



SASKATCHEWAN HIGH SCHOOLS

ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Return to School Sport

RETURN TO SCHOOL SPORT

The following document outlines protocols, guidelines, and recommendations assisting schools to provide school sport opportunities safely and effectively during SHSAA's spring season of activities.

March 29, 2021

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Introduction

Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association (SHSAA), a multi-sport organization with defined seasons of play, has been carefully studying and resourcing information related to COVID-19 and the impact on school sport. SHSAA believes they provide the administrative format for all high school sport activities on behalf of the Members (boards of education, conseils scolaire, independent schools registered with the Ministry, and independent First Nation schools). Sport and recreation play an important role in the holistic development of youth including their social, emotional, and physical well-being. This document is designed to suggest measures to allow activities to resume in a safe and responsible manner consistent with the current [Public Health Orders](#) and [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) established by the Government of Saskatchewan.

The safety of all is the primary focus of any return to school sport plan. A return to school sport will contribute to the development of citizenship skills in our student athletes. The goals of school sport can be achieved in a variety of ways through a multi-sport approach.

Everyone wants youth to have opportunities and would like those opportunities to be as normal as possible. Given the current circumstances, it is not realistic to offer school sport opportunities in their traditional format. The first planning item that needs to be considered is the most effective way of minimizing risk and reducing the spread of the virus. Mostly, that is done through personal hygiene, physical distancing, masking, staying home when you are sick, reducing contacts, minimizing travel, and vaccination.

Participation in school sport will carry a risk for transmission of the virus but if the activities can be delivered within the parameters outlined in this document, the risk should be minimized. It is crucial that the activity of participants (and spectators) is carefully monitored before, during, and after the event to ensure compliance with public health orders and efforts to minimize the risk of transmission. The ability to cooperate with Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) for required contact tracing and containment of identified cases must be assisted by the way sport is carried out by schools.

Any school planning to provide school sport opportunities must ensure that:

- the policies of the Member are strictly adhered to
- the [Public Health Orders](#) and [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) as outlined by the [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#) are strictly adhered to
- the voluntary decision to participate in school sport be left to the Members, schools, student-athletes, coaches, and officials
- the seasons of play as outlined by SHSAA are adhered to in order to maximize student participation and maintain a level playing field for all high school programs

Sport activities sanctioned by a School Division or a School's educational authority will need to abide by any restrictions that are put in place by that authority as part of their safe school plans. The authorities may have restrictions in place that are more stringent than what is covered in the sport guidelines. Additionally, if students from multiple educational authorities are participating together then those authorities will need to ensure that their guidelines align or at least are not contradictory to each other.

Seasons of Play

The SHSAA Executive Council has approved the following seasons of play for the period of March 29 – June 18, 2021. None of the seasons of play will lead to SHSAA playoffs that culminate in a provincial championship but there may be a possibility for Districts to conduct championships if the details of those playoffs and championships fit within the parameters of the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan.

- Track & Field: April 12 – June 11
- Basketball: April 12 – May 14
- Badminton: current season of play – June 4
- Golf: April 12 – end of 2021-22 golf season
- Soccer: May 3 – May 28
- Volleyball: May 17 – June 18
- Football: May 17 – June 18

Sport specific guidelines for each of the activities, which appear later in the document, are minimal at this time due to the current restrictions that are in place for sports and activities to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As the Re-Open Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) are updated, the sport specific guidelines for each of the activities will be developed in part by resourcing the Return to Play protocols/plans of each Provincial Sport Organization (PSO). The SHSAA is very appreciative of the cooperation and efforts of Sask Sport and associated PSO's in developing parameters which allow each sport to be included in the plan to Re-open Saskatchewan. Adaptations to the PSO protocols may occur to allow the activity to fit within the structure of a school sport setting.

In creating the spring seasons of play, the Executive attempted to provide a framework to reduce overlap between sports seasons and were cognisant of the traditional sport transitions that occur within our student-athlete (and coach) population. To reduce the number of contacts a student has, when there is an overlap of seasons, students are only allowed to participate in one activity during concurrent seasons of play; Golf and Track & Field are not included in this limitation.

Activity Registration

Schools will be expected to use ExNet to register their programs, including the of students and coaches that are involved in each activity.

