

Ontario announces return to play plan for pros and elite athletes

By Brian Lockhart

The Ontario government is releasing a framework for select Ontario professional and elite amateur sport leagues and events.

Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture, made the announcement on Monday, June 14.

"Our government remains committed to protecting the health and well-being of all athletes by supporting return-to-play protocols that are safe, evidence-based, and gradual," MacLeod said. "This is an important first step to getting all Ontario athletes back to sport safely, while supporting Ontario-based leagues and events that are strong local economic drivers and job creators."

A number of professional and elite-amateur sports leagues will be able to return to play under stringent public health and safety protocols.

The move is in advance of the broader return to play for amateur and recreational sports.

Sports hosted by a national sport organization that is either funded by Sport Canada or recognized by the Canadian Olympic Committee of the Canadian Paralympic Committee may also return to play.

The new rules come with a strict number of protocols that must be adhered to.

This includes COVID-19 screening and testing, assigning cohorts, practice, training and competition protocols, and accommodation and travel/transportation protocols.

Local amateur sports were not mentioned in the announcement; however this is generally considered the first step to allow more sport leagues and events to start playing.