

School District #33 - Fall 2020 Athletic Update and Protocols

Update #1 - September 3, 2020

As we prepare for an unprecedented time for back to school, parents, students and teachers have many questions, concerns and some fear of the unknown. The goal of our district includes working together on well thought out plans to ensure we do the very best to communicate and support all stakeholders during this time of uncertainty.

Over the last ten days our school district senior administration and the District Athletic Coordinator have met multiple times to discuss our district plan regarding school athletics.

Over the last two years many people have been working to increase awareness and establish greater lines of support and communication across the district in the areas of athletics and physical Literacy.

Now as we begin a school year like no other, our goals remain the same:

1. Provide consistent and current information regarding the school athletics situation and the ever changing COVID-19 Protocols.
2. Outline strategies and provide support to all three levels of education (Elementary, Middle and Secondary).
3. Encourage collaboration between School District #33 schools, teachers, administrators and coaches.
4. Continue to provide opportunities for school district teachers and coaches to access and obtain new athletic and physical literacy strategies, certification and training.

This document provides teachers and coaches with the following information:

1. **Current status of sport at all levels (community and school).**
2. **Strategies for schools to roll out safe student athlete training on September 10th as per announced by BC School sports.**
3. **Back to play protocols for all fall sports outlined by ViaSport BC and each provincial Sport Commission.**
4. **School District #33 athletic COVID-19 screening protocols.**
5. **Opportunities to reach out for support, resources and ideas.**

1. **Current status of sport at all levels (community and school).**

BC School Sports is moving to Stage 2 effective September 10. It is important to note that this is different from club/community sport as published by ViaSport two weeks ago. It is important to note that the ViaSport guidelines are NOT being applied to school sport. ([BC School Sports Release](#))

However, any school athletic training and or practices **CANNOT** contaminate and or compromise the education cohorts created by each individual school. This obviously creates many challenges for athletic training BUT does not make it impossible.

Even though, as per ViaSport and the ministry, all sports are now in back to play protocol Phase 3 **restrictions ARE still in place for school sports** and every sport has different back to play protocols (information included in this document).

- The ministry has confirmed with our senior administration team that they are aware that Community sports have been given the green light to begin organizing “competition cohorts” (while this has not yet been granted to BC school sports) and does recognize that this decision immediately compromises education cohorts at every level, as many students have already joined many additional community sport cohorts.
- The ministry recognizes this is a concern but has not yet responded to BC School Sports’ formal request to address the issue and permit BC School Sports to organize and or adjust the current community protocols.

[Read the most recent article](#) published by Howard Tsumura at Varsity Letters regarding the current situation regarding community sports vs high school sports and current protocols.

2. Strategies for schools to roll out safe student athlete training as of September 10 as announced by BC School sports.

It is the responsibility of each school to determine how to provide athletic training opportunities for their student athletes. However, there are some important district guidelines to follow when creating training plans.

- With regards to all cleaning and disinfecting equipment, teachers and coaches can refer to the [School District Safe Work Instruction and Protocols for COVID-19](#) booklet.
 - Sections to specifically become familiar with include:
 - Cleaning and Disinfecting – Pages 12-14.
 - Physical and Health Education / Outdoor Programs – Page 32.
 - Sports – Page 33.
- Students within the same education cohort can follow back to play protocols within each sport, as long as good COVID-19 safety practices are followed. (Stage 3 - with the exception of organized competition cohorts).
- Students who are not in the same education cohort **can** participate together in school athletics training **but must practice social distancing and wear a mask during training with athletes from other learning cohorts.**
- Please refer to the [Sport Activity Chart published by ViaSport](#) regarding the types of activities that can be considered during the various return phases.

IMPORTANT NOTE: throughout the province, at the time this document was released, we were at Phase 3 with regards to back to play protocols within education cohorts.

IMPORTANT NOTE: please recognize that the phases published by the ministry of education are different than those published by ViaSport. The ministry of Education phases are outlined in descending order while ViaSport phases are outlined in ascending order.

- The size of education cohorts varies at each level:
 - 60 Elementary; 60 Middle School; 120 Secondary School.
 - PLEASE NOTE that in our district we have organized our secondary education cohorts into groups of 30 students, which has provided us with some flexibility in organizing athletic training cohorts.

Based on the above restrictions and protocols, below are suggestions and strategies for each level within the district:

ELEMENTARY

- At the elementary level we will be restricted to our education cohorts of 60. At the elementary level we will focus on physical literacy throughout physical education time and have the opportunity to create some sport opportunities through their 60 student cohorts within the school. At this point we have no opportunity to bring students this age together for school wide sports and or interschool sport activity.
- At the elementary level we will have a few new district wide physical education units in which schools will be able to sign out under the leadership of Dave Allan. Available to elementary schools this fall:
 1. An indoor curling unit that can be played within an indoor space.
 2. A nine-hole disc golf course that can be set up on school sites.