- If the school previously registered for the activity, the E-5 will be available in the school's ExNet database and can be edited as needed by the school.
- If the school has not previously registered for the activity, the school can use form E-10 (School Team Registration Form) to add the activity and then proceed to complete the E-5. Form E-10 will be available to schools from April 12-16. After April 16, schools will need to email the SHSAA office in order to have activities added to their database.

School Sport Stages

Teacher-Coaches and student-athletes will require time and consideration during the re-introduction of school sport. Teacher-Coaches continue to face challenges as they provide a safe educational environment during the school day. Student-athletes will need to develop strategies to manage time effectively and prepare themselves, mentally and physical, for participation in school sport.

Members, and their schools, should plan a gradual opening of school sport that includes a period of organization to ensure a safe and effective return, time for physical and skill preparation, and finally, if allowed within the [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#), competitive opportunities for participants.

Each jurisdiction is in the best position to implement the re-introduction of sport. Time may be provided prior to the season of play for organizational purposes and meeting with potential participants to suggest ways in which they can begin the transition of implementing activity and sport back into their daily routines.

General Considerations

The following need to be considered and implemented across all activities and in all stages of return to school sport until such time as all [Public Health Orders](#) related to COVID-19 are lifted:

- Education of all participants regarding
 - [Current Public Health Orders](#) as published on the Government of Saskatchewan website.
 - All Guidelines as published in the most current Government of Saskatchewan [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#).
- Recommendations for all phases of Re-Open Saskatchewan including:
 - Protective measures for vulnerable populations.
 - Physical distancing must be maintained, wherever possible.
 - People must stay at home when they are sick.
 - Vulnerable individuals, such as seniors and those with underlying health conditions, should continue to exercise caution and minimize high-risk exposures, such as public outings.
 - Personal hygiene will continue to be a key prevention measure.
 - Enhanced cleaning and disinfection should take place in workplaces, public spaces and recreational facilities.
 - Current public and private gathering restrictions must be followed.
- ***All participants should be familiar with, and ready to implement, their school and school division protocols related to dealing with COVID-19.***
- Maintain consistency (student athletes, coaches, volunteers) within training groups.
- Competition is not allowed.
- Designate one or more people to be responsible for ensuring compliance with the guidelines outlined in this document (i.e. duties could include but not be limited to: oversee that sanitization, physical distancing, and masking protocols are followed, etc). This should not be someone engaged in other critical duties related to implementing school sport and should be someone who can maintain physical distancing protocols.

- Accurate record of event attendance must be taken and kept on file for at least one month and, if requested, be made available to Saskatchewan Health Authority to be used for contact tracing.
- All training situations must meet the limitations set out in the [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#).

Facilities

- Put in place signage to educate and direct participants about public health orders, handwashing, personal hygiene, directional flow through the facility, and other safety considerations.
- Signage is also required to reinforce key risk related messages ([Signage Resource](#) Gov't of Canada):
 - Use of masks as a means to minimize transmission of virus
 - Individuals who are sick must stay home.
 - A physical distance of three metres must be maintained between people not from the same household or extended household.
 - Individuals must wash/sanitize their hands.
- Limit/Decrease the opportunity for injury and should injury or illness occur, implement established emergency action plan – see guidelines regarding Participant Health and Wellness in [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#).
- Establish protocol for handling any participant at the event that develops signs of COVID-19 during the activity. This should include identification of an isolation area, notification process, and education of coaches and organizers on the procedure.
- Scheduling of facility should allow time for cleaning and disinfection between consecutive facility usages by two different training groups.
- COVID-19 can be transmitted if someone touches a contaminated surface and then touches their face without washing their hands. Many activities involve shared equipment among participants, coaches/staff, instructors, officials or volunteers (e.g. shared basketballs, volleyballs, etc.). The virus does not enter the body through skin; it enters through the eyes, nose, or mouth when an individual touches their face. This is why regular hand hygiene and cleaning of high-touch surfaces are so important.
 - Cleansing and disinfection of equipment (before, during, after)
 - It is recommended that scheduled stoppages be incorporated during training to allow for cleansing and disinfection.
 - Hand washing stations and/or approved hand sanitizers should be available and used
 - It is recommended that scheduled stoppages be incorporated to training situations to allow for sanitization.

Mask Use

- Please refer to the [Public Health Orders](#) and your school's policy for guidance on mask use.
- Each participant should provide their own mask(s).
- Masks must be worn by all participants in all indoor training sessions.

