



GOTHAM VOLLEYBALL PLAN FOR RETURN TO PLAY

2021

GOTHAM RETURN TO PLAY: INTRODUCTION



The Gotham Volleyball League is more than just a volleyball league. It is a large and diverse community and an organization whose mission is to build community through the sport of volleyball. The COVID-19 pandemic caused Gotham to suspend all volleyball operations, meaning that Gotham could not do the community building it does so well.

This year, as we celebrate our 40th Anniversary, Gotham begins the transition back to holding regular volleyball activities. As medical protections against COVID become more commonplace and the State of New York once again permits recreational volleyball as a safe activity, Gotham will be taking a deliberate, community-oriented approach to returning to the court. The phased plan described in this manual will allow for our community to have a voice in our plan, allow space for our membership to gradually return to volleyball as they are able, and allow our organization to build back over the course of this year to its maximum capacity.

GOTHAM RETURN TO PLAY: SUMMARY OF PHASES

Gotham's return to play plan will consist of three phases, as the organization and our community builds back to its pre-COVID capacity:

PHASE 1 will be Gotham's **Return to Play assessment and planning**. Work in this phase will involve Gotham checking in with all of its stakeholders (membership, school/facilities, health experts, etc.) to determine the capacity to return to play and any obstacles to returning to full capacity. We will also identify additional procedures and equipment need to be put in place to operate safely, such as pre-attendance health assessment, sanitizing equipment, etc. While this outreach is being done, Gotham Leaders who oversee the various Gotham programs will also start planning Phase 2 volleyball activities and developing a schedule for those activities. Phase 1 will conclude after we finalize a date that Gotham will resume volleyball activities and set a schedule for those activities.

Estimated length of Phase 1: 30-60 days, beginning February 9, 2021

PHASE 2 will consist of the **initial resumption of volleyball programming**. Phase 2 programming will emphasize smaller group activities (such as lower capacity open plays and clinics) that can be conducted given COVID-19 capacity and facility limitations. Phase 2, depending on applicable guidance and facility availability may also include resumption of annual tournaments such as Spring Fling and the Fire Island tournaments. Phase 2 programming will be flexible, designed to accommodate unforeseen scheduling changes and adjustments to safety protocols. During this phase, in addition to offering this initial volleyball programming, Gotham Leadership will be preparing logistically for the resumption of regular programming, including devising the initial tryout process. Phase 2 will conclude with tryouts for the first full Gotham season since interruption of volleyball activities.

Estimated length of Phase 2: 3-6 months

PHASE 3 will be Gotham's **return to full volleyball activities**. It is expected that Phase 3 activities will follow, as close as possible, what is considered a regular schedule and slate of activities. Phase 3 will begin with a tryout process, modified as appropriate, to allow for selection and sorting into Division and Power classes. We will then hold a full schedule of matches and classes. Phase 3 will conclude with the end-of-season celebration, at which point it is anticipated that Gotham will have fully transitioned back to full volleyball activities.

Estimated length of Phase 3: 4-5 months

GOTHAM RETURN TO PLAY: PHASE 1 PLAN

The Phase 1 plan below describes the work that will need to be done before we return to the court:

Facility Assessment (Facilities and Operations Committee) – The Committee will assess current and longer term availability of our facilities to determine what Phase 2 volleyball programming we will be able to offer and whether there will be any gaps in facility availability that need to be addressed. The Committee will create a tentative calendar for Phase 2 activities based on facility availability.

Review and Adoption of Safety Protocols (Facilities and Operations Committee) – The Committee will review NYS public health guidance, USAV Return to Play safety guidance and other applicable safety literature. The Committee will recommend additional equipment that must be purchased prior to resumption of play. The Committee will collaborate with Leadership Group designees to ensure that the logistics are in place to implement safety protocols, such as health assessments and temperature checks.

Member Return to Play Survey and Forum (Board of Directors) – The Board will send out a survey and hold a membership forum to engage the Gotham membership. This will create opportunities for all members to participate in this process and weigh in with their thoughts regarding return to play, share their vision for how we return, and express any concerns that need to be addressed.

Engagement and Outreach on Social Media (Communications Committee) – The Committee will create transparency regarding decisions made during the engagement process through posting regular updates on social media and offering members the opportunity to interact with Gotham and share information about returning to volleyball through social media.

