



Gymnastics Nova Scotia

Operational Plan for Hosting Competitions during COVID-19 V.2

2020-2021 Provincial Competition Season

OBJECTIVE

To provide meaningful competition opportunities for all competitive members of GNS in an environment that mitigates the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and keeps participants safe.

The hosting considerations laid out in this document do not constitute an exhaustive list. There may be other steps a host club can (or must) take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, the suggestions and guidelines in this document may quickly become outdated. Host clubs must be prepared to adapt to changing rules, regulations, and guidance provided by municipal, provincial, and federal governments and Nova Scotia Public Health.

Even when taking all precautions, there will still be a risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone must stay vigilant in keeping all members of GNS safe; we all have a role to play in protecting ourselves and others.

PRIORITIES

1. Adapt the competition environment to meet current public health measures and guidance.
2. Provide a competition environment in which all participants feel safeguarded from the risk of COVID-19 infection.
3. Create a competition environment that meets the needs of athletes to set goals, perform, and receive feedback through judges' scores.
4. Develop a hosting strategy that does not place unreasonable risk or burden on the host club, financial or otherwise.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

- NS Government - [Mandatory Order](#)
- NS Government - [Guidelines for Venues & Facilities](#)
- NS Government - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): avoid infection](#)
- NS Government – [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): masks](#)
- [GNS COVID-19 Guideline for Clubs](#)
- [GNS Return to Play Re-Opening Protocols](#)
- Host Club (and/or host facility) COVID-19 Operational Plan

GENERAL PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

(Please also see **Reduce Capacity**” **Physical Distancing**” page 2-3 for event specific requirements)

- **Physical distancing:** maintain a minimum distance of two metres between yourself and others, with the exception of members of your “close friends and family” bubble.
- **Hand hygiene:** wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or a minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- **Respiratory hygiene:** cough or sneeze into a tissue, or into your sleeve/elbow if a tissue is not available; dispose of the tissue and wash or sanitize your hands immediately.
- **Community face masks:** face masks that cover the nose and mouth are required in public indoor spaces.
- **Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces:** common areas must be cleaned and disinfected twice daily, and more often for high-touch surfaces and shared objects.
- **Screening for COVID-19:** screening can take a passive form by asking people to screen themselves for symptoms before entering a facility, or an active form with temperature checks conducted by a designated individual.
- **Staying home when sick:** always err on the side of caution and stay home if feeling unwell.

CURRENT PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT LEVEL

In addition to respecting general public health measures, organizations must meet the following requirements:

- Every host, organizer, or coach of sporting activities must take all reasonable steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Signage on symptoms, proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and physical distancing must be posted throughout the facility; at a minimum, signage should be placed at all common entrances and where people tend to congregate.
- Occupancy limits in controlled indoor settings must be based on the ability to maintain physical distancing between people who are not close friends and family.
- Anyone who hosts or organizes a gathering of more than 60 people must implement effective procedures for screening and for ensuring physical distancing.
- Where seating is provided, physical distancing requirements may be reduced to 2 metre while seated if all individuals are continuously wearing a face mask (i.e. not eating or drinking).
- Anyone who hosts or organizes an event must maintain a record of the names and contact information of all persons entering the facility for a minimum of 21 days post event for contact tracing and must provide these records to Public Health officials upon request.

RISK MITIGATION MEASURES FOR COMPETITIONS

Risk mitigation must consider and apply across all relevant contexts (i.e., before, during and after competition) and for all participants (e.g., athletes, coaches and staff, judges, volunteers, etc.).