Participants

- Safety education related to hand washing, cough suppression, and body fluid emissions is essential for anyone engaging in school sport activities (parents, coaches, players, officials, volunteers etc).
- Staff and participants should be given information on physical distancing and other requirements prior to attending. Staff should discourage gatherings.
- Reduce the amount of time at the training venue.
 - Warm up individually, away from training area, and arrive at the training area 5 -10 minutes prior to start of training session.
 - Participants arrive 'changed out' and ready to participate.
 - When activity is completed, leave the training area immediately after following proper hygiene protocol.
- Water bottles for personal use only – no sharing of water bottles. Water fountains will not be accessible in facilities; however, some facilities may choose to offer water bottle filling stations.
- Minimize cheering and whistling as much as possible to control the spread of COVID-19.
- ***All participants should be familiar with, and ready to implement, their school and school division protocols related to reporting COVID-19 illness, transmission, and contact tracing.***

Spectators

- Discourage spectators at events.

Officials

- Not required during training sessions

Transportation

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

Sport Specific Guidelines

Track & Field (April 12 – June 11)

As per [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) (Re-Open Saskatchewan).

Cross Country running participation can be encouraged through the Track & Field program.

As the Re-Open Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) are updated, the sport specific guidelines for Track & Field will be developed.

The following are **recommended** during SHSAA Track & Field training (modified from [Athletics Canada – Back on Track](#)):

- Avoid having athletes change training groups from day to day or week to week.
- Set up physical space with pylons, cones, taped or marked/painted barriers, etc.
- Wherever possible, use your own equipment. Sharing any equipment with fellow athletes should be avoided.
 - If sharing personal training equipment (starting blocks, throwing equipment, hurdles, crossbars, medicine balls etc.), ensure proper cleaning is done before the athletes use them.
 - All equipment must be cleaned and disinfected after each use (starting blocks, throwing equipment, hurdles, crossbars, medicine balls, etc.).
- **Track (Sprints, Hurdles, Distance)**
 - Utilize large training spaces and determine if physical distancing can be maintained. Be mindful of anyone in the area that is not part of your group.
 - When training on a track, use staggered starts when doing intervals/repeats and avoid congestion.
 - Limit the use of equipment and avoid using equipment that cannot be thoroughly cleaned before another athlete can use it (i.e. no relay exchange)
 - If hurdles are to be used, make sure one person is designated for set up/take down and all equipment thoroughly cleaned before and after each session.
 - If starting blocks are to be used, they should be used just by one athlete and thoroughly cleaned before and after each session.
- **Throws**
 - Practice physical distancing by keeping three meters away from one another at all times.
 - Coaches and athletes should ensure all equipment is used by one athlete and then thoroughly cleaned before and after each session.
 - Athletes should retrieve their own throwing implements.
 - Personal aides like gloves, wrist straps, chalk, tape should not be shared between athletes.
 - A coach or a specific individual should be appointed to using or moving equipment like toe boards, brooms, wrenches, etc.
 - Coaches cleaning any equipment should use gloves and wash their hands often.
- **Jumps**

Practice physical distancing by keeping three meters away from one another at all times.

Horizontal Jumps

- It is important to recognize that there currently is no known method to ensure sand pits are properly sanitized. As a result, use of these sand pits comes with an increased risk of infection. To help mitigate this risk:
 - Sanitize your hands before and after each jump.
 - Avoid getting sand in your eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - Fully turn and rake the landing pit before and after each individual athlete/user.
 - Equipment such as rakes, measuring tapes, should be managed by dedicated individuals for a particular session (i.e. one athlete or the coach) and cleaned between one athlete's series of jumps or between sessions.

Vertical Jumps

- Pits are to be covered by a large tarp that must be fully sanitized before and after each individual athlete/user; or
- Pits are to be covered by a large tarp that is unique to each athlete and put in place and removed before and after each individual athlete/user (Therefore multiple tarps needed).
 - Public Health Agency of Canada: COVID-19 - Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces. www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces.html
 - Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers: List of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19 www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html
- Cross Bars should be cleaned before use and managed by a dedicated individual for a particular session. Bars should be sanitized after contact by an athlete.
- Athletes are to use their own poles or if poles are shared, they must be disinfected after use. Poles should be re-gripped before use and any part of the pole outside of the grip should be cleaned before use by another athlete.
- Ensure there is only one athlete on the runway at a time.
- Use cones on the side of the runway to visually remind athletes of the distance that should be maintained while waiting to use the runway.

