



CISAA COVID-19 Task Force

Established mid-April 2020

CISAA Return to Sport Plan 2020-2021

Last updated June 18, 2020

Mandate

To address COVID-19 related concerns, a special task force of the CISAA Executive was established to review and examine issues and to begin specialized planning, related to the pandemic, for the 2020-2021 school year. The CISAA is committed to putting the health and safety of our student athletes at the forefront of all decisions.

The mandate of the CISAA COVID-19 Task Force is to research and model a variety of possible scenarios for the Fall, Winter, and Spring CISAA seasons related to the impact of school closures and pandemic restrictions placed on inter-school athletic programming. The CISAA COVID-19 Task Force will respond to directives from all levels of government, public health and sport associations as we develop and refine models for a return to inter-school competition and/or establish alternative athletic programming for CISAA member schools. Protecting the health and safety of our student athletes and coaches, is and will be, our top priority.

The CISAA COVID-19 Task Force is supported by Rob Reiner, CISAA Athletic Coordinator and Co-Chaired by Beth Will, St. Clement's School and Fraser Bertram, Crescent School. Additional members include: Leanne Dietrich, St. John's-Kilmarnock School, Paul Bedard, St. Andrew's College and Tim White, Trinity College School (incoming CISAA Director). The mandate of the CISAA COVID-19 Task Force is to present our findings and provide ongoing updates to the CIS Ontario Executive Director and the CISAA Board Subcommittee, Chaired by Ed Kidd, Head of School at Ridley College. Rob Reiner, Beth Will and Fraser Bertram also sit on the CISAA Board Subcommittee.

CISAA schools, their student athletes, parents and coaches eagerly anticipate the easing of restrictions and the eventual reopening of schools, and in turn a return to sport. Athletic Directors, along with their coaching staff, will play a key role in supporting the wellbeing of students, adults, and school communities through physical activity. It is hard to tell exactly how their roles may be redefined, but as more information becomes available, schools should implement allowable physical activity as it is vital for students' physical and mental health. It is also acknowledged that students and their families have wide ranging needs and expectations

with regards to inter-school sport. A multi-phased approach is outlined in the plan with an urgency placed on a return to sport as safely, but as quickly as possible.

A first step will be a return to physical activity as schools implement their academic Health and Physical Education (HPE) programs and then robust opportunities for intramural or intra-school sport in the Fall when they return to on-campus learning. The resumption of CISAA inter-school sport will follow. It will be phased and will adhere to guidelines provided by national and provincial sport associations, and the Ontario Ministries of Education and Health.

Assumptions and Understandings

The following assumptions guide the *CISAA Return to Sport Plan*:

1. There will be a variety of messages and guidelines shared by all levels of government and sport associations about when and how best to return to organized sport practices and competitive play. This information will need to be interpreted and reviewed in the context of CISAA. (see **appendix 5** for links to sport associations for all CISAA sports (Ontario and Canada))
2. The Ontario Ministries of Education and Health will be the authorities who signal when schools in the province can resume HPE classes, intra-school and inter-school sport based on health and safety guidelines and requirements. In addition, national and provincial sport organizations will each have their own set of return to play guidelines which will be valuable resources to consider and consult.
3. National and provincial sport associations, like OPHEA and OFSAA, will provide guidance by setting policies and establishing protocols for a return to sport. CISAA will refer to these guidelines as we develop our own protocols for practice and competition.
4. HPE and intra-school athletic activities will likely be the first to return before inter-school athletics. Lessons will be learned and direction will come from the approach to intra-school athletics that will guide and shape inter-school approaches in each school and in CISAA as a whole.
5. Heads of School, along with Athletic Directors, will make decisions about when and how their school will return to CISAA inter-school sports. Declarations may be by age group or specific sports, and will allow for as much flexibility where possible.