- **Reduce Capacity**
 - All competitions without a separate spectator mezzanine will be held without spectators present in the facility
 - Host clubs shall develop and communicate a plan for athlete drop-off and pick-up, taking into account facility access, space for physical distancing, weather considerations, and athlete safety
 - These competitions will be live-streamed and live-scored so that friends and family may watch the competition online and keep track of scores and rankings
 - All competitions with a separate spectator mezzanine will be held with a limit of 1 spectator per participant present in the facility

- Host clubs shall develop and communicate a plan for athlete drop-off and pick-up, spectator/athlete entrances & exits, taking into account facility access, space for physical distancing, weather considerations, and athlete safety
- The required maximum capacity for each competition flight shall be 44 athletes for MAG & WAG and 48 athletes for T&T
 - Host clubs shall make every effort to schedule their competition in such a way that no more than 44(M/W) or 48(TG) athletes are present for each flight
 - For MAG and WAG competitions, it is recommended that host clubs shall make every effort to split the athletes in a flight in such a way that no more than 11 athletes are in any rotation. For TG competitions the flights should not exceed 14 athletes.
- The maximum number of coaches for each flight is 4 per club, though the GNS recommends no more than 3 coaches, whenever possible and an absolute minimum of 1 coach per rotation
 - The host club shall provide the rotation order a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the first day of competition
 - The host club will record the names of their assigned coaches for each flight at the beginning of each rotation
 - For TG competitions, host clubs must be mindful of the need to have sufficient spotters on the competition floor
- The maximum number of judges is two per event per flight for MAG and WAG competitions and 12 per session for TG competitions
 - To reduce the number of people at the judges table, all MAG and WAG competitions will use the Sportzsoft Live Scoring system; the host club is responsible for naming a Chief Scorer who will be responsible for inputting scores and for recording on a paper score sheet as a back-up
 - There will be a maximum of 1 minor official for MAG & WAG and 2 minor officials for TG at each table to assist with timing for warm-ups and routines for MAG and WAG and to serve as the score-person for TG
- The maximum number of judges, officials, and volunteers can not exceed 60 people
- Host clubs are required to assess their need for volunteers and to reduce the number as much as reasonably possible; the recommended volunteer positions include:
 - Medical/First Aid (x2) – REQUIRED
 - Video Operator (x1-2) – REQUIRED for TG (number depends on whether multiple events are running simultaneously)
 - Check-In and Screening (x1-2)
 - Meet Director/Floor Manager (x1)
 - Music/Announcer (x1)
 - Scoring (x1-2)
 - Awards Coordinator (x1-2)
 - Hospitality Room Coordinator (x1-2)
 - Minor Officials (x2-4)
 - Cleaning Crew (x2)

**Note: some of these positions may be fulfilled by the same individual*

- **Physical Distancing**

- Due to COVID-19 transmission pathways, physical distancing is a top risk mitigation method. As directed by the Government of Nova Scotia, all sports are expected to adapt to enable physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. Brief contact on the field of play is permitted so long as it cannot be reasonably avoided; in all instances where distancing is possible, measures should be put in place
- As much as reasonably possible, athletes from different clubs will be expected to refrain from intermingling
 - Whenever possible, athletes from the same club shall be grouped together in a rotation
 - Every reasonable effort shall be made to limit the number of mixed-group rotations; clubs may consider adding a “bye” rotation if it facilitates easier groupings
- While close friends and family are not required to physically distance themselves from one another, host clubs are not in a position to recognize and monitor individual bubbles; therefore, it is the expectation that ALL participants will practice physical distancing as much as possible even within their own teams
- Host clubs must consider ways to accommodate for physical distancing; for example:
 - Remove any extra or unnecessary equipment from the competition floor
 - Provide additional floor or matted space for general warm-up, if possible
 - Create corral spaces for each club rather than for each event
 - Restrict access to change rooms and washrooms to ensure physical distancing of 2 metre can be maintained within
- There will be no march-in or award ceremonies:
 - Upon rotation to each event, one coach per club will approach the judges table to confirm the competition order and warm-up procedures
 - Host clubs will compile awards packages for each club to pick up at the end of the session/day to distribute upon return to their home gyms
- Judges tables should be spaced enough to accommodate a minimum of 2 metres separation between the judges and the apparatus
- Wherever possible, areas should be marked off around/behind judges’ tables to keep participants from standing in close proximity to the judges
- The hospitality room must be large enough to allow judges to be seated at least 2 metres apart for meetings and meals (this may mean that host clubs will have to designate separate rooms or spaces for judges, coaches, and volunteers)
- Access to the hospitality room must be strictly controlled to prevent over-crowding and to ensure that only individuals who require access are permitted to enter

