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WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Ladder

**Recommendations for Graduated Return to Play
During a Period of High Infectious Disease Rates**

WFTDA Return To Roller Derby Ladder

In 2020, the Women's Flat Track Derby Association released the *WFTDA COVID-19 Return to Roller Derby Guidelines* to support a safe pause and return to the sport of roller derby during the COVID-19 pandemic. **The plan was created with the goal of reducing the risk to your league and local communities, your family, workplace, and friends, of transmission of communicable diseases and infections due to roller derby congregation and activity.**

With COVID-19 and other outbreaks occurring in different areas of the world at different times, the WFTDA is shifting the document to provide recommendations for managing your league during any surge of an infection in your region, or any future pandemic. The companion documents, *WFTDA Recommendations for Return to Full-Contact Skating*, *WFTDA Infection Control Guidance for Leagues*, and the *WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Ladder Audience Guidelines*, provide best practices for ongoing roller derby league management and training to both keep your league healthy from infection, and to support a safe return to roller derby activity after a league/training pause.

These Return to Play guidelines remain recommendations; however it is a requirement that WFTDA-member leagues must follow their local government/health department requirements surrounding contact sports, sporting events and public gatherings. If a WFTDA league is also under the jurisdiction of a National Governing Body (NGB), it should follow their guidelines/recommendations.

The WFTDA recommends that all members get vaccinated if a vaccine is available for the disease. Vaccine rollouts have been inequitable along race and class lines, and based on government resources. It is important for us to center this in our returns. Additionally, not everyone is medically able to get vaccinated. We believe that putting lives before the return of our sport is essential to living our values.

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Important Concepts in This Document

League - A league for the purpose of this document is defined as any group of people - including juniors and recreational participants - who normally play and share space together. Even if multiple leagues practice together, when indicated in the Activity Recommendations for the initial tiers in the ladder, participants should be assigned to smaller groups or lineups.

Multiple leagues who utilize the same facility should, whenever possible during an outbreak, use the facility on different days/times in order to facilitate better contact tracing should an exposure occur.

Local/Locality - The geographic areas in which your league is located and all league's participants reside and work. Defining "local" is important for your league in order to be able to assess the presence of the virus in your community, and it may include more than just your town if league members travel to play from different areas. If members travel from a long distance to your events, and/or require the use of public transportation, you should also consider the impact of a virus on areas where they may stop and/or mode of transportation.

Community spread - The spread of the virus within your local community (as described in Local/Locality above). When assessing league activity, it is first important to understand how the virus is impacting your league simply by the activities of local people congregating together.

Travel spread - The spread of the virus due to travel to another locality, or from someone from another locality coming in. This is a risk that is added once the league starts traveling to other localities or inviting participants from other localities in.

In addition to assessing community spread vs. travel spread, it is also important to assess the daily impact of movement of people in your community's everyday life. It is recommended that leagues in high-density or high-traffic areas take extra care to assess their government policies and economic activities and the impact on the spread of the virus when determining how to proceed with roller derby activities.

Region - The geographic area in which your league participates and considers to be short-distance or regional travel. This is important if your league is in an area with multiple states, provinces or countries within close travel proximity and considers those other geographic areas as being within your region. It is important to hold off on international travel until the first step of competing domestically within your region is completed for at least a 14-day interval.

WFTDA Statement on Audiences and Roller Derby

Organizations following the WFTDA Recommendations should note that small live audiences may be possible only beginning at TIER FIVE on the return ladder. The WFTDA has published a *WFTDA Audience Guidelines for COVID-19 Return to Play* that outlined adjustments to the venue setup sections of the *WFTDA Risk Management Guidelines*, guidance for registration and seating of spectators, and recommendations for mitigating virus exposure risk once a league has reached Tier Five. This document has been renamed the *WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Ladder Audience Guidelines* and have been updated to reflect the change in requirements in these recommendations.

At Tier Five, the WFTDA recommends **only** including community members who may already be or come into contact with your organization's members, such as friends, family, or coworkers, and limiting your venue capacity to no more than 25%. External fans should be incorporated only after a league has successfully completed this Tier.



WHEN DO YOU STEP UP OR DOWN THE LADDER?

KNOWING WHEN TO STEP UP TO THE NEXT TIER

- You have completed 14 days on the Baseline Conditions, or on the current tier and no infections have resulted from your league activity.
- Infection conditions do not reflect any of those described below in KNOWING WHEN TO PAUSE OR TO STEP BACK DOWN A TIER OR OFF THE LADDER.
- You have met any **Basic Provisions** listed for a Section or Tier of activity.

