



April 5, 2021

To: Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer  
Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health

Cc – Honourable John Horgan, Premier, British Columbia  
Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport  
Charlene Krepiakevich, CEO, ViaSport British Columbia  
Softball BC Board of Directors and Staff  
Softball BC Members

Via email

From: Rick Benson, Executive Director and Graeme Duncan, President, Softball BC

Re. – Request to safely return softball activities

Dear Dr. Henry and Honourable Minister Dix,

On behalf of our members of Softball BC and the many softball players across our province, we would like to strongly request a return to play, including games, as soon as possible for softball. At a minimum, we would like to see restrictions eased off immediately to the same level as September, 2020 to permit competitive games within a controlled cohort, and with an objective of full resumption of play by this summer.

Softball has been declared a low contact sport, and by way of the rules of the sport, a large percentage of the game is played with physical distancing in place. Our association and members have worked extremely hard over the past twelve months to be, not just in compliance with the orders and guidelines put in place, but to commit ourselves on a daily basis to exceed the safety protocols. We have done this in order to do our part to provide healthy outdoor physical activity and social interaction under the safest conditions we can. We are very proud of the work and the results achieved by our members, and the ongoing determination of our local sport clubs to persevere through these next months of uncertainty.

However we also know that our leaders in each of the communities need to have support and encouragement through these times. We appeal most strongly to you for that support and encouragement so that we might come through this pandemic by sustaining the not for profit softball clubs that anchor our communities in urban and rural areas.

#### **How Can This Be Done**

Support us by providing data and empirical justification for the restrictions on softball. Help us by providing justification for the phase we are currently in, and so we can demonstrate that these protocols and criteria are paving the way for the fastest and safest pathway back to sport as we know it.

Encourage us by showing the timeline back to a resumption of softball activities, currently we feel, based on the orders in place, that outdoor sport could be a cause for acceleration of community transmission. We feel that we are potentially part of the problem rather than a part of the solution for social interaction, good physical and mental health; the positive attributes which we believe are necessary for British Columbians now.



The inconsistency of restrictions has been brought up by a multitude of other groups, from the school districts guidelines to hockey leagues returning to play under special circumstances, and we don't presume to either second guess those decisions or suggest we deserve special consideration. We advocate for an open, transparent process for all sports to be able to return to play based on their ability to comply with fact based guidelines from the PHO. Each sport needs to be judged on its' ability to meet an established criteria. We have heard consistently from the PHO of the high risk factors associated with the COVID pandemic, and, as well, the low risk factors which we, and our members believe should be encouraged by aligning them with less restrictions on play.

Our sport has shown respect for the process and patience with managing our activities and not simply following, but exceeding guidelines and recommendations. However, our members are growing restless and without having a clear understanding of why we are under certain restrictions and not having a sense of when we might see opportunities for play, we are fearful that a significant number of our local sport clubs will not be able to sustain their volunteers and participants and we may lose those organizations and their history, permanently.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your guidance and support of amateur sport in British Columbia.

Respectfully,

A blue ink signature of Rick Benson.

Rick Benson  
Executive Director

A blue ink signature of Graeme Duncan.

Graeme Duncan  
President