- **Hand and Respiratory Hygiene**

- Host clubs must ensure they have adequate supplies for appropriate hand and respiratory hygiene
- Hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol-based) should be available at entrances and exits
- Hand sanitizer/handwashing stations should be available throughout the facility

- Tissues and garbage bins should be available throughout the facility
- All judges and volunteer tables (scoring, music, first aid, etc.) should be stocked with hand sanitizer, wipes, tissues, and garbage bins
- Washrooms must be well-stocked with soap, hot water, paper towel, and tissues and checked regularly for necessary refills
- **Face Masks**
 - When worn properly, non-medical masks can reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. Your mask can be a commercial non-medical mask or a homemade mask that covers your nose and mouth. A face shield can't be worn instead of a non-medical mask (face shields protect your eyes, but don't protect other people).
 - Wearing a non-medical mask is required in indoor public places as per the Government of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Public Health - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): masks](#) Guidelines. Children under 2 are exempt, as well as children 2 to 4 when their caregiver can't get them to wear a mask.
 - The use of face masks is part of a layered approach to risk mitigation and a public health requirement; as per the Government of [Nova Scotia Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Masks](#) – masks must be worn by everyone in every public indoor space at all times, except when eating or drinking
 - All participants (athletes, coaches and staff, judges, volunteers, etc.) are required to wear a face mask in the following instances:
 - Entering and exiting the facility
 - During check-in and screening
 - In washrooms and change rooms
 - While seated at judges and volunteer tables
 - When approaching a judges table to discuss warm-up, competition order, or score inquiries
 - While handling/preparing food or drinks in the hospitality room
 - While moving throughout the facility, to and from the competition floor
 - While sport participants are not required to wear face masks “on the field of play” (i.e., on the competition floor), masks are required at all other times when moving throughout the facility
 - Athletes are encouraged to wear a face mask when they are not warming up or performing, especially if interacting with athletes/coaches from another club or when physical distancing cannot be maintained
 - Coaches are encouraged to wear a face mask at all times on the competition floor, however GNS recognizes that this may be deemed a hazard while moving equipment or spotting an athlete – it is up to each individual coach to make that risk assessment
 - Coaches are required to wear a face mask during coaches' meetings (if held in person) and when approaching the judges and volunteer tables
 - Volunteers, non-coaching staff, and judges are required to wear face masks at all times, even while on the competition floor

- **Cleaning and Disinfecting**
 - A minimum of 30 minutes must be left between flights to provide an opportunity for cleaning to occur.
 - The host club will be responsible for instituting a cleaning and disinfecting schedule, which shall include time between each flight to clear judges tables, wipe down mats and equipment, and clean common areas or surfaces such as door handles, tables and chairs, scoring and audio equipment, and washrooms.
 - The judges room should be cleaned and disinfected after meals/meetings when judges have returned to the competition floor
 - If the judges and volunteer tables require tablecloths, host clubs should use plastic tablecloths instead of fabric for easy cleaning and disinfecting
 - The host club shall have cleaning/disinfecting supplies readily available for spot cleaning as necessary; if an athlete's head or face or any bodily fluid comes into contact with the equipment or mats, it must be cleaned before the next athlete's turn
 - A thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the facility (e.g., "fogging") must take place at the end of each day

- **Screening**
 - The host club is responsible for conducting active screening of anyone entering the facility, including athletes, coaches and staff, judges, volunteers and spectators.

