

# Return to School Sport – FAQ (as of September 21, 2020)

The Return to School Sport FAQ is a living document which is updated regularly. Restrictions to help the spread of COVID-19 (provided by the Government of Saskatchewan [Public Health Orders](#), [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#), [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#), [Saskatchewan Safe Schools Plan](#), [School Division Re-Opening plans](#), and sport specific return to play documents) are fluid and therefore adjustments to the SHSAA Return to School Sport document and FAQ will be made accordingly.

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**Why is the SHSAA providing guidelines for school sport during a pandemic?**

- The Government of Saskatchewan and Chief Medical Health Officer (CMHO) have stated that extra-curricular at school can proceed while abiding by the current [Public Health Orders](#) and [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#). The SHSAA is providing parameters to promote consistency and safe implementation (seasons of play, stages of sport development, interpretations of Government documents) for schools/school divisions that choose to offer extra-curricular.

**Why has the start date for fall activities been delayed?**

- As a partner in the Education Sector, the SHSAA Executive Council want to cooperate with all partners to ensure a safe and effective transition into the new education environment that awaits students and staff. Delaying the start of the fall activities keeps SHSAA sanctioned activities as a viable option in the return to school process.
- The delayed start is offset by the fact that no schools will be eliminated through a playoff process during the season of play so all schools have the opportunity to remain engaged in competition until the last day for the season of play.

**Why are there no interschool games until October 5th (Soccer), **October 8th** (Football), and October 19th (Volleyball)?**

- Many students will not be returning to school (sport) in the same state (physically and mentally) that is typical at the start of a school year. Many have not been active for 6 months and will require time to train (both physically and mentally) prior to competition:
  - one of the guidelines to return to sport is to reduce the chance of injury during COVID-19; training prior to competition will assist in the reduction of injury.
  - See link: <https://sirc.ca/blog/psychological-implications-of-returning-to-sport/>

**What is the maximum number of people that we can have in our Mini-League?**

- The Government of Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) limit the number of participants in a mini-league at 50; this includes players as well as coaches, officials, referees, and volunteers who cannot maintain physical distance, use PPE and avoid contact with the players, ball, and equipment. Outdoor football has been granted an exception to use a limit of 80 for a mini-league.

**What is the maximum number of people that can participate at any one time?**

- The current [Public Health Orders](#) limits public gatherings to 30 people; therefore, the number of players, coaches, officials, and volunteers needs to remain at 30 or less people during an event.
- Outdoor football – The limit of 30 refers to the limit of 30 participants on the field of play engaged in game play and excludes:
  - on-field officials who maintain physical distancing and use PPE, avoid contact with the players, balls, and equipment.
  - game participants and coaches on the sidelines who are part of the maximum 80 person mini-league.

- other coaches and volunteers, who use PPE and avoid contact with the players, balls and equipment.

### What are the geographical considerations for the creation of a mini-league?

- Multiple schools could come together to form one or more mini-leagues.
  - Schools should first consider their ability to create mini-leagues and compete within their own schools whenever possible.
  - Schools should focus on establishing mini-leagues with schools in their closest proximity.
  - The mini-leagues would not be allowed to interact with other mini-leagues.
  - If multiple educational authorities are involved, they would need to work together to determine how guidelines specific to each authority would be followed in this situation.

### How do I register my teams, participating students, and coaches?

- Schools conducting activity programs must register teams in ExNet.
  - Currently, only the fall activities are available for selection.
    - Additional registration opportunities will be provided for the winter and spring activities
  - The Executive has chosen a team registration fee of \$20 for those activities that will not have a provincial championship conducted in the 2020-21 school year due to COVID.
  - If the activity has a provincial championship, the fee will be \$42.50 as per SHSAA policy.
- Registration of teams and students in ExNet (PLEASE CONTACT THE SHSAA OFFICE IF ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED IN MEETING THE FOLLOWING DEADLINES):
  - E-3 Team Registration – Due October 2, 2020
  - E-5 Registration – Outdoor Activities (Golf, Cross Country, Football, Soccer)
    - Due October 7 or prior to first competition
  - E-5 Registration – Indoor Activities (Volleyball)
    - Due October 21 or prior to first competition
- Schools may create more than one team per activity but all teams must be registered in the database in the following manner:
  - Utilize “Uniform Number” of E-5 to identify team of each student (ie. All students in team 1 would be assigned uniform number 1 for the sake of registration).
  - Additional Coach Information is used to list the coach of each team.
    - Multiple coaches may be required in a school to maximize opportunities for student athletes to be involved with an identifiable team (i.e. multiple teams per activity in a single school).
    - Coaching development supports can be facilitated to increase the coaching capacity at a school.

### With Provincial Championships not being held in Golf, Cross-Country, Soccer, Football, and Volleyball, what will happen with the Provincial Host rotations?

- The Executive Council will be adjusting the hosting rotation projections for the fall activities by moving the 2020 host sites to 2021. The entire rotation for fall activities will be pushed one year.
  - If a host chooses not to host next year, that championship will become an Open Bid to determine the host site.
    - The Executive will establish the date by which provincial host sites will need to declare their intention for 2021 and the subsequent bid process, if required.

- The host sites for the 2021-22 winter and spring activities will be looked at following any decisions made regarding provincial championship possibilities for the 2020-21 school year.

### Multi-Sport athletes

- SHSAA promotes multi-sport participation by student athletes through organizing seasons of play (fall, winter, spring).
- In order to reduce the number of contacts a student might have outside the curricular school day; the Executive passed a motion that adjusted the opportunities for student participation during the fall seasons of play: A student will be allowed to participate in one fall activity during concurrent seasons of play.
- Should one season of play conclude, students, at the discretion of their school, may join an active season of play
- Winter and spring activity participation is not currently impacted by the Executive decision for fall activities.
- Schools that create mini-leagues in multiple activities involving the same 50-person cohort may provide multiple sport opportunities for students.

