



RETURN  HOCKEY

COVID-19 RESPONSE

**RETURN TO
HOCKEY**

STAGE 3

MODIFIED PROGRAMMING

August 19, 2020

Stage 3 – Modified Programming

The Ontario Women's Hockey Association's (OWHA's) Return to Hockey Framework is an incremental approach that will ensure the OWHA opens in a safe way, aligned with Public Health and Government guidance. The OWHA's Stage 3 is modified programming. This Stage provides for additional hockey opportunities beyond the individual and group training already approved in Stage 1 and 2 of the OWHA Return to Hockey. It provides participants the opportunity to register in OWHA/Hockey Canada programming that may include game modified play with rules that remove or avoid physical contact.

Return to play will be different for OWHA members depending on their respective levels of preparedness and readiness. The OWHA recognizes members will move through the OWHA Return to Hockey Framework at the pace that best suits their individual situations. Members may provide activities that meet the framework or are more restrictive than the framework. Members may not proceed in a way that is less restrictive than the framework allows and must ensure they are compliant with respective Public Health requirements for their areas.

Definitions

No Physical Contact – means the application of the Ontario Government Emergency order in that practice and play cannot allow for physical contact between players or that play is operating under the modified rules that will be posted on the OWHA website and are designed to avoid physical contact between players.

Stage 3 Modified Programming – Sanctioned hockey programs in compliance with the requirements of each dated progression operated within the OWHA including modified game play, scrimmage in practice and team practice drills.

Public Health Unit (PHU) – is an official health agency established by a group of urban and rural municipalities to provide a more efficient community health program, carried out by full-time, specially qualified staff.

Team – A team that has been admitted as a Member or renewed as a Member in accordance with OWHA's By-Law.

Group – A collection of participants who have been registered on a team in the OWHA registration database and have been put together for development and training purposes.

Extended Group – A collective of specific OWHA groups that train within the OWHA requirements and do not exceed the numbers permitted by the Ontario government and PHU's.

Stage 3 is grounded in the following principles:

- Safety is the guiding principle for all actions taken by the OWHA and can only be achieved through compliance with government and public health requirements.
- The physical and mental health of our members is a priority
- Flexibility is expected on registering players for participation in the 2020-2021 season and the cooperation between OWHA Associations and 2019/2020 Teams.
- Registration of participants for the 2020/2021 hockey season with the understanding that it is not a traditional hockey season

Guidance for members, parents, and associations:

- A player who registers in the OWHA is not eligible for registration or participation in other minor or junior hockey (Alliance, GTHL, HEO, HNO, NOHA, OHA, OHL, OMHA).
- Processes put in place for new participants to register as:
- Participants and families become open to registering for hockey programming, and
- More arenas become available for use.
- Creation of participant refund policies and procedures that are transparent and fair to the individual participant and the association.
- The opportunity for adjusted program offerings will be posted on the OWHA website as approved by the OWHA Board of Directors and the Government updates numbers for gathering and group participation.
- To allow for flexible opening or closure of programming based on Ontario's regional approach to reopening with minimal disruption to programs operating.

- Individual and Group Training remains a focus in August and September with addition of participants as permitted.
- No tryouts are permitted. Teams may be formed for administrative purposes only. Players from teams will be assigned, by the association, to a Group and associations will determine the best approach for tiered structure based on the numbers and calibre of participants and will also work with other associations for the benefit of all players.
- Associations may assign specific Groups to be part of Extended Groups of participants within the numbers permitted. No player or Group may be part of more than 1 Extended Group.
- When tryouts are permitted, there will be a process to adjust the administrative team rosters.
- OWHA Independent team administrators will work together as well as with the OWHA office and other OWHA Independent team administrators and associations to provide opportunities for participants.
- No pick-ups or integration will be allowed between Groups or Extended Groups and there will be no league or tournament play.
- A player in an OWHA Group may not be a part of any other hockey participant group in Ontario.
- The boundaries of the PHU will be a guideline for competition between teams.

The OWHA Board of Directors will make the determination as to any changes to the OWHA Return to Hockey Framework. Information will be posted on the OWHA web site as it is updated.

Key Dates:

August 13 to August 31

OWHA Protocols dated July 13, 2020 remain in place with the following Approved Programming in Geographic Area that is in Ontario Government Stage 3

Programming remains for participants registered with the OWHA for 2019-2020 hockey season as noted in the protocols.

OWHA Registration is open and associations that have a fair and transparent fee structure that clearly demonstrates registration is for modified hockey that may or may not continue may begin to collect fees to cover costs.

