



Return to Squash (R2S) Guidelines for Club Administrators, Coaches and Anyone Organizing Squash Activities

Disclaimer

Squash BC's Return to Squash (R2S) Guidelines are intended to be used for the purposes set in this document. While we aim to provide relevant and timely information, because information known about the COVID-19 coronavirus and recommended health and safety measures can rapidly change, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided in the R2S Guidelines.

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Nothing in this document is intended to provide legal advice. Do not rely on this document or treat it as legal advice.

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Version Control Table:	
Version:	Date:
Squash BC (R2S) Return to Squash Plan for Clubs and Organizers	June 24, 2020
Squash BC (R2S) Return to Squash Plan for Clubs and Organizers – Phase 3 – Progressively Loosen	September 1, 2020
Squash BC (R2S) Return to Squash Plan for Clubs and Organizers – Regional Restrictions	November 9, 2020
Squash BC (R2S) Return to Squash Plan for Clubs and Organizers – Provincial Restrictions	November 27, 2020

Return to Squash (R2S)

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As different levels of government roll out the phased plan for removing COVID-19-related restrictions, Squash BC recommends these Return to Squash (R2S) Guidelines for club administrators, coaches, and anyone organizing squash-related activities.

BC's 5 health authority sub-regions have been affected differently by COVID-19 (Vancouver Coastal, Vancouver Island, South Interior, Northern Region, Fraser Valley). Consequently, there may be unique timelines and policies regarding opening of businesses and gatherings of individuals, both which will impact when and how athletic facilities resume function and level of function. These R2S Guidelines are built on [viaSport's revised Return to Sport Guidelines](#) and [Squash Canada's Return to Play](#) Recommendations. If your facility falls under BC Parks and Recreation jurisdiction, you will also need to refer to the [BCRPA Guideline for Restarting Operations](#). **Such governing authority policies, and any risk mitigation measures they include must be followed in priority and, to the extent of any overlap or uncertainty, supersede these recommendations.**

Modifications are needed for squash activities in order to ensure that they meet BC's provincial guidelines and are consistent with the limits inherent in each phase of the Restart Plan. Squash BC is committed to safe sport and is pleased to offer this document, as well as the [Squash BC website](#) which includes references and links to relevant health and sport information and updates, including sample documents (e.g. waivers and releases). Squash BC is available to answer any questions.

The following principles from BC's Restart Plan have been used to guide this document:

Five Principles For Every Situation

Personal Hygiene:	Stay Home if You Are Sick:	Environmental Hygiene:	Safe Social Interactions:	Physical Modifications:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent handwashing • Cough into your sleeve • Wear a non-medical mask • No handshaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine daily screening • Anyone with any symptoms must stay away from others • Returning travellers must self-isolate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent cleaning • Enhance surface sanitation in high touch areas • Touch-less technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with small numbers of people • Maintain distance between you and people • Size of room: the bigger the better • Outdoor over indoor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spacing within rooms or in transit • Room design • Plexiglass barriers • Movement of people within spaces

SQUASH AS AN ACTIVITY – COVID-19 RISK FACTORS

Squash is an individual contact sport where players are often in close physical contact; much less than two metres apart. Practiced responsibly, squash can be a great opportunity for participants to relieve stress, socialize with others, provide much-needed exercise and serve an important role in BC's recovery.

However, even with the below recommendations in place, it remains an activity with an increased risk of transmission **IF** an on-court opponent, partner or coach is COVID-19 positive/infectious.

In moving to sport's Phase 3 – Progressively Loosen, viaSport has classified squash as Sport Type C - sports with frequent or sustained contact, refer to Appendix H: Activities by Sport Type on pages 42-43 of [viaSport's revised Return to Sport Guidelines](#).

ADVANCE FACILITY, OPERATIONS AND STAFF PREPARATIONS TOWARDS A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

In building the restart plan for your facility, consider the following:

1. Re-opening and Facility Access:
 - a. Check with your liability insurance provider regarding any requirements that must be met as a condition of its provision of insurance coverage upon re-opening.
 - b. Implement liability waivers for adults and disclaimer for minors - This is at the sole discretion of the club or facility. It is recommended to retain all waivers and disclaimers, and other supporting documents (e.g. attestations, declarations, etc.) in case of litigation. Sample documents are available on [Squash BC's website](#). Squash BC makes no representation that a club or facility should or should not implement return-to-play liability waivers and disclaimers. Seek legal guidance.
 - c. Implement a health screening protocol for each time someone enters your facility, and include staff, volunteers, members/clients.
 - d. Update your facility or organizations' policies and rules to include COVID-19, addressing non-compliance.
 - e. Create an Outbreak Response plan for if/when your facility becomes aware of a case or outbreak of COVID-19:
 - Initiate Illness Policy – refer to the revised sample Illness Policy in Appendix C of viaSport's Return to Sport document.
 - Implement Enhanced Cleaning – consult WorkSafeBC's Returning to Safe Operation – Sports-Recreation, <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/sports-recreation>
 - Notify regional public health officials – they will direct you on next steps.
 - f. Provide and train all staff and employees on proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>
 - g. Add protective barriers between staff and guests, e.g. clear protective shield at check-in desks and pro shops, etc.

2. Facility Usage:
 - a. Reduce common touchpoints including:
 - Encouraging online reservations and payments; otherwise, electronic payments (including card tap) are strongly recommended.
 - Using ground markings to indicate proper distancing from employees, for example at reception desks. Use one-way direction of travel through the facility if possible.
 - Staggering booking times to create a buffer in the flow of individuals moving in and out of the court areas, allow players to finish and leave the area before the next set of players arrive, and allow for a court cleaning interval after each court use.
 - Electronic entry for match scoring, e.g., personal devices or email game info to an appropriate club representative.
 - Adapting locker/change room protocol, e.g. limit time, amenities and occupancy based on appropriate phase of provincial government guidelines.
 - Limit players from spreading out their gear across multiple surfaces.
 - Prohibiting any wiping of sweat from hands or forearms on any court wall. Players who sweat considerably should be permitted to wear small, personal hand towels or bring them onto the court.
 - b. Implement and communicate enhanced hygiene practices, i.e. hard-surface disinfectants, availability of hand sanitizer at all relevant locations throughout the facility, safe disposal of garbage, restricting water fountain usage to touchless or foot activated.
 - c. Pro-shop services and operations:
 - Supply PPE gloves for customers to handle merchandise
 - Use disinfectant wipes on all unsold merchandise that was touched
 - Replace the grip on demo racquets after use, and wipe down entire racquet.
 - d. General operations:
 - Limit your activities to those commensurate with the current Phase or Risk Level (see Table 1), including number of people allowed to gather in a defined area, closed areas, and ensure clear signage.
 - Limit the facility to the minimum number of employees required to operate.
 - Display COVID-19 operational procedures within the facility.
 - Keep a record of all clients who enter so that you may contact them if needed, for example, if an infected person should use your facility. This is critical for contact tracing requirements.
 - First Aid - in the event that first aid is required to be administered during an activity, all persons attending to the injured individual must first put on a mask and gloves.
 - i. A guide for employers and Occupational First Aid Attendants:
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/ofaa-protocols-covid-19-pandemic?lang=en>

COMMUNICATION

Clear, consistent communication is critical to the success of a return to squash strategy and roll-out. Providing and updating information and training to staff and employees, volunteers, and players is vital to creating a safe environment. Electronic communication, signage and monitoring are important, from preparing for each player's first visit to your facility through all phases of the provincial Restart Plan and ongoing play. In the unfortunate situation of needing to roll back level of activity due to a second wave of COVID-19 or other circumstance, established communication protocols will be especially important.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF, COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

1. Ensure that prior to coming to your facility:
 - a) hold virtual meeting(s) with staff to go over all protocols.
 - b) address any questions or concerns your staff may have with returning to work during this time.
2. Include in your new staff protocols:
 - a) daily assessment of their health. No staff member should attend work if they show any symptoms of being sick.
 - b) If any staff member is unsure please have them use the self-assessment tool provided free online through <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en> or through the COVID-19 BC Support App self-assessment tool, <https://www.go2hr.ca/resource-library/covid-19-bc-support-app-and-self-assessment-tool>.

COMMUNICATION WITH PLAYERS

Circulating your facility's COVID-19 measures to your members/clients should include:

1. Posting court and play-related restrictions in highly visible areas of your squash facility.
2. Posting your club's COVID-19 safety measures on your website.
3. Reminders on the responsibilities for anyone who feels unwell or shows any COVID-19 symptoms.¹
4. Ensuring that awareness for vulnerable individuals to the inherent risks associated with squash are communicated. Vulnerable individuals are defined as:
 - a. elderly individuals
 - b. anyone with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy.
5. Advise individuals to stay at home even if they show no COVID-19 symptoms IF they are in directed self-isolation on account of living, caring for, or working with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or shows symptoms of COVID-19.
6. Restricting entry for adult players - no non-playing spectators including guests or other family members.
7. For junior squash players - adjust to spectator recommendations by Levels, see Table 1: Matrix of Sample Phased-in Squash Activities with Corresponding Risk Mitigations.

