



COVID-19 SASKATCHEWAN RETURN TO ARTISTIC SWIMMING GUIDELINES

Friday, November 13th, 2020

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

Saskatchewan Artistic Swimming (SAS) has prepared this document based on return to sport guidelines provided by Canada Artistic Swimming which included the latest information available to date from third-party sources, including the World Health Organization and local public health authorities.

This document is meant to provide information and guidance as to best practices based on current information. Each club is however responsible for assessing the risks in its particular environment and establishing the appropriate safety procedures to minimize those risks, while following the advice and instructions of public health and government authorities.

Additionally, it is an individual's responsibility for assessing their personal risks in consultation with medical professionals and for the outcome of their decisions and actions.

Each sport organization should comply with the requirements of the provincial and local government and health officials in terms of public gatherings and sporting events when determining when it is safe to return to activities. Nothing in this document is intended to provide legal advice. Do not rely on this document or treat it as legal advice.

The document will be updated as the situation evolves and as more information comes available. Revisions will be posted here.

August 28, 2020

- Amendments to the Document:
 - Social Distancing Guidelines Updated – pg. 16
 - Routine Training Edited – pg. 18
 - Updated Risk Assessment Link – pg. 21
 - Removal of Sample Distancing Diagram – Appendix 2
 - Added Daily Health Monitoring Questions – Appendix 3
 - Updated Training Attendance Log – Appendix 4
 - Update on Where Waivers can be found – pg. 26

September 4, 2020

- Amendments to the Document:
 - Developing your Training Plan – Gloves are not mandatory pg. 18
 - Coaches do not need to be 18 but there needs to be an 18-year-old on the pool deck as a supervisor.

October 1, 2020

- Amendments to the Document:
 - Saskatchewan Specific Sport and Activity Guidelines – Mini-Leagues – pg. 6
 - Recreation Coaches – coaching in the water – pg. 14
 - Developing Your Training Plan – pg. 18
 - Conclusion – pg. 19

November 13, 2020

- Amendments to the Document:
 - What do mini leagues in artistic swimming look like – pg. 6
 - Designated COVID-19 Coordinator – face shields are not a substitute for masks – pg. 10
 - Removal of Waivers – should be filled out through the website or contact SAS ED if needed.

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INTRODUCTION

Saskatchewan Artistic Swimming (SAS) is committed to a safe and healthy return to artistic swimming activity for all participants. The resumption of aquatic sport activities will be a complex process, and the priority at all times must be to keep each other safe from COVID-19. As Saskatchewan begins to reopen for business after weeks of isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for clubs to have a well-constructed plan for returning to the pool.

This document is meant to provide information and guidance to clubs, coaches and the artistic swimming community more generally on best practices based on current information. Policies and procedures outlined by provincial and municipal governments and public health agencies should always be adhered to when returning to any form of training. The document focuses on 'how' the reintroduction of sport activity will occur in a cautious and methodical manner from an athlete, coach, and club perspective.

This framework for return to artistic swimming activity applies to any recreational or competitive club that delivers artistic swimming programs in Saskatchewan and is registered with SAS. An approved sanction is required prior to the resumption of any in-person artistic swimming activity (Fill out Appendix 7). This document sets out a Return to Activity Plan for in-pool training with physical distancing (with a recommendation of supplementary land training to fill in the gaps). The next step is for clubs to develop their specific strategies and plans. September 1, 2020 will be the earliest that sanction requests will be granted.

The situation and information around COVID-19 continues to change quickly. We know that once clubs resume training, they may have to modify or even stop artistic swimming activity again as the province or municipalities adjust restrictions due to localized outbreaks or a second wave of infection. This will be frustrating to clubs and coaches, who are anxious to get their athletes back in the water to train and compete.

In this unprecedented time, it is important to keep things in perspective and make the best of what we have right now by focusing on the skills that make good athletes including mental resilience, and developing new, creative approaches to training.

SAS would like to thank Canada Artistic Swimming, and Ontario Artistic Swimming who provided us with very thorough research for us to include in our document.

We are stronger together.

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GENERAL COVID-19 INFORMATION

COVID-19 is a type of coronavirus mostly found in animals, but when humans become infected, symptoms can range from mild to severe depending on a number of variables. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Tragic consequences of this virus are being experienced around the world, including within Canada. There are many ongoing challenges for all of us to manage, and for our Canadian artistic swimming community, a safe and responsible return to artistic swimming is paramount. It is critical that everyone understands that COVID-19 can be spread prior to the onset of symptoms.

TRANSMISSION

COVID-19 is highly transmissible from person-to-person. The virus is primarily spread between people during close contact, most often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, and talking. The droplets usually fall to the ground or onto surfaces rather than travelling through air over long distances. People catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces (fomites), then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19. The virus can persist in the air for up to three hours and on a variety of surfaces for up to 5 days (plastics and steel showing some of the longest times). The virus is most contagious during the first three days after the onset of symptoms, although spread is possible before symptoms appear (pre-symptomatic), and can even be spread from people who may not show symptoms (asymptomatic). Common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and loss of smell and taste. While most cases result in mild symptoms, some may progress to acute respiratory distress syndrome, multi-organ failure, septic shock, and blood clots. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically around five days but may range from two to fourteen days, one of the factors making this such a hard disease to monitor and control.