KNOWING WHEN TO PAUSE OR TO STEP BACK DOWN A TIER OR OFF THE LADDER

BACK TO BASELINE CONDITIONS

If your local conditions no longer meet the Baseline Conditions at any time, you must step off the ladder. Once these are met, you may return to the Tier you are on unless you wait more than four weeks. If you wait more than four weeks, start back at Tier One.

PAUSE AT YOUR CURRENT TIER

Even if you've completed 14 days at a Tier, **an increase in the positivity rates that raises concern or causes mitigation practices to be considered** should result in your team PAUSING AT THE TIER YOU ARE ON.

STEP DOWN TO A LOWER TIER

If your local health authority raises the level of alert to the highest level, but does not enforce mitigation practices that would require you to return to Baseline Conditions:

- **If you are at Tier Four or below**, you should consider returning to Tier One policies and activities.
- **If you are at Tier Five or above**, you should consider postponing games and returning to Tier Four.
 - » If mitigation practices or increasing rates continue for four weeks, you should consider stepping back down to Tier One.

Guidelines for Officials, Photographers, Announcers and Other Volunteers

Officials: The WFTDA relies on officials to ensure that roller derby is facilitated safely. If you are an affiliated official, please follow the guide along with your designated league.

- Skating officials may participate as early as TIER ONE for non-contact exercise
- Non-skating officials may participate at TIER THREE

Announcers, Photographers, and Volunteers: We value the contributions of our biggest supporters, and advise that community members affiliated with a league follow that league's progression on the ladder.

- Announcers, photographers, and volunteers may participate starting at TIER FOUR

If you work with multiple leagues, we recommend these guidelines:

- Adhere to the WFTDA Infection Control Guidance
- Adhere to pre-activity symptom checks; if you show symptoms, alert any league you are in contact with and discontinue activity
- Your area of residence must also meet Baseline Guidelines to begin activities
- If unaffiliated, choose one league for temporary ladder integration; contact that league to discuss their readiness.
- Once attending a league's activities, the WFTDA recommends that participants:
 - » Wait 14 days until the last day of your participation with one league before attending a different league's activities
 - » If invited to an interleague event, both leagues should be at TIER FOUR or higher
 - » If any league you work with steps off the ladder due to a positive case, you must follow that protocol

GETTING GEARED UP: When Do Leagues Meet Baseline Conditions?

1. Has your league identified a Risk Coordinator to manage risk assessment and wellness for your league? The job description may be found in the *WFTDA Risk Management Guidelines*. This person, along with your Coaching and Training committee, will be essential to helping your league leadership assess steps towards return to play.

2. Has your leadership read and made available to the league the suite of WFTDA documents to help you manage your league during and after a pandemic/outbreak?

- This Return to Play plan is a guide to manage the league.
- The *WFTDA Infection Control Guidance for Leagues* provides best practices for hygiene to avoid the spread of contagious diseases in your league.
- The *Recommendations for Return to Full-Contact Skating* provides best training practices for return to play from any absence from roller derby, which includes recommended off-skates activity before attempting on-skates exercise.
- The *WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Ladder Audience Guidelines* outlines adjustments to the venue setup sections of the *WFTDA Risk Management Guidelines*, guidance for registration and seating of spectators, and recommendations for mitigating virus exposure risk once a league has reached Tier Five.

3. Do you know where to find the most accurate and updated information on outbreaks in your locality, region and country? This will be essential to know when your league is legally allowed to resume activity. The Risk Coordinator should put together league-specific information on where to find this information to facilitate league knowledge and participation in this process.

GETTING GEARED UP: When Do Leagues Meet Baseline Conditions? CONTINUED

4. Have you followed the response of the local government and health authority? Keeping aware of any potential rise in infections, any medical breakthroughs and the impact of the infections on hospital beds and local regulations is important.

- **Federal, local, and/or municipal governments have opened all facilities, schools, government operations, allow for congregations of 30 or more, and have approved indoor contact sports.**
- **Hospital capacity** is not only an important indicator of infection spread, but it may mean less access to treatment for roller derby athletes in the event of injury.
- **Masking Recommendations:** We'd like leagues to consider any masking recommendations of the health authority of their home country as part of their safety plans.

5. Create a system to set up your league events based on these recommendations, including attendance, recruiting, event and game scheduling.

