

## FAQ | RETURN TO PLAY

**Q: How does NOCA interpret indoor gathering limits imposed in Stage 3 of Ontario's reopening plan?**

**A:** As of August 15/20 sport, fitness, and recreation facilities will be permitted to apply a capacity limit on a per room basis. These facilities can have up to 50 patrons for each indoor sport or fitness room, while ensuring physical distancing of at least two metres. [Read More Here.](#)

**Q: What is NOCA's interpretation of Ontario's framework on league capacity?**

**A:** "Leagues must contain no more than 50 participants total. If participants in a league exceed 50, the league may divide into smaller groups of no more than 50. Players are not yet permitted to play against players outside of their league or group."

"Smaller groups" may share the ice at the same time. Individuals may participate in more than one league.

We've heard that different health units are interpreting this rule differently. [Click Here](#) to see the message NOCA received from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (highlighted response on page 6).

**Q: What are the recommended guidelines for youth curling instruction?**

**A:** The requirement for social distancing remains the same as any other event or program therefore the program should be limited to the number of people that can maintain two metres of distance, to a maximum of 50 participants sharing the ice at once.

Consider spacing participants across multiple sheets, at different ends of the rink, or even across several sessions/times.

As with schools, one might consider making an effort to place participants in cohorts, which means that they be with the same group of children at each session and contact be limited with multiple instructors and a wide variety of other children.

As with schools, one might consider requiring or recommending the use of face coverings. Consider asking that younger aged participants, who may not wear a mask in school, be accompanied by a parent who can ensure that they are respecting an appropriate amount of social distance and following special instructions.

As youth are less likely to follow Curling Canada's recommendation on-ice traffic flow, consider limiting gameplay and focusing on skill development; or consider alternative forms of competition such as singles, doubles and triples curling.

Remember to ensure that athletes are assigned their own equipment (that they use only their assigned broom and slider, not share delivery aids, and throw only their assigned rocks).

**Q: If a club does not open, or opens only for a shorter season, how will NOCA collect dues?**

**A:** If a club does not open and does not collect fees from their members then neither will NOCA. This will not affect a club's affiliation with the Northern Ontario Curling Association, the Ontario Curling Council, or Curling Canada.

A club that opens for any duration of time will be charged as usual (\$15 NOCA and \$2 Curling Canada). This is typical as NOCA has affiliated clubs that, under regular circumstances, operate for various lengths of curling seasons.

If an unexpected interruption during the season, that is outside of the control of a club, is experienced NOCA promises to assess the severity of the disruption, among other factors, and in consultation with the club make a decision that is fair to all parties involved.

**Q: Will there be any NOCA Youth Challenges organized this season?**

**A:** NOCA will not be sanctioning any Youth Challenge events in the year 2020. More time is required to evaluate the challenges and risks of operating such events. If it is determined that NOCA can deliver these events safely and with respect to public health advisories such will be taken into consideration for the 2021 portion of this season.

**Q: Is there a chance that a club could be held liable if there is a breakout of cases originating from within the club?**

**A:** Like with any other situation that involves risk, if the club is negligent - yes. NOCA strongly recommends that curling rinks update their waivers and forms before permitting individuals to participate in the sport of curling. Curling Canada has created a "Waiver", "Assumption of Risk", and "Declaration of Compliance" for use by affiliated clubs (available at [curlnoc.ca/coronavirus](http://curlnoc.ca/coronavirus)).

In British Columbia there is a Ministerial Order enacted that orders protection against liability for sports from COVID-19 for as long as the province is in a state of emergency. We are advocating for the same in Ontario but have not been granted such at this time.

**Q: What recommendations is NOCA making for improved treatment of air (more frequent filet changes, UV-C treatment, air exchange, etc.)?**

**A:** *Working on an answer*

**Q: Can NOCA recommend special consideration for seniors curling?**

**A:** Given that senior curling programs are during the day and serve mostly retired individuals one might consider spacing draws throughout the day and creating more space between games on the ice (using less sheets). You might consider three-person teams or looking at different formats such as “Stirling” (Stick Curling) that is played two-on-two.

Consider that senior curling may be more in demand this season with travel restrictions in place. NOCA recommends gathering input from senior curlers and assessing whether or not additional league options (more days per week) might be necessary.

**Q: Is NOCA recommending play on every other sheet for league play?**

**A:** NOCA is recommending that clubs work with local health authorities on a variety of measures to ensure appropriate social distancing. Playing on every other sheet may be part of that strategy. A club might also consider staggered start times to reduce congestion in locker rooms, lounges, and on backboards to begin the game. Clubs might also consider alternating where the “home end” or “starting end” is to alleviate congestion at the beginning and conclusion of ends.

**Q: Are provincial playdowns going to be held this season?**

**A:** Curling Canada has announced that the 2020 national mixed and curling club championships have been cancelled. NOCA will not be hosting the 2020 provincial mixed or club championship events that were leading to these national events and were re-scheduled to this fall after being interrupted by COVID-19 in the spring.

We still intend to run a provincial mixed and curling club championship this season as we have such scheduled for the spring of 2021. NOCA has teams that had qualified for the 2020 Club Championship Provincials previous to the pandemic and they have been offered automatic entrance into an expanded field for the 2021 provincial.

No decision has been made on our other championships, but it is our intention to run whatever we can so long as it is allowed and safe to do so.

**Q: What happens if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in a club? Who is required to isolate (the single athlete, the one team, both teams, everyone on the ice? Is the club required to close, and if so, for how long?**

**A:** The local health authority will make those decisions for you. Please [Click Here](#) for advice on this matter from Curling Canada.

**Q: Is NOCA recommending the use of face coverings in Curling Clubs?**

**A:** We are. In most, if not all, Northern Ontario health unit district the use of a face covering indoors is mandatory. Some health units require that a face cover be worn at all time while other specify that a face covering must only be worn when entering or exiting a facility, and when accessing common areas, but that you may remove the face covering during exercise (only if physical distancing of two metres can be maintained). Due to the nature of our sport (the yelling and screaming involved in communicating the weight and line of a stone) NOCA recommends that clubs consider requiring face coverings at all times.

**Q: Does NOCA have suggestions on how to manage the 50-person gathering limit as it pertains to drop-in leagues?**

**A:** Leagues must be limited to a registration of 50 persons. If a club's drop-in league is registered and paid for in advance, then that league must not exceed 50 registrations. If participants in a drop-in program register and "pay as they go" then a club might be okay to consider that each unique event is its own league (which still must be limited to 50 persons, though possibly different participants on each occasion).