



# CAN-AM Lacrosse COVID-19: Return to Play Recommendations Version 1: 07/23/2020

Prepared by:

Rodney C. Haring, PhD, MSW (Seneca)  
Shannon Seneca, PhD, REHS/RS (Mohawk)  
Dean Seneca, MPH, MCURP (Seneca)  
Emily A. Haozous, PhD, RN, FAAN (Chiricahua Fort Sill Apache)  
Josie Raphaelito, MPH (Navajo/Dine')  
Owen Hearn, Esq., (Akwasasne Mohawk)  
Anna Banerji, O.Ont., MD, MPH, FRCPC, DTM&H CTropMed

## Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide **recommendations** to the Canadian American (CAN-AM) Lacrosse League for “COVID-19: Return to Play” as the association begins to draft guidelines for 2020 and/or anticipation of the 2021 season.

Given the sovereign status of many of the Haudenosaunee teams, recommendations for return to play include comparative guidelines set forth by the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the NYS Department of Health (NYS-DOH). All protocols and recommendations should follow the respective tribal governance in which the games are hosted and/or off territory regulations. Major themes of this return to play are adapted and modeled after the Canada Return to Hockey and US Lacrosse COVID-19 Responses, Safety Guidelines along with key reference points from WHO, CDC, and NYS-DOH.

“Bumping Hips” or in Seneca, “Dewa:e:o”, (it has netting in it) or the French word, Lacrosse, is a Medicine Game originating with Indigenous communities and part of the Haudenosaunee way of life. The intention of these return to play recommendations are to re-engage, continue, and safely practice and honor traditional, spiritual, aspects of the Creator’s Game.

### **Tribal and Public Health Authority Guidelines**

It is critical to be familiar with tribal and federal guidelines, as well as state, county and local health authority guidelines regarding COVID-19 and adhere to these requirements.

The following hygiene recommendations will assist in creating an environment that is safer for all participants engaged in lacrosse activities.

- Whenever possible, players and staff are recommended to stay at least 6 feet away to respect social distancing guidelines and wear a cloth mask when social distancing is not possible.
- Families should be prepared to participate virtually (watching online, dropping off players, picking up players) to minimize the number of people in attendance. No more than one adult should accompany a player in the event the player needs assistance.
- Families and players should be required to wear a mask at all times when around other people, entering a facility or where the game is being played.
- Everyone surrounding the event should practice safe social distancing.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before and after games or practice.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap and water are not available.

When coughing or sneezing:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of the arm, not the hand.
- Dispose of any used tissues as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash hands.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth.

### **Nation/Band/Canada/U.S. Border Crossings**

- Check and follow public health authority guidelines prior to leaving for any Native Nation and/or U.S./Canada destination.
- Check travel advisories specific to traveling to Native Nations and into U.S. or Canada.

- Players and staff should carry their own passports and/or tribal IDs and should always have two-layer cloth or surgical masks available. If required to report inside a Nation's office, customs building, players and staff should do so using physical-distancing guidelines and wearing a two-layer cloth or surgical mask that is always covering both the nose and mouth.

### **Liability & Insurance**

It will be important for the CAN-AM to review tribal and/or state liability regulations related to COVID-19 clauses. The CAN-AM should consider a new clause or waiver be included for teams, individual players, coaching staff, and volunteers to review and sign that absolves the CAN-AM, municipality/private facility, teams, tribes, and/or owners of any liability related to COVID-19. The CAN-AM should also review insurance company language relating to Communicable Disease/COVID-19 exclusions on all policies either immediately, or upon renewal and/or any General Liability insurer waivers that exclude in the General Liability policy (Sample found in US Lacrosse Return to Play:

<https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/return-to-play-final-1.pdf>)

### **Suggested Season Length and Team Composition**

- A shorter season is recommended to reduce potential exposures.
- Tournament style is not recommended due to potential of multiple teams being on site all at one time and/or not having the full capability to disinfect thoroughly between multiple games.
- Smaller rosters are encouraged to reduce larger group size on benches, in locker rooms, and during travel.
- All players should be allowed the option to opt-out of participation in any or all team activities without being penalized.

