



2020 - 2021
Cochrane Minor Hockey
Covid-19 Plan

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1 INTRODUCTION

Cochrane Minor Hockey Association is dedicated to keeping our athletes, members, volunteers, staff and our families safe. The safety of our hockey community is of the most importance.

CMHA has been diligently working with Hockey Alberta, SLS Family Sports Centre, Alberta Health Services, and other minor hockey associations in constructing our 'Return to Hockey' plan that will allow our athletes to get back on the ice!

The intent of this document is to provide guidance on how we will execute our 'Return to Hockey' plan, while focusing on the safety of our athletes and following current Alberta Health guidelines and restrictions. During these unprecedented times, we ask that you be patient and understanding, as CMHA needs to be fluid as requirements are changing rapidly. As guidance from governing bodies evolves, CMHA will update this document accordingly to remain in compliance with requirements.

We are planning to have similar 'phases' of hockey as Hockey Alberta's Return to Hockey, albeit under "the new normal", using different strategies to achieve our outcomes. We are hopeful that this plan will continue to develop our athletes as people, teammates, community members, athletes, and hockey players. These phases include:

1. Prep Phase - focus is on development and conditioning in preparation for the upcoming season, this phase will take place in August and September.
2. Evaluation Phase - This phase will take place in September and will be for the sole purpose of creating like skilled 'Cohort Groups'. This process will be done through physical distanced skill based evaluations.
3. Development Season Phase - Once athletes are sorted into cohorts, they will now be able to practice and compete in mini games with other members of the cohort. Players will not be permitted to play against teams or players outside of their cohort until applicable restrictions are lifted. This will be in October/November.
4. Regular Season - This is the final phase of our plan. There are two options:
 - a. All restrictions are lifted and CMHA will return to our traditional program.
 - b. If restrictions are not lifted, we will continue with cohorts and mini games but may revise cohort groups during the holiday break meeting the 14-day isolation requirement. In some cases, cohorts may change after a two-week sole practice period.

We know this will be a challenging year, and so different from what we are used to. For some it will make their intro to hockey such a different experience, for others who are in their final year will experience a season like no other. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to thank you, our membership, for being loyal to CMHA and for trusting that we can get through this together.

2 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Regardless of "the new normal" our objects remain the same:

- To promote, govern, and improve minor hockey in Cochrane and other areas that may be added from time to time
- To foster a community spirit among Members, supports and teams
- To increase the interest in the game of hockey in Cochrane

Commitment to our Mission Statement

“Development of a lifelong passion for hockey by providing quality recreational and competitive programs in a nurturing environment with the goal of building character, physical and mental skills while having fun. “

In addition to these objectives, we will also focus on:

- Safety - creating a safe, healthy environment for our athletes, coaches and volunteers. Safety is critical to ensure the continuation of the Return to Hockey plan.
- Development - create a competitive hockey environment that allows for growth and development, grouping players into appropriate skill level.
- Game plan - Ensuring that some variation of game play can exist (3v3, 4v4, 5v5, etc.).
- Fluidity - allow for flexible transition within our programs to enable us to move within Alberta Health Services guidelines as well as movement through the Hockey Alberta Return to Play phases.

3 REQUIREMENTS

The current guidance, under the Alberta Government Phase 2 stage, has two formats we will be using to operate our programs:

- **Physical Distancing** - all athletes, coaches, etc. must remain 2 meters apart at all times. This will be skill-based programming, focusing on development.
- **Cohorts** - up to 50 participants grouped together to participate in a cohort. No physical distancing required on the ice surface (being on the bench will be considered the 'playing field' and physical distancing will not be required), however physical distancing will be required when not on the 'playing field' (i.e. in the dressing room). If physical distancing cannot be maintained, the use of masks will be required.
 - Cohorts must remain together for the duration of Stage 2, unless participants enter into a 14-day isolation period, after which they can be moved to a new cohort group.
 - Note: Per the Government of Alberta: "An individual is only to be part of one **sport cohort** at any time". This ensures that school-based cohorts will not restrict participation in minor hockey.
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In addition, we will be following these AHS guidance as well:

- Programs should operate within a specified, community, zone, region, where travel is limited.
- Game play/competitions will be allowed but only within the team/cohort group. Interaction with others from other cohorts will be permitted for development only and only when physical distancing can be maintained (i.e. additional development for Goalies or players).
- CMHA is required to track attendance of all participants and interactions, maintaining these records for a period of time upon completion of the activity. Daily as a family we ask that you review the CMHA Player and Coach Self-Assessment Health Check form for participants, see Protocols. Any participant answering **YES** to any of the questions must **NOT** attend or participate in the program and may not return until after a minimum 14-day isolation from the activity. It is imperative that families comply.
- CMHA members must ensure that they are following all SLSFSC and Cochrane Arena guidelines. For full details, please view the SLS Family Sports Centre website reopening plan. It is important to ensure we are all following facility guidelines as well as direction from facility employees. It will be the facilities that determine spectator access, dressing room use and may have stronger requirements with regards to participation. We will be implementing our own rules regarding spectator participation and for the Player Technical Evaluations we ask that there be no Spectators.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be required. It will be the responsibility of the participant, coaches, and parents etc. to abide by all applicable requirements. PPE will not be supplied by CMHA.
- Under the current Hockey Alberta Development Phase, traditional league play is NOT permitted, only mini games are permitted within the cohort.
- Tournaments & Travel Permits are NOT permitted during the Development Phase of Hockey Alberta's Return to Play plan. No travel permits or tournament sanctions will be approved during this phase.

[Hockey Alberta Return to Hockey \(June 30/20\)](#)

4 PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY

Safety is of the utmost importance. The health, safety and well-being of our athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff and families are the top priority. We are in this together and we must all work together to keep each other safe. This section highlights some guidelines as provided to CMHA from Alberta Health Services, Hockey Alberta and the SLS Family Sports Centre. Situations, like "what will happen if there is a positive case?" cannot be answered at this time, AHS is dealing with situations case by case. We must follow reporting guidelines and take direction as it is given.

DO NOT ATTEND HOCKEY ACTIVITIES IF YOU ARE SICK OR HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS

There will be consequences if the athlete and/or family member attends CMHA events when they are unwell or who are required to isolate as per federal and/or provincial requirements, these may include suspensions. It is critical that athletes and families adhere to all guidance as to not jeopardize the health of our athletes and families, or CMHAs ability to bring hockey to our members.

Contact Tracing and Symptom Screening

As per above, CMHA is required to track attendance of all participants and interactions and maintain those records for a period of time. This will be done at the start of each event. Daily families are required to review the CMHA Player and Coach Self-Assessment Health Check form, that was described in section 3.

Anyone who has traveled internationally, is sick or has been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 is not permitted to attend practices or games. Participants must adhere to provincial and federal requirements. Follow AHS and government guidelines if you are not feeling well. Acquaint yourself with COVID-19 signs and symptoms.

DO NOT ATTEND HOCKEY ACTIVITIES IF YOU ARE SICK OR HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS

[Government of Alberta - Symptoms](#)

Reporting

Members and sanctioned partners are to report any COVID-19 cases as required by Alberta Health Services, Member, hockey association, league and facility. CMHA must be notified immediately after Alberta Health has been notified.

[Hockey Canada - Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case](#)

Hockey Canada Guidelines/Resources

Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta and its 13 Member Branches have built a comprehensive Safety Guidelines document, along with an FAQ document, to provide direction and support as organizations (administrators, coaches, managers, safety staff, trainers), parents and players prepare to return to hockey. The information included in these documents should be reviewed regularly, as it provides a solid framework to follow for any organization (and its members) as Return to Hockey planning is undertaken.

