

# Games Protocols

## Low Contact

GUIDELINES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF COVID-19 SPREAD

August 20, 2020 \*In effect until further  
notice



FREDERICTON DISTRICT SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## Introduction

This document is intended as a guide allowing the various local leagues and clubs to set up directives to ensure the smooth running of games with Low Contact as part of the resumption of activities during COVID-19.

The reality of each club, each region, each league and each field is different. The directives in the next pages relate to the supervision of the match, particularly at the level of hygiene and sanitary measures. Procedures may vary slightly depending on the league, age category, land layout, etc. however, these are the protocols laid out and adhered to by FDSA at all HOME games. It is our understanding that all clubs in New Brunswick shall follow similar guidelines unless a facility requires specific adjustments. This guideline shall be shared with each travelling club prior to their scheduled match so that they are made aware of any unique requirements from FDSA venues

## Game protocols

The role of the Field Marshal volunteer is retained during games.

- their role is to ensure that players, coaches, referees and any other person on the field and on technical areas wash their hands when they arrive on the field.
- The host club Field Marshal must ensure that the referees' hands are washed and must ask the participation questions. Referees will be informed of this by the referee association.
- Each team shall have a supervisor, who can be a coach, manager or parent.
- Each supervisor shall take care of their own team, not the opponent.
- Teams are responsible to bring sanitizer to away games.
- Participation questions must be asked by the coach, or the supervisor if it's another person, to their own players. A list shall be provided to the Field Manager BEFORE entering the facility
- The team supervisor must be identified on the match sheet. A "hygiene supervisor" function.
- If a player, a referee or a coach answers "YES" to one of the participation questions, they cannot take part in the match and must return home.

### Arrival to the game

- Arrival procedures may vary depending on the league, age category, land layout, etc. these are the protocols laid out and adhered to by FDSA at all games. FDSA field procedures are located within this document
- If a match takes place before, it is important to avoid crossovers between the teams.
- Players and coaches should gather in a pre-determined area, OUTSIDE the facility as a team so the screening and sanitizing can take place
- If a player arrives late and his/her team has already entered the playing facility, that player must properly be screened and hands sanitized by the Field Marshall volunteer at the entrance of the facility.
- No one shall enter the facility until the participants and spectators from the previous match have vacated the facility
- The players must arrive dressed ready to start their warm-up.
- We ask that parents enter the field only at the start of the match to allow players, coaches and referees to safely enter the playing area.
- Spectators shall respect the standards of distancing in force.

### Before the match

- The questionnaire is administered by the supervisor of each team, to their own players. If a breach in hand washing is observed by the official, the official must indicate this in his report at the end of the match.

- The referees must stand two meters apart during the entire pre-match (warm-up included).
- No protocol for the pre-match.
- A distance of 2 meters must be respected during game entry.
- The balls must be disinfected before the match, after having been checked by the referees.
- The Home club is responsible for disinfecting the game balls.
- The balls can be disinfected with disinfectant wipes, a spray bottle, or directly with a Purell type liquid.
- No sharing of equipment for the referees (whistle, flag, pencils, etc.).
- No sharing of bottled water for players.
- For the bibs of the substitute players, a player cannot wear the bib of a teammate following a change.
- In the case of a match where there is no physiotherapist, each team must have in their possession an emergency kit with gloves and mask so that a responsible person registered on the match sheet can attend to an injured player.

### During the match

- Spitting and group celebrations are not recommended.
- A player should not approach within 2 meters of a referee (with the exception of situations during play where a player could run alongside a referee).
- It is the referee's responsibility to ensure, with discernment, a gradual management of these behaviors.
- On the bench, as everywhere outside the field, the rules of physical distancing must be respected at all times. A mask is recommended, but not mandatory.
- The team supervisor is responsible for the application of these measures for his own team.
- The match balls are disinfected at half-time.
- The Home club is responsible for disinfecting the match balls at half-time.

### After the game

- No handshake at the end of the match.
- No feedback on the match with the players can be made on the field.
- Players, coaches and referees will allow spectators to vacate the facility BEFORE they are permitted to leave the field of play. This is important to avoid crossing paths with spectators as both spectators and players/coaches/referees will exit through the same gate.
- Any post-game de-brief/team talk/cool down must take place OUTSIDE of the facility gates.
- Players/Coaches/Referees should exit the facility as quickly as possible AFTER spectators to allow for game happening afterward to begin as scheduled
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### Spectators

- Spectators will be allowed inside the gates at Scotiabank North and South facilities
- Spectators may not enter the facility until kickoff and shall leave immediately after the game is completed
- At **Scotiabank South**, spectators will leave facility BEFORE the players and will exit through the exit gate at the East end of the facility
- At **Scotiabank North**, spectators will leave BEFORE the players. They will walk across the grass strip near the entrance gate, along the fence and exit through the 'exit' gate at the SE corner of the facility
- Attendance will be taken by the Field Manager upon entrance to facilitate contact tracing. 1 name per family will be documented. A sign in sheet will be with the volunteers at the front gate
- Wearing of masks is recommended
- Social distancing shall be respected at all times
- Spectators must stay behind the steel barriers at all times. ONLY players, coaches and referees are permitted on the playing surface
- All spectators must be seated in the grandstand and may not lean against the steel barriers. Lawn chairs are not permitted anywhere on the turf surface

## Laws of the Game Adjustments:

Game Rules will follow the FIFA Laws of the Game except for those laws below which have been adjusted or added to reduce the duration, intensity and frequency of physical contact during training and games in order to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread.

-Free Kicks: Except for Penalty Kicks, all free kicks are in-direct. Fouls that would normally result in a direct free kick that are committed by a defender in their penalty area will be punished by a penalty.

