

ROPSSAA Return to Play – 2021-2022

December 7, 2021

Introduction

The Region of Peel Secondary School Athletic Association (ROPSSAA) is the inter-school body responsible for organizing and operating secondary school sports in the Region of Peel. ROPSSAA is comprised of schools in the Peel District School Board, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and several local independent schools. Overall, the Association services 73 secondary schools and approximately 29000 student athletes.

The government of Ontario released the “COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022)” guidance document on August 3rd and updated August 13th which permitted the return of inter-school extra-curricular sports with guidelines for “high contact” and “low contact” activities.

Based on this guidance and the current state of COVID-19 cases in the region, ROPSSAA is *continuing to offer a conservative approach to sporting activities for the Winter Season.*

This document serves as a framework of health and safety protocols that must be followed for a safe return to inter-school sport in Peel Region. ROPSSAA will implement the sports consistent with PHU guidance, MOE PHE Guidelines, OPHEA OPASSE Standards, and Provincial Sport Organization protocols/progressions for each sport.

It is worth emphasizing that the framework outlined in this document will need to be revised by school officials and Peel Public Health during the school year based on evolving knowledge and shifting pandemic scenarios.

For more information on COVID-19 visit <https://www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/>

2021-2022 Sport Schedule

Due to the enhanced planning and health and safety requirements for operation of high school sport, not all sports will operate in the same manner that they traditionally have. Seasons and events may be delayed accommodating the gradual return to activity after such a long layoff. Activities will need to be modified to ensure the safety of all participants and reduce the risk of transmission as much as possible (eg. no double headers). What follows is a list of activities traditionally offered by ROPSSAA and the season in which they are operated. Note that individual boards/schools may restrict the number of activities a student can participate in during any one season.

Fall Season

Sport	Setting	Contact
Basketball (Girls)	Indoors	High
Bocce (Unified Special Olympics)	Outdoors	Low
Cross Country Running	Outdoors	Low
Field Hockey	Outdoors	High
Flag Football	Outdoors	High
Tackle Football	Outdoors	High
Golf	Outdoors	Low
Rugby 7's	Outdoors	High
Tennis	Outdoors	Low
Volleyball (Boys)	Indoors	High

Winter Season

Sport	Setting	Contact
Alpine Skiing	Outdoors	Low
Basketball (Boys' & Special Olympics)	Indoors	High
Bowling (Special Olympics)	Indoors	Low
Curling	Indoors	Low
Ice Hockey	Indoors	High
Nordic Skiing	Outdoors	Low
Swimming	Indoors	Low
Table Tennis	Indoors	Low
Volleyball (Girls')	Indoors	High
Wrestling	Indoors	High

Spring Season

Sport	Setting	Contact
Archery	Indoors*	Low
Badminton	Indoors	Low
Baseball	Outdoors	Low
Cricket	Indoors*	Low
Field Lacrosse	Outdoors	High
Rugby 15's	Outdoors	High
Softball (Fastpitch & Slo-Pitch)	Outdoors	Low
Soccer	Outdoors	High
Track & Field	Outdoors	Low
Ultimate Frisbee	Outdoors	Low

*sport could potentially be modified for outdoors

Guiding Principals

All participants 12 years of age or older in any indoor, or high contact outdoor extra-curricular sports and athletic activities must be fully vaccinated. Refer to your school board operating procedure to determine process for verifying vaccination status of participants.

Ideally and as much as possible, physical activity (especially high-intensity, high-contact) should be performed outdoors while maintaining as much physical distance as possible.

Masks should always be worn for all forms of indoor physical activity where they can be worn safely (e.g., does not interfere with vision, or risk of choking) based on the activity and as much physical distancing as possible should be maintained between individuals.

Masks should be replaced frequently if they are damp, moist, compromised, or damaged. Windows and doors should be opened when feasible to support increased ventilation during indoor physical activity.

While masks/distance may not be possible during practice/competition for some sports, coaches and athletes must wear masks (and use distance) when not directly participating in the activity for example, in change rooms and during other gatherings such as team meetings, sitting on team bench, watching other games, etc.

Other protective elements including symptom screening, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette must always be maintained. Further note: Masks are mandatory to wear in our school buildings during the school day.

Protocols

The following protocols have been developed based on guidance from the Ministry of Education, OPHEA/OPSASSE, the Peel District School Board, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and Peel Public Health. Protocols are broken down by the role of each individual and would apply to all activities. Prior to authorizing any activities at the school, it is strongly recommended that administrators review these protocols with coaching staff and clarify site specific processes.