### **Prior to Games: Testing and Screening**

- To honor the spirit of the game and to promote community health, wellness, and appreciation during pandemic times the CAN-AM may consider including the Gan:non:yok or Thanksgiving Address prior to each game.
- The CAN-AM should create league specific flyers with key points related to "prior to game" instructions for teams, athletic training staff, captains, and GMs (general managers) to distribute among their team and family members.
- Maintain formal checklist system in place to ensure all coaches, staff, volunteers, and players do not begin play until they have completed COVID-19, PPE, and handwashing training.
- **FOR THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, ALL PLAYERS, COACHING STAFF, AND VOLUNTEERS SHOULD HAVE A PHYSICAL AND NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB (NPS) COVID-19 TEST COMPLETED AS CLOSE TO START OF SEASON AS POSSIBLE WITH DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED AT FIRST PRACTICE. IT IS ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT A FOLLOW UP COVID-19 TEST BE CONDUCTED BEFORE EACH GAME BUT AT MINIMUM HALF-WAY THROUGH THE SEASON OR IF A PLAYER, STAFF OR VOLUNTEER IS EXPERIENCING ANY SYMPTOMS OR HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 (TESTING SITE INFORMATION FOUND IN RESOURCE SECTION).**

- Signs and symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 may appear two to 14 days after exposure. This time after exposure and before having symptoms is called the incubation period. Common signs and symptoms can include:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Tiredness
  - Early symptoms of COVID-19 may include a loss of taste or smell
  
  - Other symptoms can include:
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Muscle aches
    - Chills
    - Sore throat
    - Runny nose
    - Headache
    - Chest pain

This list is not all inclusive. Other less common symptoms have been reported, such as rash, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Children have similar symptoms to adults and generally have mild illness.

**Screening of players on game day should include non-contact temperature checks as well as verbal questionnaire before entering the arena or box.**

- Any participant with a temperature in excess of 100.4 degrees is not allowed to participate in the day's activities.
- Examples- Have you been in direct contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks? Does anyone in your home currently have a fever above 100.4? Have you traveled within the past 2 weeks (to where)?
- Inform those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to return home and self-monitor for symptoms, and to follow CDC guidance for home isolation and actions to take if symptoms develop.

*For those players, athletic trainers, coaches or staff who did contract COVID-19, two negative test result should be required before returning to play.*

**Other recommended items include:**

- If a player does not feel well, has a fever or a cold (runny nose, sore throat, cough, etc.) they should stay home and inform their health care provider and coach. All those participating in or attending a lacrosse activity should stay home, if sick.
- Continually stress the importance of strict hand washing hygiene before and after training and strict use of face masks and social distancing protocols the entire time while in the facility and after play. If possible, players should be encouraged to carry hand sanitizer in their bags, and it should be available on the benches.
- Players should have their own labelled water bottle. Use only that water bottle when participating in the before and after the game. WATER BOTTLES SHOULD NOT BE SHARED.
- Each player, coach or staff should wash/disinfect their own water bottles before and after each game.
- Players should arrive at the facility no earlier than [30 minutes] prior to the event. Teams exiting the facility should do so within 20 minutes after the game ends.

Every effort should be made to minimize the time spent at the facility. Team arrival and departure times should be coordinated to avoid teams entering and exiting the facility at the same time.

- Facilities managers should create one-way entrances and exits.
- CAN-AM provide teams with a list of tribal and non-tribal COVID-19 testing sites.

### **Prior to Games: Coaches/General Manager Meetings/Athletic Training Staff**

In coordination with Athletic Training staff, it is recommended to have return to play resource handouts for the players and one for the GM/Managers, before initiation of the season. (Local resource, See Dean Seneca, MPH/Seneca Scientific Solutions – consulting flyer attached). It is recommended to host an initial virtual meeting with coaches, GMs, and Athletic Training staff to review how return to play will look and allow them to ask questions.

Topics will include:

- League protocols for spacing and /limits, for drop-off/pick-ups, entering and leaving the building and/or dressing room, washroom restrictions and other limits.
- Facility guidelines for the number of people that are permitted in the facility (staff) and/or on the floor at any given time. Families should be prepared to participate virtually (watching online, dropping off players, picking up players) to minimize the number of people at the facilities.
- Importance of players arriving dressed in their equipment to the greatest extent possible.
- Steps to practicing good hygiene. Athletic injury assessments will take place in compliance with COVID-19 protocols. (e.g., National Athletic Training Association).
  - Players not feeling well and what steps are to be taken by the team (referral to health professionals, having a list of health professionals available).
  - Practice and protocols to safely and CONFIDENTIALITY document health and COVID-19-related records.