¹ These include: cough, fever, difficulty breathing, and pneumonia in both lungs. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

COACHING

While every facility will be designing their own coaching protocol, the following should be incorporated as appropriate for local conditions:

1. In the early phases of re-opening, group lessons should only include persons residing in the same household.
2. Coaches should ask & remind their students before each class to ensure they are beginning their class with sanitized hands and equipment.
3. As much as possible, coaches should try to remain on the same court and adjust their schedules in order to coach on only one court at a time.
4. For on-court drills, position players in designated and well spaced-out stations.
5. Ensure coaches have training in your protocol and know how to handle the situation on court to help the players maintain their physical distancing, even when at rest or being given feedback.
6. Drills that require continuous play are recommended, as opposed to ones that require repeated ball-handling.
7. Consider the use of tape as targets in lieu of equipment such as cones.
8. Do not let players handle practice equipment. Coaches should pick up balls and other equipment used on court.
9. Encourage players to use their racquet or foot to push balls back to the drill initiator.
10. Consider utilizing video for lessons and sharing with athletes and families for home use. Explore integrating online calls and at home discussions as part of training/weekly programming.
11. Consider assigning coaching equipment to each coach as well as assigned storage areas for their equipment.

SQUASH EQUIPMENT

Squash equipment is generally regarded as racquet and ball, with certified eyewear mandatory for juniors and doubles. With COVID-19 some additional protective measures may be considered:

1. Certified eyewear for adult singles players, full face-shields, masks or other face covering, waterproof sport gloves – please note the inherent hygiene requirements for effective use.
2. Stop or minimize the use of communal club equipment, such as racquets, eyewear, and balls. If unavoidable, thoroughly sanitize communal equipment after each use.
3. Squash balls - consider spraying squash balls with a disinfectant spray after a session. The use of new balls on a regular basis is strongly recommended.
4. Instruct players to provide their own balls. Remove any squash balls that may have been left behind.
5. Handling of the ball – refer players to your current facility protocol.

PHASING IN SQUASH ACTIVITIES COMMENSURATE WITH RISK LEVELS

Governments and public health authorities are recommending gradual relaxation of restrictions and re-integration of activities in phases over time, consistent with the understood risks as at a particular time. Included in a return to squash strategy is bringing back competition, leagues and activities that may include participants from outside of your facility.

Making an assessment of whether a safe environment can be provided depends on a large range of factors, which apply differently at each venue. It is the responsibility of each squash provider, coach, and facility to assess suitability of activities based on their local circumstances.

Sport's Phase 3 - Progressively Loosen is built around a 50-player cohort model to facilitate competitive play, leagues and tournaments, by limiting the number of people that each individual will come into contact with, thereby reducing the risk of transmission and ensuring quicker contact tracing by health authorities if an outbreak occurs. A cohort is a group of participants who primarily interact with each other within the sport environment over an extended period of time.

The following key factors, from the Return to Sport Guidelines for BC document, page 23, apply to the cohort model:

- All guidance related to personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom-screening still apply.
- Cohorts should be used for activities in which it is not possible to maintain two metres physical distancing at all times.
- When in a cohort, while individuals do not need to maintain physical distancing during sport specific activities, minimized physical contact is still advised.
- At least two metres distancing should be maintained between all participants when outside of the field of play (e.g. dressing rooms, hallways, team benches, staging areas, etc.).
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained masks should be worn.
- Cohorts should be made up of individuals/teams of similar age or skill level.
- Each cohort can be comprised of multiple teams in order to form a mini-league. With the use of cohorts, game play can resume between teams within the cohort.
- Cohorts should not exceed the number outlined in Appendix H.
- Cohort sizes are different from maximum group sizes. When members of the cohort are gathering for games or activities, gatherings may not exceed 50 people (see PHO Order).
- Coaches may be counted outside the total cohort number if they are able to maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Keep players together in designated cohorts and make sure that cohorts avoid mixing with each other as much as possible.
- Cohorts should remain together for an extended period of time. If looking to change cohorts, implement a two-week break between activities.
- Individuals should limit the number of sport cohorts to which they belong in order to reduce the number of people they are interacting with.
- Where officials (if being used) are unable to physically distance, an official(s) should be assigned to a specific cohort and avoid having them interact with multiple cohorts.
- Parents and spectators are not included in the cohort limits. They should continue to maintain physical distancing at all times and are subject to maximum capacity of the facility where play is occurring.

