

British Columbia Fencing Association

www.fencing.bc.ca

Email: president.bcfa@gmail.com

BC Fencing Association – Post Covid Return to Sport Guidelines Updated September 20th, 2020

General Introduction

As British Columbia public health authorities develop guidelines to lift some restrictions on gathering in a responsible way, the BCFA has been working with viaSport and the Province of British Columbia to understand the recommendations our Chief Provincial Health Officer and how they best apply within sport.

It should be noted that following all the recommended guidelines will NOT guarantee the health and safety of the participants and each participant and participant's families assumes all risk. Each participant should seek their own medical advice from their own physicians/health professional in deciding whether to participate in the sport either recreationally or competitively and that by publishing these guidelines the BCFA is not promoting any participation by individual participants (or their families) and shall not be liable for any illness that may result from such participation.

The attached Return to Sport Plan has been developed for our sport in order to ensure:

- health and safety of all individuals is a priority
- activities are in alignment with provincial health recommendations
 - modifications to activities are in place in order to reduce the risks to each sport organization and its participants
 - our sport is united and aligned on a plan to reopen throughout the province. While we do hope things will return to normal in the not too distant future, currently this Return to Sport Plan will be the new normal until we are advised otherwise by public health authorities. If you choose to participate, you must follow these rules:
- If you don't feel well or are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, you must stay home.
- If you have traveled outside of Canada, you are not permitted at the facility until you have self-isolated for a minimum of 14 days.
- If you live in a household with someone who has COVID-19 or is showing symptoms of COVID19, please stay home.
- Wash your hands before participating
- Bring your own equipment, water bottle and hand sanitizer
- Comply with physical distancing measures at all time
- Avoid physical contact with others, including shaking hands, high fives, etc.
- Leave the field of play as quickly as possible after you finish Our Return to Sport Plan is based on current public health guidance.

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While we are all doing our best to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19, while the virus circulates in our communities it is impossible to completely eliminate the risk. Each participant must make their own decision as to whether it is in their best interest to resume participation at this time. You must take into account your own circumstances and make the decision that is right for you. Should you choose to join us, we require your full cooperation with our Return to Sport Plan.

Sincerely,

BCFA Board of Directors

Context

Fencing is a non-contact combat sport. Fencers wear full protective equipment from head to toe, with only one hand left exposed. Physical contact between fencers only occurs during competitive training or full competitions, and only on occasion. Training is generally done in one on one sessions with a coach, or in small group sessions. In both cases physical distancing of more than 2M can be maintained.

The BC Fencing Association, in collaboration with member clubs and provincial governing bodies, plans to introduce a phased return to sport over the next few months consistent with the ViaSport Appendix A Sport Activity Chart.

Currently, effective August 31st onwards, we are in the phase 3 phase of progressively loosen.

Phasing will consist of the following, dates and timeframes will be established based on advice and required permissions from governing bodies:

- 1) High Performance athlete lessons (individual) at privately owned facilities
- 2) High Performance athlete lessons (individual and small group) at privately owned facilities
- 3) Small competitive group training sessions for High Performance athletes at privately owned facilities
- 4) General athlete lessons (individual and small group) at publicly owned facilities (schools, community centres)
- 5) Small competitive training sessions at publicly owned facilities (schools, community centres)
- 6) Introductory School programs
- 7) Competitions - Currently, it is tentatively planned to host a Canadian Nationals competition and an International World Cup in January and February 2021 respectively. There are many variables and unknowns that will determine the feasibility of these

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events, and as such they are not confirmed. Realistically, it may be more viable to return to small club competitions at that time.

Currently, only steps 1 – 5 and 7 are permissible, subject to meeting the following guidelines:

- 1) Member clubs should review and follow guidelines issued by the National Federation (attached), Provincial governing bodies (Government and Via-Sport), host facilities and the BCFA.
- 2) Clubs must complete the: APPENDIX G - COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE, of the ViaSport return to sport guidelines, as per Provincial Health Orders.
- 3) Current proposed BCFA guidelines for phase 1 - 5 only – (a controlled environment that is easily monitored) are:

General:

- Lessons must be booked in advance
- Staff and students should be screened via to entering the facility (see Via Sport screening guidelines)
- A permanent record will be maintained of all persons entering the building for contact tracing purposes
- There will be a 10 minute gap between lessons
- It is recommended that initially no more than 10 people will be on the premises at a given time, in groups of two (coach plus athlete) located at a distance of more than 2M apart
- Less than 50 people must be in the premises at any one time, and provided that all persons can maintain a safe social distance
- All public doors will be left open so no one touches any handles.
- Where possible, Reception or front desk staff will be working virtually and not enter the premises
- No athletes will have any access to any public club facility (change rooms, washrooms (except in emergency), water fountains, lobbies and waiting areas)
- Vulnerable persons should be discouraged from participation

