

BC Soccer Return to Play Phase 2 FAQ

Updated September 4, 2020

Since the release of “*BC Soccer’s Return to Play Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines*”, BC Soccer has received some consistent questions. Therefore, we wanted to provide the below FAQs to help Members and Affiliated Clubs as we collectively work together to support soccer activity under the terms the government is allowing us to do so.

We will continue to update this document as questions are received that we feel would be helpful for all Members and Affiliated Clubs to receive responses to.

We thank everyone for their work, patience and dedication to support soccer for their communities.

Question - #1

My organization didn’t participate in Phase 1 Return to Play. Does my organization still need to complete the Canada Soccer Risk Assessment Tool and have our Board approve a return to play?

Answer - #1

Yes. If your organization **did not** participate in Phase 1 Return to Play, below are the required steps to participate under “*BC Soccer’s Return to Play Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines*”:

1. Review [Via Sport’s Return to Sport updated Guidelines for B. C.](#)
2. Review [BC Soccer’s Return to Play Plan Phase 2 – Recommendations and Guidelines](#)
3. Fully complete Canada Soccer’s “Return to Soccer Assessment Tool” which requires you to commit to offer soccer activity under the terms in *BC Soccer’s Return to Play Plan Phase 2 – Recommendations and Guidelines*.
4. Pass a board motion supporting the soccer activity that your organization is choosing to offer under the terms.
5. Ensure the soccer activity is offered the safest possible environment for all participants that choose to participate.

If your organization did participate in Phase 1 Return to Play, below are the required steps to participate under “*BC Soccer’s Return to Play Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines*”:

1. Review [Via Sport’s Return to Sport updated Guidelines for B.C.](#)
2. Review [BC Soccer’s Return to Play Plan Phase 2 – Recommendations and Guidelines](#)
3. Pass a board motion supporting your organization’s decision to offer soccer activity under the Phase 2 terms.
4. Ensure the soccer activity is offered in the safest possible environment for all participants that choose to participate.

Question - #2

Can my team participate in a cohort with teams from other clubs/districts?

Answer - #2

Yes. Per the terms within “*BC Soccer’s Return to Play Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines*”, soccer activity:

- As of September 7, 2020 – Youth Game Activity may be expanded beyond solely in-Club/organization activity to include within Youth District Geographical boundaries and/or neighbouring Youth District Geographical boundaries while adhering to the Soccer Cohorts requirement.
- As of September 7, 2020 – Adult Game Activity may be expanded beyond solely in-Club/organization to include within the Adult League Member while adhering to the Soccer Cohorts requirement.

For clarity, a “Soccer Cohort” is defined as a closed, smaller group of no more than 50 individuals or up to four (4) teams who participate in soccer activity and remain together for the duration of a phase. The intent is to try to keep the interaction to the same cohort and group of people.

- It is understood that if four (4) teams is used, the number of individuals within the cohort may go above the 50 limit (for example, four teams with rosters of 18 players) BUT it must be kept to four teams.

Question - #3

How do players participating in out-of-club programming, such as with an academy, affect my team’s cohort?

Answer - #3

All members and Affiliated Clubs must follow “*BC Soccer’s Return to Play Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines*” and we understand this will impact players that participate in programming offered by more than one member/affiliated club such as supplemental training.

Participants must keep to the one cohort that they choose/sign up to be part of.

If supplemental training occurs outside of the cohort, this must be done under Phase 1 Return to Play Term (distance training/no contact guidelines) in order to ensure the participant/player is not in two cohorts.

Question - #4

Can a cohort exceed the 50 person gathering limits requirement?

Answer - #4

Yes, a cohort number may be above the maximum 50 person gathering limits, however, not all people in the cohort can participate in the same activity at the same time as this may go above the 50-participant maximum requirement.

For example: there might be 4 teams in a cohort with a total of 80 people (roughly 20 per team). The cohort is more than 50, but when they “gather” to play a game, it is only two teams on/at the field (i.e. approximately 40 people), so they’re still under the 50-person gathering limit.

Question - #5

I don’t understand the 50 people/4 team cohort’s idea. My adult team often has 22-23 players. How is that going to work?

Answer - #5

We understand the confusion regarding the requirement of 50 individuals or up to four teams. The intent is to limit interaction to a smaller group while also being able to support soccer activity. For adult soccer and older teenage groups there are more players on a rosters, which is why “It is understood that if four (4) teams is used, the number of individuals within the cohort may go above the 50 limit (for example, four teams with rosters of 18 players) BUT it must be kept to four teams.”