Additional Information:

[Government of Canada: COVID-19](#)

[World Health Organization: Coronavirus](#)

[CDC: What you should know about the Coronavirus to protect yourself and others](#)

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

The timing of progression for the resumption of sport and recreational activity will be regulated by Provincial and Municipal Government's restrictions and guidelines, which will be influenced by any evidence of transmission issues within a local community. Localized outbreaks may require Provincial Sport Organizations and clubs to restrict, postpone, or cancel return to training, and all clubs must be ready to respond accordingly. The timeline for reopening will vary depending on the jurisdiction and not all Provinces and clubs will resume operations simultaneously. One representative in the organization should be designated to monitor provincial and local government websites for daily updates or changes to health guidelines.

SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL HEALTH GUIDELINES

Sport & Activity Guidelines

- For sports or activities where participants are unable to adhere to physical distancing, groupings (mini-leagues) should be formed. Mini-leagues can be comprised of multiple teams, but no more than 50 individuals.
 - Mini-leagues allow sports teams to return to a safe level of play, and will help mitigate the risk of widespread transmission by limiting the number of athletes that come in close contact with each other.
- The 50-person maximum per mini-league includes coaches/staff, instructors, participants from multiple teams, officials and volunteers who cannot maintain two metres of distancing from others at all times. Spectators, including parents, who are not part of a previously listed category, and others who can ensure physical distancing are not included in the 50-person total.
- Mini-leagues must be comprised of individuals within the same neighbourhood, community or local geographical region (e.g. within a rural municipality, town, quadrant of a city or nearest community).
- Mini-leagues should remain together until restrictions are further relaxed.
- Game play can resume between teams in a mini-league and must be limited to teams within the same mini-league.
- Teams in different mini-leagues should not play each other.
- At least two metres distancing should be maintained between all individuals, except members of the same household, when off the field of play (e.g. on benches, during intermission).
- Contact must be minimized whenever possible.
- Tournaments and interprovincial travel are not permitted.
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained or is unpredictable, a mask should be worn by those not participating in the activity (i.e. coaches, volunteers, etc.).
- Skills training camps are permitted outside of the mini-league group as long as physical distancing can be maintained and gathering numbers are below 30. If physical distancing cannot be maintained, then a washout period of 14 days – before and after the camp – must occur before athletes may rejoin a mini-league.
- If physical distancing is possible, physical and recreational activities may proceed as normal (e.g. programming, skills training, practice and competition), while following the guidelines for general operations, cleaning and disinfection, etc.

What do Mini-Leagues look like in Artistic Swimming?

- The smaller the better. If these can be kept to teams or daily training groups those are good sizes. Coaches are included in these mini-league groups and contact is allowed within.
- Coaches must wear masks at all times even when able to physical distance.
- Athletes must wear masks whenever they are out of the water if they are in a city that is deemed a mandatory mask zone by the government.
- Mini groups should stay consistent throughout the season.
- It is recommended that athletes do not belong to multiple sports mini-leagues (whether community or school based).
- Group Highlights are still NOT permitted.

[Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#)

THE ROAD BACK TO THE POOL: STEPS

Step 1: The Province Allows Sport to Start

- Clubs to understand the risks and how COVID-19 spreads, the steps that participants in artistic swimming activity can take to stay healthy and prevent spreading infection, and recognized hygiene best practices. Information related to preventing COVID-19 and proper hygiene is available on the [Government of Canada website on Coronavirus disease](#).
- Clubs to review and understand public health agency guidelines and be aware of local daily situation reports. Each community may need to adjust to meet its unique circumstances.

Step 2: Facility or Training Space is Available

- Clubs to review and understand any policies and requirements imposed by the facility operator.
- Clubs to conduct site visit to understand the unique risks and challenges for each physical location.

Step 3: Club Decides to Offer Artistic Swimming Activity

Mandatory steps that clubs must take to be ready to return to artistic swimming activity:

- Appoint a Designated COVID-19 Coordinator - a SAS registered coach in good standing, 18 years or older, to be in charge of each training session, who will be responsible for taking attendance, storing documents, supervision and enforcement of physical distancing and personal hygiene protocols.
- Complete the Club Risk Assessment Tool for Return to Sport that can be found via link in Appendix 1. Only clubs that have a VERY LOW RISK, LOW RISK, or MODERATE RISK will receive a sanction to resume artistic swimming activity.
 - Clubs must retain a copy of the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist (found with the risk assessment tool)
- Confirm they have read the PSO Return to Sport plan and agree to comply with its requirements
- Update their Emergency Action Plan for each facility or training space (this might be done by your facility).
- Submit a sanction request to SAS clearly identifying the intended artistic swimming activities they want to operate.
- Ensure all coaches, athletes and volunteers:
 - Are registered in accordance with CAS and SAS policies and contact information is up-to-date. Registration ensures participants are insured to take part in any artistic swimming activity.
 - Are participating in activity that is sanctioned by CAS or the PTSO.
 - Have signed the proper forms for the appropriate age (examples attached in the appendices):
 - Declaration of Compliance, Coach/Athlete COVID-19 Code of Conduct, Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Form, Release of Liability.
- Parents of Younger Athletes:
 - Must consider carefully whether their child is able to follow directions about social distancing and personal hygiene practices before registering them for artistic swimming activity.
 - Parents must sign ALL required documents on behalf of the participant. Participants between 13-17 must have a parent/guardian co-sign.

