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

VERSION 2 – UPDATED SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

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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This document was approved by the Squash BC Board of Directors on September 1, 2020.

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Return to Squash (R2S)

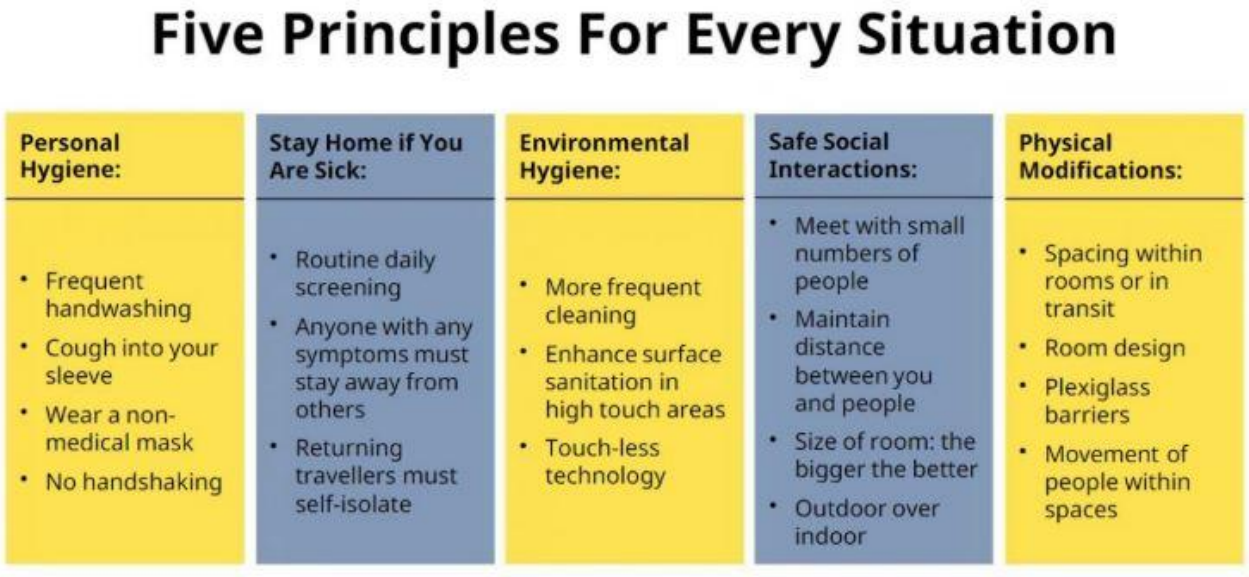
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As different levels of government roll out the phased plan for removing COVID-19-related restrictions, Squash BC recommends these Return to Squash (R2S) Guidelines for club administrators, coaches, and anyone organizing squash-related activities.

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 Return to Sport Guidelines for BC 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:



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 viaSport's revised Return to Sport Guidelines for BC document.

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 programing.
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: Matrix of Sample Phased-in Squash Activities with Corresponding Risk Mitigations

Based on Squash BC and BC's Restart phasing, consider the following matrix when designing your return to squash plan. Mitigation strategies will need to be practiced throughout Levels 1-5. **As of August 24, 2020, sport moved into viaSport's Phase 3 – Progressively Loosen, moving squash into Level 5 below**.

You will need to check with your facility about their approach to this phase of re-opening, and how they will move within this phase, including timing of this progression. Please continue to be patient with them as they work on what the new guidance means for their players and staff.

Risk Mitigation		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Risk		Low → High					
Criteria	Enhanced protocols	Increased personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom screening	Increased personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom screening	Increased personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom screening	Increased personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom screening	Increased personal hygiene, cleaning protocols and symptom screening	Increased hand hygiene
	Group size	Solo play or family same household members only	2 people only	Bubble up to 5 people	Bubble up to 8 people	Larger cohort group -50 players	Resume normal play
	In/out of club	Within Club	Within club	Within Club	Within club	Inter-club within region unless approved by Squash BC	Resume normal play
	Number of people on a court	1-2 people on court	3 people on court	3 people on court	4 people on court	Resume normal play	Resume normal play
	Spectators including parents	No	No	No	Number is based on health authority and club regulations	Number is based on health authority and club regulations	Unlimited spectators permitted

Risk Mitigation		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Type of Squash Activity	Drills - Singles and Doubles	●Training solo on court, own ball ●Training with a member of the same household	2 players training on singles or doubles court, only one ball handler	Up to 3 same bubble players on court (no mixing of courts for duration of drills)	Up to 4 same bubble players on court (no mixing of courts for duration of drills)	Regular drills within larger cohort	Resume normal operations
	Lessons & Coaching		One-person training on court with 1 coach at safe distance, only one of whom is permitted to handle a ball	Up to 3 people including the coach on court – if not same bubble - maintain appropriate distancing and no mixing of courts	Up to 4 people including the coach on court – if not same bubble - maintain appropriate distancing and no mixing of courts	Numbers are within larger cohort provision	Resume normal operations
	Singles Play	Playing with a member of the same household	Playing with a member of the same household	Regular game, in-club leagues or ladder play - same bubble	In-club leagues and activities - up to 4 players on court – same bubble	Regular play - in-region	Resume normal operations
	Doubles Play			In-club doubles play – same bubble	In-club doubles play – same bubble	Regular play - in-region	Resume normal operations
	Inter-Club League – Doubles and Singles					League play (see criteria)	Resume normal operations
	Tournaments				In-club competitions	Host singles and doubles tournaments in-region (see criteria)	Resume normal operations
	Other Events or Activities (examples)			Solo practice with a ball machine, many balls		Camps - in-Province participants only	Invite international players for an exhibition, demo or clinic

Risk Mitigation		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Personal Equipment and Facility Amenities	Forego handshake		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Face Shield		✓	✓	✓		
	Mask	✓	✓	✓			
	Own ball	✓	✓				
	Bins for personal gear	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Court sanitizing between sessions	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	No locker room or showers	✓	✓	✓			
	No towels available	✓	✓	✓			
	No sweat wall wiping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

APPENDIX A – TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLAYERS:

Check with your facility about their approach to what Level they are at (corresponding to Squash BC's Return to Squash (R2S) Guidelines). Each facility will be different in how they move through the levels and their risk management decisions. Please continue to be patient with them as they work on what the new 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: Next Page is a Printable Version to post at your facility and is also posted on SquashBC's website

SQUASH BC

TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLAYERS

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See Squash BC's Return to Squash (R2S) Guidelines for expanded information.