



# Return to Sport - Saskatchewan Athletics

The resumption of sport training and competition in Saskatchewan will be an important part of returning to a degree of normalcy during the pandemic. As a healthy, community-building activity, sport can have a positive impact on the minds, bodies and spirits of Saskatchewan residents. In time, sport will contribute to rebuilding the economy as well.

The health and safety of participants and the wider community will be paramount in all return to sport activities. A careful, phased-in approach will align with the Government of Saskatchewan's Re-Open Saskatchewan plan, and direction given by the Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan.

Resumption of sport in Saskatchewan will be a complex, non-linear process. Steps, progressions and decisions will vary from sport to sport. Sport will be different in the "new normal." These guidelines are intended to ensure it remains healthy, safe and fun for all who participate.

The guidelines in this document are for use in training/practice settings only. Saskatchewan Athletics is in the early stages of discussing competition potential for the 2020-2021 indoor season. However, any events that do happen will look much different and be subject to Saskatchewan's Reopen Saskatchewan Plan Guidelines such as restrictions in regards to travel. This may include fully sanctioned competitions or more informal non-sanctioned practice type competitions. Saskatchewan Athletics will continue to review these guidelines as we progress through the pandemic.

## PREPARING FOR A RETURN TO SPORT

Preparation by Provincial sport organizations like Saskatchewan Athletics for resumption of sport must be guided by the directions of the Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan and are based around:

- Education and communications with athletes, coaches, officials, other personnel and volunteers on risks and responsibilities in resuming sport activities;
- Consideration for environmental hygiene (facilities, equipment and common touch points) and personal hygiene needs of participants (hand washing, etc.) needs
- In-depth consideration for physical distancing requirements (ie. 2.0 meters) including assessment of the sport environment (facilities, fields, etc.) and training schedules that will accommodate physical distancing for all participants.
- The approach to training should focus on 'get in, train, get out', minimizing unnecessary contact in change rooms, bathrooms and communal areas.
- Prior to resumption, sporting organisations should have agreed protocols in place for management of illness in athletes and other personnel.

- Special consideration should be made for athletes who may delay returning to sport due to medical conditions that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection.
- Clubs and coaches should implement a gradual return to play approach to mitigate injury risk, understanding that sudden increase in training load will predispose individuals to injury.

Public health officials may increase restrictions in communities or regions in an attempt to isolate and control an outbreak. It's possible that some areas of the province will advance to the next phase while others will not, based on public health concerns. It's also possible that there will be differences in the activities allowed among provinces and territories.

**Individuals should not return to sport if in the last 14 days they have been unwell or had contact with a known or suspected case of COVID-19. Furthermore, any individual with symptoms related to COVID-19 (even if mild) should be considered a potential case and must stay home and self-isolate until such time that COVID-19 can be ruled-out and be medically cleared by a doctor to return to the training environment.**

Sporting organisations need to be flexible to accommodate and respond to changes in community transmission rates and the associated changes in advice from Public Health Authorities.

### Visual Representation of the step-by-step process involved in Returning to Sport in the province of Saskatchewan



**Information and communication chains are imperative to the return to sport process. However, they are also time consuming and frequently changing. Clarifications and full understanding are required by all parties and this takes time. Saskatchewan Athletics cannot speak for other provinces, sports, or organizations and their return plans and we ask that our membership for their understanding of this process.**