- Walls for Free Kicks: Defenders must be (two) 2 meters apart from one another when creating a wall.

After the first verbal warning for failure to comply, a yellow card will be issued for unsporting behavior.

- Throw-ins: No throw-ins. The ball must be kicked into play. The ball must be placed outside the line. The

ball is in play as soon as it enters the Field of Play. The kick must remain below knee height or an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opponents at the spot of the throw-in. Opponents must be 10 yards from the taking of the kick. No offside on kick-ins.

- Corner kicks: All corner kicks must be kicked in below knee height level. Failure to comply will result in a goal kick to the defending team.

- Drop ball: The drop ball requirement has been removed to reduce handling of the ball and has been converted to an indirect free kick. If the drop ball is inside the penalty area after hitting the Referee, the ball automatically goes to the Goalkeeper. The Referee leaves the ball on the ground, and the Goalkeeper picks it up.

**An in-direct free kick** awarded when a player intentionally commits any of the following offenses (penalty kick awarded when infringement takes place in penalty area):

- kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
- tripping an opponent
- jumping at an opponent
- charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner
- charging an opponent from behind
- striking, attempting to strike, or spitting at an opponent
- holding an opponent
- pushing an opponent
- charging an opponent with shoulder (i.e., shoulder charge)

- sliding at an opponent (i.e., sliding tackle)
- No headers are allowed.

- Coin toss: No coin toss. The Home team chooses, every game, at every level.

## Discipline Adjustments:

- Automatic cautions for any players who are involved in face-to-face (but non-mass confrontation) confrontations. Jostling and 'fighting' for space will result in a straight Yellow Card for Unsporting Behaviour.
- Physical altercations "away from the ball" will result in an automatic suspension from the match. \*eg. Two players come together and push each other \* A suspension from the match does not put a team down a player.
- Players should refrain from spitting on the field. If a player spits on the field, the referee will issue a verbal warning. If the player spits a second time it will also result in an automatic suspension from the match. The procedure to suspend a player from the match is simply to identify the player and verbally advise that they are being removed from the match for an infraction of the adjusted Rules. The player is not red carded and the suspension from the current match does not impact their ability to play in future matches.

## Process Adjustments:

- The Thunder and Lightning Policy will be adjusted to read that if the game is stopped for severe weather, then the game is over in order to avoid gathering of participants in confined areas.
- Match Officials must come dressed in appropriate gear to the game/training as dressing rooms are closed during this stage.
- With modified games, a field marshal should be appointed to ensure compliance with social distancing rules and safety protocols. The field marshal should be a recognized authority within the soccer organization. This is not the role of Match Officials.
- When a player is injured, Match Officials may only observe and refer assistance to the applicable team bench. There is to be no Match Official contact with the player. Only team personnel, following proper health and safety protocols may assist the injured player.
- There will be no handshakes or high 5's between players, match officials, coaches before, during or after the game.
- Parents are not permitted to enter the playing field at the end of game or during training.
- When Match Officials are taking part in practical training sessions, they must follow the Soccer NB Return to Play Guide as well as the Province of NB health and safety guidelines.
- Match Officials at FDSA HOME games will be paid by FDSA. Teams are NOT responsible to pay officials at the field
- Parents/Guardians of youth Match Officials are considered general spectators, therefore at any facility, they must adhere to social distancing rules and all other health and safety protocols. Parents of Match Officials are not permitted to enter the field of play at any time (before, during or after games).
- Match Official assessors and mentors need to respect social distancing guidelines. These activities should take place away from the spectator side of the field of play.
- No goal celebrations are permitted which incorporates physical touching. Verbal warnings will be issued. – Players should retrieve out of play balls using only their feet. Teams must have a second game ball ready if a ball cannot be retrieved with the feet. It is the responsibility of the home team to ensure the balls are properly inflated. The other ball will be retrieved and disinfected, by the home team, before being used again.
- Postgame discussions between the officiating crew must respect social distancing rules.

- Where applicable, team physiotherapy should be set up at the end of the team benches towards the corner flags. This provides more space in the middle for the 4th Match Official and game announcer.
- It is recommended that Match Officials take the necessary safety precautions to limit the risk of infection for them. Use hand sanitizer upon arrival, when entering and leaving the field of play and before and after handling the game sheet.

## Safety Adjustments:

- Match Officials to regularly complete the COVID-19 Self-Assessment.
- \*If showing symptoms of Covid-19, contact Soccer NB assignor and cancel your assignment and call 811.
- Match Officials to thoroughly wash equipment, towels, clothes, bags, water bottles, and other items after use.
- Individuals to bring a full personal use water bottle(s) and avoid touching or using public water fountains.
- Assistant Referees must provide their own flags.
- Do not share pens, cards etc.
- Consider wearing a mask when you are not officiating.
- Wash hands prior to leaving for games; bring personal use hand sanitizer to the fields.
- It is recommended that gloves are worn to the field and individuals avoid touching gates, fences, benches, etc.
- After games and at half time, limit your distance to two (2) meters (6 feet) from others.
- No contact with others, such as hand shaking, fist bumps and high fives.
- Leave the field as soon as reasonably possible after training or games.
- No post training/game socializing.
- Match Officials have the right to abandon any game where the required COVID-19 protocols are not being followed. In these cases, it must be reported on the game sheet and to the Field Marshall.

## Officiating Adjustments:

- Pre-game meetings with Coaches and/or Assessors can take place, if done with physical distancing.
- Player inspections may still be completed, but must be at a distance of no less than two (2) meters (6 feet).
- Assistant Referees must stand a minimum of two (2) meters (6 feet) from the kicker during corner kicks.
- Match Officials are to avoid handling the ball (i.e. free kicks), by directing direct the player to retrieve the ball themselves and indicating the spot of the IFK from a safe distance