- **Contact Tracing**
 - Participating clubs are required to provide the name and phone number of each coach
 - The host club is responsible for collecting the name and phone number of anyone who enters the facility during the competition.
 - The host club is responsible for compiling a list of names and phone numbers for all athletes, coaches, judges, staff, and volunteers who will be in the facility during each flight
 - The collected information must be kept securely on file for a minimum of 21 days after the competition, after which it should be destroyed; the information must only be shared with a Nova Scotia public health official upon request

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPETITIONS

- **Competition Schedule**
 - Participants and their families will have varying degrees of risk tolerance when it comes to the potential for COVID-19 infection, and some may prefer to avoid hotel stays to limit their risk of exposure.
 - It is recommended that competitions should not start before 8:00am or finish after 8:00pm – this will allow most participants to travel to and from the meet on the same day, if they so choose.
 - The competition schedule must factor in cleaning time between each flight as well as time for participants to enter and exit the facility safely.

- **Food for Judges, Coaches, and Volunteers**
 - At most competitions, host clubs rely on donated food prepared by volunteers and presented buffet-style to judges, coaches, and volunteers; to eliminate concerns about the risk of COVID-19 transmission through food preparation and serving, host clubs should provide judges with pre-prepared individual meals in a catered or box lunch format from a reputable food-service business
 - Host clubs must provide judges with lunch, supper, and snacks as appropriate at the competition venue. If the host club is unable to provide these meals an appropriate per diem and time must be given to judges.
 - Host clubs are not required to provide breakfast at the competition venue, however they must inform judges in advance if breakfast will not be made available and include a \$10 per diem with the honorarium for out-of-town judges for each day (unless breakfast is provided with the hotel room rate)
 - Access to water or other beverages should be provided throughout the day
 - Host clubs may be required to provide meals for first aid/medical staff and the live-streaming crew, depending on these individuals' schedules
 - Host clubs may provide snacks or meals for coaches and their volunteers depending on their own assessment of need
 - The hospitality room must be large enough to allow individuals to be seated at least 2 metres apart while eating or host clubs will need to designate separate rooms or spaces for judges, coaches, and volunteers
 - Judging chairs must inform the host club of any allergies or dietary restrictions among judges when providing the judging panels

- **Judges' Travel and Accommodations**
 - Judges will not be required to carpool to competitions; each judge may claim round-trip mileage if they choose to travel alone
 - Judges will not be required to share hotel rooms; each judge will be provided their own hotel room if requested
 - If a judge is not comfortable staying in a hotel and it is possible for them to commute to and from the competition over multiple days, the host club must provide the judge with mileage for each additional round trip up to a maximum of the cost of one night's accommodation at the host hotel

- **Cancellation of Competitions**
 - Should the province revert to a more limited stage/phase, a competition may be cancelled if a competitive member club is impacted
 - The decision to cancel a competition will be situation-specific and shall be made by the GNS Board of Directors, in consultation with the host club, judging chairs, and the technical committees if necessary; factors that may be considered in a decision to cancel a competition include:
 - The number and level of competitors unable to participate due to regional public health restrictions
 - The ability to fill judging panels

- The financial viability of hosting with reduced participation versus the financial loss from cancellation
 - The timing of gym closures and re-openings, and clubs' ability to follow an appropriate timeline for safe preparation of athletes for competition
- Whenever possible, a minimum of **three weeks** notice shall be given if a competition is cancelled, however sudden changes in the status of COVID-19 in the province may require adjustments or cancellation with minimal notice
- Should a competition be cancelled ahead of the competition by:
 - **4 or more weeks:** the host club is required to reimburse the registration fee in full.
 - **2-4 weeks:** the host club is required to reimburse the registration fee in full, less a \$10 administration fee to all participants; similarly, should a club be unable to participate due to public health restrictions, the host club shall reimburse the registration fees paid, less a \$10 administration fee for each of the club's participants (this would also apply to any individual unable to participate due to possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection or exposure and a public health-imposed requirement to self-isolate). If the host club can provide expense statements for any meet items that have been purchased to help inform a GNS decision on a recommended refund.
 - **2 weeks or less:** the host club is not required to reimburse the registration fees.
- If a participant chooses to withdraw citing COVID-19 concerns, the host club is not required to refund the registration fee; host clubs are advised to review their refund policy and communicate this information with the meet invitation.