### **Facilities**

- Outdoor arenas are optimal for play in place of indoor arenas (e.g., Riverworks/Buffalo; Tonawanda Box).
- Six-foot social distancing is required for all staff and bench personnel.
  - Although lacrosse is an important healing and wellness cultural and community event, for the 2020 season a “**no spectator event**” is recommended to protect community, youth, and elders. Live streaming of the games is highly recommended.
- Personal items such as towels, clothing, shoes, and uniforms are best maintained by the individual players to avoid cross-contamination (NO SHARING). All uniforms, towels, and other washable gear should be washed by the individual player according to virus-control protocols to prevent potential spread of the virus.
  - Dressing rooms or dressing areas must include 6-foot spacing requirement and face masks must be worn throughout the facility. Multiple locker rooms per team is recommended to allow for locker assignments that facilitate 6-foot spacing between players during times of peak congestion before and after practice and games.

- Cleaning of benches and locker rooms should occur after practices, on game day, and immediately following the game. Cleaning and disinfectant should also occur between periods by either facility staff with the assistance of team staff/bench help (or contracted services: e.g., www.cleanmd.net). A focus on high-traffic touch points including bench door handles should receive extra attention throughout played games especially during any water breaks or time-outs.
- Players must not spit, blow their nose freely or release any bodily fluid anywhere in the facility due to an extremely high risk of virus transfer. Players and staff that consistently do so will be removed from the game. Referees and coaches should give verbal reminders throughout the game. The CAN-AM and/or officials may consider some type of official warning to benches and/or bench penalties for teams/players that do not comply.
- Fields, arenas, box playing surfaces including boards and glass should be cleaned AND disinfected before the game, between periods (if time permits) and immediately after the game.
- A temporary no-smoking policy should be enacted at facilities.
- No food or outside vendors are allowed for the 2020 season. Coaches, players, and staff will be expected to bring their own food and drinks which are marked and stored in their vehicles for their personal and individual consumption.
- Above all else, respect the facility and all those that work within it.

### **Facilities: During Activity**

#### Masks.

- Everyone entering the facility should wear a cloth mask that fully covers the mouth and nose. The cloth mask can be removed by players during game time.
- Coaches and team staff should wear cloth masks **and** physical distance whenever possible.

#### Signs of sickness.

- A coach should be prepared to require that anyone exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness leave the game and the facility as soon as possible.
- If a player (or coach) does not feel well or has identified respiratory symptoms, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, or unusual/ unexplainable muscle aches or joint pains, ensure they advise Athletic Trainers and team staff immediately and put on a cloth or surgical grade mask. They will immediately be excused to their home with instructions to follow up with their physician.
- Facility staff should be provided with an incident report based on facility protocol within one hour of the identification of an ill individual.

#### Hygiene guidelines.

- No sharing water bottles, drinks, snacks, or food.
- Team warm-ups and practices should adapt to proper spacing; reduce the number of one-area stations, including the players coming together in one group for

instruction. If necessary, relocate instruction locations outdoors or to areas where proper physical distancing can be accomplished.

- Towels should only be on the bench under the guidance of the safety person/trainer and for emergency use only. A towel should only be used once and then taken off the bench and washed. TOWELS ARE NOT TO BE SHARED.
- Paper towels/tissue can be on hand to wipe the face or blow the nose if on the bench. Ensure tissues are properly disposed of. Garbage cans or a plastic bag should be placed in the bench area.
- Emphasize to all participants that spitting and blowing the nose without tissue is absolutely forbidden.
- Each player needs to have a marked water bottle, which is washed after each practice or game. WATER BOTTLES SHOULD NOT BE SHARED. WATER SHOULD BE SWALLOWED AND NOT SPIT OUT ON THE BENCH.
- **There should not be sharing of water bottles in the penalty box, as well as no sharing of towels.**
- Eliminate pre-game and post-game handshakes for the foreseeable future.
- Referees should verbally greet coaches as they generally do but will not shake hands.
- Players should not share clothing, soap, shampoo or other personal items such as towels.

#### **Facilities: Dressing Rooms & Other Areas**

- When public health authority protocol and facility guidelines allow use of dressing rooms, teams should have players appropriately physically distanced (using multiple dressing rooms).
- Dressing rooms should be cleaned and sanitized (all surfaces and fitness equipment) after each use, including utilizing air disinfectant spray.
- All equipment, including sticks and balls, should be cleaned after each practice and game.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be available as players enter and leave.
- Access to the dressing room should be strictly monitored.
- Communal water fountains should be disabled and marked as out of order.

