

# Review of Phase 3 – Return to Sport for Football





# INTRODUCTION

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# OVERVIEW

The BCPFA recognizes that the outbreak of COVID19 has created a challenging environment in which to operate a football club or league. Our collective decisions during this time will determine the manner in which football programs are provided to our young participants. And with this in mind, we ask that all stakeholders continue to make the health and well-being of all participants the overriding priority and to have this principle guide your decision making throughout the return to sport process.

# OVERVIEW

- With the exception of some specific equipment requirements, these guidelines will apply to:
  - Tackle Football
  - Flag Football
  - Touch Football
  - Cheer



# APPROVALS



In order for a club to enter into Phase 3, each club will once again be required to have recorded motion to adopt the revised BCPFA Return to Sport Plan.

Each club needs to send a copy of the meeting minutes sent to the BCPFA Executive Director before approval for play can be granted.

As before, approved clubs will be noted on the BCPFA website. Clubs who were previously approved for Phase 2 Return to Sport can maintain their current activity (training, development, no contact) and move to stage 3 at any time in the future.

# ACCOUNTABILITY



The Local Sporting Organization (Leagues/Clubs) are responsible for adhering to this Return to Sport Plan. Failure to adhere to the plan may result in shutting down our sport, fines from the government and a loss of reputation.

The BCPFA is similarly responsible for adhering to this plan during the delivery of regional and provincial programs (e.g Regional Academies, Team BC, Coach Education).

# RISK MITIGATION

- Good risk mitigation strategies are key to maintaining the health of all participants.
- BC Public Health Orders should guide the safety plan – social distancing, gathering size(s) and hygiene.
- All participants must understand the risks associated with returning to play – each will have an acknowledgement letter to be signed.
- Each session must commence with a wellness check of each participant – and a record must be kept of this check.
- Any suspected infected participants must be dealt with as outlined – immediately.
- Appropriate signage must be in place.



# FIELDS & FACILITIES



A “Field of Play” for football is defined as a designated area where sport activities take place. The field of play does NOT include dressing rooms, hallways, team benches, staging areas, etc.

It is also still imperative that sport organizations consult and collaborate with their municipal and facility partners before resuming and adding activities. Municipalities and facility operators will have their own policies and processes that also need to be adhered to.

# CONTACT TRACING



If clubs are NOT the owner or operator of the sport facility, the club must provide the facility operator with the first and last names and telephone number, or email address of all participants (athletes, coaches, volunteers, and all others).

# SPORT CATEGORIES



For phase 3 sports have been divided into four categories. These categories are based on the number and intensity of contact within the sport. Football is in category C with the following sports:

- Hockey
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Field Hockey
- Goalball
- Lacrosse
- Netball
- Ringette
- Sledge Hockey
- Soccer
- Ultimate
- Water Polo
- Rugby
- Squash
- Wheelchair Rugby
- Wheelchair Basketball

# IMPLEMENTATION



The following 4 sections cover the requires approaches to:

- Contact
- Cohort
- Competition
- Travel

# CONTACT



## Purpose of Guideline:

To safely introduce sport activities that may involve instances of contact :

- Close physical proximity should still be minimized as much as possible.
- In sports and activities that generally involve interaction between participants at a distance of less than two meters, sport organizations should:
  - ✓ modify the activity or rules to keep participants at a safe distance;
  - ✓ limit the number and duration of contacts between different participants (when physical distancing is not possible);
  - ✓ enforce physical distance when outside the field of play (e.g.- dressing rooms, hallways, team benches, staging areas, etc.).
- Any introduction of activities involving either close proximity or physical contact should only occur within a sport cohort.

# COHORTS



## Purpose of Guideline

Establishing cohorts will limit the number of people that each individual will come into contact with, reducing the risk of transmission and ensuring quicker contact tracing by health authorities if an outbreak occurs.

A cohort is a group of participants who primarily interact with each other within the sport environment over an extended period of time.

# COHORTS



- Cohorts should be made up of individuals/teams of similar age or skill level.
- Each cohort can be comprised of multiple teams in order to form a mini-league.
- With the use of cohorts, game play can resume between teams within the cohort.
- Cohorts may not exceed 4 teams
- When members of the cohort are gathering for games or activities, gatherings may not exceed 50 people (see PHO Order). To clarify, total number of participants (players, coaches, etc) for each team cannot exceed 25 participants. (Re: coaches, officiating crew see below.)