COMPETITION FEES

The GNS Board of Directors has amended the competition fee structure for the 2020-2021 season, recognizing the additional costs required to meet public health guidelines and the loss of revenue from spectator admissions and concession-type sales.

- The base registration fee for competitions remains unchanged at \$75 for MAG and WAG and \$70, \$80, or \$90 for TG for one, two, or three/four events
- There will be an additional \$10 COVID-19 fee on top of the base registration fee; this will assist clubs in covering the cost of live-scoring, cleaning supplies, increased judging costs, and the cost of 1 spectator per athlete.
- The total competition fees per participant are:
 - \$85 for MAG and WAG
 - \$80 for TG – one event
 - \$90 for TG – two events
 - \$100 for TG – three or four events

GNS SUPPORT

- GNS may offer financial assistance to host clubs as a means to reimburse clubs for some of the increased costs for judges meals, travel, accommodations, virtual scoring, cleaning, etc. GNS

recommends that all technical committees investigate subsidizing host clubs through direct funding or indirectly by using their officials tax collected through the event.

- GNS will assist clubs in preparing for live-scoring.

RESPONSIBILITY OF HOST CLUBS

- Host clubs must provide a Competition Operational Plan to participating clubs and judging chairs a minimum of two weeks in advance of the first day of competition; the plan must include:
 - Competition schedule
 - Procedures for athlete drop-off and pick-up
 - Screening and check-in protocols for all participants (athletes, coaches, judges, etc.)
 - Procedures for collection of floor music – it is recommended that host clubs collect floor music in advance in a digital format via email, drop-box, etc.
 - Isolation plan should an athlete, coach, official or volunteer become ill during the competition
 - Any other pertinent information specific to your club such as washroom/change room capacity, availability of water fountains/filling stations, process for awards pick-up, etc.
 - Information regarding availability of snacks and meals for coaches and judges
 - General reminders about public health measures including physical distancing and face mask requirements
 - Web links for live-scoring
- While all participants and spectators are required to bring their own face mask(s), host clubs should maintain a small supply of disposable face masks in the event that a participant has forgotten their own
- Supplies provided at the judges tables should be kept to the bare minimum essentials as judges will be responsible for bringing their own supplies
 - Items to provide: a few pencils, stop watch, bell, necessary hygiene supplies
 - Items to remove: flags, calculators, scorecards, candy dishes, decorative items, etc.
- Host clubs may consider running a virtual coaches meeting to review competition protocols the day prior to the event instead of at the beginning of each flight; host clubs can distribute a copy of the rotation order to each coach during check-in
- Host clubs are not required to provide chalk or chalk buckets, spray bottles, or snacks for athletes; athletes will be required to bring their own supplies
- Host clubs are not required to provide athlete gifts; this may be done at the discretion of the host club

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARTICIPATING CLUBS

- Be mindful of and respect registration deadlines, and ensure you provide accurate information for each participant (i.e., age, level, contact-tracing details, etc.)
 - Given the increased challenges of scheduling and grouping, the deadline for any level changes shall be 4 weeks prior to the first day of competition, no exceptions
 - Host clubs shall make every effort to group athletes from the same club together in as few rotations as possible, however no special requests will be accepted
- Respect the limit on the number of coaches on the competition floor for each flight
- Disseminate all information from the host club's Competition Operational Plan to coaches and to athletes and their parents/guardians
 - Familiarize athletes and coaches with the policy on the use of face masks while at the competition

