



BC Amateur Baseball Association

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Attention: Baseball BC Membership (and affiliated clubs)

From: BC Amateur Baseball Association

Re: COVID – 19 UPDATES

As we have stated previously, we continue to provide information and updates to best support our Members and affiliated clubs. We are collectively facing this uncertainty, which still changes daily. This memo is in follow up to previous updates circulated.

Recently, government and the health officials commented on the re-opening of youth sports and specifically referenced baseball. This is exciting news, but just like other aspects of our lives, we are going to be faced with a “new normal.” It is also becoming clearer with every passing day that traditional approaches to expectations and timelines will need to be tempered.

We understand that everyone may have been anticipating receiving Return to Play guidance from Baseball BC, however, new information has been provided to us from viaSport (and the Provincial Government) that has delayed any return in the short term.

Contrary to their initial advice to PSOs (and what we have shared previously), viaSport recently informed us that neither the government health officials nor viaSport will be approving sport specific Return to Play protocols. They further advised that they are waiting for government direction before they will prepare a set of general guidelines for the entire sport sector. These will ultimately have to be approved by government health officials and WorkSafeBC before we can return to play. We have not received a response to questions about the timelines and when we could expect to receive the guidelines.

The revised viaSport process is set out in more detail here:

https://www.viasport.ca/sites/default/files/Return%20to%20Sport_FAQ_05-13-2020.pdf

Baseball BC was advised our role is to prepare sport specific protocols after we receive their guidelines. The work we have already done will allow us to finalize these in short order. Of importance, with the change in approval process, we have concerns regarding risk, insurance and liability. These concerns are shared across sports in BC and by our counterparts in other provinces.

As we know, there are different types of risks associated with participating in sport and baseball. The current situation has potentially added to the assumption of risk. Baseball BC's insurance underwriter has issued a COVID-19 exclusion notice. Our understanding is that all industries now have such an exclusion. We are told by our insurance broker that no such coverage will be forthcoming.

Up until now, we were working under the assumption that the health authorities (and/or viaSport) would review and approve return to play plans. This is no longer the case. We are concerned that liability is being pushed down to the individual sports and importantly to local communities/clubs, all under a situation where sport people are not the health experts.

Ultimately, Baseball BC and each of our Members and affiliated clubs are independent (but linked) organizations. Each must be comfortable that appropriate and reasonable steps are being taken to mitigate risks associated with approving and/or implementing any form of baseball programming under any Return to Play Plan. Again, this can't occur until viaSport sends guidelines to the sport sector.

As we continue to wait to receive our guidelines from viaSport, we remind the baseball community that Baseball BC's current suspension of in-person activities is still in effect.

The Board of Directors and staff at Baseball BC thank the Members, affiliated clubs, and the entire baseball community for their patience as we work on your behalf to get everyone back on the field as soon as it possible, safely.

Please direct any questions you may have on this topic to Baseball BC Executive Director David Laing at 604-586-3312.