

# Manitoba Soccer Association Inc.

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Dear MSA Members,

The current COVID-19 pandemic situation in our province is concerning and we urge our soccer community to do their part in keeping the public safe. We hope that by everyone following provincial health authority guidelines that the number of cases in our province will reduce and we can help flatten the curve.

The MSA is constantly evaluating how our sport should move forward taking into consideration the information from the provincial health authorities, Sport Manitoba, Canada Soccer, and membership feedback. The decisions we make are not easy, but they are made with the safety of all our participants in mind.

We want to reiterate that the Manitoba Soccer Return to Participate Status is dependent on the #RestartMB Pandemic Response System Levels as outlined in the chart below, and that we will continue to use this process:

| <b>#RestartMB Pandemic Response System Level</b> | <b>Manitoba Soccer Return to Play Status</b>                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Limited Risk (Green)</b>                      | <i>Return to Play does not apply, no restrictions other than following general guidelines</i> |
| <b>Caution (Yellow)</b>                          | <i>Return to Play Stage 3</i>                                                                 |
| <b>Restricted (Orange)</b>                       | <i>Return to Play Stage 2 or Stage 1 as determined by the MSA</i>                             |
| <b>Critical (Red)</b>                            | <i>No sanctioned soccer activities</i>                                                        |

As of today, the **Winnipeg Metropolitan and Northern Regions** remain in the Restriction Level (Orange) and will remain in Stage 2 of the Manitoba Soccer Return to Participate Indoor Guidelines and Recommendations. All other regions of the province remain in Stage 3.

**Please note that December 1<sup>st</sup> is the intended start date for the 2020/2021 indoor competition season in the Winnipeg Metropolitan and Northern Regions. This presumes that the provincial health authorities will have changed the warning level in those regions to the Caution (Yellow) level. The MSA will confirm the start date two weeks prior to allow all members to prepare. We will confirm on November 16<sup>th</sup> whether the season will start on December 1<sup>st</sup> or be postponed until January 2021.**

Once a start date for the 2020/2021 indoor competition season is confirmed, member leagues may adjust dates accordingly to maximize their competition schedules.

The MSA will provide updates as soon as possible and when appropriate.

We understand that there are many questions associated with these decisions and are providing some additional information in the form of a FAQ.

### **1. Why are other sports allowed to have competition but not soccer?**

Every provincial sport organization has put together their own individual Return to Participate guidelines in conjunction with the provincial health authorities, Sport Manitoba, and their national governing body. The MSA, along with several other sports, has chosen to base their Return to Participate Status on the #RestartMB Pandemic Response System Levels as outlined in the chart above.

### **2. Why is unsanctioned soccer allowed to have competition but not sanctioned soccer?**

Any soccer organization in Manitoba who is not a member of the Manitoba Soccer Association and thus unsanctioned can follow their own guidelines as to what they deem is appropriate as far as when to allow competition.

### **3. How many total participants (coaches & players) are allowed on a quarter field? Half field? Full field?**

The total number of coaches & players allowed on a pitch is dependent on the capacity of the facility. Occupancy and activity levels must allow people to maintain a physical distance of at least two meters.

### **4. In Stage 2, training may include activities with opposition limited to a maximum of 6v6. What if my team has 20 players on the roster?**

More than 12 participants can be on the pitch at one time, individual groups however must be limited to 12. For example, on a roster of 20 you could have 2 groups of 6 and a group of 8 all training on the same pitch. The MSA has provided sample training sessions which specifically adhere to the Stage 2 guidelines which can be found at:

[http://manitobasoccer.ca/page.php?page\\_id=104956](http://manitobasoccer.ca/page.php?page_id=104956).

### **5. What should players/coaches do when they are not actively participating in the training session? Should all coaches be wearing masks during training?**

If a player/coach is not actively participating in the training session, they should be maintaining a physical distance of 2 meters from those participating. If they are not on the field of play, they must wear a mask inside the facility, otherwise it is at their discretion.

### **6. Are playing inter-squad matches allowed?**

Inter-squad matches at training are allowed if they are kept to a maximum of 6v6. Inter-squad matches that involve 13 players or more (7v7, 9v9, 11v11) are prohibited.

### **7. If my team is practicing on half of a quarter field, and a different team is practicing on the other half – Can we play 6v6 against the team practicing on the other half?**

No, teams should only train with players on their own teams' roster. This helps keep group sizes small and contacts minimal, that also allows for better contact tracing.

### **8. What are the consequences if the Return to Participate guidelines are not followed?**

The Manitoba Soccer Association is not able to police every training session that is taking place in the province. We provide the Return to Participate Guidelines and Recommendations to the soccer community as parameters on what should be done to keep our community and our province safe. We hope that all members follow these guidelines to allow us to continue to play the sport we all love and to make it as safe as possible.

We urge everyone to please continue to follow the Return to Participate guidelines and recommendations regarding sanitizing, physical distancing, self-assessing, equipment hygiene, and following facility guidelines for players and spectators when attending any sanctioned soccer activities.

We all need to work together to keep our province and our sport safe.



Héctor Vergara  
Executive Director