



VIA EMAIL

October 14, 2020

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

From: BC Soccer Association

Re: Return to Play – Phase 2 for soccer – updated guidelines and additional cohort clarification

Dear Full/Associate Members and Affiliated Clubs,

Soccer's Return to Play Phase 1 commenced June 2 with on-field activity occurring earliest June 12.

Soccer's Return to Play Phase 2 commenced on August 24, 2020 with on-field contact in training and game activity within the cohort model and geographical restrictions. This progression aligned with the BC health authorities and ViaSport's "Progressively Loosen" shift within the Sport Activity Chart.

Since August 24, 2020, members and affiliated clubs have worked hard to offer responsible soccer activity under the Phase 2 guidelines and recommendations; we thank and congratulate you all on this.

BC Soccer Return to Play – Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations & Guidelines – Updated October 14, 2020

ViaSport has acknowledged that soccer has taken a responsible approach to our collective return, which is positive. Along those lines, we are pleased to share with the members and affiliated clubs an updated version of "*BC Soccer's Return to Play Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines*". The adjustments to the guidelines are highlighted in green with the most significant change allowing for increased geographic flexibility of cohorts for youth game activity (page 3 of the plan).

The regional adjustment simply allows for increased flexibility to adjust cohorts (after the 2-week break) based on the competitiveness of the teams while supporting members and clubs to keep youth engaged, active, and positive in their soccer experience.

All members, clubs and sanctioned leagues that determine the cohorts and schedule league/game play are reminded to be responsible (to limit travel as best as possible).

ViaSport have confirmed that the updated "BC Soccer's Return to Play Phase 2 Plan – Recommendations and Guidelines" continues to be aligned and compliant with their Return to Sport Guidelines.

Increasing cohort size requests

BC Soccer has received requests from members and clubs asking for when we will allow for cohorts to be increased in number and size beyond the current allowance of "...no more than 50 individuals or up to four (4) teams...".

ViaSport has confirmed that the sport sector is "...limited from the PHO (Provincial Health Office) and their comfort level. (Therefore, Sport) will not be adding more to cohorts at this time or in the near future."

Individuals playing in more than one cohort requests

BC Soccer has also received requests from members and clubs regarding the allowance for players to participant in more than one cohort. These requests have been based on information within ViaSport's Return to Sport Guidelines, where some are interpreting it to be allowed.

To confirm, ViaSport's guidelines speak to all sport organizations, those both in and outside the Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) membership structure. What ViaSport states is that if a player/family wants to play with an organization inside the PSO membership structure (i.e. an affiliated soccer club) and also outside the structure (i.e. a soccer service provider not inside BC Soccer membership), they can. BC Soccer does not encourage this as we want all those participating in soccer to be doing so inside the membership structure.

For added clarity, BC Soccer only has the jurisdictional reach to those organizations under membership, therefore, "*BC Soccer's Return to Play Guidelines and Recommendations*" only apply directly to the organizations under BC Soccer's membership structure. Therefore, all these organizations (i.e. youth districts, adult leagues, affiliated soccer clubs, etc.) must keep player participation to one cohort (at a time and if adjustments are needed, to follow the break periods, etc.). For in-club academy activity, as long as the club is not mixing players across cohorts, then this type of activity is allowed. If clubs are mixing cohorts for academy activity, then phase 1 (distance training) would need to be followed. This same principle applies when players are participating within their team/club cohort and any extra training they are choosing to participate in within BC Soccer's membership structure.

ViaSport has confirmed the above information is correct and the requirement to limit player participation to one cohort within the BC Soccer membership structure. Further, ViaSport's overall guidance to participants is to limit the number of cohorts they participate in across all sports; a message that was stated publicly by Dr. Henry - <https://theprovince.com/news/local-news/covid-19-five-deaths-and-549-cases-reported-in-b-c-over-the-past-four-days/wcm/9538beca-7eeb-4bd6-9e8e-a3df23e9ddc4>.

Next Phase Timings

We are pleased to be progressing further under the Phase 2 Plan for Soccer. Moving to the final phase for soccer; the "Return to the Regular Type Training & Games/Competition Structure" phase, will be aligned with the BC health authorities and ViaSport and we have not received any indication on when activity beyond what is currently in "*BC Soccer's Return to Play Plan (updated) Phase 2 – Recommendations and Guidelines*" will occur.

As we have continued to do since March 2020, we will provide updated and information as and when appropriate as we collectively work through the evolving situation.

Thank you for your attention to this. Keep well and stay positive.

-End-

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