6. Working with each school's Athletic Director, the CISAA Director will ensure all schools are following proper protocols as outlined by CISAA. These will include new measures like CISAA waivers as developed by legal counsel, and other measures like health and safety training, which will be required to prepare coaches and players for a safe return to sport.
7. The CISAA Director, CISAA Executive and CISAA Scheduling Committee will coordinate any game modifications that are needed to ensure maximized safety and participation for student athletes at all levels.
8. The Scheduling Committee, in conjunction with the CISAA Executive and Sport Convenors, will publish new play dates/schedules as required, and schools will need to be flexible in order to engage in inter-school competition. It is important for schools to note and accept the following possibilities:
 - a. Schedules may not be traditional in nature
 - b. Leagues may need to be organized regionally by geography rather than by level of play
 - c. Sports may be played "out of season" or over multiple seasons
 - d. Common play dates may be required by sport, age group and/or gender
 - e. Individual sports will likely return before team sports
 - f. Age groups may return to play at different times
 - g. Modifications to game play and rules may be necessary and required
9. Once inter-school sport resumes, spectators may be limited or not permitted at all.
10. Cross-border travel between Canada and the U.S. will be contingent on [Canadian travel restrictions](#) including border closures and Quarantine Act regulations. Currently, the U.S.-Canada border is closed to non-essential travel and a 14-day mandatory quarantine period for all visitors to Canada is in effect.
11. CISAA membership fees paid annually by our member schools are essential revenue to support the Head Office operations of CISAA, including but not limited to, staffing, legal costs, liability insurance and administration. All CISAA schools are required and expected to pay their annual membership fees whether or not they are able or willing to participate in inter-school competition.
12. Fees per sport, league and division for inter-school competition are charged to each school only for the costs incurred related to their school's participation.

Summary of the *CISAA Return to Sport Plan*

The ever changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the plans for the reopening of institutions are an obvious challenge for CIS Ontario, our CISAA Division and our member schools. As such, the *CISAA Return to Sport Plan* is a framework based on a measured and research-based return to inter-school practice and competitive game schedules that is intended to prioritize the health and safety of student athletes and coaches.

The flexible timeline for a return to play can be found on the tab labelled the [CISAA Return to Sport Staircase \(Appendix 1\)](#). It outlines return to game scenarios for each month of the 2020-2021 school year. Understanding there may be several phases of activity before any actual competition is allowed, plans must be flexible enough to react to guidelines and protocols established by the various levels of government, including public health, and sport associations.

Appendix 2 provides further details on possible schedules for the return of sport for scenarios from one day tournaments to modified season schedules as time permits. This will allow for maximum flexibility in offering sport.

Appendix 3 links to two sport association resources for returning to sport.

Appendix 4 outlines a suggested CISAA staged return to sport for schools.

Key Dates:

Provincially:

- the date the Ministry of Education sanctions physical activity within schools
- the date the Ministry of Education and/or Health sanction inter-school or association sport
- a timeline and guidelines are established for team practices and competitive play for inter-school competitions.

Within the CISAA, the CISAA Director and the Scheduling Committee will plan:

- the timeline required for schools to declare their participation in particular sports, leagues and divisions
- the play date range for sports being played and playoff options

If a season of play starts later than normal, the CISAA Director and the Scheduling Committee will publish new play dates, and schools will need to adapt to these changes or work to reschedule with one another.

The CISAA COVID-19 Task Force reviewed a number of related issues (as of June 18, 2020) and created a list of considerations that will be addressed.

Issues to Consider for Return to Sport

1. The safety and health of students, coaches, officials, and families will be at the forefront of all return to sport decisions. See **Appendix 3** for recommended resources.
2. Online coaches meetings will be introduced before seasons start in order to review new protocols and expectations.
3. Approval of sport risk using a green, yellow and red phasing will include priority placed on individual over team sports, and may include priority for specific age group(s), whether sports are indoor or outdoor, as well as consideration of levels of contact and shared equipment.
4. Screening processes of athletes and coaches prior to all practices and games will need to be implemented.
5. Training for students and coaches on new protocols will be required.
6. Transportation considerations need to be reviewed by individual schools.
7. The safe use of facilities including cleaning and usage protocols for change rooms must be considered, along with issues related to rental facilities, use of indoor vs outdoor spaces and traffic flow within buildings to minimize contact.
8. Availability of officials for games could be a challenge.

The CISAA COVID-19 Task Force also created a monthly checklist that will be provided to all Athletic Directors, and updated throughout the summer, in order to ensure that all schools are as prepared as possible for a return to inter-school play. The checklist will be shared with schools by the CISAA Director in August. The plan does not make specific recommendations about how and when member schools should introduce HPE classes or intra-school athletic programs.

Legal Questions

CIS Ontario (CISAA) schools will follow Ministry guidelines, directives and protocols, and will seek direction and assistance from legal counsel at Borden Ladner Gervais (BLG) for the development of appropriate waiver templates.

