



High School Sports in Alberta: *"We want to practice....."* What is allowed, what is not, and where does jurisdiction lie?

June 12, 2020

The Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA) is receiving a lot of inquiries about what is and is not permitted in relation to school sport activities. In light of COVID-19 related matters, and the recent announcement about Stage 2 starting this Friday, June 12 and cohorts of 50 participants being permitted in sports, here is the best feedback we can provide right now:

Unless otherwise directed by the ASAA Board of Governors, all member schools must continue to follow ASAA Bylaws and Policies including, but not limited to, student eligibility, Seasons of Play, two team policy. As of June 12, the ASAA has cancelled the spring Season of Play for all four sports in season: football, volleyball, cross country running and golf meaning no in-person team practices can occur between now and the end of June, 2020.

Very regularly over the past three months, ASAA has been in conversations with several groups including the Ministries of Education, Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women and Alberta Health, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta Association of Independent Schools and Colleges, several provincial sport organizations (PSO's), School Sport Canada members and others. The goal of the ASAA's communication with those groups has been to stay abreast of federal and provincial developments around return to sport protocols. The ASAA has been in conversation with provincial sport organizations in an attempt to ensure that our communications to stakeholders are coordinated and consistent. While the direction and guidance provided by the PSO's is welcome input, no aspect of the "return to sport in schools" should occur without the approval of principals and district superintendents.

Following AHS and school district guidelines, ASAA will determine what provincial championships will look like in the 2020/21 school year, if they occur; such determination may not happen for some time as the ASAA evaluates related developments.

Here is what the ASAA Executive Committee sees as the hierarchy for the decision making process for return to school sport:

Alberta Health Services



Superintendents



Principals

1. **Alberta Health Services (AHS):** The restrictions put in place by AHS are the minimum standard that must be followed in undertaking any sports related practices. This includes but is not limited to: physical distancing, size of gathering, sharing equipment, etc. and will likely be related to sport in general (individual, team, contact, non-contact), not specifically sport in schools.
2. **Superintendents:** Using the above information, Alberta school districts, via their school superintendents, will decide how school sport is reintroduced in their district. To assist school superintendents, the ASAA Executive will collaborate with PSO's and ASAA Sport Commissioners to come up with guidelines for introducing each sport back into the school setting. How rules and restrictions are implemented at the school district level will be the responsibility of the school superintendent. The CASS representative to ASAA, Cam McKeage (Hanna) is integrally involved in these discussions.
3. **Principals:** Using the above information, we expect school principals will take into account the recommendations from their school superintendent before they, preferably in collaboration with their school athletic director, determine how to roll out the return to sport protocols in their school and what this means for practice and eventually inter-school competition.