



Memo

Date: May 15, 2020

To: SPDSA Membership

From: Debbie Ballam – General Manager

Good afternoon

With the news of the province starting to open this week, this has sparked a lot of optimism about what this could mean for soccer and youth sports overall. In a continued effort to keep our members up to date with information, I wanted to send you some news that we have received from Canada Soccer, Alberta Soccer and the Alberta Government.

The ban for soccer activities remain in effect until the end of May. However, Canada Soccer has announced that they have Return to Soccer Guidelines, which must be followed before returning to soccer activities. Alberta Soccer is currently working on a “Return to Play Plan”, that should be available to districts next week. Once this has been done, it will help the SPDSA plan for the outdoor season and ensure that we have the required protocols in place to protect our members and staff. This is exciting news, as we have many athletes that are anxious about getting back onto the pitch.

As mentioned in our communication from May 1st, our main goal this year, is to get as many players on the field as we can, and in doing so, the “traditional” soccer programs for some age groups that we have known in previous seasons, will be different this outdoor season. Our focus has not changed, and we are working on a relaunch strategy of our own and hope to have it finalized by the end of May, with a projected roll out date of mid June. When we have more information on this, we will be sure to share with our members.

The SPDSA staff has continued to work on ways to keep our players active during the past couple of months. We have created online sessions that players can do at their own pace and time. This past week, we have started our new LIVE Sessions. We have received a lot of positive feedback and these sessions will continue until we can start in person, on field sessions. As with any change or the introduction of a new program, it can create a lot of questions and many of them are reoccurring. I thought it would be best for the remainder of this communication to focus on some of the frequently asked questions, as I am sure that many are looking for the same answers. Below are some of the reoccurring questions we are asked daily.

Q: Will there be an outdoor season?

A: The SPDSA has not cancelled the outdoor season, it has been postponed. Canada Soccer has put a ban on all on field soccer activities, for the month of May. The SPDSA continues to work with Alberta Soccer, who is taking guidance from CSA and Alberta Health Services and are developing a Return to Play Protocol.

Q: Has Alberta Soccer cancelled the outdoor season?

A: No, Alberta Soccer has not cancelled the outdoor season. They are doing all they can, to allow districts to provide soccer programs for the outdoor season. We all must follow the guidelines of our governing body, which is Canada Soccer. Alberta Soccer has however, cancelled the AMSL (Alberta Major Soccer League), AYSL (Alberta Youth Soccer League) and Provincial Competitions. Canada Soccer will be confirming by June 30th, if there will be a National competition. If Nationals do go ahead, then ASA will be working on a qualifying format, for teams to attend Nationals.

Q: When do the fields open in Strathcona County?

A: It was announced in April, that the County has closed outdoor fields until mid June. With recent updates from the Province on the relaunch strategy, the SPDSA has been in talks with the County on the possibility of fields opening sooner.

Q: With the social distancing still in effect, how can we run a soccer program?

A: Programming will be based on an academy style training format which can be done with physical distancing in mind. All aspects of the game will be worked on.

Q: How will the soccer program be structured when only 15 people are able to be in a group setting?

A: Much like most training sessions, there will be a theme for each training session. These sessions will be a variety of ball mastery, passing, shooting and all things soccer related. They will run as any normal training program with physical distancing being kept in mind.

Q: Are the online training and live sessions replacing the outdoor season?

A: No. The online sessions are there to provide players the tools to do training at home and on their own time. We have just launched the Live Sessions, and these are strictly to help us engage with the players directly and keep them active, until we can get back onto the field. These sessions are free, and members can continue to access them as long as they remain registered for the outdoor season. They are not mandatory to attend and will remain optional for our members at no cost.

Q: I noticed that there are no sessions yet for the U4 to U7 age group, will there be sessions for my child?

A: Yes, we are still working out the details for the younger ages, and will be hopeful to having it complete in the next week.

Q: If the SPDSA cannot offer an outdoor season, will we get a refund?

A: Yes, we have mentioned in previous communications, the SPDSA will issue full refunds. We are not charging any of the fees, that are outlined in our refund policy. We do however ask that you wait and stay registered, until we know for sure when the season will be starting. With the province announcing the relaunch of business as well as recreation, we are very optimistic of being able to provide outdoor programs.

Q: Instead of requesting a refund, can I have the money I paid for the outdoor program, to be transferred to the indoor season?

A: Yes, we can transfer the fees to the indoor season. If you wish to transfer your fees to the indoor season, please email the request to our General Manager – Debbie Ballam at d.ballam@spdsa.net

Q: Will the fees for the outdoor season change from what we originally paid or registered for?

A: Once we know when we can get back onto the field and provide soccer programs, the fees will be adjusted accordingly, based on the program length, facilities used and other program related costs.

Q: Will times of the new outdoor programs be the same times and days as the traditional format?

A: At this time, it is hard to confirm the days and times for the various age groups and programs. We will be doing all we can to try and maintain the same days as posted in our outdoor programs, but this will be dependant on facility availability. Again, with the feedback we are getting from members, they want their kids active again and are willing to work with us and remain flexible with the days and times of our programs.

Q: If we requested a refund, and we end up being able to participate in the outdoor season, are we able to re-register?

A: Yes, members will have the opportunity to register, however we will be limited to the amount of registrations we can accept. Therefore, it is important to stay registered until a final decision has been made on when the outdoor season will commence.

Q: Do you have a date in mind of when a final decision will be made on cancelling the outdoor season?

A: The SPDSA has not come up with a date where we would look at cancelling the season. Although we recognize that some youth sports have cancelled, the SPDSA remains committed to providing soccer programs. We will need at least two weeks, to organize a season once we are given the approval to do so. As previously mentioned above, with the news of the relaunch strategies, we believe that there will be an outdoor season, in some form.

Q: I think I may have missed some past communications from the SPDSA. Where can I get a copy of them?

A: We are in the process of updating our website, however the past communications can be found on the home page of our website, if you scroll down to the COVID-19 portion of the site. We encourage our members to continue to check our site for further updates and news.

I realize that we may not have captured all our members questions, but myself and the staff are always available to help you. Our office remains closed to the public, until the end of May, however we can be reached via phone or email.

Our current hours are Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday – 9am to 5pm.

As always, the SPDSA is extremely grateful for the support that you have all shown to assist us in continuing to deliver quality programming. We also appreciate your continued patience during this time. We are looking forward to being able to connect with our members face to face very soon.

I hope you have a wonderful and safe long weekend!

Take care