



Communique # 2 – May 15, 2020

Planning Assistance and Preparation for a Potential ‘Phase One’ Return to Responsible Play

‘Phase One’ – Recreational Activity and Skills Training

Dear Field Hockey BC Members

On behalf of all involved with Field Hockey BC (FHBC), I would like to thank the membership for its continued patience as we all navigate the complexities of the COVID-19 response. This is especially relevant to the ongoing effort being made to allow for the BC Organized Sport Sector to responsibly return to play.

Further to Communique # 1 circulated earlier this month, I wanted to reassure our membership that every effort continues to be made to develop a ‘phase one’ framework for a responsible return. FHBC has already completed a second edition draft framework for consideration in ‘phase one’, a framework that will assist our community clubs and associations to provide for a consistent return at the local community level. As we all adapt to the unique nature of the COVID-19 response, a third draft framework edition is pending upon receipt of the latest Provincial Health Authority guideline for sport. As a reminder, such a framework considers the essential areas outlined within Communique # 1 which are as follows:

- Field Facility Access – Field Management Plan
- Facility Operations – Park Management Plan
- Participants – Athlete and Coach/Leader Numbers, Protocols and Checklists
- Sport Programming (Recreation and Skills) – Lesson/Activity Plans and Management of Equipment
- Activity Liability and Accident Insurance and First Aid

In anticipation of requests for such a framework, it remains FHBC’s intention to take the following steps (PSO – Provincial Sport Organization – LSO – Local Sport Organization):

- a. to receive the latest Provincial Health Authority and Work Safe BC guideline update from the Provincial Government (PSO)
- b. to adapt the PSO recommended return to play framework as may be required – third edition (PSO)
- c. to submit the PSO return to play framework for approval (PSO)
- d. to liaise with club stakeholders and facility operators to frame what a return looks like at a local community level - based on the necessary guidelines and the PSO approved framework (PSO/LSO)

- e. to develop individualized and/or collective club stakeholder frameworks for a 'phase one' return (LSO)

Your Society continues to work with Sport BC, the BCRPA, viaSport, Municipal and Private facility providers, and Provincial Government Agencies to consider the necessary environment for a responsible and confident return. In order to provide for such responsibility and confidence, two key areas are currently being considered at some considerable length (both of which are pivotal to a 'phase one' return):

1. An appropriate Permissions Protocol for a responsible, consistent, and confident return

Over the course of the last few days, the Provincial Government changed the permissions protocol for Organized Sports' return to play from a Provincial Health Authority assessment and sign-off to an internal assessment and sign-off now deferring to the internal governance structure of each sport. As such, a deferral of this kind now requires a sports internal governance structure to interpret Provincial Health Authority guidelines and approve a framework for a responsible return. Certainly for FHBC and as is the case for the majority of Organized Sports across BC, this then falls squarely on the voluntary board governance structure of Provincial Sport Organizations (PSO's). In light of this change in protocol and the obvious risks associated, a proactive lobby back to the Provincial Government is underway.

2. The necessary insurance liability and defense cost coverage to protect organized sport against COVID-19 related legal action

It goes without saying that in order for our sport to confidently return, there is a need for adequate insurance protection. This past week has seen insurance underwriters reinforce their position as it relates to COVID-19 and whilst the news is disappointing for most, it is not necessarily unexpected. What this means to Field Hockey across Canada and indeed a large percentage of PSO's across BC, is that there is currently no provision for liability and defense cost coverage associated with COVID-19 related claims or lawsuits. Field Hockey's insurance underwriter 'Markel Canada Ltd' states "regardless of the organization having the Contagion Exclusion or not, Markel will not provide defense for COVID-19 related claims or lawsuits". Again in light of this change in insurance coverage and the obvious risk associated, both a proactive lobby back to the Provincial Government, as well as, a similar approach to the insurance industry is underway.

So understandably as your heart potentially drops from reading this information, rest assured that field hockey in BC remains at the forefront of the political and bureaucratic effort to see organized sport responsibly return. Your PSO will be ready to assist in the creation of local community return to play planning and we will be ready to submit field hockey's 'phase one' return to play framework for consideration and approval at the first opportunity.

With the seemingly daily changing COVID-19 response, please remain patient, optimistic and most importantly safe, as we all look forward to a responsible, consistent, and confident return.

Yours in sport,

Mark Saunders

Executive Director
Field Hockey BC

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