Basketball (April 12 – May 14)

As per [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) (Re-Open Saskatchewan)

As the Re-Open Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) are updated, the sport specific guidelines for Basketball will be developed.

The following are **recommended** during SHSAA Basketball events:

- Coaches should lead and instruct without touching the ball as much as possible. If handling the ball, coaches should use hand sanitizer.
- Manage training to avoid circumstances where physical distancing is not maintained (i.e. standing in line during a drill).
- Consider having separate (or own) equipment for each team, but where that is not feasible, sanitized basketballs should be separated from those requiring cleaning.

- Breaks for sanitization of equipment should be scheduled during training sessions.
- All equipment must be sanitized following a training session so it is ready for use by the next team that will be accessing the equipment and training area.

Badminton (Current Season extended to June 4)

As per [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) (Re-Open Saskatchewan)

As the Re-Open Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) are updated, the sport specific guidelines for Badminton will be developed.

The following are **recommended** during SHSAA Badminton (modified from [Badminton Canada – Badminton Facility Planning during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)):

- Analyze the space and determine how physical distancing can be maintained.
- Establish protocols for washing hands prior to going on-court
- Develop no touch policies (no handshakes, no touching other’s racquets or equipment)
- Provide each badminton court with hand sanitization stations (hand sanitizers)
- Remove court benches and replace them with chairs in order to facilitate greater physical distancing. Place chairs a minimum of 3 meters apart.
- Wipe-down court chairs, net posts, player entrance
- One person is designated for set up/take down and thorough cleaning before and after each session.
- Ideally, each student brings their own equipment (racquet, safety glasses, etc.). If not feasible, equipment will be used by one person and thoroughly cleaned before and after each session.
- Shuttlecock management
 - Ideally replace all shuttlecocks with new shuttlecocks (never used). If not feasible please consider:
 - During coach-led drills:
 - Creating one shuttle bin per coach. The bin should only be used by that one coach
 - Only the coach will handle the shuttles (players can still herd them to the coach with their racquets)
 - Limit the amount of shuttlecocks on-court (modify lesson delivery)
 - Coach should wash hands after using shuttles in bin
 - During student-led drills:
 - Reduce the number of shuttles being used by using less ‘feeding drills’ and having players rally in skill development situations.
 - Each participant should use their own shuttles (with distinguishing numbers or felt pen marks). Whomever is serving only uses their own shuttles. Players can pass each other shuttles by only using their racquet.
 - Do not change ends.
- Class organization/management modifications:
 - Maintain physical distancing protocols

- Encourage partner rallying versus feeding
- Minimize the use of teaching aids and markers; only handled by the coach.
- Stagger on court sessions to allow ample time for those on court to leave the playing area before the next group starts.
 - Create waiting areas with appropriate physical distance
- Limit number of players playing on-court or in viewing areas at any given time; eliminate areas where players congregate
- Reduce student / coach ratios
- Limit doubles - only singles

Golf (April 12 – end of 2021-22 golf season)

As per [Golf Course Guidelines](#) (Re-Open Saskatchewan). The SHSAA would like to acknowledge Golf Saskatchewan and Golf Canada ([Golf's Playbook for Canada](#)) for the work that they have done with creating return to play protocols.

The following are **recommended** during SHSAA golf events:

- Limit events to one day.
- Encourage groups of four (male and/or female) from a school to enter the competition.
 - Wherever possible have golfers from the same school golf together
 - Golfers would use the assigned gender teeing areas on each hole
- If pre-event meetings are required, they should be conducted using on-line meeting software prior to the event.
- Students should arrive to play no more than twenty minutes before their scheduled tee time allowing them access to a quick warm up opportunity at the driving range and practice putting area.
- Students should leave the facility shortly after completing their round.
- Encourage a contactless means by which to have scores recorded and submitted
- For any ties that need to be broken, "Matching Scorecards" is suggested rather than a playoff

Soccer (May 3 – May 25)

As per [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) (Re-Open Saskatchewan)

As the Re-Open Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) are updated, the sport specific guidelines for Soccer will be developed.

Volleyball (May 17 – June 18)

As per [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) (Re-Open Saskatchewan)

As the Re-Open Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) are updated, the sport specific guidelines for Volleyball will be developed.

Football (May 17 – June 18)

As per [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) (Re-Open Saskatchewan)

As the Re-Open Saskatchewan [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) are updated, the sport specific guidelines for Football will be developed.