



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION
The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

9023 111 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5B 0C3

Ph: 780 474 2200
Fax: 780 474 6300



Refereeing in Phase 2 – Q&A

Answers to the Q&A about Referees' Requirements and Protocols in Alberta Soccer – Phase 2, Return to Modified Games

General

Q: Is there any information about when Phase 3 in soccer will happen?

A: We have not been given any information from the Government of Alberta or AHS on this.

Q: Can you define un-sanctioned leagues or competitions?

A: Un-sanctioned leagues or competitions are those that are not registered or affiliated with an Alberta Soccer Member District or Alberta Soccer (AMSL, AYSL e.g.). It is a breach of Alberta Soccer Rule 13 (Referees) for any ASA registered referee to officiate in an un-sanctioned game or competition. If you are unsure if any league is sanctioned, please contact your district first then Alberta Soccer.

Q: How will you know that I attended the Phase 2 Referee Webinar?

A: Your attendance will be recorded by Zoom using the unique link that you were given to join the webinar. It tracks your attendance and the amount of time you stayed in the webinar.

Q: Will Alberta Soccer provide assistance to referees if they become infected with COVID-19 as a result of participating in Phase 2 – Return to Modified Games?

A: You are assuming the risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 by participating in team sports, so Alberta Soccer will not provide any assistance.

Q: Will I be required to sign a waiver to participate in future phases of Return to Soccer?

A: This has not yet been finalized by Alberta Soccer but there is a good possibility that waivers will be here to stay.

Q: I understand that Alberta Soccer does not wish to use referees younger than 18 for modified games, but is there an upper age limit?

A: There is no upper age limit for referees during modified games under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q: Will misconduct forms be amended to cover COVID-19 sanctions to players or coaches?

A: Yes, there will be a change to the misconduct form, and you will receive a copy in your Phase 2 referee package by email.

Q: Will we receive a copy of the webinar presentation?

A: Yes, you will receive a PDF copy of the presentation.

Q: Will there be standard suspension lengths for COVID-19 related misconduct?

A: Suspension lengths will be determined by each league or competition.



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION
The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

Q: I understand that referees younger than 18 have been offered refunds on their registration fee for 2020. Will this also be offered to adult referees who do not feel comfortable refereeing during the pandemic?

A: Yes, registration fee refunds will be considered on a case by case basis, but if you do not feel safe you will be entitled to a refund.

Q: Will there be more time scheduled between games to allow for COVID-19 precautions?

A: This will be determined by each league or competition, but we expect that they will.

Q: Will referee fees be increased to compensate for the extra work and responsibility during the pandemic?

A: This will be determined by each league or competition. Ask your assignor.

Q: How will referees access the feedback forms?

A: Referees will have the link sent directly to them in the Phase 2 package.

Q: Which leagues are using referees in Phase 2?

A: Leagues are still making decisions on this. Please contact your referee assignor for more information.

Q: Can you sue a player or coach if you get COVID-19?

A: You are assuming the risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 by participating in team sports. If you believed that a person deliberately infected you then a criminal charge would be the only option.

Q: Please clarify – ‘stop, suspend or terminate the match’.

A: ‘Stop’ is a regular stoppage in the match (fouls, ball out of play etc.) where a restart will take place in the normal timeframe. ‘Suspend’ is a longer stoppage (weather, re-sanitize ball etc.) where the game is expected to restart within a certain timeframe. ‘Terminate’ means that the match will not restart after a stoppage.

Q: If you have travelled out of province will you need to quarantine before refereeing?

A: There is no restriction in Alberta for returning from another province in terms of quarantine or self-isolation, unless you are showing symptoms. If you are returning from another country, you may have to self-isolate or quarantine if you are showing symptoms or are asymptomatic.

Q: If I decide not to referee at this time due to the risk, will this affect my future assignments?

A: No, it is perfectly reasonable to make the decision not to referee at this time. If you decide not to referee in Phase 2, you will still be eligible to referee in Phase 3, providing that you meet any requirements in place at that time.

Q: Will there be any money allowance for cleaning supplies?

A: Cleaning supplies are considered personal equipment so there is no compensation.

Q: Will trialists be allowed in games?

A: They would have to belong to the cohort, so they may as well register with the team.



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION
The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

Q: I am new to my city/town and do not know how to get games.