Participants who were registered with OWHA for the 2019-2020 hockey season who have been released from their 2019/2020 team may now participate with an association with which their intent of registration for the 2020/2021 hockey season has been submitted through the OWHA registration portal.

Individual and Group Training

- Maximum of 25 participants on the ice for individual training, including instructors, or a lower number if determined by the Ontario Government, local PHU, the facility or the OWHA.
- Strict on-ice physical distancing is required for the purpose of individual and group training and if any of the Ontario Government, local PHU, the facility or the OWHA has further restrictions all programming must comply.
- Group skill development
- NO Physical Contact
- Limited or normal use of the bench with physical distancing
- Off-ice Training and Activity with physical distancing and within the permitted numbers
- Limited travel, ideally within PHU
- No Group, Extended Group or team gatherings or overnight activities
- Hockey Canada RTH Alternate Skills Instruction outlines skill progression programs with physical distancing as a template for programming.

September 1 to a date to be determined

Return to Modified Practice and Play - for participants who are registered for the 2020/2021 hockey season OWHHA Approved Programming in Geographic Area that is in Ontario Government Stage 3

Individual and Group Training

- Maximum of 30 participants on the ice, including instructors, or a lower number if determined by Ontario Government, local PHU, the facility or the OWHHA.
- Strict on-ice physical distancing is required for the purpose of individual and group training and if any of the Ontario Government, local PHU, the facility or the OWHHA has further restrictions all programming must comply.
- Off-ice Training and Activity with physical distancing and within numbers permitted.
- Limited or normal use of the bench with physical distancing
- Allocation of Extended Groups
- Extended Group training
- Limited travel, ideally within PHU
- No Group, Extended Group or team gatherings or overnight activities.

Competition (Modified Game Play)

- Following a minimum two-week development phase for any new programs, modified 3 on 3 or 4 on 4 Modified game play with No Physical Contact and OWHHA rules for modified game play may begin at a time yet to be determined.
- Extended groups are a maximum of 50 or less depending on the PHU. The OWHHA will review the group maximum upon amendments by the Ontario Government.
- All modified Game Play is within OWHHA requirements and local Public Health Unit requirements.
- There is a minimum of one registered official per game unless determined otherwise by the OWHHA.
- All Modified Game Play must be conducted in conjunction with the local PHU and facility rules for the purpose of sanitation and physical distancing.

At a time yet to be determined

Member Approved Programming in Geographic Area that is in Ontario Government Stage 3 Individual and Group Training

- Maximum of 40 participants on the ice, including instructors, or a lower number if determined by Ontario Government, local PHU, the facility or Member.
- Physical distancing is required for the purpose of individual and group training and if a facility has further restrictions all programming must comply.
- Limited travel, ideally within PHU and adjacent PHU's
- No Group, Extended Group or team gatherings or overnight activities.

Competition (Modified Game Play)

- Following a two-week development phase for any new programs, Stage 3 Modified Programming.
- Physical Contact hockey 3 on 3, 4 on 4, and 5 on 5 may begin at a time yet to be determined.
- Extended groups are a maximum of 50 or less depending on the PHU. The OWHHA will review the extended group maximum upon amendments by the Ontario Government.
- All Modified Game Play is within local PHU's that are at a similar Phase/Stage.
- There is a minimum of one registered official per game unless determined otherwise by the OWHHA
- All Modified Game Play must be conducted in conjunction with the OWHHA and local PHU and facility rules for the purpose of sanitation and physical distancing.

At a time yet to be determined:

Traditional Hockey (may be modified)

This stage will involve the introduction of traditional hockey (5 on 5). Any such introduction will be in compliance with the Ontario Government Emergency Order and OWHA policies.

- No on-ice physical distancing
- Regular practice
- Off-ice training and activity
- Standard Competition with modifications
- May be normal use of bench
- May be normal use of dressing rooms
- Regular team sizes
- League play
- Tournament play
- OWHA provincial championships

Registration Numbers

Implementation of a collective recruitment initiative in conjunction with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and Hockey Canada to bring participants back to hockey to pre-COVID 19 numbers for the 2021-2022 season.

Internal Events

- Planned approach to operating leagues and hosting of tournaments across the OWHA with teams from Ontario
- Integration Outside of the Province
- Welcoming teams from outside Ontario to tournaments and events.
- OWHA teams travelling outside Ontario for tournaments and events.
- Identifying National and International hosting opportunities for events and tournaments.

Clarifications

Any questions or comments relating to the OWHA Return to Hockey Framework should be submitted to the OWHA office at applications@owha.on.ca.