



INFORMATION BULLETIN 19-11

May 27, 2020

COVID-19 Update – Message from the CEO

To the Members of Hockey Alberta:

During the Member Zoom meetings held in early May, we spoke about the work being undertaken on various fronts to prepare for the return of hockey both in Alberta and across the country. We talked about how there were many questions to which we were looking to obtain and develop the answers.

Last week we all received the update letter from Hockey Canada with regard to COVID-19. Hockey Alberta is aligned with the details outlined in the letter.

Make no mistake, we want hockey back. As the Provincial Sport Organization for hockey in Alberta, this is not just our game, it is our passion.

Everyone involved with our sport recognizes the benefits of hockey for our participants – physically, socially, and emotionally. We know that hockey makes a difference in people's lives, helps develop individual and group social skills, and is important for the physical literacy of our youth.

Simply said, we believe hockey is important. However, it is not more important than the health and safety of the participants, the larger hockey community, and society in general.

That is why Hockey Alberta is working with Hockey Canada, other provincial branches, and fellow Provincial Sport Organizations in Alberta as we develop our Return to Hockey Plan.

The intention is to provide the framework and minimum standards for any organization in our province to undertake hockey activities. That way, when facilities reopen, and athletes are allowed back on the ice, they can participate safely and securely and in a manner where the participants, their families and all of our other partners and stakeholders are protected and given the best chance for success.

As most of you are aware, opening arenas and recreation facilities currently is in Phase III of the province's COVID-19 relaunch plan, and no firm timelines have been established for the implementation of Phase III.

We know that not having specific dates or timelines can be unsettling. But it is important for everyone to remember that amateur hockey of any kind cannot be played in Alberta until the government and health officials authorize rinks to be open and outline the minimum safety standards that must be followed.

Hockey Alberta's responsibility is to have a plan in place that can be adapted to meet those requirements and allow participants back on the ice in a safe atmosphere.

The current focus is to work to ensure our game is ready to go in the fall, if allowed as part of the province's relaunch plan. We also want to be prepared if rinks open sooner than that because we know that our participants, and the hockey community in general, are clamouring to return to hockey.

What will be included in the Return to Hockey Plan?

First and foremost, the plan abides by government directions with a focus on the health and safety of all involved. It reflects the reality that there will be new requirements in place for the safe operation of hockey facilities, which will impact hockey participants, including a checklist of items that participants will be required to do to be able to step on the ice. This will include items such as when to arrive at the arena, masks, sanitizer, parent access to help tie skates etc. The plan will also include resources and processes that Hockey Alberta will be developing to help our Members establish programming procedures to meet these requirements in a safe environment.



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The plan calls for a phased-in approach, in keeping with the planning undertaken by government and health authorities. At this point, the plan has four phases, starting at the developmental program level and working up to a return to the traditional 5-on-5 game. As circumstances evolve and improve, we will update and adapt the plan to best allow for the return of hockey in Alberta.

Hockey Alberta will be seeking input from our associations, leagues, club teams, accredited schools and other stakeholders to help establish a coordinated process and the detailed timeline and parameters of what activities may look like in each phase.

We are committed to keeping our Members, and the larger hockey community, updated as the Return to Hockey plan is finalized and then made ready for implementation.

If you have questions or concerns, please ask. Please send your inquiries to this special email address: membership@hockeyalberta.ca

Rob Litwinski, CEO
Hockey Alberta