Head Coach/Staff Liaison

- Always wear a medical mask and eye protections when it is possible to be less than 2m from unmasked students.
- Coaches must wear PPE provided by the school board and the Ministry of Education.
- Develop a COVID Operation Plan for approval by your principal (eg. Communication to families, attendance tracking, schedule, etc.).
- Practices should focus on a gradual return to activities (high contact activities must follow progression as per the sport specific OPHEA Guidelines).
- The first practice must involve a review of all COVID-19 expectations for participants

- It is your responsibility to ensure that your plan has been approved by your principal PRIOR to communication with coaches/students/families.
- Ensure that each student participant has completed the permission to participate consent form prior to starting.
- *Verify that all participants have had their vaccination status confirmed with school administration*
- Verify that each participant (all coaches and players) has successfully completed the COVID-19 self-assessment and be symptom free prior to attending the practice.
 - The Ministry of Education self-assessment tool must be used for all staff, students, and volunteers. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>
- Maintain an attendance record for each practice/game of all participants, that must be shared with the principal/vice principal(s) to allow for contact tracing as required. A sample sign in sheet will be provided to all schools.
 - Practice: Each school may use a process that works for their unique situation.
 - Games: The ROPSSAA game sheets will be used to record attendance of coaches and players present at the game. Game sheets must be posted on the ROPSSAA.org website by 12:00noon the day following the game. Hard copies of the game sheets for both teams must be collected by the host school and kept for the required amount of time. Additionally, the host school must have a “sign in” sheet for all minor officials (scorekeepers, line judges etc.) and referees.
 - Other Activities: Attendance will be recorded at other activities that do not have game sheets (tennis, golf, cross country, bocce).
- Keep records of transportation cohorts if using taxis/carpooling or bus seating plans
- Supervise all participants to ensure COVID-19 protocols are adhered to - including hand sanitizing on arrival to practice/games, physical distancing, no unnecessary touching between athletes etc. (high fives, pre and post-game huddles etc.).
- Ensure equipment has been properly sanitized prior to and after the practice/games.
 - Refer to school board Health and Physical Education policy on shared equipment.
 - If students are assigned equipment for the season, encourage them to sanitize their equipment at home.
- If yourself/anyone notifies you that they have tested positive, please contact your principal/vice principal immediately.
- Have a designated space/room if a student/adult have symptoms arise during the practice that is separate from all other attendees so that they are isolated before they leave and seek medical advice.
- This isolation space/room should:
 - Have only one individual within the space/room to reduce the risk of transmission.
 - Contain several PPE kits and each kit shall contain medical masks, disposable gowns, goggles, gloves, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and a thermometer. The kit should be used by the ill individual and the staff member attending to them. Instructions on the proper use of PPE should be posted on the isolation room door.

- Post mandatory mask use, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, and physical distancing signage inside the isolation room/space.
- Ensure that furniture is configured to enable at least 2 meters of distance from the ill individual.
- Ensure that the isolation room/space has a deep clean after each use.
- Refer to School board policy regarding supervision of this space.
- *When required by outside facilities, present proof of vaccination in accordance with facility policy.*

Assistant/Community Coaches

- *Verify your vaccination status with school administration.*
- Each coach must complete a COVID-19 self-assessment and be symptom-free prior to arriving at the field/gym <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>
- Always wear a mask and eye protections when less than 2m from unmasked students.
- Maintain physical distance from others as much as possible.
- If yourself/anyone notifies you that they have tested positive for COVID-19, contact the lead coach/principal/vice principal immediately.
- Volunteer community coaches are allowed but should ideally be limited where possible to reduce risk of transmission outside the school.
- Community coaches must be approved by the school administration. It is required that all community coaches be fully vaccinated.
- Community coaches must follow all enhanced health and safety measures that board staff follow.
- Coaches must meet certification standards for their sport as identified in the OPHEA safety guidelines.
- *When required by outside facilities, present proof of vaccination in accordance with facility policy.*

Players

- Each student must complete a “permission to participate” consent form prior to starting practices.
- *For high contact outdoor or any indoor activity each participant must verify their vaccination status with school administration by downloading their COVID-19 verification QR code.*
- Each participant must complete a COVID-19 self-assessment (MOE App completed day of practice/game), pass the assessment and be symptom-free prior to arriving at the field/gym <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>
 - Players must present the passed screening to the coach or designate at each practice/game.
- Follow all directions of coaches.
- Arrive dressed and ready for practice/games. The number of players who visit the washroom/changeroom at any one time may be limited.
- Bring your own water bottle(s) with your name on it.

