

**VIA EMAIL**

May 13, 2020

**Attention:** BC Soccer Full/Associate Members and Affiliated Soccer Clubs

**From:** Kjeld Brodsgaard, President & Jason Elligott, Executive Director

**Re:** Return to Play Update

Dear Full/Associate Members and Affiliated Clubs,

As we have stated previously, we are working to provide information and updates to best support you as we collectively work through the uncertainty and ongoing impacts of the current situation. This memo is in follow up to the [April 30, 2020 memo](#) circulated to the members and affiliated clubs.

We understand that everyone was anticipating receiving a Return to Play Phase 1 Plan from soccer, however, new information has been provided to us from Via Sport (and the Government) and Canada Soccer which has slightly delayed returning in the short term. This memo provides you all with the update on where we are at and why.

**BC Soccer's Return to Play Phase 1 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines**

To confirm, BC Soccer has developed a Return to Play Phase 1 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines for soccer document which currently includes the following:

1. Timelines, recommendations, and guidelines for members and affiliated clubs, administrators, coaches and anyone organizing soccer activities.
2. Technical resources providing sample sessions that fall within the recommendations and guidelines to support members and affiliated clubs that want to offer soccer activity.
3. Timelines, recommendations and guidelines for participants.

We are not able to share BC Soccer's Return to Play Phase 1 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines yet; the rationale for this is outlined below.

**Return to Play Plan Approval Process**

Contrary to what we have shared previously, Via Sport has now informed us that the BC health authorities nor Via Sport will be approving BC Soccer's Return to Play Plan Phase 1 – Recommendations and Guidelines for soccer. They further advised that once the emergency act is lifted, the Government provides direction on the return to work/play scenarios. Via Sport's role is to prepare robust guidelines for the sport sector based on government direction (not completed yet), receive approval of these guidelines from government, MOH, and WorkplaceBC and then shares them with the sport sector.

Via Sport further advised that BC Soccer's role is to prepare soccer guidelines which BC Soccer has done already and shared with them. They have escalated these guidelines, "BC Soccer's Return to Play Phase 1 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines" up to the Ministry for comment with the intent to make

certain that our plan has all key components and to gather any further feedback. We have not received a response or any indication on when we will receive one. [Linked here is an FAQ from Via Sport.](#)

Of importance, with the change in approval process, we have concerns regarding risk, insurance and liability. These concerns are shared amongst other organized sports in BC and our counterparts in other provincial soccer associations across Canada.

### **Risk & Insurance**

As we know there are different types of risks associated with participating in sport and soccer. The current situation has potentially added to the assumption of risk. As communicated on March 23, 2020, BC Soccer's insurance underwriter has provided an exclusion notice which we are resharing again with this memo. Of note, this exclusion is not specific to soccer or BC and from our understanding is being applied across amateur sport in BC and Canada. Considering this, BC Soccer has received guidance from our legal counsel and also accompanying this memo are updated Youth and Adult Participant Waivers that we recommend all members and affiliated clubs use for your registration purposes once we are able to get back to soccer.

Importantly, up until now, we were working under the assumption that the health authorities (and/or Via Sport) would approve return to play plans, which we now know is not the case. This change potentially brings another added risk with liability concerns for all organizations within BC Soccer's membership structure.

The concern regarding liability is that it is being pushed down to the individual sport and importantly to local communities/clubs, all under a situation where sport people are not the experts. We have expressed our concerns with this through the channels that we have available to us. However, ultimately, BC Soccer and each of our members/affiliated clubs are independent (but linked) organizations and each must be comfortable that the appropriate and reasonable steps are being taken to mitigate risks associated with approving and/or implementing any form of soccer programming under a Return to Play Plan.

We have inquired with our insurance broker to see what additional insurance coverage is available, however, they have informed us that there is no such coverage currently available.

### **Canada Soccer's Process to Lifting the Suspension of Soccer Activity**

We are still under the wider Canada Soccer suspension of on-field soccer activity; however, Canada Soccer informed us yesterday that in the next few days they will be releasing publicly more information on how they will support Provincial Member Associations (BC Soccer) with our Return to Play Plans, along with providing added support tools to help local soccer organizations.

Note: in addition to providing BC Soccer's Return to Play Phase 1 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines to Via Sport, we have also already provided it to Canada Soccer as we work with them through the process.

Canada Soccer providing support to BC Soccer gives us, as a collective soccer community in BC, some added assurances. Once we receive more information from Canada Soccer and what the support tools



are to help at the local levels, we will share accordingly. Importantly, mitigating risk is the overall objective; however, as we all know, it will not bring it to zero. Ultimately, the most important decision-maker is the parent or person registered to play soccer.

#### **Closing Comments & Extension of Suspension**

We understand that everyone wants to get back on the fields and play the sport we all love; BC Soccer wants to as well. However, we must do so in the most responsible way possible. We also want to ensure that our members, affiliated clubs and the volunteer (and paid) individuals that lead them are aware of the potential risks with decisions they make.

Until we hear back from Via Sport and Canada Soccer, which we hope will be soon, we unfortunately need to extend the suspension of soccer activity in the short term.

We continue to thank you for your support and the work you are all doing in your organizations and communities.

Keep well and stay positive.

Kind regards,

Jason Elligott  
Executive Director, BC Soccer

Kjeld Brodsgaard  
President, BC Soccer

CC: Charlene Krepiakovich, CEO, ViaSport British Columbia  
Earl Cochrane, Canada Soccer