A: Please contact – doneill@albertasoccer.com for assistance.

Q: Will the games have water breaks similar to what we see in televised games?

A: 'Temperature related breaks' will be allowed as per Alberta Soccer's memo, which will be published with the Rules of Play.

Q: Have games with no spectators been considered to reduce possible issues?

A: They have been discussed but since AHS guidelines allow spectators, they will be allowed in our programs.

Q: Are referee fitness tests being scheduled this year?

A: Fitness tests will be scheduled once we have access to appropriate facilities.

Q: Not so much a question but an appeal from a fellow referee to be consistent in enforcing all rules and policies. We don't want to hear 'but the last referee allowed me....'

Q: Will the two-referee system be used?

A: No. One referee will be used. Leagues have an option of including ARs in the cohort but we don't think they will do this.

Q: If I decide not to referee and request to un-register, will I receive updates on the next phases?

A: If you ask for a refund and un-register, you will need to check the Alberta Soccer web site for updates as you will no longer be on our contact list.

Q: If a district is not using referees in Phase 2, can they recommend that their referees attend a webinar in any case?

A: Yes, they may.

Q: Will there be assessments in 2020?

A: The assessment program has been cancelled for 2020. The modified games are not suitable for assessing and if we return to normal soccer there will not be enough time to allow all upgrade candidates to receive their 3 assessments.

Available Games and Assignments

Q: Will there be any junior high or high school games this year?

A: Schools would have to play in cohorts, and we have not heard of any yet. Also, once you were part of a school cohort you would not be able to join another cohort unless you quarantined for 14 days.

Q: I normally referee games in surrounding communities. Will I still be able to do that?

A: You would need to belong to 1 cohort and your games would be limited by where that cohort is scheduled. Team travel is not recommended by AHS, so the answer is probably 'no'.

Q: Will leagues schedule back to back games?

A: You should check with the league for the answer.



Q: What should I do if I become ill?

A: You should not go to your game and you should give the assignor as much notice as possible.

Cohorts

Q: What is the definition of a 'sports cohort'?

A: A 'sports cohort' is defined as a closed, small group of no more than 50 individuals who participate in the same sport or activity, and remain together for the duration of Phase 2. The cohort includes all players and referees and will also include coaches unless they remain physically distanced from their team at all times. *Note – as of July 7th 2020, AHS allowed movement between cohorts if a 14-day isolation period from any sports cohort was observed.*

Q: If I get myself tested for COVID and it is negative, can I move to another cohort in less than 14 days?

A: No, a negative test does not remove the 14-day isolation requirement. From AHS - If an individual wishes to change cohorts, they should not participate in a new cohort activity for 14 days (which reflects the incubation period of the virus).

Q: Do we have any say what cohorts we are in?

A: This should be discussed with your assignor. Location of your residence may play a role in this.

Q: Are members of a cohort required to sign up for contact tracing apps?

A: No they are not required, but it may not be a bad idea.

Q: What if an assignor wants me to cover someone else's game?

A: Before accepting, you should confirm with your assignor that this game involves the same cohort as you have been placed in.

Q: If any of my immediate family members belong to a sports cohort, am I allowed to referee in a different cohort?

A: Yes, you may. If you accompany them to any of their games, you must maintain physical distancing from all people who are not in your household.

Q: Will cohort games always be on the same day every week?

A: This will depend on the league schedule. Check with your assignor.

Q: How will we know if a coach is part of the cohort or not?

A: Teams will self-manage this, but you could always ask before the game.

Q: If adult players bring their children to the game, are they allowed to be on the bench side of the field?

A: This is not recommended but can't necessarily be prevented. We do not want to end up in a situation of forcing them to leave their children un-supervised. The children should remain physically distanced from the cohort if they remain on the bench side.

Q: Is a team's 'Game Day Manager' included in the cohort?

A: No, because they may need to deal with spectators.



Q: How will Alberta Soccer or the leagues know if I am in more than one cohort?

A: League assignors are required to submit their referee cohort lists to Alberta Soccer.

Health and Safety at the Field

Q: Will players, referees and coaches be required to be tested for COVID-19 prior to participating in Phase 2?

A: No, this is not a requirement, but it is encouraged if it can be arranged.

Q: Are participants who have allergies, which may have similar symptoms to COVID (runny nose etc.) allowed to participate.