## COACH, EQUIPMENT, AND FACILITY GUIDELINES

- Clubs and/or unattached coaches are recommended to ensure that facilities have set schedules that allow for sports to meet municipal and provincial mandates for physical distancing and proper hygiene. (i.e. coordination between sports and other athletic clubs.).
- It is strongly recommended that coaches use personal protective equipment (including masks) as often as possible, especially if they will be working with multiple training groups.
- Coaches should sanitize or wash their hands before, during, and after training sessions when eating, using the washroom, sneezing/coughing etc.
- Clubs/Coaches should track attendance. Note who showed up to practice and when your practice occurred.
- Clubs/Coaches should be prepared to work very closely in the development of facility access plans with facility managers to align with all requirements and guidelines. Flexibility and adaptability are imperative to maintain quality daily training environments.
- Clubs and/or unattached coaches are recommended to ensure that facilities have posted appropriate signage outside entrance to the facility briefly outlining the physical distancing guidelines in place.
- Clubs and/or unattached coaches are recommended to ensure that there is public notification of the training venue – signage posting of practice/group times when athletes will be training at track & field venues.
- Clubs and/or unattached coaches are recommended, as much as possible, to hold training in outdoor venues. If indoor training venues are used, they must comply with local public health guidelines with respect to group size, physical distancing and enhanced facility cleaning.
- Clubs and/or unattached coaches are recommended to ensure that facilities are conducting frequent cleaning throughout the day including cleaning, sanitation, and disinfecting of all common areas, especially high traffic areas such as counter surfaces, tables, public restrooms, door handles, equipment, and more.
- Athletes should arrive at their scheduled time for training and leave as soon as it is completed.
- Ensure that all equipment is cleaned before and after use.
- High Jump and Pole Vault mats, as well as sand pits are to be used with caution at this time. While there are NO specific cleaning guidelines available at this time, any usage in these areas should include clear instruction to the athletes that they are to not spend unnecessary extra time on the mats and in the sand.
- Public Health Agency of Canada: COVID-19 – Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces.  
[www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-](http://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-)

[conditions/coronavirus/cleaningdisinfecting-public-spaces/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces-eng.pdf](#)

- 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](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html)

## EVENT SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

### Track (Sprints, Hurdles, Distance)

- Prioritize large parks if not training at a track facility and decide if physical distancing can be maintained. Be mindful of anyone in the area that is not part of your group.
- Try keeping one lane apart when training on the track (i.e. use lanes 1, 3, 5, 7).
- Use staggered starts when doing intervals/repeats.
- Limit the use of equipment and avoid using equipment that cannot be thoroughly cleaned before another athlete can use it (i.e. No relay exchanging, weighted vests, etc.).
- If hurdles are to be used, make sure 1 person is designated for set up/take down and all thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session.
- If starting blocks are to be used, they should be used just by one athlete and thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session.
- Steeplechase barriers and the water jump can be used by a coach and athlete provided the equipment is thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session.

### Throws

- Practice physical distancing by keeping two meters (six feet) away from one another at all times.
- Coaches and athletes should ensure all equipment is used by one athlete and then thoroughly cleaned according to guidance 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.

## **Horizontal Jumps**

- Practice physical distancing by keeping two meters (six feet) away from one another at all times.
- 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. In Saskatchewan, sand pits can now be fully used. When sand pits are being used, to help mitigate this risk, we strongly recommend:
  - Sanitizing your hands before and after each jump.
  - Avoid getting sand in your eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - The landing pit should be fully turned and raked 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.
- 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.

## **Vertical Jumps**

- Practice physical distancing by keeping two meters (six feet) away from one another at all times.
- Athletes should be additionally screened and educated prior to use of the pits, that they are to avoid spending excess or unnecessary time on the pits/mats.
- 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.
- 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.
- Have the approval of the facility owner to use equipment – if not owned by the clubs.
- Athletes are to use their own poles or if poles are shared, they must be disinfected after use.
- 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.

### **Off Track Coaching and Leading, Including Road Running**

- Coaches and athletes running or training in a public space, other than a track and field facility, should adhere to all restrictions that may be placed on a public space by the owner of the space.
- Coaches should ensure they have carried out a standard risk assessment of any training space or route, as they would normally, prior to the session taking place.
- Coaches and athletes should ensure they carry out standard safety procedures (e.g. phones, route planning, etc.) when accessing “wild” public areas.
- Coaches and athlete aiming to access trails and mountaitns or public spaces a long way from assistance and emergency services should make themselves aware of any local guidance/considerations prior to travel/training. Consideration of whether the activity could add to pressure on emergency services should be taken.