Step 4: Artistic Swimming Activity Can Start

- Participants to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 by completing a “self” health check on training days – must also have a plan in place for managing a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 Case.
- Clubs to ensure training plans comply with all public health and facility requirements.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RETURNING TO SPORT

Checking in on an athlete's or coach's mental health is just as important as checking in on their physical health. Here are a few phases that an individual might go through while they begin to get back to sport, and what to focus on with each phase:

- Phase 1: Managing Emotions – keep expectations low and focused on reconnecting the athletes with each other and their training environment. Mental fatigue is likely with coaches and athletes returning to sport given the stress of adhering to new guidelines.
- Phase 2: Making sense of the situation – it is likely that athlete's commitment and motivation may have been affected during quarantine and their time away, keep in mind that athletes will return to sport at different levels of readiness. Some will be ready to go back to their pre quarantine training; others could be questioning why they are back if the pandemic isn't over.
- Phase 3: Mobilizing energy and efforts – in this phase athletes should return to focusing on performance. Short term goals should be in pursuit of long term goals. Gradual training is key in avoiding injury after being away.

For more information, please read the article [The Psychological Implications of Returning to Sport Post Isolation](#) by Lori Dithurbide.

COVID-19 AND POOL SAFETY

ARE SWIMMING POOLS SAFE?

COVID-19 has a fragile lipid outer membrane, and is therefore highly susceptible to soaps and oxidants, such as chlorine³. According to the Centre for Disease Control (USA), there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools, hot tubs or spas. Proper operation maintenance, disinfection with chlorine or bromine of pools should inactivate the virus (CDC 2020).

As new information and research becomes available, the general knowledge about pool safety will continue to increase and will influence decisions made by facility management. General pool safety is among the ongoing challenges for all partners to manage, and for the Canadian aquatic community, a safe and responsible return to the pool is critical.

CDC4: [Water and COVID-19 Facts](#)

Myrtha Pools: [COVID-19 Swimming Pool Study](#); Professor Vincenzo Romano Spica, (Professor of Hygiene at the University of Rome "Foro Italico")

HEALTH MONITORING

Individuals should not participate in artistic swimming programs or any activity if, in the last 14 days, the individual, or anyone in their household has:

- Experienced symptoms or signs of COVID-19, even if mild (including fever, sore throat, dry cough, fatigue, chills and body aches, shortness of breath, chest pain, diarrhea, pink eye, or loss of smell or taste)

- A confirmed case of COVID-19, or are waiting to hear the results of a lab test for COVID-19
- Had close contact with someone who has a suspected, or confirmed case of COVID-19
- Been told by public health that they may have been exposed and need to quarantine
- Have travelled to or had a lay-over in any country outside of Canada
- Have travelled from another province in Canada (if the province requires a period of quarantine following travel from another province)

QUARANTINE (SELF-MONITORING) VS HOME ISOLATION

QUARANTINE (SELF-MONITORING)

- Quarantine for 14 days if you have **no symptoms** and **any** of the following apply:
 - You are returning from travel outside of Canada (mandatory quarantine)
 - You had close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19
 - You have been told by the public health authority that you may have been exposed and need to quarantine

HOME ISOLATION

- You must isolate if **any** of the following apply:
 - You have been diagnosed with COVID-19,
 - You are waiting to hear the results of a lab test for COVID-19
 - You have symptoms of COVID-19, even if mild
 - You have been in contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19
 - You have been told by public health that you may have been exposed to COVID-19
- Notify your doctor or local health department by phone, as testing may be indicated
- Remain at home except to get urgent medical care; cancel non urgent appointments
- Do not go to work, school, pool or other public places
- Do not use public transport
- Monitor your symptoms and seek medical attention if you are having difficulty breathing, are unable to drink fluids or if your illness is significantly worsening
- Wear a face masks when around others, particularly when physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Separate from household members, at least 2 meters at all times
- Do not have visitors
- Stay in a well-ventilated room (open windows) and use your own bathroom if possible
- Sanitize common use surfaces frequently; maintain excellent hand hygiene
- If close contacts are vulnerable in terms of their health, consider alternative accommodations
- Avoid sharing household items

DESIGNATED COVID-19 COORDINATOR

All clubs must appoint a designated COVID-19 Coordinator and submit their name to SAS on the sanctioning form in Appendix 5. This role can be shared among coaches – so long as documentation is kept in a known place. The roles and responsibilities of the COVID-19 Response Coordinator include:

- Keeping updated on policies and procedures outlined by provincial and municipal governments and public health agencies, and monitoring local daily situation reports
- Working with local facilities to comply with all public health and facility requirements
- Ensuring an Emergency Action Plan is current and complete for each training facility – this may be done by the facility (know what your role is in an Emergency Situation)
- Ensuring a Health & Safety Bin that includes alcohol-based hand sanitizer and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available at each training facility (depending on what your facility provides or requires you to have – the club may have to purchase your own). Masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, etc. **Face Shields are no longer an appropriate substitute for masks.**
- Communicating with club managers and coaches on any training restrictions or recommendations
- Implementing an attendance process at every practice to help with communication if a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported (and retaining these copies for insurance purposes)
- Ensuring training group size complies with public health agency guidelines
- Ensuring signage is in place so that all risk mitigation measures are easy to follow
- Being responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Everyone in the club should know who this person is and how to contact them
- Being the primary contact for participants to self-report COVID-19 symptoms or exposure
- Liaising with the local public health unit for contact tracing, infection control, etc.
- Collaborating and coordinating with facilities in the instance that any new COVID-19 cases arise
- Modifying, restricting, postponing, or cancelling return to training due to an evolving COVID-19-related outbreak or emergency within the club or at the facility
- Removing participants who feel unwell from further training.
- Immediately separating (isolating) staff, patrons, or swimmers with COVID-19 symptoms (for example, fever, cough, or shortness of breath).
- Reporting any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 as directed by Public Health.
- Establishing procedures for safely transporting anyone sick to their home or to a health care provider.

