



SASKATCHEWAN HIGH SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

#1-575 Park Street • Regina, SK • S4N 5B2
P: 306.721.2151 • F: 306-721.2659
shsaa@shsaa.ca
www.shsaa.ca

August 20, 2020

SHSAA - COVID-19 Update

Following the release of the August 13 update to stakeholders, the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association (SHSAA) was contacted by the Education Sector Response Planning Team (RPT) to discuss the Executive decisions impacting the administrative format for SHSAA sanctioned activities as the new school year gets underway. The Executive, acting under their mandate of administering sanctioned sport on behalf of their Members (boards of education, conseils scolaire, registered independent schools, and independent First Nation schools) adjusted the 2020-21 start dates for fall activities in the Policy for Interschool Play and introduced stages for school sport to provide for a gradual and methodical introduction of sport back into the educational setting.

In these everchanging times, the Government of Saskatchewan announced on August 17 that students will be returning to schools on September 8 rather than the week previous. This announcement and the RPT/SHSAA discussions that all educational partner organizations require time to effectively address the curricular and facility needs during school re-opening led to a meeting of the Executive Council on August 19 to further discuss the administrative format for the 2020 SHSAA fall activities. Recognizing their role as a partner in the education sector, the Executive Council passed the following policy changes:

The fall 2020 SHSAA golf season of play has been cancelled. Unfortunately, similar to badminton and track & field in the spring, the pandemic has forced the Executive to cancel a season of play impacting many students who are typically involved in school sport. The Executive believed that the restrictions related to the re-opening of schools would not allow for a safe and effective qualification process leading to a provincial championship event. This is very disappointing for SHSAA, the schools, and students that were hoping to participate in a fall golf season. We wish the best to those students and look forward to seeing many of them when the next season of high school golf kicks off on April 12, 2021 in preparation of the fall 2021 championship.

The Executive also adjusted the start dates and stages for the remaining fall activities. Under the current [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) and [Public Health Orders](#), the SHSAA will be able to sanction modified competitions but, at this time, will not be able to provide a playoff structure leading to provincial championships in cross country, soccer, football, or volleyball. The start dates of the other four activities have been adjusted as follows:

Outdoor Activities

Cross Country	September 28 – October 17
Soccer	September 28 – October 31
Football	September 28 – November 14

Indoor Activities

Volleyball	October 13 – November 28
------------	--------------------------

Statements in the [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) indicate the likelihood of transmission between individuals participating in sport, physical activity and recreation in an indoor setting is significantly higher than in outdoor settings. The delayed start time for indoor activities was considered to allow more time for those school divisions that choose to offer volleyball as part of extra-curricular programming to effectively develop protocols and plans around sanitization and hygiene related to student use of their facilities.

“The purpose of the SHSAA is to foster educational opportunities for all students through interschool sport.”

The stages for school sport implementation include:

Stage	Dates	Details
Stage 1 Promotion and education of school sport preparedness	September 14 – 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promotion and education of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Public Health Orders and Sports and Activities Guidelines • SHSAA Return to Sport document • PSO return to sport protocols • Expectations for a return to school sport • Competition modifications ➤ Determine interest in school sport participation
Stage 2 Outdoor activities (Cross Country, Soccer, Football)	September 28 – end of sport specific season of play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish teams at the schools, investigate the need for mini-leagues, and plans for future competitions ➤ Register mini-leagues with Districts ➤ Registration of teams and students in ExNet ➤ Student athlete and team training ➤ Competition as per sport specific stages (see below) ➤ No inter-school cross country competition
Stage 2.1 Cross Country training	September 28 – October 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student athlete and team training ➤ No inter-school cross country competition
Stage 2.2 Soccer modified competition	October 5 – October 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Competition can occur as per guidelines and registrations
Stage 2.3 Football modified competition	October 13 – November 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Competition can occur as per guidelines and registrations
Stage 3 Indoor activities (Volleyball)	October 13 – 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish teams at the schools, investigate the need for mini-leagues, and plans for future competitions ➤ Register mini-leagues with Districts ➤ Registration of teams and students in ExNet ➤ Student athlete and team training ➤ Competition as per sport specific stages (see below)
Stage 3.1 Volleyball modified competition	October 19 – November 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Competition can occur as per guidelines and registrations
Stage 4 Modified playoffs and championships	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dependent on current Public Health Orders and Sports and Activities Guidelines in Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan
Stage 5 Playoffs and championships (no modifications/restrictions)	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dependent on current Public Health Orders and Sports and Activities Guidelines in Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan

“The purpose of the SHSAA is to foster educational opportunities for all students through interschool sport.”

The final decision to come out of the Executive meeting centered around multi-sport student athletes. Although SHSAA philosophy strongly promotes and encourages multi-sport participation; due to the pandemic, a student athlete will be limited to participating in one SHSAA sanctioned activity during the concurrent seasons of play in the 2020 SHSAA fall activities.

The Executive believe that a gradual and methodical approach to re-introducing school sport is warranted to assist the entire process of re-opening schools. A gradual return to school sport will allow teacher coaches and student athletes an opportunity to gain an understanding of, and become comfortable in, the new school environment while looking forward to a re-introduction of modified SHSAA sanctioned activities.

On behalf of the Executive and the Membership, the SHSAA office staff continue work on a Return to School Sport document that will assist Members in implementing modified SHSAA sanctioned activities should they choose to offer it as part of the school re-opening plan. As the Return to School Sport plan has been reviewed there are items that require further clarification from the Business Response Team. Edits to the final SHSAA Return to School Sport document will occur over the next number of days before being released to Members and Districts. The final details of the document which will be available on the SHSAA website, should serve as a multi-sport, one stop shop for Members.

The Executive wish to continue to emphasize all current [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) from the [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#) and the current [Public Health Orders](#) but in particular draw everyone's attention to the following:

- Tournaments and interprovincial travel are not permitted.
- Large public and private gatherings – indoors and outdoors – are prohibited. Effective June 22, 2020, indoor gatherings of up to 30 are permitted where space allows for two metres of physical distancing between participants. Outdoor gatherings of up to 30 people are still permitted with appropriate physical distancing.

The entire process of re-opening amidst a pandemic remains fluid and the Executive continues to appreciate the patience and understanding of the Members, schools, administration, staff, and students throughout this process.

As changes occur in the [Sports and Activities Guidelines](#) and/or [Public Health Orders](#) the Executive will revisit the various stages at which school sport is occurring. The Executive is scheduled to meet on September 13 at which time the status of the plan will be reviewed.

The September meeting will also allow for the first look ahead to the guidelines and sport specific plans for winter activities (basketball, curling, wrestling) and spring activities (badminton and track & field).

Sincerely,

Lyle McKellar
Executive Director, Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association