



August 21, 2020

Hockey Manitoba Return to Play

Hockey Manitoba hosted five information sessions for member leagues and associations between the dates of August 6 – 13, 2020, to ensure communication of important information included in the Hockey Manitoba Return to Play (RTP) plan approved for Phase 2 by the provincial government beginning on August 12, 2020. In preparing the RTP, Hockey Manitoba has worked in coordination with Hockey Canada, Sport Manitoba, and the Province of Manitoba and was reviewed by a task team which included input from a variety of stakeholders. These answers are as of August 21, 2020. As a reminder, the document will remain fluid and flexible to accommodate the necessary changes from local health authorities. Below are answers to important questions that were discussed in the information sessions to help players return to hockey based on the August 12, 2020 approval of the RTP – Phase 2 by the Province of Manitoba.

Thank you to those who participated with the task team and in the information sessions, your contributions and proper execution of the RTP protocols will ensure all members can return to hockey safely and have a positive hockey experience.

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Roles and Responsibilities

1. The role of the Communications Officer will be challenging. Does Hockey Manitoba plan to release training documents/materials to assist volunteers in taking on this role?
A: Yes. Hockey Manitoba is currently putting together a Communications Officer Toolkit to support staff/volunteers in their role.
2. When does the Communications Officer have to be in place?
A: The Communications Officer should be in place prior to players returning to the ice. If players are returning to the ice prior to having a Communications Officer in place, the association should identify a Communications Officer for the tryout process. This individual will handle the RTP and safety protocols related to COVID-19 during the tryout process. Following team formation, these responsibilities will shift to the Communications Officer for each team.
3. Do teams need to track all persons in the facility during practice and games or just players/parents?
A: Teams are responsible for tracking their own players. The arena would be responsible for the capacity of the facility. Hockey Manitoba will be releasing the appropriate tracking protocols that all teams will be required to follow.
4. Can the role of communications officer be performed by an existing team official, or in the case of senior hockey, a player?
A: The role can be performed by an existing staff member or volunteer however should not be the responsibility of a player.
5. Does the communications officer need to have Respect in Sport (RIS) certification?
A: There is no additional requirement for the communications officer to complete RIS however existing team officials or parents are required to have the Activity Leader or Parent Program, respectively.
6. Who is required to keep a record of the screening questions?
A: The team Communications Officer should ensure all players have completed the mandatory screening prior to attending and tracking attendance. Attendance records should be kept for at least 30 days.
7. How will information be sent to the communications officer on each team?
A: Minor Hockey Associations should collect the email information for each team's communications officer. Important Hockey Manitoba information will be updated on the website and sent to associations as required. The communications officer should also be aware of any information communicated by the Province of Manitoba.

8. What happens if a player tests positive?

A: If a sick participant (or their parent/guardian if the participant is a minor) elects to inform a team/hockey association/Member that they have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual informed shall seek the sick participant/their parent's/guardian's consent to contact public health authorities in order to obtain advice on communication with other potentially impacted participants. The sick participant (or their parent/guardian if the participant is a minor) should be asked to advise Public Health of this consent. Explain the communication that will take place and NEVER disclose the sick person's name. If a player tests positive, the communications officer will be required to follow the protocol outlined by the Province of Manitoba and Hockey Canada, this information will be provided in the Communications officer toolkit and on Hockey Manitoba's website. Once properly reported, public health would investigate the risk to all those involved in the activity, this includes activities prior to the activity, during the activity and following the activity. This assessment would include players, coaches, spectators, officials and anyone else who may be at risk. Pending the risk assessment, public health may determine that there was zero risk to others and therefore there would be no need for anyone to self isolate (quarantine). The risk assessment could also determine that all those involved would be at risk and therefore all those who were involved would have to self isolate (quarantine) for 14 days.

Equipment

9. What will the protocol be for teams that need to share goalie equipment?

A: We recommend only one member of the team use the equipment during a given practice or game. Wherever possible, players should use their own helmets and not share helmets. After the goalie equipment is used, it should be washed/sanitized/disinfected (as best you can) at home by the individual who used it last and then brought back for the next person to use. We encourage coaches to allow players who show interest to play consecutive games in goal to reduce the number of times the goalie equipment needs to be washed and shared.

10. In the equipment section of the document it states "Equipment that is shared (pucks, pylons, etc.) must only be handled by the owner of the equipment.", will game officials be responsible to bring game pucks now instead of asking the home team for pucks?

A: Once Phase 3 is approved; the home team should provide pucks to officials.

11. What are the recommendations regarding mouthguards?

A: Mouthguards are required as per the Hockey Manitoba Handbook for all levels excluding senior hockey. It is important that mouthguards are properly worn, washed, and only be handled by the individual player.

Phase 2

12. Will there be a maximum number of players permitted on the ice during practice sessions?

A: The maximum number of players on the ice will be limited to the maximum roster size at each level.