TRAINING GROUP PROTOCOL FOR A POSITIVE TEST

If any athlete or coach tests positive for COVID-19, the following steps must be taken:

- The individual is removed from the training group immediately.
- Training for the training group is suspended and all team members are placed in self-isolation.
- The local public health authority will provide further management recommendations which may include further testing, and contact tracing.
- Any further team members who develop symptoms will be referred to the appropriate health authority or helpline for guidance on testing and appropriate management.

RETURN TO TRAINING AFTER HAVING COVID-19

The decision on when it is appropriate to return to the training environment following a positive COVID-19 test will require medical advice and clearance by a doctor. Recommendations will vary based on a number of factors and may include further testing in some cases.

An athlete's return to sport after a COVID-19 infection requires special consideration prior to resumption of high intensity physical activity. While there is increasing research on the multi-organ nature of COVID-19 in the acute phase, there is currently limited research on medium to long-term complications.

Any athlete, coach, volunteer or staff member who contracted COVID-19 must meet the following minimum criteria prior to returning training environment:

- Be symptom-free for 14 days before participating in artistic swimming programs or activity.
- Have written clearance from a physician.

Group Training can resume if:

- All members undergo self-isolation for 14 days and no other member develops symptoms.
- Once members are cleared by their physician they are able to return to the training (groups do not need to wait for everyone to be clear to resume training).

BUILDING A SAFE RETURN TO SPORT PLAN

ASSESS YOUR SITUATION

- Strictly adhere to the policies and procedures outlined by their provincial and municipal governments, public health agencies and facilities that have been established to ensure a safe environment for all and;
- Complete a detailed Risk Assessment (A sample Risk Assessment tool can be found in Appendix 1) to determine what the risk factor is (high-medium-low) for a return to artistic swimming in your specific jurisdiction and situation and;
- Know and follow guidelines for the number of people allowed in the facility at one time and other physical distancing requirements determined by health authorities and the facility and;
- Communicate with venue operators in advance of restarting about what their cleaning and physical distancing strategy is and how you can help implement and contribute to a safe and clean environment

FACILITY OPERATIONS

Flow and Physical Distancing - Adopt a “Get in, train and get out” Approach

- Athletes should arrive in their bathing suits, train and leave promptly after training has finished.
- All members should adhere to their facilities guidelines.
- Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak, there is to be no contact. Within individual training groups athletes should stay an arm’s length apart.

General Risk Mitigation Strategies Checklist for Physical Distancing

- Drop-off and pick-up of athletes to happen outside the facility according to a set schedule to avoid “congregations” of people during drop off and pick up.
- Establish facility access with one entry point and a separate exit point.
- Post signage that reinforces social distancing and illness prevention measures. (The Public Health Agency of Canada has free posters and handouts available on their website – it is likely that your facility will help with this. Encourage athletes to keep space between bags).
- Multi-use facilities manage access in a way that prevents interaction/cross over between different user groups.
- Develop a facility use schedule that allows adequate time for the required sanitation to be done between each activity/user group and as frequently as necessary to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- Close locker rooms; athletes, coaches and others should arrive at the pool dressed and ready to enter the pool (swimsuits under clothes). No use of facility lockers or storage for participant equipment or personal items.
- Prevent use of low ventilated spaces.
- Design planned access to washroom facilities and limit them to essential use.

- Design a planned flow and movement of people in the facility using floor markings and signage (out of the water).
- Planned use (including distancing diagrams and flow patterns) of the pool space to ensure an appropriate physical distance can be maintained at all times (minimum of 2 metres but may need to be greater depending on the exertion level and training being done).
- Markings on the pool deck to identify individual areas for athletes and coaches that respect the physical distancing requirements and provide each individual with their own space and that do not require one individual to walk through another person's space to get to their space.

CLEANING, HYGIENE AND SANITATION

Surfaces frequently touched with hands are most likely to be contaminated. These include door-knobs, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, cabinet handles, faucet handles, tables, countertops and electronics. The COVID-19 virus has been shown to last on glass and hard plastics for between 2-5 days, metal for 3-5 days and wood 4 days without washing and sanitizing.

Coronaviruses are one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with the appropriate disinfectant product when used according to the label directions.