### Why is it recommended to use small sided games (6-aside or 9-aside in Football and 7-aside Soccer)?

- The current [Public Health Orders](#) and [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) place limits on the number of people that can gather and the number of participants in a mini-league.
- The recommendations to use small sided games allows more teams (students) to participate in a mini-league.
  - Schools will need to be creative in their approach to how the activity is conducted in order to maximize student opportunities and participation under the current [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#).
    - Individuals must realize that during the pandemic, there will be an opportunity for sport and competition but it is going to be much different and much simpler than what was the past “normal”.
  - Schools may consider creating multiple teams to maximize the number of students that can access school sport participation.

### Regarding mini-leagues, who picks the teams I play against?

- As in other years, schools can determine how they will construct their season of play but in the fall of 2020, the school will need to do so following the [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#).
  - School Divisions/Schools may impose restrictions on inter-school participation.
  - Whether the individual SHSAA Districts are involved in creating the mini-leagues or not, all mini-leagues will need to be registered with the District.
    - The District, in turn, will forward the mini-league information to the SHSAA office.
- Mini-leagues must remain together for the season of the sport. Once a season has concluded players are able to join new mini-leagues in a different activity.

**SHSAA schools have battled declining numbers of coaches, officials, and volunteers; some of the guidelines point to the need for more of these people. How is this going to be manageable and feasible?**

- Competition restricted to a local geographical area is an opportunity to encourage more people to get involved in a coaching or officiating capacity in order to fulfill the need locally.
  - Much of the competitive opportunities that will exist can be viewed as recreational in nature as there will be no playoffs or championships available.
    - This will encourage a reduced emphasis on outcome and more focus on development
- A concerted effort by schools that are planning to offer teams will need to be made to recruit local individuals to coach and/or officiate.
- Coaching/Officiating PD support is available from the SHSAA through the District.

**I have a lot of questions about transportation....**

- Travel to and from a practice/event should follow guidelines set out by the sponsoring school or school division but it is recommended that:
  - each individual should attempt to provide their own transportation (i.e. parent transportation).
  - participants need to arrive in 'uniform' and ready to participate.

**Sanitization**

- Sanitization products and protocols will need to be provided by the school division and school hosting the event.
  - Visiting participants are encouraged to bring their own items for personal hygiene and sanitization
- Sanitization of the facility and equipment should occur between each group use and during planned breaks at a training session or competition.

**Community coaches**

- Application/approval will continue as per SHSAA Bylaws/Policies.
- School and School Division approval may be more stringent with mandates to reduce the number of people that enter the school facilities during the pandemic.

**Joint Sponsorship**

- Since multiple schools may come together to form one or more mini-leagues, joint sponsorships are a possibility.
  - School Division and school approval may be more stringent with mandates to reduce the number of people that enter the school facilities and due to travel constraints.
  - It is imperative that before any schools continue their current joint sponsorship agreement that clearance must be received from the School Division or School's educational authority. If multiple educational authorities are involved, they would need to work together to determine how guidelines specific to each authority would be followed in these situations.

### Student Transfer Eligibility

- Since the availability of school sport opportunities may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the transfer of athletic eligibility for students will be carefully scrutinized and investigated to ensure that the motivation for school transfer is not related to participation in school sport. All transfer requests, including those that reference Parts 1 and 2 of Establishing Eligibility, will require substantial documentation to be submitted by the receiving school to demonstrate the reason for transfer meets the criteria of the Bylaw Eligibility to Represent School Teams. SHSAA member schools are reminded that students transferring from out of province must follow the SHSAA Transfer Policy prior to being allowed to participate in SHSAA school sport.

### Distance Learning Students

- Some students may be choosing on-line educational delivery rather than attending during the school day.
  - School Divisions will determine if they will offer extra-curricular opportunities to those students not attending the physical school.
    - Should participation be allowed, the student will represent the school they are currently registered with in ExNet
  - For other distance learning situations, schools should complete form E-18 for submission to SHSAA office.

### Tournaments and Inter-Provincial sanctioning

- Tournaments are not currently allowed
  - This includes more than two teams from a mini-league competing against each other on the same day
- Inter-provincial competition is not currently allowed
  - The SHSAA office staff will work with MHSAA and ASAA to develop guidance for the Executive Council in developing policy for border communities

### Spectators

- Spectators are discouraged from attending school sport events to minimize the amount of onsite administration (maintaining spacing, attendance lists, etc.) that needs to be conducted by the host.
- Schools are encouraged to provide live-streaming of school sport events

### The number of cases in our Health Region are low; what's stopping the SHSAA from having playoffs?

- The current [Public Health Orders](#) limits public gatherings to 30 people; therefore, the number of players, coaches, officials, and volunteers needs to remain at 30 or less people during an event.
- The Government of Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) limit the number of participants in a mini-league at 50 (80 for outdoor football); this includes players and coaches as well as any officials and volunteers that are not able to physically distance (2 meters).
- At this time, mini-leagues cannot be dissolved and recreated.
- Until such a time that the above restrictions are lifted, playoffs are not possible.

### Can I have students practice with my team that do not intend to compete against other teams in the mini-league?

- No. All of the students that are practicing together need to be included in the mini-league numbers.

### **Why have the start dates for Curling, Wrestling, and Basketball been changed?**

- To limit the conflicts for multi-sport athletes transitioning between the fall activities and the winter activities it was decided to delay the start of the winter activity seasons until after the last fall season has been completed.
- Volleyball and basketball will tend to have the greatest cross over of students participating so it was decided to delay the basketball season for an additional week (also taken into consideration is the late March end of season for basketball).