- A mask must always be worn when you are not actively practicing/playing on the field/court (this includes in bench areas).
- When an athlete enters the field of play, their mask should be stored in a paper bag or container with a lid labeled with their name. OR follow any other process that has been designed and approved by school staff.
- Maintain physical distance from others as directed, especially while eating or drinking with masks off and don't participate in unnecessary physical contact with others eg. high fives, pre-game huddles.
- Sanitize hands upon arrival to the field/gym and after breaks. Sanitizer will be made available in the bench area.
- If you have any COVID-19 symptoms that arise during practice, please notify a coach immediately go home right away OR proceed to the designated isolation room if you cannot go home right away and are waiting for parents/guardians to come pick you up.
 - Be aware that an isolation room will be accessed by staff if symptoms arise during practice or a game.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 you need to contact the coach/school immediately.
- No congregating in school facilities after the conclusion of games/practices. Ensure you have transportation home arranged.
- *When required by outside facilities, present proof of vaccination in accordance with facility policy.*

Officials

- All officials must complete the Ministry's COVID-19 self-assessment and be symptom-free prior to arriving at the field/gym <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>
- Wear a medical mask while on school premises and not actively officiating.
- Record your attendance with the host school (name, contact information) for contact tracing purposes.
- *All officials must be fully vaccinated.*
- *When required by outside facilities, present proof of vaccination in accordance with facility policy.*

Parents and Spectators

- *No spectators/parents at indoor events*
- *Spectators are permitted at outdoor events (i.e., Football, Track and Field, etc.). For unseated events, spectators permitted at a maximum capacity of 75% or 5,000 people (whichever is less) and other restrictions. For events with fixed seating, spectators permitted at a maximum capacity of 75% or 15,000 people (whichever is less) and other restrictions.*
- It is the responsibility of the host school to ensure that large gatherings at school events are limited.
- *Administrators should regularly remind parent spectators (e.g., via communication sent out to the school community) that they should wear a mask while attending a sporting event as per the Reopening Ontario Act regulations.*

- *16. (1) 4. Every outdoor spectator must wear a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, unless they are entitled to any of the exceptions set out in subsection 2 (4) of Schedule 1, or are seated with members of their own household only, and every member of the household is seated at least two meters from every person outside their household.*
- *Where events are hosted at outside facilities, ROPSSAA will defer to facility policy on attendance. (Vaccination status, supervision, etc.)*

Equipment

- Equipment should be sanitized before and after practice/games and should be stored clean and disinfected.
- Cleaning and disinfectant products provided by the Ministry must be used.
- Focus should be on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection related to shared materials, particularly when regular cleaning of shared objects is not feasible.
- As much as possible, sharing of equipment between individuals should be limited.

Transportation & Travel

Travel within Peel

- Avoid carpooling when possible. If carpooling, open windows and always wear masks.
- Taxis can be used for transport. The same students must travel together to and from events. Records must be kept of which students travelled in which group. Open windows to ensure air flow.
- Busses/busettes can be used at full capacity. Masks must always be worn. Students must be assigned seats. Open windows to ensure air flow.
- *Schools may not combine transportation to events. Each school must arrange their own transportation to and from ROPSSAA events. Only those participating in the ROPSSAA event may travel with the teams.*

Travel outside of Peel (OFSAA Events)

- *Follow school board and public health guidance on inter-regional travel.*

Team Social Events

- Non-athletic team events, such as team dinners or other social activities, *can occur indoors if a vaccine requirement is in place. (e.g. the team can dine at a restaurant as long as all athletes are fully vaccinated).*
- Socializing with other teams is strongly discouraged.

Positive Test Reporting

- If a member of a team reports a positive case, refer to your school Board policy regarding case reporting among students and staff.
- The school reporting the positive test is responsible for notifying the other participating school(s) and ROPSSAA of the positive test.
- Community coaches must report a positive test to the school they coach for.
- Officials must report a positive test to Peel Public Health and their Assignor.
- It is strongly recommended that each team have the necessary contact tracing information prepared and on file prior to games commencing to make the process of notification as efficient as possible.

Tournaments

- It is the recommendation of Peel Public Health that only fully vaccinated students and staff be permitted to participate in interprovincial tournaments (Outside of Ontario).
- Each board will determine the eligibility for their school teams to participate in tournaments/events hosted outside of Peel Region (including OFSAA).
- *ROPSSAA may utilize mini-tournament formats for some events. These events would only occur in facilities with adequate space for distancing. (for example, curling, hockey, wrestling)*