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Information current

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We're in Phase 3 of lifting COVID-19 restrictions. Watch the latest video update.

For non-medical questions, email covid19info@gov.yk.ca or phone 1-877-374-0425.

For medical questions or if you feel ill, phone 811, or launch the COVID-19 self-assessment tool.

Contact sports guidelines

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Restarting contact sports

A safe return to contact sports such as hockey, soccer, volleyball and basketball, is a particular challenge because of COVID-19. Sports that involve contact between players are at odds with public health measures such as:

- physical distancing;
- practising good hand hygiene; and
- respecting gathering limits.

By adapting the way Yukoners play contact sports we can reduce the risk of COVID-19 and get back on the:

- ice;
- field; and
- court.

These guidelines:

- supplement the sport and recreation guidelines; and
- apply to child and adult leagues.

Please ensure that you read and incorporated the 6 steps to staying safe into your planning as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. In particular:

- maintain physical distancing – keep 2 metres (6 feet) away from anyone who's not a member of your social bubble;
- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol; and
- stay home if you're feeling sick, even if your symptoms are mild.

General principles

Contact sports like hockey, soccer, volleyball and basketball, among others, present challenges. They:

- increase the regularity and closeness of interactions; and
- encourage the congregation of a sizable numbers of participants.

While these risks cannot be fully eliminated, the following steps will allow sports to restart while reducing the transmission risk of COVID-19. The following principles should be applied.

Physical distancing

During games physical distancing will not always be possible.

- Practise physical distancing whenever possible:
 - before and after games;
 - during practice and training; and

- on and off the surface of play.
- Spectators should ensure they sit or stand at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart.
- Encourage participants and spectators to wash their hands before and after participation.

Cleaning and disinfecting

- Disinfect equipment after use.
- Clean and disinfect changerooms after use.
- If possible, participants should come ready to play, avoiding the use of change rooms.

Physical contact and physical distancing

- Hold training and games outside whenever possible.
- Eliminate team huddles
- Do not shake hands at the end of a game.
- Keep a record of participants to enable contact tracing if the need arises and keep these records for a minimum of 21 days.

Sport specific guidelines

Our contact sports guidelines should be shared with all participants. Local Yukon sport governing bodies are developing return-to-play guidelines that you should adhere to.

Hockey

Hockey organisations are encouraged to adapt Hockey Canada's COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for their own play.

Soccer

Soccer organisations are encouraged to use the Soccer Canada Return to Soccer Assessment Tool before they return to play.

Basketball

Basketball organisations are encouraged to adapt Canada Basketball Back to Basketball Return to Sport Guidelines for their own play.

Volleyball

Volleyball organisations are encouraged to adapt Volleyball Canada's A Safe Return to Volleyball for their own play.

Other sports

Look up national guidelines to help inform your specific sport's safe return to play.

Your responsibilities when using facilities

If you're a coach you should reach out to facility managers to ensure they're following all facility rules and guidance. Each facility will have an operational plan that will help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. All players, coaches and parents have to do their part by following the facility's plan.

In addition, ensure that:

- the 6 steps to staying safe are observed whenever possible;
- avoid:
 - spitting;
 - blowing your nose without a tissue; and
 - other actions that spread bodily fluids;
- respect physical distancing in change rooms;
- clean and disinfect change rooms after each use;
- consider staggering change times to accommodate physical distancing, or wear masks when physical distancing is not possible;
- wipe down benches after each session;
- disinfect equipment after practice and games, including:
 - sticks;
 - pucks; and
 - balls.

Practice, warm-up and games

- Avoid scrimmaging in practice.
- Focus on individual skill development drills and conditioning.
- Do not share items like towels, or water bottles.
- To allow for physical distancing, warm-ups should be conducted individually and not in groups.
- Clean jerseys, faceguards and mouth guards before and after each game.
- Limit the number of participants on the field, court or rink to 30 per game.

Guidance for safety and medical staff

- Wear a non-medical mask when treating participants, and when physical distancing is not possible.
- Wear gloves if you're treating participants.
- Change gloves and wash your hands in between interactions with participants.

Consider forming a “mini-league”

Sports organizations may create a “mini-league” with a maximum of 60 participants. A mini-league allows for the return of team sports while reducing potential widespread exposure in the event that a participant has COVID-19. If necessary, this limit may be exceeded to accommodate additional players, but should not have more than 60 players.

All community members should follow public health measures and keep their mini-leagues consistent. At the same time, it’s important to give everyone the opportunity to be active, get out, and play.

Forming a mini-league decreases opportunities for players’ exposure to the virus, while allowing for increased interaction during games. If someone does get sick, tracing close contacts becomes easier and the number of people who risk being exposed is lower.

You should not participate in sports mini-leagues if you’re:

- sick, no matter how mild; or
- you need to self-isolate.

When to use a mini-league

A mini-league is only recommended in activities where physical distancing cannot always be maintained, for example during games. It does not apply to sports or activities like drills where physical distancing can always be maintained.

If you play in a mini-league

You can participate in up to 2 sports mini-leagues at any given time. For example, you could be part of both a hockey and a volleyball mini-league, but not also a soccer mini-league.

Mini-leagues in communities

Mini-leagues may be modified to suit practical arrangements in rural communities where populations are smaller. For example, a small population may have several people who play many sports with each other. This would be 1 mini-league of people who play many sports.

Officials and coaches participating in mini-leagues

Coaches and officials are not counted in the number of 65 participants in a mini-league. This means they should remain extra vigilant to ensure they maintain physical distancing during a game. Careful attention to 6 steps to staying safe are especially important for officials such as referees, who may interact with many mini-leagues. In addition, consider modifying practices such as the puck-drop in hockey to better accommodate physical distancing for referees.

Players changing mini-leagues

If you switch between mini-leagues, either within 1 sport, or between sports you cannot play for 2 weeks before joining a new mini-league. For example, if you play in mini-league “A” you could join a team in mini-league “B”, but you cannot play for 2 weeks before joining mini-league “B”.

Including more than 1 mini-league in a tournament

Teams in different mini-leagues should not play against each other. But, initial games in a tournament can be played within different mini-leagues. The winning teams move on in the tournaments and after a 2-week waiting period, they form a new mini-league for the final games.

Rules for participating in a mini-league

- Only play in a maximum of 2 mini-leagues.
- Do not participate if you're required to self-isolate.
- Do not participate if you've been or may have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Organizers should keep a list of mini-league participants with contact information for a minimum of 21 days in case contact tracing is needed.
- Practise physical distancing and other public health measures whenever possible, even within your mini-league.
- If you want to switch between mini-leagues, you must not play for 2 weeks before joining a new mini-league.
- Do not play if you're sick, no matter how mild your symptoms are.

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