Assuming the Ontario Ministries of Education, Health and Sport share guidelines, timelines and protocols for a return to inter-school sport and the CIS Ontario Board and its Committees and Subcommittees, along with the Executive Director and CISAA Director, support the implementation of the *CISAA Return to Sport Plan*, CISAA schools will be asked to follow all government and other applicable directives for:

- waivers
- practices and games
- transportation
- facility use and liability (use of neutral school sites)
- appropriate washroom and water access
- medical needs, supervision and training of coaches and players
- officials protocols
- spectator policies
- management of any cases of COVID-19 at a school that are traced to CISAA activity

Next Steps

The plan outlines the approach to be taken by CISAA and its member schools as we respond to the emerging COVID-19 impact on school sport. Communication with the CIS Ontario Board, its Committees and Subcommittees, and the Executive Director and CISAA Director will continue as the plan evolves and is refined. Heads of School and Athletic Directors will be kept informed and consulted throughout the process.

It is anticipated that ongoing changes and refinements will be made as government and sport association guidelines and policy frameworks become available. Once appropriate, the CISAA COVID-19 Task Force will launch sport specific working groups to address any recommended changes or requirements that may arise from provincial and/or national sport-specific associations.

Appendices follow on the next page.

Appendix 1

[CISAA Return to Sport Staircase](#)

Appendix 2

[Possible League Schedules for Alternative Lengths of Season](#)

Appendix 3

[NFHS Guidance for Opening](#)

[B.C. ViaSport Return Guidelines](#)

Appendix 4

[CISAA Multi-Phased Return to Sport](#)

Appendix 5

Government of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Government of Ontario

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/government>

Ministry of Education

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-at-home>

<http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/privschr/index.html>

Ministry of Health

https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-ontario-is-responding-covid-19?_ga=2.186726509.477137331.1592559198-184103628.1586898351

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-heritage-sport-tourism-culture-industries>

Provincial and National Sport Governing Associations (all sports played by CISAA schools)

OFSAA

<https://www.ofsaa.on.ca/>

OPHEA

<https://www.ophea.net/>

Alpine Skiing

<https://www.alpineontario.ca/>

<https://alpinecanada.org/>

Athletics (XC and Track & Field)

<https://athletics.ca/>

<https://athleticsontario.ca/>

Badminton

<https://www.badminton.ca/>

<http://www.badmintonontario.ca/>

Baseball

<https://www.baseballontario.com/>

<https://www.baseball.ca/>

Basketball

<https://basketball.on.ca/tag/covid-19/>

<https://www.basketball.ca/en>

Cricket

<https://cricketcouncilofontario.ca/>

<https://cricketcanada.org/>

Curling

<https://www.curling.ca/>

<https://ontcurl.com/>

Field Hockey

<http://www.fieldhockey.ca/2020/05/07/field-hockey-canada-return-to-play-concept-covid-19/>

<https://www.fieldhockeyontario.com/>

Football

<http://footballcanada.com/>

<http://ontariofootball.ca/>

Golf

<https://gao.ca/>

<https://golfcanada.ca/>

Gymnastics

<https://www.gymnasticsontario.ca/>

<http://www.gymcan.org/>

Hockey

<https://www.ohf.on.ca/>

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/home>

Lacrosse

<http://www.lacrosse.ca/>

<https://ontariolacrosse.com/>

Nordic Skiing

<https://xcskiontario.ca/>

<https://nordiqcanada.ca/>

Rugby

<https://rugby.ca/en>

<https://www.rugbyontario.com/>

Snowboarding

<https://ontariosnowboard.ca/>

<https://www.canadasnowboard.ca/en/>

Soccer

<https://www.ontariosoccer.net/page/show/5697170-covid-19-updates>

<https://www.canadasoccer.com/>

Softball

<https://softball.ca//?lid=UCTWF-WS6JU-WE7M3>
<https://softballontario.ca/>

Squash

<https://www.squashontario.com/>
<http://www.squash.ca/>

Swimming

<https://www.swimming.ca/en/>
<https://www.swimontario.com>

Tennis

<https://www.tennisontario.com/pages/advisory-on-covid-19>
<https://www.tenniscanada.com/>

Volleyball

<https://www.ontariovolleyball.org/ova-response-to-coronavirus>
<https://volleyball.ca/>

Ultimate

<https://ontarioultimate.ca/>
<https://canadianultimate.com/>

Wrestling

<https://www.oawa.ca/>
<https://wrestling.ca/>