General Risk Mitigation Strategies Checklist for Cleaning, Hygiene and Sanitation

- To ensure the disease is killed in swimming pool water aquatic facility operators should ensure water testing takes place as required by regulation or more frequently if required by protocols established by the facility.
- Restrict activities to areas with a high level of ventilation (poor ventilation has been attributed to COVID-19 airborne spread).
- Have available touchless hand disinfection /soap-water stations throughout the facility.
- Develop a facility use schedule that allows adequate time for the required sanitation to be done between each activity/user group and as frequently as necessary to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- Ensure all no-touch fixtures in restrooms are working properly (faucets, soap dispenser, hand dryer, toilet flushing functions).
- Have standard operating procedures (SOP) for cleaning and disinfecting that frequently and effectively eliminates any viruses from public spaces and surfaces. Identify high traffic areas and disinfect these areas more frequently.
- A detail cleaning log is kept and posted.
- Ensure easy access (no touch) to garbage cans for disposal of tissues, wipes etc.
- No lost and found. All items left behind are disposed of.
- Disinfect all equipment between user groups (railings, door handles).

CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUILDING YOUR PLAN

The return to artistic swimming should only be initiated once municipal, provincial and federal regulations permit the resumption of this type of activity and with approval from your PSO. All the health, safety and strategies to mitigate risk must be adhered to. This step should involve only one training session per day per training group.

PARTICIPANTS

- Attention needs to be paid to the ability of participants to be able to follow all of the recommendations, age and level of artistic swimmer should be limited to participants capable of independently adhering to the recommendations and strategies to mitigate risk.
- **The decision of who is swimming and what each club offers is up to the decision of each individual club and their facility regulations.**
- Competitive Ages *Recommended* for Participation:
 - Athletes ages 8 and over (born in 2012 and earlier)
 - Special consideration can be made for 8 year olds joining 10U teams so long as the club thinks that they are capable of swimming without help and understand guidelines that are in place and this isn't their first year swimming.
- Recreation Ages *Recommended* for Participation:
 - Athletes ages 8 and over (born in 2012 and earlier):
 - Coaches are mainly teaching from the pool deck but can help in the water as needed with the athletes.
 - Participants should be strong enough to swim independently in the water without the help of a coach.
 - Recreation Athletes ages 5-8 (athletes born in 2013-2016) are able to participate in club programs such as AquaGO! or equivalent if the facility is allowing or delivering their own Redcross/Lifesaving swimming lessons
 - The club will be required to follow up with their pool and know what their requirements are.
 - Redcross/Lifesaving has recommended that with younger athlete's parents will be in the water with the athlete with the coach on land. This is to limit physical touching. Parents would have to register as SAS volunteers.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Complete a "Risk Assessment" prior to the start of returning to training and following the completion of each week of training. Ensure any issues or recommendations are actioned before the start of any training. A sample Risk Assessment tool is found in Appendix 1.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (EAP)

Update your EAP to include a COVID-19 facility plans to exit everyone from the venue in a way that respects physical distancing if it is safe to do so. Facilities that employ lifeguards will have an EAP in place which you can reference or request access to at any time.

SAFE SPORT

Your return to sport program must be designed to ensure all aspects of a safe sport environment can be implemented and followed. Open and observable training environments should be maintained at all times, with the Rule of Two applied. This includes any training or communication done virtually.

Additional Resources: Coaching Association of Canada - [Three Steps to Responsible Coaching](#) and Canada Artistic Swimming - [Safe Sport](#)

CONDUCT POLICY

Consider updating your Conduct Policy to include following the communicated protocols/processes for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and the consequences for not following them (for coaches, athletes, parents).

REGISTRATION

Ensure all coaches and athletes are duly registered in accordance with CAS and SAS policies and that all fees have been paid and they have submitted any and all forms required by SAS and/or Club.

CLUB FEES AND REFUND POLICIES

- Consider online payment or no contact payment methods only.
- Develop and communicate (in a virtual meeting and in writing) the payment policies, processes and timelines.
- Determine Refund Policies - If the season is shortened or unable to be completed.
- What fees are refundable and non-refundable?
- Under what circumstances will refunds be provided (e.g. If an athlete contracts COVID-19, If an athlete is unable to practice due to family quarantine) and what kind of documentation will be required?

COMMUNICATIONS.

- Communicate early and often.
- Designate a COVID-19 Coordinator – Refer to the Designated COVID-19 Coordinator Checklist on page 10 for more information on what they are in charge of.
- Educate and inform your stakeholders. Host information sessions online prior to restarting to educate all stakeholders - club executives, coaches, athletes, and parents so that they:
 - Are familiar with the risks and how COVID-19 spreads, the steps that participants in artistic swimming activity can take to stay healthy and prevent spreading infection.
 - Clearly understand how the training will be executed and what the expectations are for athletes, coaches and parents, as well as the consequences for not following the policies, guidelines and directives.
 - Understand and commit to the physical distancing rules, and how they will be applied in the venue and during training.
 - Understand and commit to hygiene best practices, and prohibitions on sharing of equipment, water bottles, nose clips, towels, etc.
 - Commit to preventing the spread of COVID-19 by communicating immediately to the COVID-19 Coordinator if they or someone in their family feels sick, or has symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Understand and can execute the Emergency Action Plan.
 - Conduct formal training for all staff, coaches, instructors and volunteers on new procedures and protocols. Provide a check list they can use to assess the training environment before each group enters the facility for training.
 - Keep meticulous logs of users by date and time in case they need to be reached for “contact tracing”.

