**NEW BRUNSWICK INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**December 16, 2020

**The purpose of this document is to examine each of the 16 NBIAA activities and their return to high school sports in New Brunswick for the 2020-2021 school season, while following Appendix F from EECD on Physical Education and Sports Activities.**

[EECD Return to School: Directions for School Districts and Schools](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/ReturnSchool_Districts.pdf)

**RISK MITIGATION**

The reopening of schools will significantly increase breadth and size of ‘social circles’ across New Brunswick. Expanding points of contact across broader social circles increases risk of potential COVID-19 transmission. Enabling interscholastic sports and activities may further expand points of contact between already larger ‘social circles’ across New Brunswick once schools reopen. This incurs greater risk. Additionally, evidence on COVID-19 transmission pathways indicates that risk may be greater during physical activity, or otherwise during activities that increase respiration. Due to this, a modified approach to physical education, interscholastic, and otherwise school sport and physical activity is warranted.

Please note that a layered approach to risk mitigation is most effective in the context of COVID-19. All recommendations listed below that pertain to physical distancing (2 metres/6 feet) during sport and physical activity are prefaced with the understanding that *some degree of physical contact during sport play is inevitable and acceptable*. Sport and game play must be modified to better accommodate physical distancing and effectively reduce contact; a modification that has already been successfully accommodated by many Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) in New Brunswick.

*In a yellow alert level, players and participants must passively screen at home and actively screen with two modified questions upon arrival to practices/games. Modified active screening questions will ensure that participants have been screened and that no one is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Suggested modified active screening questions include: Were you screened at home prior to coming to today’s practice/game? Are you experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19?*

 **RETURNING TO HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**

Resuming activities in our format pre-COVID-19 may not be possible until there is a vaccine and when New Brunswick enters the Green phase. In the meantime, we will make efforts to adapt rules & regulations to some of our school sport activities for our member schools, student athletes, coaches, and officials to return with the safety protocols in place. It is critical that we continue to adhere to the public health measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19. These guidelines are not all-encompassing; therefore, schools will need to make additional modifications specific to their own facility within their operational plan to ensure they meet or exceed the requirements mandated by the Province of New Brunswick. The safety and health of all involved will be first and foremost in our decision-making process.

Since the shut down of NBIAA school sports back in March 2020, due to COVID-19, the following factors will be examined on a regular basis for the return of high school sports:

1. State of health in our province, as well as in each zone as outlined by the Government of New Brunswick;

2. Approval from Public Health, the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NBIAA Executive Members, and NBIAA member schools to allow students and staff to participate in extra-curricular activities;

3. Availability *of custodial services*, cleaning and disinfection of equipment and facilities in accordance with standards set by Public Health;

4. Modifications to activities will be *developed and documented in COVID-19 operational plan(s) as applicable, to uphold the public health measures* (e.g., physical distancing; *mask use as required; hand and respiratory hygiene*; cleaning and disinfection as noted above; staying home when sick or required to self-isolate); *this includes modification of sport game play to enable physical distancing*.

The following parameters must be implemented for all return to school sport activities until [Public Health Orders](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/recovery.html) related to COVID-19 are lifted:

* Physical distancing of 2 metres must be *maintained*.
* *While masks are not required by individuals while participating in an organized sport, they must be worn at all other times, including between practices and games, etc. Where masks can safely be worn while participating in sport, this is also encouraged. Spectators must wear masks at all times. Participants are not required to wear masks while on the team bench during game play, but if feasible, this should be enabled and encouraged. Where participants are not wearing masks on the team bench during game play, ensure participants are being substituted frequently; any individual not in substitution should wear a mask. Masks will be required in dressing rooms (worn continuously by all present), combined with 1 metre minimum physical distancing between individuals. Coaches will be required to wear masks during practices and games*.
* Self-screening and staying home when sick *or when otherwise required to self-isolate or when required to avoid participating in organized sport*.
* Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of equipment (before, during, after), limiting use of shared equipment where possible, and otherwise cleaning/disinfecting *shared equipment* between use.
* Enabling hand and respiratory hygiene (e.g., ensuring provision of hand-wash opportunities and/or availability of hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol content; providing tissues and disposal bins).
* Utilize posters of Public Health Measures to passively reinforce understanding of symptoms, screening criteria, reminders of physical distancing requirements, *mask requirements*, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and risks associated with COVID-19.
* Communicate the factors that increase vulnerability to COVID-19 (e.g., older age, underlying chronic health conditions, and/or being immunocompromised) *to ensure informed understanding of risk, but do not* discriminate or force divulsion of personal health information.
* Pre-screening checklist and questionnaire for COVID-19 health monitoring is required by all participants and spectators (when permitted).
* No sharing of personal equipment.
* Encourage the use of personal water bottles.
* Students *and coaches* should only be part of one NBIAA sport at a time.
* *A maximum of 3 bench staff will be recommended*.
* Team roster maximums (*tryouts, practices & games*) will be set by the NBIAA per sport in accordance with modifications to game play to support the public health measures including physical distancing (while noting that some degree of brief contact is acceptable during game play, play must be modified to effectively minimize and reduce contact).
* *The current mandatory order requires that organizations maintain a record of the names and contact information of all persons who attend (players, spectators, staff, etc.),* as well as when a school hosts an event. The documentation must be stored by the school in a secure location *and must make those records available to Public Health Inspectors upon request. For more guidance:*[*Collection of names and contact information under the Mandatory Order COVID-19*](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/Promo/covid-19/information_collection-e.pdf).
* Maintain consistency when grouping student athletes, coaches and volunteers during training and competition where possible. Schools may have multiple groups within an activity to provide an opportunity to as many students as possible.
* Pre-& Post Competition Protocols are to be in place; there shall be no unnecessary physical contact (high-fives, handshakes, *huddles*, fist bumps, etc.) with *teammates or* opponents.
* Everyone should attempt to provide their own transportation when travelling to an event and when carpooling, follow risk mitigation measures such as use of face covering *and physical distancing within the vehicle*.
* Participants should arrive ready to participate, as changing rooms *may* not be available without each school outlining it in their COVID-19 operational plan; where changing rooms are used, adjust occupancy to enable physical distancing within the changing room and minimize time spent within group settings in confined indoor spaces (e.g., such as some changing room formats). *When feasible, the use of changing rooms at rented venues (ex: rinks, pools) can be made available to participants at least 30 minutes prior to a practice/game, as long as physical distancing requirements and total occupancy conditions for the facility are met. Where venues have more than one area for entrance/exit, a staggered schedule is required to limit the amount of patrons entering/exiting at one time*. *Masks must be worn continuously within changing rooms when used*. *Students in Grades 9 to12 must maintain a physical distance of one (1) metre while using the changing room*. *Team huddles in locker rooms are not permitted.  If coaches want to have the entire team together for a 5-10 minute pregame discussion they can use the field, bench, ice, poolside, etc. Rented venues will be encouraged to designate an area for team players who are waiting to use the team dressing room where they can wait physically distanced 2 meters apart*.
* Team & coach meetings should be conducted virtually or must follow health and safety requirements of distancing and mask use when in person.
* Verbal recognition of awards is permitted post-competition *and physical awards are to be presented while following the public health measures (e.g. place awards on a table for physically-distanced pickup and distribution*). Promote clapping rather than cheering/shouting to reduce potential for COVID-19 transmission.
* There will be no spectators at indoor sporting events *within the schools*.
* *Spectators would be permitted inside rented spaces (ex: rinks, pools), as long as those facility protocols are followed*. *Whenever the operational plan for the venue differs from the guidelines of that PSO or the NBIAA, the more stringent plan is the one to be followed*. *Where sufficient space exists within the venue to allow required 2-meter physical distancing, sporting events will be limited to the number of spectators per participant that does not exceed a total occupancy of 150 people (including all participants, staff, volunteers, public). Large sporting events with an occupancy exceeding 150 (including all participants, staff, volunteers, public) must submit an operational plan to be approved by the Regional Medical Officer of Health/Health Protection Branch for the area the event is hosted. In addition to physical distancing, hygiene etiquette and any relevant health and safety measures will be respected by all in attendance.*
* Events occurring outdoors will be limited to a maximum of 50 spectators, while ensuring physical distancing of two (2) metres. It should be encouraged to limit parent attendance to one per player.
* *At this time, tournaments will not be permitted*.

**NBIAA HIGH SCHOOL SPORT PHASES**

The phases of NBIAA High School sport re-introduction will need to follow the guidelines, recommendations and Public Health Orders of New Brunswick. Following the guidelines and policies of the NBIAA, the decision to participate in high school sport activities will be left to the member schools, student-athletes, coaches, and officials.

*Public health alert levels impact organized sport (no organized sport during red alert level). Zonal and provincial changes to public health alert levels will be monitored and expectations communicated to relevant partners to ensure early understanding that organized sport is only permitted in yellow public health alert level and at the orange public health alert level, the NBIAA Phase 2 (Return to Practice) is permitted*.