#### **Facilities: Recommended Teams Supplies/Medical Supplies**

Athletic trainers should have access to a separate supply of PPE, hand-sanitizer, gloves, sanitizer wipes, sanitizer spray, and face shields for emergency situations. Emergency contact numbers, including local or tribal ambulance services should be posted clearly throughout the facilities.

#### **Player Recommendations**

- To promote healthy lifestyle, pre and post games, players are encouraged to re-connect with ancestral food pathways, ancestral drinking (water, tea, berry drink) to increase immunity and as a means of prevention.
- Eliminate substance use to honor the game and ensure good health.
- Connect with telehealth provider to reconnect with your resiliencies (SEE RESOURCES).
  - Bring own personal towels and hygiene supplies (do not share).
  - Bring your own water bottles and write your name on it (cleaned using hot water and soap after each practice and game), again, "DO NOT SHARE".
  - Players should warm-up for games individually as opposed to in groups.

- Cleaning of jerseys, face shields and mouthguards must take place before and after every game.

**Player Recommendations: Equipment.**

Full face shield for helmets. Examples include:



In combination with sports anti-viral PPE. Examples include:



\*Regional supplier: <https://www.purehockey.com>

**Coaches, Bench, and Athletic Training Staff: Recommendations**

- Keep detailed attendance records for players and staff in order to facilitate contact tracing should the need arise.
- Work with facility staff to ensure the bench area is wiped down and disinfected before games, after each period, and after games.
- Non-latex gloves and disinfectant wipes should be available on benches for players and staff.
- Ensure a garbage can or plastic garbage bag is available on the bench or near the bench.
- Bench staff should always wear cloth or surgical grade masks covering both the mouth and nose.
- Team meetings should only be held in a controlled environment with physical distancing.
- Gloves must be worn when handling equipment.
- Non-latex gloves must be worn when on the bench for each game.
- Cloth or surgical grade masks should be worn if treating players, dealing with players' equipment or if physical distancing is not possible.
- Gloves must be changed when required and hands must be washed frequently.
- Gloves must be changed between contact with each player contact, including washing of hands before putting gloves on and after taking them off.



- Cloth masks should be worn when treating players and when dealing with player's equipment.
- It is recommended that teams/players practice at home instead of having "team practices". If team practices are held, drills that maintain a 6-foot distances, are recommended.

### **Officials and Referees: Recommendations**

- Come fully dressed in uniform, if possible.
- Personal towels only (towels are not to be shared).
- If possible, hands should be washed prior to start of each period (officials should carry a small bottle of sanitizer).
- Wear a cloth or surgical grade mask when entering the arena. The mask can be removed when going on to the box, arena, or field.
- Have personal hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes in referee locker room and penalty boxes.
- Officials are required to bring their own water bottles to the game, label, and keep with score keepers and/or in the penalty bench.
- Referees should verbally greet coaches but should not shake hands.
- When reporting penalties, do not speak through the hole in the glass – work from a distance.
- Some equipment should also be washed (jerseys, pant shells, etc.) after each session, following manufacturer guidelines. It is important that officials ensure equipment is kept clean.

### **Score Keeper and Volunteer Staff: Recommendations**

- Score keepers and staff assisting are recommended to wear a cloth or surgical grade mask.
- Scorekeepers are recommended to have personal hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to wipe down and disinfect the score clock equipment/penalty bench prior to each game. Handles to doors going to the score keeper area ice are high-touch areas and proper hygiene and cleaning is important.
- Physical distancing must be practiced, and it is important to work with the facility to plan the best way to incorporate into the space being used.

### **Conclusion**

These uncertain times have necessitated specific measures to allow us to return to the game that is part of our way of life. It is important to understand that even if all the precautions set forth herein are followed, there still lies a risk of COVID-19 transmission during an event. The CAN-AM has worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts to prepare these suggested guidelines for return to play. The CAN-AM encourages a thorough review and respect by all teams, players, volunteers, and community members.

It is crucially important to stay home for the safety of the team if you do not feel well or someone in your household is not feeling well. The CAN-AM is supportive of players remaining home to avoid potential spread of infection and discourages any player from attending practice or games if they have the slightest symptom. This represents good team and community culture and switching from suffering for the good of the team to practicing good self-care for the good of the team is imperative and honorable.

With all our minds collectively as one, we can work together to continue our game in a respectful, healthy, and mindful manner.