Staff and athlete health:

- Prior to accessing the building, Staff and athletes will confirm that:
- They have no symptoms of Covid-19
- They have not been in contact with anyone who has a positive test or symptoms of Covid-19 in the past 10 days

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- Staff and athletes who cannot confirm the above will be required to self-isolate for 10 days prior to admission to the building
- They have not returned from out of country in the past 14 days
- Staff and athletes who have returned from out of country will be required to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of return to BC, and meet criteria above, prior to admission to the building

Entrance and Exit:

- Athletes will only be able to enter the facility when called by the coach (text message or phone call)
- Athletes and parents must stay inside their cars until the athlete has been called inside
- Where possible, reception areas will be protected by a plexiguard shield, which shall be cleaned daily
- Parents will not be allowed in the club and must wait outside until the lesson ends
- Athletes will leave the club as soon as the lesson ends
- Doors will be left open where possible
- Where doors are required to be closed only a designated person will be permitted to touch the door (open and close) to allow an athlete to enter.

Equipment:

- No athletes will be permitted to borrow any club equipment
- Athletes must come for their private lessons wearing full fencing attire (the club will relax its mandatory fencing pants rule to ease the changing process for the athletes)
- Athletes will not be allowed to change at the club

Hygiene, cleaning and body contact:

- Hand sanitizer shall be provided at each entrance and used by all participants on entering and exiting the building
- Door handles and common touch points will be cleaned frequently.
- Premises will be cleaned fully at the end of the work day and sprayed by sanitizer
- No physical contact or shaking of hands will be permitted
- Coaches will not be permitted to physically touch any athlete or athletes equipment, to fix any positions; will corrections will need to be verbal.
- Coaches will maintain a physical distance of 2M from the student at all times, and ensure all participants maintain a 2M distance from each other
- Staff and participants should understand the risks and benefits of wearing face masks (Cloth or N95) , and follow any government issued guidelines with respect to the wearing of face masks

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Wearing of non-medical masks:

While the province of B.C. currently has no provincewide mandate for mask-wearing, The wearing on non-medical masks may be mandatory in some facilities and it is encouraged for all those participating in fencing in any capacity (student, athlete, coach, administrator, officials) where feasible.

Safe sport requirements:

- The “rule of two” shall be maintained at all times that a coach is working with an athlete. This requires that another person (coach) be in line of sight and at a hearing distance from any coach that is giving a lesson

Sanctions:

- Any person not complying with the rules above will be barred from the activity for a minimum of 10 days

Waivers:

- Member clubs are required to sign the attached BCFA waiver
- Clubs should ensure participants sign waiver forms acknowledging the risks associated with participation and the Covid Pandemic

Phases 4-6:

- For phases 4-6, offered at publicly owned facilities, clubs will be required to meet the above recommendations and any other recommendations required by the facility.

Phases 7:

- As per the Via sport guidelines, competitions are now permissible under the following guidelines:
 - Only club or within province competitions are allowed
 - A competition plan, outlining the safety measures in place, is required for each competition
 - All attendees must give names and addresses for contact tracing purposes.
 - No spectators are allowed

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- Social distancing must be maintained at all times during the competition, except during competitive bouts themselves where normal fencing rules shall apply
- Shaking of hands post bout is not permissible
- Competitions should be restricted to specific cohorts only. For fencing this would allow for an inter and intra club competitions, provided that gender and weapon specific events are held at separate times, with one cohort leaving the venue before another arrives.
- This means, for example, that a competition could be run with attendees from more than one club, but the cohort at any given time would be restricted to say, a men's epee event, with a female foil event scheduled at a different time with no crossover of attendees
- No more than 50 persons shall be in a venue at a given time, as per provincial regulations, and subject to any changes in said regulations

Important notes:

- Injuries or harm related to pandemics are not covered under BCFA insurance policies. Clubs are advised to ensure they have adequate insurance coverage.

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BCFA CLUB WAIVER

On behalf of _____ fencing club, I acknowledge that I have read the Viasport, CFF and BCFA return to sport guidelines.

I acknowledge that _____ fencing club has produced a safety plan as required by the latest Provincial Health Order, and will provide this plan upon request.

I acknowledge that the safety plan developed by _____ fencing club includes the requirements as set out in the Viasport guidelines

I acknowledge that the insurance provided by BCFA does not cover any event related to the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Signed by _____

Date _____

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