

SPORT

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Dee Beat: Not quite normal service resumed for anglers

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Banchory pair are MGR Golfers of the Week

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Sport

Golf, fishing, bowls and tennis set to emerge from shutdown

Non-contact sports, including golf, angling, tennis and bowls, have been given the green light to resume in Scotland from this week.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon made the announcement on a planned relaxation of lockdown measures last Thursday.

In a Scottish Parliament statement, Sturgeon outlined a four-stage plan to emerge from Covid-19 restrictions, and the initial phase included some positive news for sport.

Beginning from May 28, Sturgeon said: "Some non-contact outdoor leisure activities will be allowed to restart, such as golf, tennis, bowls and fishing, subject of course to appropriate hygiene and physical distancing.

"Those phase one measures – most of which have an outdoor focus – are not in place yet, and they are dependent on us continuing to suppress the virus. They will also be monitored carefully as they do take effect."

Any subsequent move to phase two would include provisions for the "resumption of professional sport in line with public health advice", meaning opportunities for elite level athletes to compete and a possible return for football,



'Our members have been chomping at the bit these past few weeks and are obviously keen to get out playing,' says Aboyne Golf Club president Nigel Bradburn

while restrictions on holding live events will continue to be assessed across the third and fourth phases.

Aboyne Golf Club president Nigel Bradburn told the Deeside Piper this week: "This is very good news. Our members have been chomping at the bit these past few weeks and are obviously keen to get out playing on Friday if the Scottish Government confirms this Thursday that it is safe to proceed.

"With all this fine weather that we have been having, it has exacerbated the desire to go out and play.

"Only members will be allowed to play in the first phase of restrictions being lifted but members, guests and visitors will be permitted in phase two."

Reflecting on the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on Deeside as a holiday destination, Nigel added: "Deeside is on its knees. We're hoping to

attract visitors once travel restrictions ease, and obviously domestic tourism should gain from the difficulties of travelling abroad at this time."

A Scottish Golf statement read: "Once golf has resumed, the following groupings will be permitted to play golf in Scotland: Two balls – may be from two households whilst maintaining physical distancing; and groups of up to four players permitted at the discretion of the golf club (ensur-

ing that only two households are represented in the group).

"Scottish Golf would like to highlight that the Scottish Government continues to monitor its response to the Covid-19 outbreak closely and have not ruled out the re-introduction of restrictions which could see golf paused again if these guidelines are not being followed.

"It is therefore imperative that golf clubs take the necessary steps outlined prior

to opening their courses for play and adhere to the guidelines detailed, which could be subject to update or change at any time."

Details can be found on the scottishgolf.org website.

Bowls Scotland, meanwhile, have been liaising with their district secretaries, sportscotland and the Scottish Government to create a guidance document for clubs and bowlers to get safely back on the green.

The guidance document includes: guidance for bowling clubs; guidance for players; guidance for bowling activity (including before, during and after play); frequently asked questions (FAQ's); additional information for clubs such as green maintenance, risk assessment template, rink booking template, and rink layout example.

The full document is at <https://www.bowlsscotland.com/clubs/club-support-covid-19>

Bowls Scotland CEO, Alan McMillan, said: "I fully understand that a break from the game we all love, and miss, will have had a significant impact on both the physical and mental health of thousands of bowlers in Scotland and I'm

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