



To: Local Coordinators and Local Committee members

Date: October 20, 2020

Topic: Return to Sport update

With sincere thanks to all who have worked so hard on Special Olympics BC's safe return to sport, we would like to share the latest steps in the slow, phased provincial progression.

Basketball, floor hockey, alpine skiing, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing are moving into the Pilot Program level, joining bowling (5- and 10-pin), curling, powerlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, Active Start, and FUNDamentals.

In the Pilot Program level for these sports, Locals can apply to the SOBC provincial office to host a pilot. Please contact your Community Development Coordinator to express your interest.

Basketball and floor hockey programs will only involve individual skill drills at this time.

Figure skating, speed skating, and swimming join athletics, bocce, golf, and Club Fit in Level 1.

All of these sports are available to be offered by Locals around the province, once they receive approval from the SOBC provincial office.

In addition, **Fit Families & Friends** can be offered as an in-person program under Club Fit guidelines. Please contact SOBC Sport Coordinator Marlow de Paul if you are interested in offering Fit Families & Friends.

Changes have been made to the maximum number of participants allowed in each Level 1 sport program.

We have carefully reviewed each sport, facility considerations, provincial health guidance, and the feedback from Pilot Programs. Based on this, we have changed the maximum numbers of participants allowed in a program while the sport is in Level 1. Each sport's maximum participant numbers and required athlete-to-coach ratios can be found in the respective sport-specific protocol document. Please visit the [SOBC Return to Sport homepage](#) to find the links to sport-specific protocols. (These links can also be found in the [SOBC Return to Sport Plan](#) Appendix C.)

Existing programs do not need to increase their sizes, but options are available if it is possible to increase the program size while still adhering diligently to all safety requirements. If you wish to increase the size of an existing program, please contact your Community Development Coordinator to discuss.



Based on the Provincial Health Officer’s guidance, athletes and coaches are still only permitted to participate in one program at a time.

We all want to create as many opportunities as possible for athletes, but [Dr. Bonnie Henry recently issued a reminder](#) about the importance of participating in just one in-person sport league at a time right now, rather than joining multiple training groups. Every training group you join means you are exposed to a different set of people and environments. SOBC will continue monitoring and following provincial health guidance, and will revisit this question when provincial health conditions allow.

Even though athletes can only participate in one in-person program at a time, registration does matter, and we greatly appreciate all of your efforts to get everyone registered in this unique season.

Today’s changes mean that 16 of SOBC’s 18 sports are in Level 1 or Pilot Program status, along with Club Fit, Fit Families & Friends, Active Start, and FUNdamentals. You can determine what your Local can offer, based on your resources and the interests expressed by athletes and coaches in registration forms.

Thank you for all your efforts to get registration forms completed. Your work is so essential in helping us all plan and communicate with athletes and coaches about upcoming opportunities, both in-person and virtual.

Additional updates:

- There have been minor changes to the Standard Program Protocol (the list of basic safety requirements for all programs). Among these is guidance to ensure safe transportation for programs that carpool or charter rides to their training venues.
- Bowling and speed skating protocols have been updated to reflect feedback from coaches as well as changes in provincial sport organization recommendations.
- Our FAQs have been updated to cover emerging topics, such as the question of whether SOBC athletes and coaches need to wait one week between the end of one program and beginning a new one – the answer is no.
- All of the above can be found on the [SOBC Return to Sport homepage](#) and in the Return to Sport Plan.

The safety of all participants remains our utmost priority. We appreciate all your diligence in following all safety and hygiene protocols, and ensuring that all of your Local’s athletes and coaches continue to follow them rigorously as well. Ongoing vigilance is so important to protect all of our participants, and communities at large.



Please continue to share your thoughts on what you need and recommend during the slow, phased return to sport. Your insights are truly invaluable. And please don't hesitate to reach out to any SOBC staff member with questions and feedback! Thank you so much.

Upcoming and ongoing virtual options include, but are not limited to:

- SOBC Virtual Skill and Fitness Training Program created by Sport Consultant Jacques Thibault – multi-week coach-led virtual programs based on the [SOBC Basic Sport Skills](#) tools – coming soon
- [Coach Development Webinars](#)
- Virtual Healthy Athletes Education Sessions – [Strong Minds October 22](#); Healthy Hearing coming soon
- At-home workouts and wellness activities in [SOBC's monthly calendars of challenges](#)
- Athlete Leadership opportunities – stay tuned for details
- SOBC Virtual Dance Club (ongoing) and Virtual Yoga Club (upcoming)
- SOBC What's On Your Mind Wednesday conversations, first Wednesday of each month on [Facebook Live](#)