- Minor Hockey/U15 AAA – 19 Athletes
- U18 AAA/High School – 20 Athletes
- Junior/Senior Hockey – 25 Athletes

13. Is there a limit to how many teams we can have on the ice?

A: There will be a maximum of two teams on the ice. If there are two teams sharing ice, they will each be permitted their maximum roster size if they remain separated on their respective half of the ice.

14. What is the maximum number of people that can be on a bench?

A: Phase 2 allows for up to 10 people (players and coaches) permitted on a bench.

15. Are competitive drills with contact allowed?

A: Competitive drills are permitted with limited contact however drills should not be set up for extended contact and ensure that the occurrence of multiple players in a small area is minimal.

16. When do you suggest associations open registration for Minor Hockey?

A: With the approval of Phase 2 Minor Hockey Associations are permitted to open registration as they see fit providing they have completed the appropriate steps to access the HCR.

17. Are tournaments allowed in Phase 2?

A: No, tournaments will not be approved until November 1, 2020.

18. Are out-of-province tournaments allowed?

A: Currently travel permits will not be approved prior to November 1, 2020. Teams will be able to apply for travel permits beginning October 15, 2020.

19. Have the facilities seen the RTP document?

A: The approved RTP – Version 1 is now on the Hockey Manitoba website and Hockey Manitoba will be sharing with facilities.

20. Can a league seek approval for all teams at once?

A: Yes, Hockey Manitoba will accept a request on behalf of a league.

21. Who is checking facilities to make sure that the rules are being followed?

A: The safety of all members should be the number one priority of all participants and therefore a joint effort between user groups, members, and facilities is required. There is a level of trust and compliance to enforce regulations required by Hockey Manitoba, Regions, Associations, and respective teams to follow the rules. Ultimately, if the appropriate guidelines are not being followed, Public Health and the Province of Manitoba may be required to take the appropriate action that may include shutting down our program. This is certainly something our entire organization wants to avoid and to alleviate this possibility we need your support.

22. On a team with a full roster, can all players and coaches use one dressing room provided all players and coaches are wearing a mask?

A: Physical distancing should always be enforced in dressing rooms. Only team personnel will be allowed in dressing rooms (coaches, medical staff, and players). If a parent is required, only one parent per player will be permitted. No additional family members will be allowed in dressing rooms. It is recommended that teams use two dressing rooms to physically distance players based on facility availability.

Tryouts

23. What is the maximum number of players for tryouts?

A: Similar to practice, the maximum number of players on the ice will be limited to the maximum roster size permitted to each level.

24. What should we do if we do not have a team Communications Officer in place by tryouts?

A: Due to the tryout/evaluation process taking place prior to team formation it is a requirement that all associations and organizations have an identified Communications Officer for the tryout process. This individual will handle the RTP and safety protocols related to COVID-19 during the tryout process. Following team formation, these responsibilities will shift to the Communications Officer for each team.

25. Do we have to get written approval for practice times and tryouts booked for early September?

A: Only activities wishing to start prior to the September 1st start of the Hockey Manitoba season require written approval to begin. Activities that are scheduled to begin following the September 1st start of season date do not require approval however must follow the RTP protocols.

26. Are inter-squad games or scrimmages allowed at tryouts?

A: Inter-squad games or scrimmages at tryouts are allowed but they must be non-contact. These should be heavily controlled full-ice play that can be formatted as 5-v-5, 4-v-4 or 3-v-3. The number of athletes participating in the scrimmage CANNOT exceed one roster consisting of the maximum roster size for that particular level of hockey. During a scrimmage, the maximum number of individuals allowed on the bench cannot exceed 10 players, coaches, or team staff. As always, players and coaches need to observe physical distancing recommendations while on the ice/players bench. Exhibition games will not be allowed.

27. What is the difference between scrimmages and games?

A: Only the members of the same team would be permitted to participate in a scrimmage as opposed to two teams in a game. A scrimmage should be controlled by a coach. The number of players permitted on the ice should not exceed the maximum roster size of one team.

Phase 3

28. When do you anticipate moving to Phase 3?

A: Hockey Manitoba's Board of Directors have supported the continuation of Phase 2 throughout the month of September. We remain on schedule to enter Phase 3 for the return to competitive hockey beginning in October provided the receipt and completion of the necessary compliance templates by member Regions, Leagues, Accredited School Programs, and Minor Hockey Associations. These documents will need to be completed and approved by Hockey Manitoba.

29. Are there any changes to faceoff alignment for players?

A: Alignment will remain the same however it is recommended that all players and the official remain distanced at the top, bottom or to the side of the face-off circle until the official blows the whistle and then move to their appropriate positions for the puck drop.

30. Is there any plan to change (shorten) length of periods/games to help allow for extra time of players entering/exiting ice surface?

A: At this time there will be no changes to the length of games. When leaving the ice, coaches should excuse players one-by-one in an orderly fashion to ensure athletes are given appropriate time to exit the ice surface without congregating. Adequate time should be planned to ensure this can be done.

