPPORT TEST & TRACE

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Contact is defined as being 'within 1m of another person', this doesn't necessarily mean that physical contact has been made and can be further classified in a number of ways dependant on whether your position relative to the other person is:

- side to side
- front to front
- front to back

Basketball England have undertaken a small research project where games spanning male, female, senior, youth, recreational and professional settings were assessed to understand the total amount of 'contact' takes place in a game of basketball to ascertain whether the sport is at a low, medium or high risk when returning to competitive training and games.

For each game, players in guard and forward positions were tracked as per below:-

- Total number of contacts (defined as being inside 1m)
- Contact type (Side to Side, Front to Front, Front to Back)
- Duration of the contact (more or less than 3 seconds)
- Duration of the contact if over 3 seconds
- Purpose of the contact if over 3 seconds

INITIAL FINDINGS

The below provides an average taken from the data for forwards and guards:

Forwards

- 84 contacts per 10 minutes played
 - 75 are less than 3 seconds
 - 9 are more than 3 seconds
- Average contact time of more than 3 seconds is 6.1 seconds
- Contact types for forwards are ranked as below:
 - Side by Side – 70%
 - Front to Back – 22%
 - Face to Face – 8%
- Purpose of contact over 3 seconds
 - Jump ball situation (face to face) – Average 8 seconds
 - Backing down a player to the basket (front to back) – Average 4 seconds
 - Boxing out (varies) – Average 3.5 seconds
 - Team huddles on the court during dead balls (face to face) – Average 5 seconds
 - Free throws (side by side) – Average 15 seconds

In summary, Forwards are exposed to 3.4 mins of contact per 10 mins, which is **13.66 mins** if they play the full 40min game.

Guards

- 56 contacts per 10 minutes played
 - 48 are less than 3 seconds
 - 8 are more than 3 seconds
- Average contact time of more than 3 seconds is 8 seconds
- Contact types for forwards are ranked as below:
 - Side by Side – 65%
 - Front to Back – 25%
 - Front to Back – 10%
- Purpose of contact over 3 seconds
 - Jump ball situation (side by side)– Average 8 seconds
 - Being pressured full court defensively (face to face) – Average 4 seconds
 - Team huddles on the court during dead balls (face to face) – Average 5 seconds
 - Free throws (side by side) – Average 15 seconds

In summary, Guards are exposed to 2.6 mins of contact per 10 mins, which is **10.66 mins** if they play the full 40min game.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Although the above initial assessment deems basketball as low/medium risk, it doesn't take into consideration two main areas of the game that will need clear mitigation to avoid increased contact time. They are:

1. Bench configuration – To ensure a 1m+ distance between players on the bench and the coaching/support staff.

Teams and venues will need to lengthen the player seating area for each team allowing players to be sat (if safe to do so) on the opposite side of the court. Players will have their own nominated seating area which should not be changed during the game. They will also not be required to go to the officials table to enter the game, the game officials will allow the players onto court directly from their chair/bench space.

2. Time-outs – To avoid lengthy huddles where players are inside 1m contact with multiple players.

Timeouts should remain at one minute but need to allow for all players to configure themselves safely on the court to undertake the timeout. Timeouts must not be conducted in a close huddle therefore the team may spread out over the court area if required. All players will be required to use hand sanitiser at this point as well. Note that officials should be lenient on the timings of the timeout if hand hygiene has taken time.

Officials are required to wipe down the ball as per our hygiene guidance. .

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

To further restrict the amount of contact we are advocating that the below areas are considered and adopted by teams:

1. Limit player huddles on court during dead ball situations or ensure that your players maintain a 1m+ distance with teammates
2. Do not help teammates who may have fallen over during play to return to their feet. Although this might sound in contrary to being a good team mate, helping someone to their feet will involve hand contact with another player and provide another opportunity for virus transmission.
3. As per RTP guidance avoid handshakes, high fives etc

TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS

Whereas the above relates directly to a game of basketball we must also consider the training environment in relation to contact training, its duration and mitigation strategies.

The below principles should be applied by clubs, coaches when devising their session plans:

1. Limit player huddles during training or ensure that your players maintain a 1m+ distance with the coach and teammates. Where possible it is advised to keep players spaced out across the court to give instructions etc.
2. Contact training is permitted but should be delivered in short sections of no longer than 20 minutes with breaks for ball and hand cleaning (see points 4 & 5)
3. Team based scrimmaging is permitted, please follow the mitigation strategies mentioned above for players not on the court ensuring they are spaced accordingly to allow for a 1m+ space between players
4. As per our hygiene guidance, balls must be cleaned every 20 minutes during practice sessions
5. During ball cleaning breaks, players should be advised to clean their hands with hand sanitiser gels/sprays etc