Table 1: SQUASH BC'S (R2S) RETURN TO SQUASH STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 27, 2020

ELEMENTS	RECOMMENDATION
Enhanced Protocols	Increased personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom screening
Contact Tracing	Ensure complete occupancy information should contact tracing be required.
Group Size e.g. number of people on a court	Singles court - 2 people for games/matches or drills and 2 people + coach for lessons
	Doubles court - 4 people for games/matches or drills and 4 people + coach for lessons
Trusted Bubble/Trusted Pod (Person or people you feel comfortable and safe with. The number of people in your bubble/pod is determined individually)	SQBC recommends keeping the number of people you play games/matches or drills with to individuals you feel safe with.
Cohort Size (A cohort is a group of participants who primarily interact with each other within the sport environment over an extended period of time (e.g. leagues and tournaments)	Squash falls in Category C for sport with frequent or sustained contact. A cohort of up to 50 squash players is allowable for competition. Note: facilities may have restrictions on the number in a cohort based on their own safety plans.
Games/Matches	YES as viaSport's Phase 3 Progressively Loosen guidelines
In-House/Inter-Club	In-house only
Spectators	NO as per PHO
Travel for Competition	NO outside of community for teams as per PHO (currently under review by viaSport to get a better understanding for individuals. SQBC interprets this as no travel between geographic regions by individuals (e.g. Lower Mainland to Okanagan)
Continued Safety Protocols on Court	Forego handshake No sweat wall-wiping Court sanitizing
Masks in Facility	As per PHO, masks must be worn when indoors except when on court

APPENDIX A – TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLAYERS:

Check with your facility about their approach to squash during COVID-19 and how they apply the protocols outlined in Squash BC's Return to Squash (R2S) Guidelines document. Each facility may be different in how they apply these protocols and their risk management decisions. Please continue to be patient with them as they work on what the evolving guidance means for their players and staff.

BEFORE YOU PLAY

- Play only with individuals considered to be low risk.
- Do not play if you or your playing partner:
 - Exhibit any coronavirus symptoms, such as a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by health experts.
 - Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - Are considered vulnerable or at risk (elderly individuals, immunosuppressed persons, individuals suffering from serious health problems, notably high blood pressure, pulmonary diseases, diabetes, obesity and asthma).

PREPARING TO PLAY

Protect yourself against infections:

- Wash your hands with disinfectant soap and water for at least 20 seconds before going onto a squash court.
- Bring hand sanitizer if none provided at your facility.
- Clean your equipment, including your racquets and water bottles.
- Do not share equipment with your playing partner.
- Bring enough water with you to avoid having to touch a tap or water fountain handle.
- If you wear a mask or gloves please carefully monitor your health as you exert yourself. Wearing a mask or face covering restricts the flow of air into your lungs, which means your lungs have to work harder to get the same amount of air that they're used to.
- If you cough or sneeze, do so into a tissue or in your sleeve.
- If you touch something, make sure to wash your hands and disinfect the surface you have touched.

WHILE PLAYING

- **No sweat wall wiping.**
- Avoid **all** physical contact (no shaking hands, high fives, etc.).
- Avoid touching your face after manipulating a ball, racquet or when you hit the ball to another player.

AFTER PLAYING

- Leave the court immediately after you finish playing.
- Consider spraying squash balls with a disinfectant spray after a session and take balls with you. The use of new balls on a regular basis is strongly recommended.
- Wash your hands carefully with water and disinfectant soap or with hand sanitizer.

Note: Last Page is a Printable Version to post at your facility and is also posted on [SquashBC's website](#)

APPENDIX B – VERSION HISTORY – RETURN TO SQUASH (R2S) GUIDELINES

VERSION RELEASE DATE	UPDATES AND CHANGES
June 24, 2020	Original document
September 1, 2020	viaSport Phase 3 – Progressively Loosen revisions
November 9, 2020	Regional Restrictions – Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Valley Health Regions at Level 2 vs. Vancouver Island, Interior and Northern Health Regions at Level 5.
November 27, 2020	Provincial Restrictions – updated document to include all 5 health regions under same guidance. Replacement of 6 Levels with a Status table.



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