



Communique # 6 – August 28, 2020

Framework Creation and Approval for the ‘Second Stage’

Responsible Return to Play

‘Second Stage’ – The “Cohort” Model

Dear Field Hockey BC Members

On behalf of the Field Hockey BC (FHBC) Board of Directors and following the announcement earlier this week from the BC Provincial Government, I am pleased to report that work has begun in earnest to complete due process towards an approval of a Second Stage Responsible Return to Play Framework for field hockey in BC. This second stage return for the organized sport sector across BC takes place within phase three of BC’s COVID-19 restart plan (apologies in advance for any confusion here), and offers the opportunity for sport to assess the viability to progressively loosen the physical distancing protocols to allow for modified or standardized game or competitive play.

The second stage responsible return to play introduces the “cohort” model which put simply allows for a progressive game play return involving greater permissible participant interaction on the field of play. Such a cohort model also allows for the same level of participant interaction in a training or recreational context. Although the framework will provide more detailed information on adherence to safety protocols, it is important to note that greater participant interaction is strictly restricted to the field of play during this second stage return and physical distancing protocols are in effect outside of the field of play boundary (especially pertinent when utilizing field infrastructure such as team benches and technical areas which is now a permitted progression from stage one). Field Hockey participant activity numbers will be progressed from stage one guidelines but will be restricted to the provincial health office ‘group of 50’ rule (allowing for up to a maximum of 49 participants on a single field facility at any one time).

Mindful that a great many of our members have already enquired as to why field hockey cannot immediately move to second stage implementation, FHBC is required to follow due process and formally approve a second stage responsible return to play framework (as was the case with the stage one approval protocol). To this end, the FHBC Board of Directors will meet formally to consider such an approval on the evening of September 3, 2020. Once approval has been obtained, the second stage responsible return to play framework will be sent to the provincial government agency via Sport for public posting and will also be posted and available for download from the Society website. Thereafter, Local Sport Organizations (LSO’s) will be able to develop, refine, and approve their second stage safety plans and move to practical implementation. It is important to note that LSO’s can choose to move towards implementation at whatever speed is most appropriate and can continue to develop responsible return to play safety plans utilizing stage one or stage two guidelines.

For those members considering a return to play, I would politely remind you to remember to register your membership prior to stepping on the field of play. It remains essential that all active participants have a valid and paid FHBC and Field Hockey Canada (FHC) membership. The online registration portal is available in the normal way from the FHBC website (www.fieldhockeybc.com).

In closing, it is evident and understandable that many of us are eager to move to the second stage of responsible return to play and I once again ask for your patience and consideration as we navigate due process to achieve this end. For many of us who have experienced the journey to date in helping to navigate the BC sport sectors COVID-19 response, it is on the one hand surprising that our sector has been given the flexibility to consider a second stage return to standardized game play, but on the other hand this provides for a return to club and league game play at a time when I'm sure most feared a winter season may have been lost. Such a fantastic opportunity comes with an even greater responsibility to do so as safely as possible for all involved and we wish everyone the very best for an exciting and optimistic opening to a new season.

Yours in sport,

Mark Saunders

Executive Director
Field Hockey BC

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