*Any participant who travelled to an Orange or Red zone are required to follow those zone restrictions and public health guidelines.*

**Note:** Within the phases outlined below, certain activities may be at different phases than other activities, as well as certain zones within the province.

**PHASE 1: RETURN TO PLAN** (NB Yellow Phase)

Promotion of high school sport opportunities

* Awareness of Public Health Orders and Recommendations
* Education of expectations for permitted high school sports per season
* Awareness of Provincial Sport Organization’s Return-to-Play-Plans
* Promotion and application of required game modifications

**PHASE 2: RETURN TO PRACTICE** (NB Yellow Phase) may only begin on **September 14th**

School training within the NBIAA season of play

* Promotion of skill development within your school sport
* Promotion of intramurals within your school sport
* Additional coaches may be required per team to assist with training

**PHASE 3: RETURN TO CONFERENCE PLAY** (NB Yellow Phase and approval by Public Health & EECD)

Controlled scrimmage/competition within the NBIAA season of play

* Controlled scrimmage/competition only within your conference with recommended modifications
* *Competitions to occur within a 7-day cycle. Teams may play a team more than once between Sunday and Saturday. Then play another team in the next 7-day cycle starting on Sunday.  This allows a school team to organize games in a week against one other school team and within 14 days, the team would continue to only have contact tracing between two teams*.
* Local certified officiating is recommended to minimize interaction with those outside of the conference
* *Sport game play and potential travel will also be impacted by public health alert level on a zone or provincial basis*
* *No overnight accommodations*

**PHASE 4**: **RETURN TO REGIONAL PLAY** (NB Yellow Phase and approval by Public Health & EECD)

Controlled scrimmage/competition within NBIAA season of play

* Controlled scrimmage/competition only within your region/classification with recommended modifications
* *Competitions to occur within a 7-day cycle. Teams may play a team more than once between Sunday and Saturday. Then play another team in the next 7-day cycle starting on Sunday.  This allows a school team to organize games in a week against one other school team and within 14 days, the team would continue to only have contact tracing between two teams*.
* Local certified officiating required where possible to minimize interaction with those outside of the region
* *Sport game play and potential travel will also be impacted by public health alert level on a zone or provincial basis*
* *No overnight accommodations*

**PHASE 5**: **RETURN TO PROVINCIAL PLAY** (NB Yellow Phase and approval by Public Health & EECD)

Competition leading to Provincial Championships

Championships may need to be modified sport by sport:

* Competition may need to be held in various locations
* Competition may need to be held over various days
* No overnight accommodations
* Limiting the number of participants at the event, at any one time
* No, or limited, spectator attendance

**PHASE 6**: **RETURN TO ‘NEW NORMAL’** (NB Green Phase with all Public Health Orders related to COVID 19 lifted)

Competition without boundaries or restrictions

* NBIAA activities resume with possible new adaptations.

The NBIAA will be referring to each available Provincial Sport Organization when modifying rules & regulations for each sport within the plan to return to high school sports. *The PSO plan must have sufficient modified and adapted game play to better enable physical distancing in order to be accepted by the NBIAA*.

* **Golf** – NBIAA **Phase 5**, while following [Golf NB](http://golfnb.ca/)’s Return to Play Plan.

\*Max team roster of 6 athletes.

* **Baseball** – NBIAA **Phase 3**, while following [Baseball NB’s Return to Play Plan](https://baseballnb.ca/en/news/on-the-field).
\*Max team roster of 15 athletes.
* **Softball** – NBIAA **Phase 3**, while following [Softball NB](http://softballnb.ca/)’s Return to Play Plan.

\*Max team roster of 15 athletes.

* **Cross Country** – NBIAA ***Phase 3***, while following [Athletics NB](https://www.anb.ca/)’s Return to Play Plan.

\*Max team roster of 5 athletes per category = 20 total athletes.

* **Field Hockey** – NBIAA ***Phase 3***, while following [Field Hockey Canada](http://www.fieldhockey.ca/covid-19-return-to-play/) Return to Play Plan. The NBIAA *has approved* conference play *effective September 23rd*.
\*Max team roster of 18 athletes.
* **Soccer** – NBIAA ***Phase 3***, while following [Soccer NB](https://www.soccernb.org/en/)’s Return to Play Plan. The NBIAA *has approved* ***Phase 3*** *to begin on* September 22nd.
\*Max team roster of 18 athletes.
* **Football** – Rule modification from contact football to flag football for this fall 2020 season. NBIAA ***Phase 3* for Flag Football**, while following [Football NB](http://footballnb.ca/)’s Return to Play Plan. The NBIAA *has approved* ***Phase 3*** **for Flag Football** *to begin on* September 22nd.
\*Max team roster of 15 athletes
* **Swimming** – NBIAA ***Phase 2*** *and moved to the winter season*, while following [Swim NB](https://www.swimnb.ca/resources/)’s Return to Swim Plan with meet modifications. *Relay events will not be possible this season*.