DAILY INDIVIDUAL HEALTH MONITORING

- All athletes, coaches and anyone else who will take part in artistic swimming training environment (“participants”) should always self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. The Government of Saskatchewan COVID-19 Self-assessment Tool is available [here](#).
- Athletes, coaches, and staff must complete a mandatory daily health assessment questionnaire online prior to arriving at the facility and must answer ‘NO’ to the following questions prior to attending any training session: (could be paper, or online questionnaire):
 - Do I have any of the symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficult breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, abnormal muscle pain, headache, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal illness?
 - Have I returned from a trip outside the country within the last 2 weeks?
 - Have I been in contact with or cared for someone with COVID-19?
 - Have stayed home when sick, even with mild symptoms
- Temperature check for everyone as part of the visual health check assessment prior to entering the facility is recommended if the facility does not already do this.
- Staff or athletes at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to review their specific health concerns with their primary care provider prior to attending training sessions.
- Have available on deck, pool side a First Aid kit and Personal Protective Equipment (e.g., gloves, masks, eye protection/face shields, hand sanitizer, paper towel, tissues, etc.) in the case that a minor injury must be managed by the coaches. Each club should make sure that they have access to this.
- Have readily available information about how participants can access the healthcare system virtually, or in person.

TRAINING AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Physical distancing of a minimum of 2 metres is recommended however as an amendment to the previous requirement, athletes within the same training group (of up to 12 people can form an extension to their social bubble).
 - The training group **must** stay consistent throughout the season.
 - Physical distancing is still encouraged where possible, but can be closer than 2 meters if not possible when in the water.
 - Coaches should be wearing masks, or face shields and avoid physical manipulation of the athletes.
 - Athletes should avoid hands on contact.
- Training groups should be self-contained to limit transmission, keep the same group of athletes for each training session.
- Coaches are able to go between training groups so long as they are maintaining physical distancing, otherwise they should stay with their specific group for the duration of the training session.
- It is up to the club to decide if athletes can train more than one sport during the season.
- Athletes **must** wear goggles at all times while training.
- Remember that the club should follow the facility regulations first and foremost, if the facility has less stringent rules then the SAS guidelines should be used to ensure safety within our sport.

TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT USE

- Athletes are not permitted to share any training equipment.
- Ensure athletes use a large enough yoga mat to eliminate contact between them and the pool deck when stretching or warming up.
- A plan needs to be developed for the use of music system during training. Only one individual using their personal I-pod can work the music at a time. All music equipment must be disinfected between users.
- Personal items and clothing (backpacks, jackets, shoes, etc.) brought in by athletes, coaches, and staff should be kept to a minimum. Where bags must be brought in, they should be stored separately, with adequate space between each member's items (re: backpacks left 2 metres apart along pool deck)..
- Coaches should not use whiteboards so that swimmers do not congregate around them, unless physical distancing measures can be applied (large board, big printing).

TRAINING AND HYGIENE

- Upon arrival, athletes, coaches, and staff must wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol) for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of elbow when sneezing or coughing.
- Do not share food and drinks.
- Do not share water bottles. All water bottles must be easily identifiable. Athletes, coaches, and staff are required to fill their personal water bottles at home, prior to a leaving for the facility unless they have access to a touchless water bottle filler in the facility.
- Ensure participants have appropriate deck footwear that is worn at all times, except when in the water, to limit contact between feet and the deck.
- Upon arriving at home athletes and coaches should remove their clothing, place it in the washing machine, along with their swimsuit and towel, and wash everything using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C).

DEVELOPING YOUR TRAINING PLAN

- Coaches and athletes must recognize the potential health implication of reduced training volumes experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many athletes will have experienced diminished capacity in many areas. To reduce the risk of injury, it is advisable to begin with a gradual resumption of training.
- Step One is a gradual return to the water. The focus of training is individual athlete training.
- See Appendix 2 for a sample Return to the Water Training framework.
- Incorporate the "return to the water plan" into a periodized, annual training plan. Factor in how many hours of pool time are able to be accessed and how that will that impact training volume and intensity over periods of time, as seasonal plans are developed.
- Determine the "minimum" coaching plan required to support the training plan
- Create a plan for appropriate warm up/activation and post training cool down/recovery. All warm-ups and cool down protocols must adhere to the [mini-league requirements](#). Athletes must use their own equipment (no sharing of equipment).

- Athletes must maintain physical distancing when appropriate. Athletes are allowed to come into contact with those in their own mini-league. SAS recommends mini-leagues consist of immediate teams. Or training groups. Limit touching to in the water (i.e., correcting lines in the water.) There are to be no highlights trained at this time. Land training should still be distanced if possible or masked.
- If the coaches need to touch the athletes, make sure that all the appropriate PPE's are in place (face mask, shield). Try to use a second point of contact such as a flutter board or a pole instead of your hand.
- Coaches are still encouraged to use verbal cues when instructing athletes in place of physical contact.
- Maintain coach-coach distancing when possible – where a mask when not
- Coaches are permitted to share hand-held equipment such as stopwatches, tablets, clipboards or pens, with colleagues so long as these are being sanitized between each use.
- Use cones, chairs or other aids on deck to visually divide the pool training space into appropriately sized areas for athletes that respect the required physical distance for a particular activity.
- Entry and exit into and out of the pool must be staggered or spread out in a manner that respects the physical distancing requirements.
- *Lap swimming:*
 - To maintain distancing while swimming laps, no passing, and swimmers should only share lanes if necessary.
- *Individual Skills and Solo Training:*
 - Maintain appropriate physical distancing at all times.
 - If possible, design the training so that athletes are never facing each other when breathing.
 - Maintain a physical distance that is appropriate for the level of exertion of the training (greater exertion = heavier breathing and therefore needs a greater physical distance).
- Routine training:
 - Patterns may be trained in the water within the mini-league format. On land physically distanced or not physically distanced but wearing a mask.
 - Consider doing land drilling training outside while it is still nice out.
 - Families with siblings who swim a routine together do not have to physically distance unless they are in two different training groups.

INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

The return to sport plan is not specifically an insurance matter but it is a government matter meaning that all return to play (and return to business) guidelines that the various governments (municipal, provincial or federal) are imposing need to be adhered to / followed.

Insurance companies are not dictating when / how businesses should re-open however, given the changes being made to coverages to reflect COVID-19, the respective insurance broker/company should review any return to play / risk management plans that clubs intend to provide to their members prior to re-opening to provide appropriate feedback.

RELEVANT LINKS FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH LINKS

Federal COVID-19 Public Health Link - [Canada](#)

Provincial COVID-19 Public Health Link - [Saskatchewan](#)

Provincial Artistic Swimming Website Link ARTISTIC SWIMMING WEBSITE LINK - [SAS WEBSITE](#)

CONCLUSION

Return to sport in Saskatchewan will happen in a “patchwork” fashion and the lifting of restrictions will be at different times and using different steps/phases across the country depending on the evolution of COVID-19 in a particular area of Canada.

Canada Artistic Swimming asks the Canadian artistic swimming community to always respect the regulations and directives from all levels of government and public health. Now is the time for our community to be leaders and continue to do our part to control the spread of the virus and keep all Canadians safe.

This document has been created to assist member organizations with planning their return to the pool with the health and safety of all individuals being every organization’s priority. At no time should the information in this document be interpreted as superseding or providing the justification for not adhering to government regulations, public health directives or any return to sport guidelines in a community or facility, nor should it stop an organization from implementing whatever strategies are necessary to mitigate risk in their particular situation.

APPENDIX 1

CLUB RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR RETURN TO SPORT

The Club Risk Assessment Tool (RAT) for Return to Sport is an Excel spreadsheet that lets clubs calculate risk by answering a few questions.

In order to accurately provide answers to the following risk assessment and mitigation checklist, those responsible must be knowledgeable on the current COVID-19 outbreak. They should reference the daily provincial, local and global COVID-19 situation reports provided by WHO, Health Canada and provincial health authorities.

The tool must be completed in this Excel spreadsheet (see following tabs), as the scores are automatically calculated there.

It must be ensured that this risk assessment is conducted with input from local public health authorities, and preferably personnel with expertise in risk assessment, epidemiology, and infectious disease control measures are included from the initial stages of planning.

For the overall determination, factors under consideration include:

- The current stage of the COVID-19 outbreak where training is to be and known transmission dynamics
- The geographical distribution of and number of participants, and their individual risk profile
- The risk assessment tool
- The mitigation measures that are currently in place or feasible to implement

It is important to remember that while mitigation measures can reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections, they cannot completely eliminate the threat. It is the Sport Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), Canadian Public Health and WHO's view that all regions with community transmission should seriously restrict gatherings that bring people together and have the potential to amplify disease and support the recommended best practice of physical distancing.

If movement restrictions (provincial, local) and physical distancing measures remain in place, the Risk Assessment may not apply as public health restrictions (e.g. maximum number of people together, quarantine post movement, etc.) take precedence and by their very nature may preclude any training.

[Club Risk Assessment Tool](#) for Return to Sport

*Note: it is on BC's page but the link is the same across Canada

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE GRADUAL RETURN TO WATER TRAINING SCHEDULE

As clubs return to some form of structured training and start their new season, a well-designed periodized training plan should start with general preparation, working on building the engine of your athletes with a focus on aerobic conditioning (land and in water), strength, coordination, and flexibility. The duration of this phase is 8-12 weeks depending on the level of athletes your work with:

Learn to Train:	8-12 yrs of age (synchro age)	12 weeks
Train to Train:	11-15 yrs of age (synchro age)	10-12 weeks
Train to Compete:	15-21 yrs of age (synchro age)	8-10 weeks

Before the pandemic, clubs and athletes had different training situations and the amount of time spent in-water could vary between 1 and 29+ hours / week. When pools closed and access to water-based training stopped, artistic swimmers moved to dryland training. The result of this situation is that athlete's bodies have adapted to being 100% land based.

Returning to the pool after being out of the water for this long presents a challenge for athletes and coaches. Stopping water-based training can significantly affect the bodies adaptation to being in a weightless environment and **this adaptation must be considered when returning to in-water training.**

As such, precautions must be taken to plan for a PROGRESSIVE return to in-water training in the number of hours, the frequency (times/ week) and the activities within the training session.