A: Yes, they are allowed to participate if this is a 'known' condition. If the symptoms are unexplained, they must not participate.

Q: Will Alberta Soccer or the teams supply the referee with sanitizing products?

A: No, this is considered personal equipment for the referee.

Q: May a referee or players wear rubber gloves either on or off the field?

A: Nothing against this, but gloves are not proven to be much more effective than simply washing or sanitizing hands often.

Q: How should blood on a player or their clothing be treated?

A: No different than normal times. Bleeding players must leave the field and not return until the bleeding has stopped and been cleaned. Blood soiled clothing may not be worn.

Q: Prior to the game, at halftime and after the game, should cohort members stay 2 meters distanced?

A: Yes, and this includes the referee.

Q: How should I deal with players who are deliberately sneezing or coughing on other people?

A: MINIMUM caution for USB, red card if blatant and obviously a danger to health.

Q: What is acceptable as a sanitizing product?

A: Lysol wipes (or similar), soap and water, hand sanitizer.

Q: If there is a physical altercation between two players and other players are involved to 'break up' the altercation, do I need to terminate the match?

A: Use your discretion, but these players are trying to help and not risking anything more than they are by playing the game. Terminating the match is to be used when more than two players are actually participating in the altercation.

Q: Does the field need to be disinfected if a player spits on the field?

A: This is not required, although diluting the area with water may be a good idea, if available. Bleach or other products should not be used on grass or artificial fields.

Q: If there is a positive COVID test in the cohort, will the entire cohort need to quarantine?

A: An outbreak is defined as two or more positive tests and in this case AHS would contact all people on the tracing list and advise that they get tested for COVID-19.



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION
The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

Q: What is the minimum number of times the ball is required to be sanitized?

A: The ball **MUST** be sanitized in view of the referee and players before the start of each half. More sanitization may be done if the ball is touched by hands often or the players request.

Q: Are players allowed to switch jerseys? e.g. if there is a change of goalkeeper?

A: Absolutely not. There is no sharing of equipment allowed. Teams will need to make provisions to have clean equipment available.

Q: What should I do if a player is showing symptoms of COVID-19?

A: Play should be suspended while you question the player – from a distance of at least 2 meters. If the symptoms are unexplained (i.e. not allergies), the player should be instructed to leave.

Q: If neither team can sanitize the game ball(s), what should we do?

A: The game may not be started if the ball(s) cannot be sanitized.

Game Protocols

Q: How are the spectators managed?

A: Each team will have a Game Day Manager (GDM) to organize spectators and ensure that they are following the guidelines. The referee will only become involved if the GDM is not able to maintain compliance from the spectators. The referee may give a 'final' warning, or in extreme cases terminate the match.

Q: Are spectators allowed on the bench side of the field?

A: Spectators are **NOT** allowed on the bench side of fields. Facilities with staff should have a plan in place to manage this. At facilities with no staff, the GDM must manage this.

Q: How is physical distance maintained if a player needs treatment on or off the field?

A: If possible, a parent/guardian of a youth player should provide player support, so physical distancing is not a concern. For adult players, or if a parent/guardian is not available, a mask and gloves should be worn by the person attending to a player. The only exception to this would be a 'life threatening' injury.

Q: How do we sanction players who give high fives etc. to each other?

A: There is no sanction for this as they are the ones taking the risk. You may remind them of the policy and you should report it on your feedback form for the game.

Q: How do we sanction players who do not maintain 2m physical distance off the field?

A: There is no sanction for this as they are the ones taking the risk. You may remind them of the policy and you should report it on your feedback form for the game.

Q: May a referee use an electronic push-button whistle to reduce droplet transfer?

A: If it is effective in managing the game and you have one, feel free.

Q: Should the referee avoid using a strong voice (e.g. 'advantage') to reduce droplet transfer?

A: By all means try and avoid a strong voice when close to people but don't let it negatively affect your game control.



Q: Do players need to remove a face mask when the referee is checking player cards?

A: If the player is recognizable with the face mask on, there is no need for them to remove it. If they need to remove it, ensure that you are at least 2m distanced.

Q: Does the referee need to retain player cards for sent off players?

A: Referees should not handle or retain player cards for any purposes. Any leagues that require this will be informed that they will need to manage player cards of sent off players.

Q: How will game sheets and player cards be checked?

