



To: Local Coordinators and Local Committee members
Date: August 10, 2020
Topic: Return to Sport update

Based on the success of the first Special Olympics BC Pilot Programs, we are ready to take the next step in our slow, phased Return to Sport Plan. Today we are excited to announce that **athletics, bocce, outdoor Club Fit, and golf** can move to Level 1. All Locals around the province can now offer these four programs, once they receive approval from SOBC.

For anyone who has not yet viewed the SOBC Return to Sport Plan, the document and all related resources can be found on the SOBC website here: <https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/return-sport>. We encourage everyone to check this page regularly, because updates and additions of resources will be ongoing.

For the past six weeks, we have been in the Pilot Program level for these first four sports, with 12 Locals around the province testing the new protocols to safely reopen these sports. During this phase, staff supported the pilot programs and sought the feedback of the Locals, athletes, and coaches to make sure that the protocols outlined in our Return to Sport Plan worked to keep volunteers and athletes safe, and that each program was able to follow the protocols as set out in the plan. Based on the feedback, staff made adjustments to those protocols where needed. We are excited to say that all 12 programs were highly successful and we are ready to move to Level 1 with these four sports.

We understand that in the past many Locals have not normally run programs in August and early September. But there is nothing “normal” about our times, so now we would like to provide the opportunity for interested Locals to run these four sports that are in Level 1, until the weather will no longer allow.

Since we started the Pilot Program phase for the first four sports, many coaches and Locals have reached out to us to ask if they can start to offer these sports. If your Local would like to introduce one of these four sports, please do the following:

- Connect with your Region’s Community Development staff member immediately to discuss the sport(s) you would like to start. If you wish to start more than one sport, please provide the CDC with which sport is your priority, as not all Locals will be able to start all sports at once.
- Contact your coaches to ensure they are interested in returning and running the program in August and September.
- Once the Local and the CDC have agreed on which sports the Local can start, the CDC will walk the Local through the process to Return to Sport. NOTE: Locals are not able to start any programs without approval from Special Olympics BC.

For your convenience, we have pulled the Level 1 – Local Reopening information from the Return to Sport Plan (please see below). But we do ask that you to read the full document to ensure you understand the plan.



	Level 1 - Local Reopening
Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain physical distance • No non-essential travel
Health Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased hand hygiene • Health screenings at practices and meetings • Signage and markers to be used as visual cues for distancing
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor only • Where possible, rent dedicated facility space (outdoors) to preserve boundaries • Have barriers in place to keep spectators at a distance
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group sizes may increase* • Spectators are not permitted in the designated program area
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low risk, outdoor activities only • Focus on individual sport skill development
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No shared equipment • Any general equipment handled by coaches only (i.e. cones)
Virtual Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer a range of virtual opportunities
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within-community skill development competition allowed under protocols

Additional requirements:

- Locals and coaches will be responsible for ensuring that athletes who want to participate are currently registered for those sports. If your program starts before September 15, athletes and volunteers who registered in summer/fall 2019 are considered currently registered.
- To participate in the new programs, all volunteers and athletes will first need to sign SOBC's new Participation Waiver, COVID-19 Declaration, and Athlete or Coach Program Participant Agreement.
- The athletes invited to be a part of these Level 1 programs must be able to safely participate by following all the new COVID-19 protocols, which are listed in the Return to Sport Plan.
- Before the program starts, all coaches must participate in a sport-specific webinar, to be trained on the safety protocols for their sport.
- Each sport program will be a "training group." Athletes and Coaches may not move from one "training group" to another. This group will be made up of 10 to 12 athletes, 3 coaches, and 1 Program Safety Volunteer (please see the plan for the description of the Program Safety Volunteer role).
- A Local may have more than one "training group" per sport, but there is to be no cross-participation between training groups. This means coaches cannot train both groups.
- Staff and Leadership Council members will do spot checks on certain programs to ensure protocols are followed, to collect feedback, and to provide support where needed.

Next steps:



Special Olympics BC puts the safety and wellbeing of our athletes, volunteers, and staff first. To that end, we are being cautious now as we begin our return to sport, meetings, and fundraising. We will continue with caution while trying to provide sport opportunities for our athletes.

We understand that each community will have different realities when looking to reopen sports. Some communities are opening their facilities now and asking Locals to commit to their bookings; others are not even taking bookings. Some schools will be renting facilities starting in the fall; others have indicated they will be waiting until January to decide if outside groups will be allowed into their facilities.

So over the next few months, staff will be working to develop protocols for the additional 15 sports, as well as youth programs, so that we are prepared should your Local be able to run any of those sports in the fall.

We know that not all programs will be able to start in-person in October, so we will also be developing virtual sport specific programs. These will be programs that coaches can host with their athletes at a specific time each week using Zoom or other web platforms. Stay tuned for more information on these programs.

We will keep Locals completely in the loop as those protocols and programs are developed. It is also important to know that we continue to monitor the recommendations and protocols provided by the Provincial Government and BC Centre for Disease Control. Should they recommend the suspension of in-person programs and/or meetings, we would heed that recommendation.

If you have any questions about the Return to Sport, or anything in this document feel free to reach out to your Community Development Coordinator or myself.

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