31. Are there any plans to remove intermission?

A: Currently there are no plans to remove intermission. All spectators should continue to follow the facility protocol and physically distanced in all areas.

32. With limiting arrival times, will referees be able to mandate an early start time?

A: The existing rule in most regions is that a game cannot begin more than 15-minutes prior to the originally scheduled start time. If both teams have arrived at the facility and are fully dressed and prepared to begin, the officials may begin the game early with the agreement of both participating teams.

33. What happens to the game schedule?

A: Regions or Leagues will be required to submit expected start dates and the number of games for approval by Hockey Manitoba. Based on circumstances surrounding COVID-19 at the time of transition into Phase 3, leagues may need to reduce the number of games scheduled for the 2020 – 2021 season.

34. If teams have to isolate, how does scheduling work?

A: Organizations should anticipate that there may be interruptions and games may have to be rescheduled. All leagues should consider leaving open dates to allow for rescheduled games.

35. If spectator capacity is limited, what do the visiting team parents do due to capacity regulations?

A: It is important that the team Communications Officer identify what the protocols and capacity are before arriving at the facility to ensure families are aware of the regulations.

36. The document mentions that AA Female can arrive 45 minutes prior to ice time. What about AA Male?

A: U15 AA Female (Winnipeg) is classified as the highest level of female hockey within Hockey Winnipeg and therefore is on par with U15 AAA Female teams in rural parts of the province. As a result, U15 AA Female teams in Winnipeg will be permitted to arrive 45 minutes prior to their scheduled ice time. U15 AA Male teams are not the highest level of male hockey at the U15 age category therefore they will only be permitted to arrive 30 minutes prior to their scheduled ice-time.

37. Will Affiliate Players (APs) be permitted?

A: Under the current rules for our Phase 3 of Return to Play teams will be permitted to use Affiliate Players.

Masks

38. Are masks required?

A: Hockey Manitoba strongly recommends the wearing of face masks for all spectators and staff. Anyone entering the facility is encouraged to wear a face mask when physical distancing cannot be followed including coaches, team staff, off-ice officials, and spectators throughout the facility.

39. Is the recommendation that masks are worn on the ice?

A: No, masks should not be worn when participating in hockey activities. Players are recommended to wear masks when entering or exiting the facility.

Officials

40. Will officials' clinics be in person or online?

A: At this time, all Level I/II officials will be required to attend an in-person clinic. Level III-VI officials are required to attend one online session to become certified for the 2020-2021 season.

41. Are officials required to use different types of whistles (electronic or the new Caul)?

A: Officials will be allowed the use of electronic officials, but we do not require officials to have them.

Miscellaneous

42. With respect to the hand sanitizer required on the bench, in dressing rooms etc. Will this be the responsibility of the team or the facility to provide?
 A: On the bench and in dressing rooms, teams should provide hand sanitizer. Individual players may also have their own sanitizer.
43. Are kids allowed to play multiple sports?
 A: Yes. Hockey Manitoba has always encouraged players to participate in multiple sports as a part of our Long-Term Athlete Development model. Players should follow the respective RTP safety protocols of the specific sport.
44. Will Hockey Manitoba handle any media communications at the association level?
 A: In the event that a situation occurs within an association that garners media attention, the association can contact the Hockey Manitoba office for communications support.
45. If a community is on lockdown, how will hockey Manitoba address this issue? Checkpoints may be in place so the time to get through may be time-consuming because of health questionnaire and teams will have to arrive a lot earlier. This could be an issue if a community only permits its members into the community.
 A: If a community is in lockdown Hockey Manitoba will cancel all scheduled events in that community.
46. Is there a possibility of an emergency fund available through Hockey Manitoba for Minor Hockey Associations if needed for health protocol improvements at their local rink?
 A: At this time there is no plan to offer an emergency fund for facility improvements however if there is a specific need related to COVID-19 please contact the Hockey Manitoba office.
47. Will teams/players living near the borders be permitted to play in Manitoba?
 A: Athletes living in communities on provincial borders may be eligible for participation within Manitoba pending approval from Hockey Manitoba. Athletes living in communities on the American side of the USA/Canadian Border will not be eligible for participation in Manitoba until the border is open for travel.
48. Is there a scenario/situation identified that activities would be stopped? Or will this be continually monitored, and the call made when appropriate?
 A: The Return to Play will be continually monitored by Hockey Manitoba and any decision to suspend or delay activities will be made by the Provincial Health Authorities in consultation with Hockey Manitoba.
49. Is the team obligated to inform the facility staff immediately of symptoms so affected areas can be tended to?
 A: Yes, staff should be informed and any person with symptoms should leave immediately or isolate and follow necessary protocols.

50. What if a U7/U9 player needs a car seat and therefore cannot arrive fully dressed?

A: Players will only be recommended to arrive fully dressed if it is safe to do so. The intent is to limit the number of people and time spent in dressing rooms in proximity to others.

For more information on Hockey Manitoba's Return to Play plan, please visit hockeymanitoba.ca/return-to-play/.