

Q - Would AA and AAA play on opposite weekends to utilize field use?

A - We will be able to have the opposite weekends of play where possible. This will look different for different associations based on their availability. We should be able to give more concrete information as we move closer to the season. If scenario 2 is possible - we would stagger the start date of the 2 sets of age categories to offset play weekends and the start of the new cohort groups after each mandatory break.

Q - Would you consider limiting rosters to 16 players at the 18U level to ensure you could have a 3 team cohort instead of only playing one team all the time if the Covid was still around?

A - We recognize that the cohort limit did cause some difficulties and limitations to the number of teams we were able to place in the same cohort in the 2020 season. No set determination has been made regarding roster sizes yet, but we would definitely consider player / coach limits in order to expand the number of teams in a cohort. This will be dependent on the guidance / restrictions that are in place from the Province / AHS.

An update that works in our favour moving in to the 2021 season is that coaches and umpires no longer count towards cohort numbers. Coaches, staff and officials who primarily interact with individuals or teams at a distance of 2 metres or greater do not need to be counted as part of the cohort. These individuals are required to wear a mask and perform proper hand hygiene if it becomes necessary to temporarily interact with cohorting participants at a distance of less than 2 metres.

Q – Not knowing what the rules will be next year. Would you consider developing a plan around a 12 day break from cohorts? Would it allow for additional weekends available?

A – Baseball Alberta will continue to follow the guidance and restrictions that have been put in place by the Province and AHS. Currently, the required break between leaving one cohort and joining / forming a new one is 14 days.

If a mini-league comes to completion, a new mini-league comprised of new cohort teams may be formed, provided that there is a 14 day period between completion of play in the old mini-league and the beginning of the new mini-league.

As per -GUIDANCE FOR SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND RECREATION DOCUMENT

<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-sports-physical-activity-and-recreation.pdf>

Q – An option is to have "Buddy" teams that can stay co-horted together consecutively and then they could play each other on the "off" weekends. Would this be considered?

This option is explained below and would be considered in cohorts once all guidance and restrictions are met. The greater number of teams in the age category / division would have to benefit from this option for it to be considered.

The buddy team in a cohort would be as follows:

If we have a 4 team cohort during our 1st cohort, if when we switch to our second cohort if one of the teams that was in our first cohort is also still with us when we move to our second cohort then this would allow us to continue to play that one team during the off weekends.

Example:

Co-hort #1

Olds

Drumheller

Stettler

Oyen

Co-Hort #2

Olds

Drumheller

Lacombe

Innisfail

Under this scenario Drumheller and Olds could play each other during the 14 day break while there is a reset and moving onto Cohort #2.

Q - Are we able to do one on one training now?

*A – Yes, one-on- one training is permitted with one coach and one player, and is covered by Baseball Alberta Insurance. Information for this is available on our website as well as the AHS website. Please keep in mind that facilities you would typically use may not be able to accommodate this type of training based on their business restrictions. *Please note Baseball Alberta insurance will not be valid for those areas that currently have restrictions on team sports until further notice for all in person **team and group activities**.*

Feel free to contact the office for more information.

Q - Will AA roster submissions deadlines be the same as always?

A - We are intending to have all of our forms up by January 6, 2021, while we hope to have all deadlines the same as usual, we may have to make adjustments if necessary as things change.

Q - How do you feel the 2020 season guidelines were followed by associations? Is there work to do here?

A - Every association that registered with us and played in our cohort leagues or within their Associations was in contact with us and did a fantastic job with the new guidelines. As with any new situation, there were some bumps in the road and room for improvement as we ALL navigated a rapidly changing environment together. Our rules were respected and everyone worked hard to ensure the safety of all players.

Q - There is talk in the hockey world of perhaps lengthening the season into April and May. Has there been any discussion on how Baseball Alberta may deal with this as far as how the cohort model would work? (ie. multiple cohorts)

A - There have been no discussions with hockey regarding this change to their season. Obviously each organization will make the choices that they feel are best for their sport at this time.

Currently multiple cohorts are not permitted so an extended hockey season may have some negative impacts on Associations being able to run try outs and select players for their rosters.

As far as making any change to the dates of the Baseball Alberta schedules / leagues, we already have a limited amount of days with "ideal" weather and sunlight to play our sport. While we hope to be in a better position in 2021 to allow for multi-sport athletes to participate in more than one sport, Baseball Alberta will continue to follow the guidance and restrictions that are in place by the Province and AHS.

Q - I see a lot of information for AA and AAA scenarios, any plans made or scenarios for the "A" for example CUB or Errbl?

A - We hope and expect that all 'A' and Community leagues should be able to participate this season. Depending on the regulations at the time of the season, they may also have to play in a cohort style grouping. Baseball Alberta is prepared to help facilitate play for all players regardless of skill level.

