

'Can't prevent contact'

Continued from A33

two or three per team, he added, while other game personnel and spectators would also be limited or kept at a distance.

There would be a slew of new game-day safety measures under the proposed plan, too.

Admitting that limiting contact in a contact sport simply cannot be done, Parks said they would simply ramp up sanitizing efforts, including constant cleaning of game balls.

"You just can't prevent (contact).

A player is going to touch his mouth guard, then his glove is going to touch another player, and then maybe that player adjusts his mouth guard, and then suddenly, there's a transfer (of germs)," he said.

At each game, one person would be designated as the 'ball person' who would be in charge of cleaning each one and rotating it back into play. In a perfect world, Parks said balls would be sent to the sideline for sterilization after each play.

As well, all players will be required to wear gloves and long sleeves, to further protect themselves from contact.

To limit transferring droplets, full face shields will also be attached to each helmet – shields that cover the entire face, as opposed to traditional football face shields that only cover a player's eyes.

On-field officials will also be required to wear masks during

games, though Parks said they'll obviously need to pull them down from their mouths in order to blow the whistle. Officials have also been instructed to turn away from players – whenever possible – when blowing the whistle, in order to further limit droplet transmission.

Parks said the final phase of the season – provincial championships – are the only thing he doesn't yet have a solution for, though he admits such games could simply be cut altogether for one season. At this point, he noted, crowning a B.C. champ isn't the most important thing.

"We just need to get the kids out there... and I'm trying."

In order to keep their young players interested in the sport, Parks said they're in the midst of holding an essay contest for players, who have been tasked with writing about what they love about football. The response – from players and parents, alike – has been positive, he said.

"It's just a way to keep the kids engaged... and you don't get marked on it – you can't fail this one," he laughed.

Both Whitmarsh and Parks said accepting that things will be different – for awhile at least – is going to be key for all involved.

"In broad strokes – we certainly aren't expecting rugby as we know it to take place in 2020," Whitmarsh said.



rd day

te Rock's
re department,
y protocols –
screenings and
child ratios – in

iations across
nsula are
reen light to
return-to-play
approved by
authorities and
anizations.

FC soccer
return to local
(y), and others
n this month.