- **If your league has a reported case of the disease:**
 - » If testing is widely available, all exposed members who are able to get tested are encouraged to test negative before returning to events/practice. If tests are not available, exposed members are encouraged to wait the time period recommended by your local health authority, or the individual's physician, before returning.
 - » We feel this practice should be upheld by all participating members to ensure the safety of most vulnerable community members. Unexposed league members may continue normal activities.
- **Centering Equity While Returning:** When creating your league's Return to Play Plan, it is important for everyone to make sure plans are created with equity and access in mind. This can mean a lot of things, including where your league is able to practice, how you think about recruiting or extending invitations to new members, or even your league participation policies. These are especially important as we slowly rebuild; recognizing that members will continue to be unpacking trauma. Be prepared to be flexible and mindful that community members may not feel comfortable engaging in gameplay or contact if cases begin to rise. This includes officials, support staff, or team members.

Baseline Activities Program

Once you've reached Baseline Conditions, the Baseline Activities Program asks leagues to re-enter roller derby slowly and carefully, to minimize potential injuries or cases. This includes a longer timeline for Baseline Activities, smaller groups, and prioritizing outdoor and highly ventilated areas.

- We know that leagues are eager to play roller derby again. If you have not played roller derby in more than six months, we ask that your league creates a plan for **4 weeks of on-skates, non-contact activity**.
 - » Emphasize rebuilding strength and fitness through non-contact drills
 - » Footwork, line drills, endurance with ample spacing
 - » If you need help or inspiration, have a look at the [This is Roller Derby - Beginner Curriculum](#) training elements and development stages to plan your return.
- WFTDA recommends beginning your in-person training with **pods (6-10 people) and small-group-focused programming**.
 - » Create a sign-up sheet for contact tracing with each practice. This means making a list of participants who attend each practice, and if one of them develops an infection, being able to alert other members that they may have been exposed. Names of those participants who have tested positive or are ill should be withheld to protect privacy rights.
 - » Consider adding a weekly symptom-check-in for skaters returning to practice
- Prioritize outdoor practice in places where you are able to do so
 - » Outdoor practices and activities should meet Risk Management requirements
 - » If you do not have access to outdoor skating areas, indoor spaces must have excellent ventilation opportunities, such as windows and garage or bay doors open at all times. We recommend mask usage for respiratory ailments should you be practicing indoors.

SECTION ONE

League-Only Graduated Return to Activities (Tiers One, Two, Three)

This Section includes Tiers One to Three and activities only within a single league. Activity takes place in smaller groups and builds from no-contact to intraleague scrimmage activity.

Leagues should remain on each Tier for 14-day intervals and if the increase in activity and number of participants does not result in infection in your league, you may move up to Tier Two and Tier Three.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Suspend all league attendance policies** until Tier Four;
- Encourage **regular symptom checks** at home before practice or activities;
- Allow the use of cloth masks and gloves;
- **Create and encourage a judgment-free, self-reporting structure** that includes mandatory isolation from in-person league activities or events as advised by a medical professional for participants who
 - » report any symptoms, or
 - » return from travel to areas with high-risk

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **To track any potential exposure, start by limiting practices to assigned, smaller groups of skaters and skating officials, where participants do not rotate or mix. As you move up to Tier Three, you may increase your numbers to allow for scrimmage participation.**
 - » You may start Tier One by assigning groups by teams or lines, or people who live/congregate together outside of roller derby.
 - » Any adjustments to groups should be limited and made at the same time.
 - » Skating Officials may start on Tier One. It is recommended that Non-Skating Officials wait to return until Tier Three.

SECTION ONE

League-Only Graduated Return to Activities (Tiers One, Two, Three) CONTINUED

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

- Leagues are expected to **read and abide by the WFTDA Graduated Return to Contact table in the WFTDA Recommendations for Return to Full-Contact Skating:**
 - » **Tier One:** Start with a graduated exercise reacclimation period that can be assigned to skaters and officials before returning to skating practice:
 - Light aerobic exercise
 - Cardio exercise
 - Strength exercise
 - » **Tier Two:** In addition to the TIER ONE activities from the WFTDA Recommendations for Return to Full-Contact Skating, you may participate in low contact training drills.
 - » **Tier Three:** In addition to the TIER ONE and TWO activities from the WFTDA Recommendations for Return to Full-Contact Skating, you may participate in full-contact training and scrimmage drills.
- **Read and follow the WFTDA Infection Control Guidance to ensure participants follow best practices for hand-washing and other hygiene, and to disinfect your facility properly.**

SECTION ONE

Local Interleague Game Play (Tier **Four**)

Inter-league game play represents an important step in the Return-to-Play Ladder, and it must be contemplated carefully and attempted with care, with risk of infections in mind. The WFTDA recommends integrating this step slowly, and for many leagues, this step may take some time to attempt. We recommend using 14-day waiting periods following these games, as they represent an expansion of your contact circle, potentially widening the risk of infection.