## DISCLAIMERS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**There is a high false negative rate in coronavirus testing. A positive test is helpful to rule on COVID-19, but a negative test in someone who has symptoms or exposure may not be helpful. Those experiencing symptoms should reframe from play regardless of a negative test. Recommendations based on professional training and does not reflect views from employment affiliations. Questions regarding recommendations can be forwarded to Dr. Rodney Haring at [rcharing@hotmail.com](mailto:rcharing@hotmail.com).**

## BIOGRAPHIES

Rodney C. Haring, PhD, MSW  
(Seneca/Beaver Clan)  
Director, Center for Indigenous Cancer Research  
Office of Community Outreach and Engagement  
Department of Cancer Prevention and Control  
Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Shannon Seneca, PhD, REHS/RS  
(Mohawk/Turtle Clan)  
Seneca Research Remediation and Restoration, LLC  
(<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shannon-seneca-phd-25abb155>)

Dean Seneca, MPH, MCURP  
(Seneca)  
Seneca Scientific Solutions, LLC  
(<https://www.senescientificsolutions.com/>)

Emily A. Haozous, PhD, RN, FAAN  
(Chiricahua Fort Sill Apache)  
Research Scientist  
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Josie Raphaelito, MPH  
(Navajo/Dine')  
Research Coordinator, Center for Indigenous Cancer Research  
Office of Community Outreach and Engagement  
Department of Cancer Prevention and Control  
Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Owen Hearne, Attorney-at-Law  
(Akwesasne Mohawk)  
Hearne Law, PLLC  
(<https://www.hernelaw.com/>)

Anna Banerji, O.Ont., MD, MPH, FRCPC, DTM&H CTropMed  
CPD Conference Chair, Indigenous and Refugee Health  
Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto  
Associate Professor Pediatrics and Dalla Lana School of Public Health

## REFERENCES

Canada Return to Hockey, Covid-19 Responses, Safety Guidelines, June 2020,  
[https://cdn.hockeycanada.ca/hockey-canada/Exclusive/return-to-hockey/downloads/HC\\_RTH\\_Safety-GUIDELINES\\_EN.pdf](https://cdn.hockeycanada.ca/hockey-canada/Exclusive/return-to-hockey/downloads/HC_RTH_Safety-GUIDELINES_EN.pdf)

Centers for Disease Control, Considerations for Youth Sports,  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

Centers for Disease Control, Interim Infection Control Guidance for Public Health Personnel Evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) and Asymptomatic Close Contacts of Confirmed Cases at Their Home or Non-Home Residential Settings,  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/guidance-evaluating-pui.html>

New York State, Department of Health, Interim Guidance for sports and recreation during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency,  
<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf>

US Lacrosse, Return to Play Recommendations,  
<https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/return-to-play-final-1.pdf>

## RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

First Nations Telehealth: Mental health/counseling, [www.fntelehealth.com](http://www.fntelehealth.com)

National Indian Health Board, COVID-19, Tribal Resource Center, <https://www.nihb.org/covid-19/>

National Institutes of Health (NIH), Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus#!/detail/403327>

New York State COVID-19 Emotional Support Hotline: 1-884-863-9314

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19),  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

Seneca Scientific Solutions: <https://www.senescientificsolutions.com/>

US SAMHSA Disaster Distress Hotline: Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. Dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster.

Telehealth Ontario (Canada) 1-866-797-0000

World Health Organization, Advice for the Public,  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

## COVID-19 TESTING SITES AND INFORMATION

[New York State Department of Health](#): Hotline: 1-888-364-3065

Allegany County (585) 268-9700

Cattaraugus County (716) 938-9119

Chautauqua County (866) 604-6789

Erie County (716) 858-2929

Franklin County (518) 481-1111

Genesee County (888) 364-3065

Madison County (888) 364-3065

Niagara County (716) 278-1900 or (888) 364-3065

Onondaga County (315) 464-3979

## HAUDENOSAUNEE RESERVES AND CANADA: COVID-19 TESTING INFORMATION

Tehsakotitsen:tha -Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre: (450)638-3960

Corona Virus Hotline: 1-833-784-4387

Quebec area: 1-877-644-4545

## INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES (<https://www.ihs.gov/nashville/healthcarefacilities/>)

Lockport Service Unit (Tonawanda and Tuscarora Reservation Areas) – (716) 280-3850

Onondaga Purchased/Referred Care – (315) 682-3167

Cayuga Nation (716)337-4270

Oneida Indian Nation Health Services (315)829-8700

Seneca Nation of Indians (716)945-5894; (716) 532-5582

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (518)358-3141

Tonawanda Seneca Nation (716)542-4244