

Kendo Bu Statement - September - Incorporating advice from Errol and JOS

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We hope that everyone is keeping fit and well.

1. Sadly, we have been informed that next year's world championships have been postponed. No new date has been set as yet. Many of the other upcoming European events may be in doubt and travel abroad remains problematic.
2. Many of you may be considering or have already returned to training. Bear in mind the many variables across UK countries, regions, venues and group demographics and take these into account when preparing your dojo's COVID 19 safe training plan and risk assessments. The Bu team is happy to help with these. If unsure about a training approaches safety for your group err on the side of caution and do not include it in your sessions

The Bu team are convinced that kendo can be practiced safely if performed in line with government guidelines following a sensible and cautious approach.

Training in armour can also be mitigated by limiting the intensity of the training and focussing on technical skills. Close contact (Nearer than 1m) is easily avoidable or at worst fleeting as strikes are delivered from wider than this distance approximately 1.1m to 1.4m for most adults.

NOTE! It is essential to prepare and agree a local plan and COVID Specific risk assessment before commencing training. Plans need to be revisited and adapted as advice and guidelines change over the coming weeks and months.

To be clear the kendo Bu does not endorse a return to "pre-Coronavirus training approaches". Any groups or individuals engaged in such training is not aligned with the Kendo Bu's interpretation of government guidelines or applying the advice of the Kendo Bu, does so entirely at their own risk and may run the risk of having their affiliation to the BKA suspended.

At the end of July, the kendo Bu produced and distributed detailed guidelines to enable safe kendo training and to help with the preparation of dojo plans. These have now been updated to reflect our current understanding of the situation and will be published shortly. The guidelines outline our principles in regard to training safely under COVID 19 restrictions and I list and expand on some of the key concepts from these guidelines below:

- 2.1 There is concern about a second wave of COVID-19 infections, so it is essential to limit opportunities for spreading the virus. The kendo Bu recommends that taking the following measures individually and

collectively will offer the best protection against spreading COVID-19 - see also item 2.6 below.

Participants must ensure that they:

- Are not infected/unwell and have not been in contact with anyone who is, may be or has been infected in the last 14 days.
- Keep overall group contact time and especially one to one training time between individuals down (Maximum 15 minutes).
- Larger dojos/Groups should set up smaller training groups to limit the number of others who practitioners come into close contact with.
- Have good personal and domestic hygiene routines before and after training.
- Maintain safe spacing at all times i.e. follow guidelines related to the number of persons who can safely train in a given space or train outside and endeavour to maintain a minimum 2m distance
- Use a face mask and Men shield/s whilst indoors or when there is a risk of getting closer than 2m (see Appendix 1 and 2 of the guidance).
- train in a well-ventilated space.
- Do not share equipment.
- Only engage in technical Low or medium intensity, non-combative forms of training.

2.2 As one's physical condition may have declined resume training carefully and build up the intensity of the training activities over a number of weeks/sessions (say 12 to 15). Due to the unfamiliarity of wearing PPE (Masks and shields) it is important to take frequent breaks and not to train too intensely.

2.3 Following on from item 2, a third of the session could be for distanced technical training practices in Bogu using appropriate PPE (Masks and shields) and without use of the voice. Due to the use of PPE care must be taken to monitor the condition of those taking part with particular attention to their breathing and temperature

2.4 Once practitioners have regained their fitness/conditioning, half of the session could be conducted in Bogu (if a 60-minute session, then 30 minutes). Training could include warming-up and fitness exercises, Suburi or paired technical training, Kata, Kihon Keiko Ho. For the final 30 minutes participants could don bogu (With shields and masks) to do more kihon style practices and technical training whilst being careful to maintain safe distancing and without the use of the voice.

2.5 In the coming months it may be possible to gradually re-introduce some of our more combative and high intensity training approaches such as kakari

geiko or ji geiko but **for the moment we consider these to be inappropriate**. Inclusion at a later date of such combative and/or intense training methods will be dependent on improvement in infection rates and the restrictions in the government's guidelines being relaxed considerably further or totally removed. We are also mindful of the physical limitations imposed by the use of shields and face masks. The BU will issue modified guidance as and when we consider it necessary and appropriate to do so in light of changes in the UK government/s regulations.

- 2.6 If restricted from training indoors, plan to focus on warming-up exercises, fitness, suburi, Kata/kihon keiko Ho etc. maintaining wherever possible a minimum distance of 2m between participants and gradually increasing the training load in line with the performance of the group.

Key Note! All training approaches must be managed to limit instances of closing to a distance nearer than 1m to be fleeting (Less than 3 seconds) and to an absolute minimum. Where participants are likely to be closer than 2m apart face masks/shields should be used. There should be no shouting during training and at no point should activities become competitive or combative.

3. Since meeting to discuss this statement there has been an announcement (9/9/21) and many of you have expressed concern and uncertainty about how this will affect you and your club. The government has changed its position in response to a worsening situation since the easing of lockdown restrictions. The following summarises the new legal framework for England as of the 14th of September:

- **Social gatherings** of more than six people in England will not be allowed in law from Monday 14 September
- The new rule applies to people in private homes, indoors and outdoors, and places such as pubs, restaurants, cafes and public outdoor spaces
- It applies to all ages
- The rule does not apply to schools and workplaces, or weddings, funerals and **organised team sports**
- **A full list of exemptions is due to be published before the law changes. See below**
- People who ignore police could be fined £100 - doubling with each offence to a maximum of £3,200

The exception for 'exercise allowed under the indoor leisure/gyms guidance' remains in place and this is the guidance we have been operating under thus far. We believe it can be applied to all the non-combative aspects of kendo. There is now greater emphasis in the guidance on social distancing and effective ventilation.

The leisure and community halls guidance has also been updated. Halls/venues can still host organised sporting activities where there are larger numbers in attendance than 6 present.

Sources of Government Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities#section-4-6>

You may also wish to renew and update your dojo/group's Risk assessment documentation

<https://www.britishkendoassociation.com/resources/>

4. We have optimistically booked a venue (Mumeishi) for an event in December. Potentially a grading. For this to be possible the COVID 19 situation will need to have improved considerably and the government's guidelines will have to be relaxed or removed. We are not convinced that this will be possible but will begin to plan for it. We will keep you informed about the likelihood of this going ahead and enter a date in the calendar as and when it becomes clear whether it will be feasible.

Hoping for your cautious, safe and successful return to training...

The BU Team