If you are interested in signing up to book either of these units during the year, please contact Dave Allan directly at Rosedale Traditional: dave_allan@sd33.bc.ca.

We plan to offer more COVID friendly district units like the above in the coming months.

MIDDLE

- At the middle school level, we are organized into 60 student cohorts. This once again restricts us on how we can organize training. Schools could adapt the secondary model – see below. However, there has been discussion at this level about focusing on some form of intramural program among the cohorts of 60. The decision of whether athletic training takes place at the middle school level will be made by each individual school. At this point we have no opportunity to bring students of this age together for school wide sports and or interschool sport activity. We are hopeful this situation will change in the coming months.
- If schools require additional strategies and or ideas they are welcome to contact jake_mouritzen@sd33.bc.ca.

Our plan is to be able to provide a district wide COVID friendly unit that can be signed out by middle schools, similar to that at the elementary level. If middle school teachers have any suggestions on possible equipment and or units they would like to see developed please contact: jake.mouritzen@sd33.bc.ca.

SECONDARY

- At the secondary level we have organized our education cohorts into groups of 30 students. However, the Ministry of Education has provided a maximum cohort size of 120 kids per education cohort. This means when organizing your athletic training you have the opportunity to create sport specific cohorts of 120, which will be made up of four individual education cohorts of 30 (classes).
- **Example:**
 - 50 student athletes register for football. All the students that are in Class A, Class B, Class C and Class D can make up your football cohort 1. These student athletes can participate in phase 3 of the return to play guidelines outlined by ViaSport.
 - You can then make a second football cohort of student athletes from Class E, Class F, Class G, and Class H. Once again, this football cohort remains a part of their education cohort of 120 students and can participate on field with each other at phase 3 activities.
 - If Football Cohort 1 and Football Cohort 2 come together on the field for combined activity, social distancing would have to occur between the two cohorts, face masks would need to be worn and activities would fall under Phase 2 of activities laid out by ViaSport.
 - This strategy can be used in all sports and/or training sessions.
 - **Once again it is VERY important that all education cohorts are never compromised by any athletic training and cross contamination.**
 - We appreciate this is a very detailed strategy but, until restrictions on learning cohorts are adjusted, it is our only option to begin training. If you have any questions and or concerns and/or need help setting this up at your school please contact jake.mouritzen@sd33.bc.ca.

3. Back to play protocols for all fall sports outlined by ViaSport and each provincial Sport Commission.

- Below is the most recent information regarding back to play protocols and each fall sport and basketball back to play protocols.
- IMPORTANT NOTE: guidelines and protocols are continually changing and being adapted. It will be imperative that coaches and athletic directors stay up to date with the current protocols during the coming months.
- Current return to sport info from ViaSport: <https://www.viasport.ca/return-sport>
- Sport Specific Back to Play Protocols:

[Football](#)

[Volleyball](#)

[Soccer](#)

[Field Hockey](#)

[Cross Country](#)

[Basketball](#)

- [BC School Sports Memorandum – August 13, 2020](#)

4. School District #33 athletic COVID-19 screening protocols.

- With regards to COVID screening prior to training and or sport participation:
 - o All School District #33 COVID-19 protocols are in place. This means if a student athlete attends school and is symptom free, they are cleared to participate in extra-curricular athletic opportunities. However, if a student athlete acquires any COVID-19 related symptoms prior to or during a training session they need to be removed from the session immediately and all School District #33 protocols must occur prior to the student athlete returning to the team: [Safe Work Instruction & Protocols for COVID-19](#).

5. Opportunities to reach out for support, resources and ideas.

- At this time, our plan is based solely on the information we currently have from BC School Sports, the Ministry of Education, ViaSport and each sport governing body.
- Our plans MUST ensure that we do not compromise our education cohorts at any level.
- We appreciate this will be a very fluid situation and we will continue to adjust our protocols as needed.
- It is very important at this time that Athletic Directors are provided with the time and resources they require to keep their student athletes and school safe while following all protocols in place.
- Our goal is to have our entire district on the same page to tackle this challenge head on.

We appreciate that we are about to enter some challenging times in education, and our goal is to work together, stay safe and healthy, and be kind.

Please feel free to contact jake_mouritzen@sd33.bc.ca with any questions, comments or concerns.