Q - Will Baseball Alberta consider waiving overage restrictions for the U18 next year to allow for all 2002 players to enrol? Due to Covid, the 2002 group did not get to "graduate" through our 18U program.

A - This is a topic was discussed at the Board Meeting on the afternoon on November 28th, the decision can be found below:

The matter of permitting an increased number of 19 year olds to participate at the 18U category for the 2021 season has been raised. After much discussion and careful consideration, the decision has been made to maintain the 18U age category as currently stated.

Although we completely understand that the pandemic has affected our children in many ways, we need to be mindful of the decisions we do have control over which will affect more than just one age group. The ramifications of increasing the number of 19 years olds who are permitted to play in the 18U category have far reaching impacts beyond those turning 19 years of age in 2021.

Three Associations have already announced their intention to enter new teams in the Baseball Alberta 21U League. Entering a team in the 21U age category is something that your Association may want to explore. This is an opportunity to grow the existing Baseball Alberta 21U League and we encourage all interested individuals and Associations to reach out to Baseball Alberta for more information.

Q - How do we ensure that there is better communication between BA and other organizations? Specifically, BA shut down the Sherwood Park - Parkland 18UAAA cohort after a PBR event in Lethbridge. I find it astonishing that BA wouldn't have been aware of this event until afterwards. If the teams would have been aware it likely would have avoided this situation. It was disappointing enough to only get in 11 games, to get shut down 2 weeks early obviously made it worse.

A – It is unfortunate that a number of 18U players and subsequently their teams, cohorts and season were affected negatively by attending the PBR event. This event was not planned by Baseball Alberta, nor was Baseball Alberta made aware of it by the organizers or any players planning to attend. As such, we did not have the opportunity to communicate any consequences for attending.

Baseball Alberta was contacted by the Government of Alberta following the event informing us that it broke a number of restrictions and guidance at the time. We were asked to ensure that all players that attended the event did not participate in their cohorts for 14 days. As such a cohort was unfortunately forced to stop play for that time period.

Baseball Alberta encourages all players / families that consider attending events that may not abide by Provincial restrictions to advise their local Association of their planned participation and review the possible outcomes their participation may have on their team / cohort. Families and Associations with questions regarding the Provincial restrictions can call Tam at Baseball Alberta for further clarification.

Q – How can Associations help (in general)?

A – The best way to help is to support on and other through these difficult, ever changing times. An open line of communication regarding questions and information between your Associations and Baseball Alberta is the best thing you can do. Reach out through your Zone Director or Board Member if you are a large member association, or by contacting us in the office at any time.

Q - Having our first "COVID" season under our belts, what would you say is the biggest lesson(s) taken away from Baseball Alberta's perspective?

A – Implementing the 24 hour rule (like for coaches) when it comes to any new COVID restrictions and guidelines that are released from the Government / AHS. Provincial Sport Organizations do not get the new information ahead of time and therefore are not able to answer questions immediately following an announcement, which is not ideal when we start receiving calls, emails and text before the new documents are even posted. Giving ourselves the time to read the documents, potentially meet with our Board if needed and ensure we have a proper, detailed response holds far more value than a quick reply.

We saw a great deal of creativity and adaptability from our Associations, coaches, umpires and volunteers, and are so proud of our athletes for the level of respect that they showed to their teammates by ensuring they followed all the new rules to the best of their abilities .

We will continue to listen to all suggestions that come from our association and members as we all aim to provide the best possible baseball experience in 2021.

Q - Can you comment on associations that have teams in multiple associations (I.e. LL and BA) and differences between associations that have both versus ones that just have BA. Is there any talk about making it the same?

A – As many Albertans are aware, Baseball Alberta and Little League are separate entities. We do not have the same governance, processes, rules, insurance, access to diamonds or member Associations across the province.

Baseball Alberta offers programming at all levels of baseball, Rally Cap(7U) – 21U and Senior Leagues register with us as well. I would encourage Associations that have questions about our programming to contact Tam Rosnau in the Baseball Alberta Office.

Q - Will NCCP coaching clinics be offered virtually in the spring?

A – Yes, at this time we are preparing to host online NCCP clinics in 2021. Baseball Canada has been working on the updated clinics and process for online delivery.

Our hope is that we will be able to shift to in person NCCP clinics when we are able to safely do so.

Q - Just wanted to hear the thought process around Canada Cup altering 18U schedule for provincials? Having a tier 2 team play in was a huge success in 2019. Quite likely only a handful of players from BA will be participating in Canada Cup in any event

A - While we understand the effects of this change of our schedule, the decision to make changes to the Provincials schedule for the 18U League was in an effort to allow the Canada Cup team additional training time and planned exhibition games. This change was to be implemented for the 2020 season with an evaluation of its effectiveness and impact to follow.

We agree that the opportunity for the tier II team to move up was a huge success and one that we would embrace moving forward.