Choreography

Clubs and coaches could consider using the choreographies they prepared for the 2019-2020 season as their routines for the 2020-2021 season. By using the same choreographies, this will **free up time** typically allotted to developing the new choreographies and that can be used to **develop energy systems** and spend **focused time on athleticism and technical skills.**

WEEK 1

20-25 minutes just play

do whatever you want re-acquaint yourself with the water by floating & diving – get moving with no structure

Finish the 25 minutes with 200m free-style and backstroke mix

Basic exercises:

- back layout head-first & foot-first travel
- propeller
- reverse propeller
- ballet leg exercises
- front layout head-first & foot-first travel
- front layout support scull
- vertical positions at the wall

WEEK 2

20-25 minutes just play

do whatever you want – re-acquaint yourself with the water by floating & diving – get moving with no structure

Finish the 25 minutes with **400-600 meter** freestyle and back-stroke mix

Basic exercises:

- back layout head-first & foot-first travel
- propeller & reverse propeller
- ballet leg exercises
- front layout head-first & foot-first travel
- front layout support scull
- vertical positions at the wall
- vertical positions off the wall at ankles and at knee level - provide individual technical feedback.

WEEK 3

10 minutes play / free

600-1000 meter swimming:

- no time requirement
- attention on technique

Basic exercises as previous week, with the addition of:

- 25-30 minutes vertical positions
- Basic barracuda exercises
- Basic body boost exercises
- 20-30 minutes
- Basic routine skills: kick-pull, eggbeater travel, side flutter, pike entries, simple figures & arms, nothing fast or with any type of speed. Be control of your movements at all times.

WEEK 4

10 minutes play / free

1000-1400 meter swimming:

- no time requirement
- attention on technique

- Basic exercises as previous week
- 25-30 minutes vertical positions
- Basic barracuda exercises
- Basic body boost exercises
- 30-45 minutes of basic routine skills: same as above.

WEEK 5

1200-1600 meter swimming:

- Start sets with time (easy)
- attention on technique

- 25-30 minutes vertical positions
- Basic barracuda exercises
- Basic body boost exercises
- 45-60 minutes of basic routine skills: add in easy speed and quickness basic drills. Start with simple movements. No complex movements

SASKATCHEWAN RETURN TO WATER

Sanctioning requests will be approved starting September 1st.

Who?

- Individuals registered with SAS for the 2020-2021 season, including:
 - o CAS-registered coaches in good standing only
 - o Athletes that were registered for the 2019-20 season
 - o Clubs can introduce new swimmers at their own discretion
 - o Athletes must be able to follow directions for social distancing and hygiene protocols

What?

- Gradual return to the water
- Swimming lengths or solo routine lengths (follow facility requirements)
- Stationary, in-water technical drills with some distancing and no travelling
- Routines that can be in pattern in the water (no highlights)
- May be supplemented with a land-based, distanced indoor or outdoor program

Where?

- Indoor public aquatic facilities

How?

- Athletes and coaches separated into small, self-contained training groups or teams of no more than 50 people, according to Saskatchewan guidelines set out in Re-Open Saskatchewan Phases. Group size may be restricted further by facility rules.
- Clubs might consider having the same group of athletes stay with the same coach, or have the same group of athletes rotate among coaches
- **“Get in, train and get out”** – arrive in bathing suit, stagger arrival of different training groups and leave as soon as practice is over.
- No organized or spontaneous socializing
- No one outside the training group is permitted in the training environment
- No spectators or non-essential visitors, including parents

APPENDIX 3 - COVID-19 Daily Health Monitoring Questionnaire and Attestation

These Health Monitoring Questions must be answered before each practice by all members that are planning to be on the pool deck or in the facility. This is assuming your facility is not already asking these questions. This can be done digitally or by handing in a sheet of paper. If an athlete or coach answers 'YES' to any of the questions they are not to come to the pool. Children and youth will need a parent to assist them in completing this screening tool.

HEALTH MONITORING QUESTIONNAIRE			
Name of Athlete or Parent/Guardian: _____		CIRCLE ONE	
1.	Does the activity participant have any of the following symptoms relative to their normal personal baseline ?		
	Fever (38°C or higher)	YES	NO
	Cough (new, worsening, continuous, or barking)	YES	NO
	Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	Sore Throat	YES	NO
	Chills	YES	NO
	Painful or Difficulty Swallowing	YES	NO
	Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	Feeling unwell / Extreme Fatigue	YES	NO
	Nausea	YES	NO
	Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
	Unexplained Loss of Appetite	YES	NO
	Loss of Sense of Taste or Smell	YES	NO
	Muscle / Joint Pain	YES	NO
	Headache	YES	NO
	Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	YES	NO
<p>If you answered "YES" to <u>one or more of the symptoms</u>, DO NOT enter the training environment. Go home immediately and contact Health Link at 8-1-1, or your primary care provider to determine if further assessment and/or COVID-19 testing is recommended.</p>			
2.	Have you, or has anyone in your household, travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Have you, or has anyone in your household, travelled in the last 14 days, to a location identified by the Provincial Health Office or Government of Sask as currently experiencing a community COVID-19 outbreak?	YES	NO
4.	Have you, or has anyone in your household, within the last 14 days, had close contact, resided with, or cared for someone without protection who is ill with a cough and/or fever?	YES	NO
5.	Have you, or anyone in your household, within the last 14 days, had close contact, resided with, or cared for someone without protection who has or is suspected to have COVID-19?	YES	NO
6.	Have you been notified by a public health authority or healthcare provider that you, or anyone in your household, may have been exposed to COVID-19 and/or that you should self-isolate?	YES	NO
7.	Have you been diagnosed with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 and are you still experiencing symptoms?	YES	NO
8.	Have you been diagnosed with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 and has it been less than 14 days since the later of your diagnosis or the ending of your symptoms, if any?	YES	NO

If you answered **"NO"** to questions 2-8, you may enter the training environment.