BASIC PROVISIONS FOR **Return to Inter-league Game Play:**

All Baseline Conditions continue to be met and your league has successfully passed through 14-day intervals each of TIERS ONE-THREE.

The league may **participate in games with other leagues**, but those leagues should be **within the same region** as defined as:

- a city, state/province, or multi-city/state/province locality within reasonable geographic proximity of the league; WITHIN THE SAME COUNTRY; AND
- sharing coordinated or similar timing and response between health and governmental entities.

These games **should be limited to single games or smaller multi-game events** to limit congregation.

No audiences recommended per *WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Ladder Audience Guidelines*.

When ALL OF THESE BASIC PROVISIONS have been met, your league is ready to advance to TIER FOUR.

SECTION TWO

TIER FOUR: Return to Inter-League Game Play in Region

These are localized recommendations that apply for any geographic area in which a skater or official lives and participates. This tier allows for inter-league regulation and sanctioned games to resume, but only within the localized region of the league—for example, a county or small state—within the same country, and with no audiences.

TIER FOUR: **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Continue to follow policy recommendations as listed in SECTION ONE.** Attendance policies may be reinstated but anyone who has symptoms of any infection should be advised to stay home and be excused.
- **Speak openly to any opposing teams,** and recognize that the goal is to avoid active infections.
- To minimize the economic impact of a cancellation for health reasons, **work with a lawyer to:**
 - » **Structure your inter-league agreements to avoid penalizing cancellations**
 - » **Set up venue contracts that allow for flexibility in case of infection resurgence in your locality or in case a participating league has a resurgence in their locality.**

TIER FOUR: **ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Announcers and Volunteer Staff:** These community members are possible at Tier Four and must:
 - » Practice social distancing
 - » Masks are recommended, where possible (announcers may stand more than 6 feet (2 meters) apart and unmask when needed)
- **Continue to consider capping participants** in order to limit exposure when inter-league play resumes;
- **Read and abide by the WFTDA Graduated Return to Contact table** in the WFTDA Recommendations for Return to Full-Contact Skating. In addition to the TIER ONE through THREE activities, you may participate in:
 - » Full Game Play
- **Review the WFTDA Infection Control Guidance** to ensure all participants follow best practices for hygiene, and your facility is disinfected properly to prevent the spread of infection.

SECTION THREE

Graduated Return to Travel and Small Events (Tiers **Five** and **Six**)

SECTION THREE allows for travel outside of a league's region for the purpose of game play and is split into three tiers in order to assess the risk of:

- Travel distance - moving from short-haul travel to long-haul/international travel including travel restrictions, closed borders and quarantine requirements
- Medical advances and practices in participating regions
- Impact of the above on the safety of allowing audience participation in the event

BASIC PROVISIONS:

Travel is possible between the league's region of origin and a destination origin without quarantine requirements either upon arrival in the destination region or upon return to the league's home region.

Games may be sanctioned and should be **limited to single games or smaller multi-game events.**

Small live audiences are possible per the requirements of the *WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Ladder Audience Guidelines*

When ALL OF THESE BASIC PROVISIONS have been met, your league is ready to advance to SECTION THREE.

SECTION THREE

Graduated Return to Travel and Small Events (Tiers **Five** and **Six**)

These are recommendations that apply for graduated travel outside of the local region and with small audiences.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue Policy Recommendations for TIER FOUR**
- **Consider purchasing travel insurance for your league members** when travel is possible, to allow for cancellation should your league be affected by a new outbreak.
 - » Be sure to check for policy exclusions and read the policy terms carefully, prior to purchasing. **Not all travel policies include pandemic coverage**

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue to follow the WFTDA Infection Control Guidance** to ensure participants follow best practices in travel and at play, and your facility is disinfected properly to prevent the spread of infection.
- **For leagues hosting small audiences**, follow the *WFTDA Return to Roller Derby Ladder Audience Guidelines*

SECTION FOUR: **Return to Full-Scale Events with Spectators**

TIER SEVEN

- **No limit to the size of the event or number of participants and spectators.**
- **WFTDA returns to full global competitive pathways and events.**

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue Policy Recommendations for TIER FIVE.**
- **The league should always run an attendance policy that allows for participants to miss events when ill or suspecting illness.**

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue to follow the WFTDA Infection Control Guidance** to ensure participants follow best practices for hygiene in travel and at play, and your facility is disinfected properly to prevent the spread of infection.