A: As per the procedure in the Alberta Soccer Return to Modified Games plan.

Q: How will game sheets be submitted to the leagues?

A: As per the league's normal procedure or anything they put in place for COVID. Ask your assignor for information.

Q: If a team only has one sanitized game ball and no spares, can we play the game?

A: Yes, the game can be played, but will need to be suspended any time the ball needs to be re-sanitized.

Q: Do I have to read the pre-game script word for word or can I make it more 'personable'?

A: The script must be read word for word to be consistent and it is designed to be a strong message in any case.

Q: Who do we read the pre-game script to?

A: All members of the cohort who are at the game – players and coaches.

Q: How do I read the pre-game script and maintain physical distance?

A: Easiest way would be to gather players in a semi-circle with nobody any closer to you than 2 meters.

Q: Are players and coaches allowed to yell instructions

A: Normal yelling of instructions is fine. The yelling that is cautionable is when it is directly AT someone i.e. 'in their face'.

Q: If my child plays, am I allowed to go and watch their game?

A: You can go and watch as a regular spectator and must stay outside of the cohort, unless providing player support in the case of an injury.

Q: Has placing the referee on the touchline instead of on the field been considered?

A: It was discussed, but would not be an effective method of managing a game. You will likely end up adjusting your positioning in any case on the field, to stay distanced when needed.

Q: How can we manage a wall if we need to stay 2m distanced?

A: Manage from 2m to the side of the wall.



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION

The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

Q: What distance do the spectators need to be away from the field?

A: Spectators are required to be 2m distanced from the players, so to allow throw in's etc., they must be 3-4 meters back from the touchline.

Q: Is a Game Day Manager mandatory for teams?

A: It is recommended by Alberta Health Services (AHS) and required by Alberta Soccer. If they do not have one you should report that on your feedback form.

Q: How do we handle players arriving late?

A: More or less the same as any game, except they will not have heard the pre-game script.

Q: Do the players in a defensive wall need to stay 2m apart?

A: Due to the 'cohort' arrangement, physical distancing in a wall is not required.

Rules of Play

Q: What rules are we using?

A: The 'modified' rules are closely based on the 2020 U12 8v8 Alberta Rules. Modifications will be made for adult games and COVID safety precautions. These rules will be published on June 26th, 2020.

Q: What are the differences between youth and adult games?

A: Mainly – ball size and no 'retreat line' for adults. In U12 and younger, teams will not play shorthanded if a player is sent off.

Q: What are the roster sizes

A: This will be managed by the leagues with relation to the available numbers in the cohort.

Q: What is the minimum number of players required to start or continue a match?

A: This will be managed by the leagues in their competition rules.

Q: What length are the halves?

A: This will be managed by the leagues in their competition rules.

Q: What is the 'grace period' for a team to have enough players to start?

A: This will be managed by the leagues in their competition rules.

Q: Will the games be 7v7, 8v8 or 9v9?

A: This will be managed by the leagues in their competition rules.

Q: What are the field dimensions?

A: This will be managed by the leagues in their competition rules, based on what is available to them.

Q: Are we allowed to shorten halves for late starts etc.?

A: Yes, providing both teams agree prior to the start of the match and 2 equal halves are played.



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION
The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

Waivers

Q: Is there a deadline to submit a waiver to Alberta Soccer?

A: There is no deadline, but your name will not be released to assignors until you have submitted a waiver and attended the webinar.

Q: Who should the waiver be sent to?

A: Alberta Soccer, Referee Development Officer – doneill@albertasoccer.com

Q: Will there be waivers required in Phase 3 of re-opening?

A: At this time we don't know. It will depend on any restrictions required by Alberta Health Services or the insurance and legal advisors to Alberta Soccer.

Q: What is the purpose of the waiver and how does it affect my legal rights?

A: You cannot take legal action against anyone if you are infected by COVID-19. You cannot take legal action against anyone except a 'responsible party' for anything else. In other words, if a player assaulted you, you can only press criminal charges or take legal action against the player, not Alberta Soccer or the league.

Q: Does the waiver affect my insurance coverage as a referee?

A: The standard insurance coverage provided by Alberta Soccer to all registered referees is not affected. Please go to - <https://albertasoccer.com/member-services/insurance/> for details of coverage.

If you have any questions that are not answered here, please submit them to –
doneill@albertasoccer.com