\**Max team rosters of 36 athletes, but must follow the Swim NB policy of no more than 6 swimmers per lane at practices*.

* **Cheerleading** – NBIAA **Phase 5** with all competitions to be done virtually, while following [Cheer NB Return to Play Plan](https://4053354f-f16f-4a33-9a1f-12caf7e608e7.filesusr.com/ugd/d9abca_78c0a6aaf02747499fec57804e56d4ad.pdf).
\*Max team roster of 15 athletes.
* **Basketball** – NBIAA **Phase 3** *will begin with league conference play on November 23rd.* The [Basketball NB Return to Play Plan](http://basketball.nb.ca/page.php?page_id=121651) will be followed, *along with these exceptions:*
	+ *Spectators - NBIAA must follow the EECD Return to School Plan*
	+ *Frequency of competition – the NBIAA 7-day cycle will followed as detailed in NBIAA Phase 3*
	+ *Health zone competition – the NBIAA Conference play will be followed*
	+ *Group size – The NBIAA Return to Play Plan will be followed*

\*Max team roster of 12 athletes.

* **Wrestling** –*NBIAA* ***Phase 2*** *for the remainder of the winter season and the* [Wrestling NB’s Return to the Mat Plan](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KDaAGRBeSS7IgDa4-qfbE-MnLLrX_nVZ/view) will be followed.
\* *Max team roster of 10 athletes*.
* **Hockey** – *NBIAA* ***Phase 3*** *will begin with exhibition conference play on November 6th and NBIAA* ***Phase 3*** *with conference league play will begin November 10th,* while following [Hockey NB’s Return to Play Plan](https://www.hnb.ca/en/allcategories-en-gb/category-en-gb/latest-news/hockey-nb-statement-on-return-to-hockey). *NBIAA* ***Phase 4*** *will be reviewed in December.*  *A maximum of 3 bench staff will be recommended and when on the bench, coaching staff must wear a mask*.
\*Max team roster of *20* athletes. *Associated players will not be permitted this season, but extenuating circumstances for hockey goalies may be considered. The school administration must email the NBIAA detailing their unique need to associate a hockey goalie*.
* **Badminton** – NBIAA ***Phase 2* for the Fall Season** *as Badminton New Brunswick’s Return to Play Plan is not finalized*. A further review in January or February to potentially be able to advance to **NBIAA Phase 5** for the Spring Season.
\*Max team roster of 6 athletes per category = 24 athletes; only 4 athletes per category for competition.
* **Volleyball** – To remain ‘on hold’ and the NBIAA will review at a later date. [VNB’s Return to Play Plan](https://volleyballnb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/VNB-Return-to-Indoor-Volleyball-Final-July-21st-1.pdf) will be followed.
\*Max team roster of 10 athletes.
* **Rugby** – To remain ‘on hold’ and the NBIAA will review at a later date. [Rugby NB](http://www.rugbynb.ca/)’s Return to Play Plan will be followed.
\*Max team roster will be determined.
* **Track & Field** – To be permitted while following [Athletics NB](https://www.anb.ca)’s Return to Play Plan and the NBIAA will review at a later date.

\*Max team roster will to be determined.

**\*** **ORANGE** sports will be on hold and reviewed further, along with the Provincial Sport Organization’s plan and approval from Public Health/EECD for the 2020-2021 season.

**\*** **GREEN** sports will move forward with proper safety protocols and public health risk mitigation measures for COVID-19 transmission; along with the Provincial Sport Organization’s plan and approval from Public Health/EECD for the 2020-2021 season.

NBIAA High School sports will need to consider our seasons of play and the re-introduction of individualized skill development to provincial championships through specific phases. Cancelling, delaying, compressing, or moving sports within seasons of play may have adverse effects on schools and their student athletes. The NBIAA Executive plan to make decisions throughout the year as conditions change and Public Health Orders are altered. Once changes are approved by the NBIAA Executives, the information will be communicated to our membership and through our social media outlets.

With each province having different Public Health Orders and Recommendations, the NBIAA will support School Sport Canada members by not permitting inter-provincial events during the 2020-2021 school year. A review will occur when Public Health Orders related to COVID-19 have been lifted by respective Provincial Governments.

**NB RESOURCES:**

All resources can be found on the [GNB COVID-19](http://www.gnb.ca/coronavirus) website.