



Contact Sports

A safe return to contact sports such as hockey, soccer, volleyball and basketball, is a particular challenge because of COVID-19. Sports that involve contact between players are at odds with public health measures like physical distancing, practising good hand hygiene and respecting gathering limits. By adapting the way Yukoners play contact sports we can reduce the risk of COVID-19 and get back on the ice, get back on the field and get back on the court. These guidelines supplement the [Sport and Recreation](#) Guidelines and apply to children and adult leagues.

Please ensure that you have read and incorporated the [6 steps to staying safe](#) into your planning as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. In particular:

- Maintain physical distancing – keep 2 metres (6 feet) away from anyone who's not a member of your bubble.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Stay home if you're feeling sick, even if symptoms are mild.

General

Contact sports like hockey, soccer, volleyball and basketball, among others, present challenges as they increase the regularity and closeness of interactions while encouraging the congregation of a sizable numbers of participants. While these risks cannot be fully eliminated, the following steps will allow a resumption of activity while reducing the transmission risk of COVID-19. The following principles should be applied:

- During games physical distancing will not always be possible. However, before and after games, during practice and training physical distancing should be observed where ever possible – on and off the surface of play.
- Spectators should ensure they are sitting or standing at least 2 metres apart.
- Encourage participants and spectators to wash their hands before and after participation.
- [Disinfect](#) equipment after use.
- If possible, participants should come ready to play to avoid using change rooms.
- Hold training and games outside wherever possible.
- Eliminate team huddles and hand shakes at the end of games.

- Keep a record of participants to enable contact tracing if the need arises. These records should be kept for a minimum of 21 days.
- Local Yukon Sport Governing Bodies are developing return to play guidelines which should be adhered to.
- Hockey organisations are encouraged to adapt [Hockey Canada's COVID-19 Safety Guidelines](#) for their own play.
- Soccer organisations are encouraged to use the [Soccer Canada Return to Soccer Assessment Tool](#) before they return to play.
- Basketball organisations are encouraged to adapt [Canada Basketball Back to Basketball Return to Sport Guidelines](#) for their own play.
- Volleyball organisations are encouraged to adapt [Volleyball Canada's A Safe Return to Volleyball](#) for their own play.
- Other contact sports are encouraged to look up national guidelines to help inform their specific sport's safe return to play.
- These Contact Sports guidelines should be shared with all participants.

Facilities

Coaches should reach out to facility managers to ensure they are following all facility rules and guidance. Each facility will have an operational plan that will help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and all players, coaches and parents will have to do their part in following the facility's plan.

In addition, ensure that:

- The [safe six](#) are observed whenever possible.
- Spitting, blowing your nose without a tissue, or other actions that spread bodily fluids must be avoided.
- Physical distancing must be respected in change rooms, and they should be [cleaned and sanitized](#) after each use. Consider staggering change times to accommodate this, or wearing masks where physical distancing is not possible.
- Benches should be wiped down after each session.
- Equipment, including sticks, pucks and balls should be cleaned after practice and games.

Practice, warm-up and games

- Avoid scrimmaging in practice and instead focus on individual skill development drills and conditioning.

- Do not share items like towels, or water bottles.
- Warm-ups should be conducted individually to allow for physical distancing, not in groups.
- Clean jerseys, faceguards and mouth guards before and after each game.
- Limit the number of participants on the field, court or rink to 30 per game.

Safety and Medical Staff

- Non-medical masks should be worn when treating participants, and when physical distancing is not possible.
- Gloves should be used when treating participants.
- Change gloves and wash hands in between interactions with participants.

Mini-leagues

Sports organizations may create 'mini-leagues' with a maximum of 60 participants. Mini-leagues allow for the return of team sports while reducing potential widespread exposure in the event a participant has COVID-19. If necessary, this limit may be slightly exceeded to accommodate additional players, but should never exceed 65 players.

Mini-leagues are only recommended in activities where physical distancing cannot always be maintained, such as games. It does not apply to sports or activities like drills where physical distancing can always be maintained.

All community members should continue to maintain public health measures and keep their mini-league/s consistent. At the same time, it is important to give everyone the opportunity to be active, get out, and play.

Players may participate in up to two sports mini-leagues at any given time. For example, a player could be part of both a hockey and volleyball mini-league, but not a soccer mini-league as well.

Mini-leagues may be modified to suit practical arrangements in rural communities where populations are smaller. For example, a small population may have several people who play multiple sports with each other and thus effectively maintain one mini-league of people playing multiple sports.

Individuals should not participate in sports mini-leagues if they are sick, no matter how mild, or if they need to self-isolate.

Officials, coaches and switching mini-leagues

Coaches and officials are not included in the mini-leagues. As a result, they should remain extra vigilant to ensure they maintain physical distancing. Careful attention to [“Safe Six”](#) rules are especially important for officials like referees, who may interact with multiple mini-leagues. In addition, consider modifying practices like the puck drop in hockey to better accommodate physical distancing for referees.

Participants may switch between mini-leagues, whether within one sport or in switching to a different sport, if they spend a two-week period without playing with their original mini-league. For example, a player in mini-league A could join a team in mini-league B, if they spend two weeks out of play. This could be one way to include more than one mini-league in tournaments. Initial games can be played within the original mini-leagues, with the winning teams moving on and forming a new mini-league for the final games after a two-week waiting period. Otherwise, teams in different mini-leagues should not play against each other.

Forming a mini-league decreases opportunities for players’ exposure to the virus, while allowing for increased interaction during games. If someone does get sick, tracing close contacts becomes easier and the number of people who risk being exposed is lower.

Rules for participating in a mini-league

1. Choose one/two sports mini-league(s) only.
2. If you are required to self-isolate, you should not participate
3. If you have or may have been exposed to COVID-19, you should not participate.
4. Organizers should keep a list of participants in the mini-league with contact information for a minimum of 21 days, in order to inform contact tracing should it become necessary.
5. Practice physical distancing and other public health measures whenever possible, even within your mini-league.
6. If you wish to switch between mini-leagues, you must spend two weeks without play before joining a new mini-league.
7. Do not play if you are sick, no matter how mild.

For more information on COVID-19 and the most up to date information on the Yukon situation visit [Yukon.ca/COVID-19](https://www.yukon.ca/COVID-19) or call COVID-19 InfoLine at **877-374-0425** between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. seven days a week.