

***“DRAFT”***

## **Return to Play Guidance**

Bellingham Pickleball Club

May 12, 2020 (Updated May 14, 2020)

### ***Reference Documents***

**Washington State 4-Phase Approach:**

<https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/chart-washingtons-phased-approach>

**USAPA: COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY; Guidance on Safe Return to Play**

[https://www.usapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-RETURN-TO-PLAY\\_USAPA.pdf](https://www.usapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-RETURN-TO-PLAY_USAPA.pdf)

### ***BPC Return to Play Needs To:***

- 1) Adhere to relevant city, county, state, and federal guidelines.
- 2) Provide options for a phased approach, to be implemented as necessary and appropriate
- 3) Be feasible and practical.
- 4) Be equitable (within reason).

### ***Variable Factors:***

- 1) Unknown timing of subsequent easing of relevant city, county, and state restrictions;
- 2) Unknown degree of change to relevant city restrictions at various phases;
- 3) Degree to which the Bellingham Parks & Recreation Dept will collaborate with BPC re: return to play;
- 4) Inclinations of local players regarding public play;
- 5) Inclinations of BPC volunteers, including potential session “Hosts”.
- 6) Covid-19 risk trajectory in Bellingham, Whatcom County, & WA State, which influences everything else!

### ***Phase 1:***

Current situation. No “public” play or BPC-hosted sessions.

Any private play is encouraged to adhere to relevant city, county, state, and federal guidelines.

This would include singles play, or doubles play with “household member” partners only.

The BPC Board believes that in order for the City of Bellingham & the Parks and Recreation Department to allow pickleball play in the next phase, they will need to have confidence that local and state guidelines will be followed. For that reason, our proposed steps are conservative. In all cases, individuals and families will need to decide what personal risks they are willing to take, and what safety measures they need to enact for their health and safety.

## **Phase 2 (When courts open are allowed to open in a modified format for play):**

Pickleball allowed, with restrictions, at outdoor facilities.

BPC does not provide “hosted” or coordinated sessions.

In all cases and at all times, the guidelines for everyone, supported by venue or agency, include:

- Social distancing of at least 6 feet while on AND off the court between non-household members;
- Limit group size to no more than 5 persons outside your household, in adherence with Phase 2 guidelines;
- Top level of personal hygiene for hands, face, paddle, balls, & belongings. Wash beforehand & bring sanitizer.
- Use hand sanitizer between matches (or wash hands with soap if feasible) AND avoid touching face;
- Avoid touching potentially “shared” items with hands (such as railings, gates, lockbox, benches, etc);
- Stay away if you, or anyone around you, have had any symptoms within 14 days or are not feeling well;
- For vulnerable individuals: stay away, or avoid exposure to non-household members;
- Sneeze or cough into elbow;
- Use tissue if needed, and then dispose of it, followed by hand sanitizer;
- Stagger play throughout times of day, and days of week, to minimize groups waiting.

### Phase 2 Potential Allowances and Other Considerations:

#### **High level of safety:**

- Singles play, with just one person allowed on each side of net (regular singles or “skinny” singles ok);
- Close of middle courts, so playable courts aren’t adjacent, needing to be passed through, or balls returned;
- Small rotation & waiting groups only. No bigger groups or “drop-in” sessions;
- No shared use of BPC lock-box @ Cornwall or equipment;
- Sanitize or use clean balls when changing players;
- Use of masks when potentially closer than 6 feet;

#### Recommended

- Consideration of doubles for household members, and possibly others while maintaining at least 6’ distance.
- Play in games and wait with only the *same small group of players over time* (a “bubble” of players);
- Implement a reservation system for some of the courts.
- Touch and serve with only your own pickleballs which are distinctly identifiable.  
Balls are returned to player on other side of net with paddle, rather with hand.

#### **Questions**

- Does BPC provide 1-2 balls to members? If so, what kind, when, and how?
- How to best support lower level players who might not have already established needed connections?
- Might it be helpful to use an app, (but only in support of small group play), like “Playtime Scheduler” or “Spond”?  
Could there be a reservation system for some courts, using PlaytimeScheduler, SignupGenius, or Park Dept?
- Could it make sense to have a schedule with suggested times for various levels?  
(Inclination from recent BPC meeting and from the board is to wait until Phase 3).
- Should players be allowed to bring a portable net for use on “multi-purpose” courts, if they set-up/take down?
- To what degree will the Park Department collaborate, set policy, and/or enforce guidelines?

### **Phase 3 (when more restrictions are eased and possibly groups of up to 50 are allowed):**

- Incorporation of any guidance from Phase 2 which is still relevant;
- Adherence to all relevant city, county, state, and federal guidelines;
- Doubles partners while maintaining 6-foot distance with non-household members as much as possible;
- No more than 50 people total in the group at a venue;
- Lock box and shared nets accessible to a limited number of “authorized” persons.
- Consider incorporation of as many of these elements as are appropriate:
  - BPC hosting of some scheduled “skill-level” sessions, with modifications as relevant;
  - Playing on adjacent courts while taking utmost care to maintain social distancing and advised hygiene;
  - Allowing increased number of rotating players within a player group;
  - Adding in a modified schedule of drop-in sessions;

### **Phase 4 (when most restrictions are relaxed):**

- Incorporation of any guidance from Phase 3 which is still relevant;
- Adherence to relevant city, county, state, and federal guidelines;
- Consideration of modified schedule of drop-in sessions, as well as allow expanded group sizes in general;
- Lock box and shared nets accessible to expanded group of “authorized” persons.

Feedback and questions are welcome.

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