# COHORTS



- Coaches may be counted outside the total cohort number if they are able to maintain physical distancing at all times and use PPE (mask, gloves).
- Keep players must be kept in designated cohorts
- Clubs must ensure that cohorts avoid mixing
- Cohorts should remain together for an extended period of time. If looking to change cohorts, implement a two-week break between activities.
- Individuals should limit the number of sport cohorts to which they belong in order to reduce the number of people they are interacting with

# COHORTS



- Where officials (if being used) are unable to physically distance, an official(s) should be assigned to a specific cohort and avoid having them interact with multiple cohorts.
- Officials should wear a mask whenever practical
- Spectators are not permitted
- When in a cohort, while individuals do not need to maintain physical distancing during sport specific activities, minimized physical contact is still advised.
- At least two meters distancing should be maintained between all participants when outside of the field of play (e.g. dressing rooms, hallways, team benches, staging areas, etc.). If physical distancing cannot be maintained masks should be worn.
- All guidance related to personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom-screening still apply.

# COMPETITION



To introduce competitive sport activities. This includes formal, organized games, matches and tournaments between participants where scores are recorded, and standings are kept. In this phase:

- For sports/disciplines that cannot maintain physical distancing, competition should only be introduced in the cohort environment.
- Competitive activities may be expanded outside club play to include regional play if deemed appropriate by the provincial sport organization.
- Provincial sport organizations can define regional play based on applicable regions within their sport.
- Inter-provincial competitions should not occur at this time.
- All competitions are required to have a detailed safety plan in place.

# COMPETITION



The BCPFA has established the following regions for phase 3

- Region 1: VMFL/VCFL, Chilliwack Huskers, Langley Rams
- Region 2: VICFA , Westshore Rebels, VI Raiders
- Region 3: SIFCA, Kamloops Broncos, Okanagan Sun
- Region 4: North

# COMPETITION



- Provincial Health Office (PHO) Orders related to group gatherings are still in effect, limiting group numbers to 50 people.
- Clubs should take measure to limit contact:
  - ✓ Plan arrivals and departures of different teams/groups to avoid co-mingling
  - ✓ Avoid participants waiting on site between games/activities
  - ✓ Discourage groups of people gathering before or after sport activities
  - ✓ Schedule activities over a longer period of time (days or weeks) or at different locations
- Conduct symptom-screenings using the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>

# COMPETITION



- Develop a strategy to manage increased levels of staff/volunteers required to host a competition and ensure the illness policy is in place.
- Spectators are not permitted.
- Participants may be fit and healthy, volunteers and how to mitigate risk to those individuals but groups need to consider the demographics of staff, coaches and.
- Ensure that the outbreak plan is in place and that there are dedicated spaces that can be used for isolation if an athlete/other personnel develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- if outbreaks occur, organizers may be asked to postpone or cancel competitions or activities, therefore a cancellation policy is recommended. Any outbreak must be reported to the BCPFA without delay.

# TRAVEL



While provincial travel restrictions have been lifted as of June 25, 2020, travel for the purposes of sport and group activities should still be slowly introduced.

- Individuals should remain primarily within their region when travelling for sport in order to limit the number of groups that they are coming into contact with. Exceptions may include travel to attend a high-performance training camp or provincial championship, if available in their sport.
- Inter-provincial and international travel are not endorsed at this time.

# EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS



Player equipment is quite similar in every format of contact football; however, given the current social circumstances, a few modifications will be instituted. The following only applies to clubs and leagues in Phase 3 of return to sport.

## Uniform

All players are required to ensure that their whole body is covered during training or games. This will include

- long sleeved t-shirts to the wrists
- football gloves covering hands\*\*
- socks and/leggings that will fully cover the area between the cleats and the bottom of the football pants.

\*\* quarterbacks are allowed to NOT wear a glove on their throwing hand

# EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS



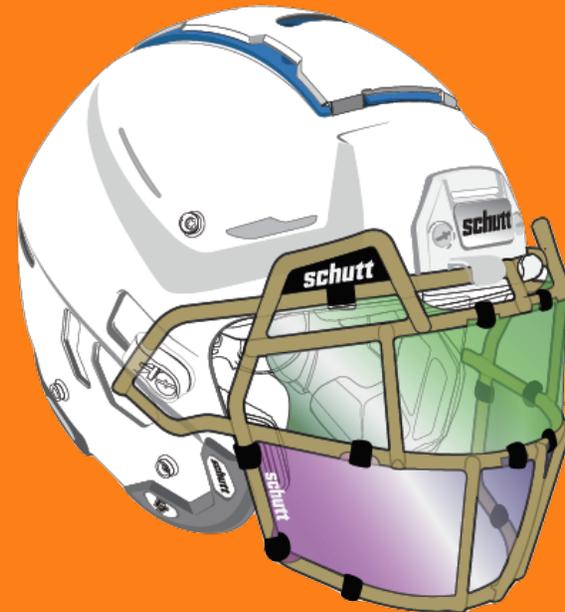
All players are required to use a soother style mouthguard  
(subject to availability from suppliers).



# EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS



The BCPFA is recommending the use of a full visor for all players:



# EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION



Distribution of tackle football equipment may begin in Phase 3 and will require the following policies & procedures:

- Schedule equipment pick ups under 30 people at one time (one player & parent) & able to maintain physical distancing at facility
- Individuals involved with the distribution of player/coach equipment should wear gloves throughout process
- Individuals involved with the distribution of equipment should wear masks
- Masks are recommended for any person picking up player/coach equipment
- Equipment fitters are recommended to sanitize between each fitting (wash hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer)
- Equipment should be sanitized before distribution

# EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION



- Equipment that a player tries on but is not taken by the player should be sanitized between fittings
- it is recommended for teams & leagues to contact their equipment suppliers/makers for proper equipment sanitation procedures,
- Sanitation stations or hand washing facilities (for hand cleaning) should be made available to all persons involved with equipment pick up
- Signage promoting the use of mask and the need to maintain physical distance should be visible to posted in the equipment pick up zone.

# CHEER



The same restrictions and guidelines apply to cheer teams, including:

- socially distance wherever possible
- masks are required when socially distancing is not possible
- shared equipment/matts should be sanitized after each event

# CHEER



## Other Cheer Guidelines:

- Community Cheer teams will be situated at least 10 yards away from the edge of the bench area.
- Each cheer team will be its own cohort and will not mix with other cheer teams
- Coaches and cheerleaders will be covered with long sleeves, leggings, and masks for all events where stunting will occur, or physical distancing is not possible
- Gloves are recommended (when safe to use)
- Frequent hand washing/sanitizing is required
- Stunt groups must stay as same stunting group no mixing of stunt groups i.e. same bases, same flyer and same backspot.
- Pyramids are not permitted.

# SUMMARY



- Whenever possible, each team should be located on the opposite sides of the field. If there are no cheer teams present, it is recommended that the bench stretch from 30-yard line to 30-yard line.
- Bench areas should be a minimum of 30 yards apart when teams are compelled by facility restrictions to stay on the same side of the field. If a Game Commissioner is present, they will be situated at least 10 yards away from the bench.
- Teams from different cohorts must be safely distanced and not interact, have contact with each other's equipment, etc. Although not recommended, it is permissible to have teams from different cohorts to be on the same regulation size field based on the following guidelines:
  - Each team is allocated the space between the 40-yard line through their own end zone (normally 55 yards of field space)
  - There is no sharing of equipment (bags, sleds, balls, etc.) without sanitizing first.
  - There is ZERO interaction between the teams on or off the field.
  - If the training facility is less than a regulation size field, only ONE team will be permitted at a time.

# SUMMARY



- Club must pass motion approving new BCPFA Guidelines (minutes sent to [executivedirector@bcpfa.com](mailto:executivedirector@bcpfa.com))
- Clubs can stay at Phase 2 if they wish
- Clubs must appoint a safety coordinator - Phase 2 safety and risk management requirements remain in place
- Contact tracing – participant information must be forwarded to facility operator
- Establish cohorts for games (4 teams, max 50 person gathering, max 25 person cohort)
- It is imperative that clubs consult and collaborate with their municipal and facility partners before resuming and adding activities
- Maintain physical distance at all times when not engaged in contact activities
- Spectators are not permitted.

# SUMMARY



- Only teams in the same cohort can play each other and the 50-person restriction on gatherings remains as a restriction. As a result, the roster limit for a single team should be approximately 20 players (plus coaches, field staff, etc.) under phase 3.
- Team rosters must be formed in a manner that complies with the 50-person gathering requirement (when 2 teams play a game) and also comply with the minimum and maximums roster limits specified by Football Canada:

	<u>Minimum to start season</u>	<u>Minimum to play game</u>	<u>Recommended to play a game</u>	<u>Maximum to begin thinking of other alternative options</u>
<b>Touch 5's</b>	7	5	7	13
<b>Touch 7's</b>	9	7	9	17
<b>Flag 5's</b>	7	5	7	13
<b>Flag 7's</b>	9	7	9	17
<b>6-a-side</b>	9	8	10	17
<b>9-a-side</b>	17	13	15	30
<b>12-a-side</b>	30	24	28	45

# SUMMARY



- As a result, the 50-person gathering rule will preclude 12-a-side as an option in phase 3 of return to sport.
- Note: Football Canada mandates that there is a minimum full 3 days of rest between games.
- Two teams of this size and composition would inevitably contravene the 50 person gathering rule when playing a game.

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# SUMMARY



- “soother” style are mandatory (subject to supplier availability)
- Face shields are recommended
- No exposed skin
- Players & coaches have their own water bottles (No water stations)
- All equipment should be sanitized before & after practice:
- Footballs should be sanitized with proper disinfectant safe for footballs – teams may need to contact their equipment providers for recommendations
- Cones, bags, and sleds can be sprayed and wiped with appropriate disinfectant and allowed to dry
- Soft goods (leg pads, pants, jerseys, gloves etc.) should be washed after every practice & game
- Hard goods (helmet, shoulder pads, rib protectors, back plates, etc.) should be sprayed and wiped with appropriate disinfectant and allowed to dry



THANK YOU