See example noted in answer #4.

Question - #6

Can cohorts be shuffled?

Answer - #6

Yes, if cohort participants (or teams) need to be adjusted, a 2-week break between activities is required.

Any reshuffling of cohorts must also comply with the requirement of:

- Youth Soccer Activity: within the Youth District Geographical boundaries and/or neighbouring Youth District Geographical boundaries.
- Adult Soccer Activity: within the Adult League Member.

Question - #7

If someone tests positive, what does that mean for the cohort soccer activity?

Answer - #7

Via Sport has advised BC Soccer that if an outbreak occurs, to follow their outbreak plan, report to your local health authority who will instruct you on next steps and any action required (i.e. postponement, cancellation, etc.)

Question - #8

One of the coaching points in the Return to Play Phase 2 guidelines states that players can’t touch the ball with their head. Does this mean heading the ball won’t be allowed when gameplay returns?

Answer - #8

The intent is to limit touchpoints. Players can head the ball; however, it is encouraged to try and limit heading in training environments. Currently, the only modification to on-field gameplay is “No throw-ins, kick-ins only. Handled as an indirect free kick.”

Question - #9

I don't understand the spitting and nose clearing requirement? Will the referees have to manage this?

Answer - #9

Spitting and nose clearing that occasionally occurs in soccer is not a pleasant part of our sport, even under normal circumstances. The intent is to educate players and participants to not engage in these actions because, with the current situation, they are even more unwanted.

Based on guidance from Canada Soccer, referees are only able to address spitting when directed at someone, not when spitting or nose clearing occurs when not directed at someone. Therefore, the expectation is player and coaches will respect each other to not engage in these actions and that coaches will substitute their players who do.

We understand that this raises concerns with gamesmanship; however, we are hopeful that our soccer community will work together under these terms so we can all enjoy soccer under the circumstances.

Question - #10

Why are BC Soccer's Phase numbers different from Via Sport's?

Answer - #10

Via Sport's previous sport specific guidelines did not have numbers associated with their phases and BC Soccer's did. With the recent release of the updated Via Sport Return to Sport Guidelines, Via Sport introduced phase numbers.

To confirm BC Soccer's phase 2 is equivalent to Via Sport's Phase 3.

Question - #11

Can coaches, coach more than one team?

Answer - #11

The intent is to limit contact as much as possible. However, coaches can coach more than one team and in doing so must ensure distancing as best as possible.

Question - #12

What are the guidelines for physiotherapists/trainers and their ability to treat multiple teams/players?

Answer - #12

Per Via Sport – Certificated physios and trainers must adhere to higher standards based on their professional designation. In most cases they are required to wear masks when interacting with patients, therefore, they would count towards the people within the gathering size but can interact with multiple individuals without a large risk.

Question - #13

Why does soccer have to have cohorts when players are going back to school and playing other sports?

Answer - #13

We are working within the requirements/restrictions that Via Sport and the BC health authorities are allowing sport/and soccer to operate under. We do agree that it is a bit confusing as people will be going back to school and perhaps playing other sports or joining other activities. This question has been raised previously within the sport sector and the response is there is nothing preventing someone from being involved in multiple activities, however, the BC health authorities are not encouraging that and requesting people to limit their activity. ViaSport have stated there is no way to 'police' that activity. Therefore, we must focus on what we can control and within soccer, it is limiting participation to one cohort under the guidelines.

Question - #14

Is indoor soccer allowed?

Answer - #14

Yes, if BC Soccer Return to Play Guidelines and individual facility guidelines are followed.

Question - #15

Are there specific guidelines on how the kick-ins will occur?

Answer - #15

Per the guidelines kick-ins are to be treated as an indirect free kick. The goal is to keep the game as normal as possible, so we hope that kick-ins are treated as close to throw-ins as possible.

Question - #16

What happens if my team only has one set of goalkeeper gloves?

Answer - #16

The guidance is to limit the sharing of equipment as much as possible. For the goalkeeper gloves, BC health authorities care of Via Sport have provided the following principles:

- No sharing of gloves on the same day
- Spray gloves with disinfectant after use and air dry
- Only share with individuals on the same team

Question - #17

Can teams from different cohorts practice on the same field as long as there isn't any interaction?

Answer - #17

Yes.

Question - #18

Will there be discipline for individuals/organizations who don't adhere to the cohort model?

Answer - #18

Similar to other situations where rules are not being followed, any complaints or reports would be reviewed under BC Soccer's independent Judicial process.

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