



To: Local Coordinators and Local Committee members

Date: September 9, 2020

Topic: Return to Sport update

With sincere thanks to all who have worked so hard to move the Special Olympics BC Return to Sport Plan forward safely, we would like to share the latest step in the slow, phased provincial progression.

Bowling (5- and 10-pin), curling, powerlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, Active Start, and FUNdamentals are joining figure skating, speed skating, and swimming in the Pilot Program phase.

In the Pilot Program stage for these sports, Locals can apply to the SOBC provincial office to host a pilot. Please contact your Community Development Coordinator or Sport Manager Helen Cheung to express your interest.

While selecting sports, the first thing we looked at was trying to reopen the lowest-risk outdoor sports first. Those were athletics, bocce, golf, and outdoor Club Fit, which are now at Level 1. Now that we are heading into fall, with days getting shorter and bad weather coming, we know we should try to get some of the lower-risk indoor sports open – so that is why the above sports are moving into the Pilot Program phase. These programs will run indoors.

Through all of this, the priority is the safety of participants. We will continue to act based on safety priorities, provincial health circumstances, and the feedback of athletes, coaches, and volunteers.

We want to thank all the volunteers and coaches who are making safe programs possible, and all those who attended the first SOBC Return to Sport Town Hall on September 8. The next Town Hall is on September 10. Details can be found on the [SOBC Return to Sport website](#), along with information about the required Return to Sport training webinars for coaches in the current Level 1 sports (athletics, bocce, outdoor Club Fit, and golf). Training opportunities for additional sports will be coming soon.

In the Town Hall, we also introduced the core concepts for upcoming provincial virtual programs and virtual competitions. Because the numbers available in the first in-person programs are limited, and in-person competitions will not happen for some time, we want to make sure to provide these additional options. Please stay tuned for further tools that you will be able to offer as your Local's time and resources allow.

Sincere thanks also go to everyone who has shared the news about the [cancellation of the 2021 Special Olympics BC Summer Games](#), and provided reassurance and encouragement to those who are disappointed. This was a difficult decision, but it has created yet another opportunity to be inspired by SOBC athletes, coaches, and volunteers. So many have responded with support for each other and have prioritized everyone's safety. There will be meaningful competitions again, both virtually and in person – we look forward to hearing your feedback on how to make this happen.



SOBC's current Return to Sport status:

- Athletics, bocce, golf, and outdoor Club Fit are at Level 1, available to be offered by Locals around the province, once they receive approval from SOBC.
- Bowling (5- and 10-pin), curling, powerlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, Active Start, and FUNdamentals are joining figure skating, speed skating, and swimming in the Pilot Program phase.

Upcoming virtual options include, but are not limited to:

- Coaches will have access to multi-week SOBC virtual program outlines created by Sport Consultant Jacques Thibault, to help them lead sport-specific training through virtual connections. These virtual program packages will be launched in the coming weeks.
 - These programs are modelled on the [SOBC Basic Sport Skills](#) tools, which focus on developing the fundamental skills for each SOBC sport. There are PDF packages online for every sport, and several videos to help athletes with at-home skill training. Videos in additional sports will be released in the coming weeks.
- [Coach Development Webinars](#) will begin again in the next few weeks – event details will be posted on the SOBC website.
- Locals can continue to offer the [Virtual Fit Families & Friends](#) program.
- Volunteers and coaches can connect with athletes to encourage participation in the [SOBC Super September calendar](#) of daily at-home workouts and wellness activities.

Ongoing:

- Please continue to check the SOBC website for opportunities and Return to Sport Plan updates and resources. <https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/return-sport>
- Please continue to share your thoughts on what you need and recommend during the slow, phased return to sport. Your insights are truly invaluable.
- Please don't hesitate to reach out to any SOBC staff member with questions and feedback.
- And please always know that we are so grateful to you for the significant difference you make in the lives of so many people.