Design Phase 2 programming (Training Leadership Group and T&OP Leadership Group) – The Training Leadership Group will assess availability of coaches and engage the Power Director to design clinical offerings at all skill levels appropriate for Phase 2 with the various coaches. The Tournaments and Open Play Leadership Group will design a schedule of open play, friendship tournaments and other flexible offerings at all skill levels to populate the Phase 2 schedule. The Tournaments and Open Play Leadership Group will also explore and, if appropriate, confirm holding the Big Apple, Spring Fling and/or Fire Island Tournaments. If needed, these groups should consult with the Treasurer and the Finance Committee about adjusted pricing.

GOTHAM RETURN TO PLAY: PHASE 2 PLAN

Phase 2 will be our community's first opportunity to return to the volleyball court. Specific details of Phase 2 programming, such as the schedule of events and the facilities that will house the events, will be determined through the Phase 1 processes. Given the uncertainty and complexities inherent in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Phase 2 schedule will be flexible, reduced capacity and will not be in a "regular season" format.

Programming will offer members who will not have played volleyball in a while the opportunity for clinical re-training and events to "shake the rust off." During Phase 2, it is anticipated that some members and coaches will still be uncomfortable participating, and messaging and engagement will take account of this to ensure these members do not feel excluded. Phase 2 may include, if circumstances permit, a "mini-season" of Division Play, but likely will focus more on individual events.

In addition to holding Phase 2 volleyball activities, the below work will be done in preparation for moving to Phase 3.

Evaluation of Safety Protocols (Facilities and Operations Committee) – The Committee will seek feedback from Gotham Leaders on Duty (GLODs) about safety protocols and will update and adjust those protocols as needed.

Facility Confirmation (Facilities and Operations Committee) – The Committee will confirm that all necessary facilities are available to proceed to Phase 3, and will propose alternatives to close any gaps in facility availability.

Publicity and Engagement (Communications Committee) – The Communications Committee will engage membership and the public regarding Gotham's activities and return to the volleyball court.

Planning Tryouts and Logistics for Full Season (*Ad Hoc* Return to Volleyball Working Group) - This *ad hoc* working group will coordinate between Facilities, DPLG, TLG, E&N, D&I the Board and Communications in order to review and recommend any changes to existing processes and protocols needed to safely and effectively resume our regular, on-the-court operations. This group will create a work plan for tryouts, including assignment of assign volunteer roles in tryouts and other return to volleyball events. Elections and Nominations will work with the DPLG to determine the appropriate method for selecting the Team Captains for the first full season of Division Play.

GOTHAM RETURN TO PLAY: PHASE 3 PLAN

At the end of our return to play transition, Phase 3 will be our first effort since the COVID pandemic at hosting a full season of Gotham programming. Some modifications are anticipated based on applicable health guidance but the volume and capacity is anticipated to more closely approximate what Gotham has done in the past.

During Phase 3, the **Facilities and Operations Committee** will continue to assess the efficacy of safety protocols, proposing modifications as public health developments warrant.

Should we be able to hold an end of season gathering, the **Activities and Outreach Leadership Group** will secure a venue for that gathering. If we are unable to hold a gathering, the Leadership Group will work collaboratively with Division and Power representatives to create alternative programming.

At the end of the season, we anticipate the transition back to play will be complete. At that time, the **Board of Directors** will conduct a final review of the Return to Play plan and make a determination as to whether any additional follow-up is needed.

GOTHAM RETURN TO PLAY: OTHER ACTIVITIES

While we transition back to volleyball play, Gotham will hold several important off-the-court activities. These activities, to the extent possible, will be coordinated with our Return to Play effort to ensure that all events are properly supported and well attended.

Gotham's 40th Anniversary Celebration – We are hosting a series of zoom events, social media events, and membership profiles, culminating in a partnership with the LGBTQ Center to hold a virtual celebration of our 40th Anniversary in June 2021.

Leadership Election and Selection – We will be appointing and electing various leadership positions over the coming months. In April and May, the Vice Presidents of Division Play, Training, Activities and Outreach and Tournaments and Open Play will be appointed. Additionally all members of the Activities and Outreach Leadership Group, the Tournaments and Open Play Leadership Group and Committee members will be appointed. We will also be holding an election in May 2021 for 4 members of our Board of Directors. If we reach Phase 3 by Fall 2021, we will hold elections for Division Representatives and Power representatives in October 2021.