## Saskatchewan Athletics Step by Step Approach

1. **Questionnaire and Attestation, Club Attestation Form, Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Agreement, and Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims and Indemnity Agreement** are in place and will be available to the membership electronically on Trackie (this link will be sent out to all Clubs). If these documents are being filled out manually, they must be completed, scanned, and emailed to [admin@saskathletics.ca](mailto:admin@saskathletics.ca)
2. Review of Guidelines for General Operation [Government of Saskatchewan Re-Open plan allows for Sport and Recreational Activities](#).
3. Understanding of the main elements of Phase 4 of Saskatchewan's Public Health Guidelines & Requirements involving sport for OUTDOOR Sport Activities.
  - a. Max Gathering Size of 30 people, which includes coaches. I.e. if there are 2 coaches present then the maximum number of athlete participants is 28.
  - b. Physical distancing at all times (2m between all participants)
  - c. Personal Hygiene (Handwashing, etc.)
  - d. Equipment use & cleaning
  - e. Facility or Venue Access and Restrictions
    - environmental hygiene protocols
    - people flow
    - signage
    - physical distancing
  - f. Training modifications to minimize transmission risks (eg. small groups, 'bubbles', etc.)
  - g. Contact Tracing mechanisms (sign-up sheets, rosters, tee-sheets, etc.)
  - h. Athlete and Parent Education; Communications
4. Review of [Athletics Canada's Return to Track Document from July 21, 2020](#) by club Board of Directors and Staff.
5. Review and completion of the **Sask Athletics – Return to Activity Checklist** with record of who completed this document from the club/organization.
  - a. If, practices are to take place in a venue/location that requires additional Return to Play elements that those are the responsibility of the club, coach, member. Saskatchewan Athletics is not responsible for the implementation of community, municipal, and/or private facilities/venues.
6. Completion of the **Sask Athletics - Practice Planning Worksheet** with record of who completed this document from the club/organization.

- 7. Electronic submission of numbers 5 (Return to Activity Checklist), 6 (Practice Planning Worksheet) to Saskatchewan Athletics ([admin@saskathletics.ca](mailto:admin@saskathletics.ca)) and making sure to cc the individuals who completed this document from the club/organization.**
- 8. Saskatchewan Athletics will review documents at this stage and confirm acknowledgement of the documents and that they have been received. Any major risks or red flags will be communicated back to the club/member who submitted the documents. The submission of documents is to occur from the Club President (and board) and/or Head Coach and/or Assistant Coaches looking to take part in organized activities. It is imperative to note that the responsibility to complete all required documents and the follow through of them is the club's responsibility. Saskatchewan Athletics is only confirming that the club stated that they will do this and is addressing red flags and that the club and its coaches/members are responsible for the safety of their member participants. While Saskatchewan Athletics staff will review the documents and communicate any major issues/concerns to the submitter it is not a medical body, it is not the Government of Saskatchewan, and it is NOT responsible for the day to day practice operations in accordance with the COVID-19 safety and sport guidelines as established by Athletics Canada in their Back to Track document and the Government of Saskatchewan which Saskatchewan Athletics supports at this time.**
- 9. Saskatchewan Athletics will respond (REPLY ALL) to the submitter and all those cc'd with a confirmation of approval to participate in accordance with their submitted plans.**
- 10. Clubs and coaches will then be able to conduct organized training activities in accordance to Athletics Canada's Back to Track plans that are also in accordance with the Saskatchewan Government Health Authority and its Re-Open Saskatchewan Guidelines as they related to Sport and Physical Activity noting that these can change at any time. Clubs, their coaches, and their members are responsible for staying up to date on the guidelines for participation and while Saskatchewan Athletics will communicate information the responsibility ultimately lies with the participating clubs and their members.**
- 11. Clubs and their members MUST complete and retain, for 60 days, the DAILY Attendance Register Document. These documents must be completed daily and WILL be of extreme importance if a member becomes COVID-19 positive so that those in proximity to that individual are made aware and relevant contact tracing can occur.**

- 12. Optional/May be required - Any additional requirements based on community, municipality, facility must also be completed by the club and/or its member in accordance with the needs of that specific entity.**

## **ADDITIONAL LINKS AND RESOURCES**

Many additional resources are available to guide sport organizations as they work to develop Return to Sport plans:

**Athletics Canada Back on Track** - <https://athletics.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Back-on-Track-guidelines-July-21.pdf>

**Government of Saskatchewan: Reopen Saskatchewan Plan and Phases**  
<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/re-open-saskatchewan-plan>

**Government of Canada: Risk Mitigation Tool for Child and Youth Settings**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/covid-19-risk-mitigation-tool-child-youth-settings-operating-during-pandemic.html>

**Government of Canada: Risk Mitigation Tool for Outdoor Recreation Spaces and Activities Operating During the COVID-19 Pandemic** <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-mitigation-tool-outdoor-recreation-spaces-activities-operating-covid-19.html>

**Own the Podium: Returning to High Performance Sport Framework**  
<https://www.ownthepodium.org/getattachment/Resources/COVID-19-Resources/Canada-COVID-19-Return-to-HP-Sport-Framework-May-2020.pdf.aspx>