4 PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY (Cont'd)

[Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines](#)

The Safety Guidelines provide guidance on a safe and positive return to hockey experience for our participants and stakeholders. Sections include:

- Insurance Coverage
- Hygiene Requirements and Checklist
- Recommended Return to Hockey Procedures
- What to do if there is a positive COVID-19 test
- Junior Hockey guidelines
- Guidelines for Officials

Responsibilities

Parents and players also play key roles in the Return to Hockey. Their responsibilities include:

- **Stay at home if experiencing any symptoms.**
- Become educated on the safety protocols and procedures prior to attending session and adhere to them while at the session.
- Follow all AHS, HA, SLF Family Sports Centre and CMHA requirements.
- Ensure each player has his/her own water bottle which is sanitized prior to each session, and his/her own hand sanitizer (for use in dressing room).
- Ensure equipment is dried, cleaned and/or sanitized following each session.
- Arrange appropriate transportation to and from the session.
- Refrain from cheering and yelling as it presents a high risk of spreading droplets.
- Do not spit, blow nose freely or release any bodily fluid anywhere in any facility due to an extremely high risk of virus transfer.

A detailed outline of responsibilities of Administrators, Coaches and Managers, Safety Person and Trainer, Players and Parents can be found in the Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines – Roles and Responsibilities.

[Return to Hockey information for Alberta](#)

5 FACILITIES

SLS Family Sports Centre has implemented protocols to meet the requirements of Alberta Health. They also have the ability to strengthen these guidelines if they feel it is important to the safe operation of the facility.

As user groups, it is our responsibility to follow the requirements as outlined by the SLS Family Sports Centre and ensure that we are respecting the premises. The facility management has the ability to cancel any and all bookings and stop CMHA programs from operating in their building.

Not respecting the facilities protocols and procedures jeopardizes the entire CMHA program.

Please note that each facility may have slightly different protocols in place, therefore upon entering a facility for the first-time families are encouraged to read the information posted at the entrance and follow the guidelines.

Highlights for our athletes include:

- accessing the facility 15 minutes prior to the booking start time
- Participants should arrive at the arena fully dressed, including skates whenever possible. If skates must be tied at the arena, dressing rooms will be used, and physical distancing and masks will be recommended. Participants should only have one parent/guardian in the building per child.
- Participants should bring their own filled water bottle; fountains are not in use.
- Parent/guardian may accompany their child (if necessary) to the change room and then head immediately to the viewing area, if applicable.
- Parent/guardian must maintain physical distance while doing so.
- Parents/guardians must maintain physical distance in the viewing areas at all times.
- Dressing room use is discouraged. Participants may quickly pass through change rooms to drop off skate guards or to access the ice. Change rooms have a 10-person capacity (SLSFSC) or 9-person capacity in dressing 1 and 3 and 10 in dressing room 2 and 4 (Cochrane Arena) for non-cohort groups.
- There is no loitering in the lobby. This is a drop off/pick up zone only.
- Participants must vacate the arena within 15 minutes after booking end time.
- Parent/guardian may wait in the lobby to collect their child (if necessary) and then promptly vacate the building.
- No shower facilities available.
- All participants must refrain from spitting on or off the ice.
- If attendees are unable to maintain physical distance, non-medical face masks should be worn in common areas.

6 POLICIES

Please refer to CMHA's website for up to date policies. These can be found here: [CMHA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures](#).

Please note, specific to refunds, the board is working on what this will look like if we do not enter into regular season play. In the event the season length is affected by a lockdown or a cohort is required to quarantine for a period, CMHA will do everything in their power to be fair to their members. However, please understand that there are several considerations and factors that impact how registration dollars are spent.

Some expenses are fixed and will be difficult to recuperate in the event of a cancelled season, while other expenses may be easier to recuperate with enough notice. It is not possible to determine any of those details at this point, but please know that CMHA will do everything they can to ensure fair treatment of players and families and return as much of their registration fees as possible in the unfortunate event that the season length is negatively impacted.

7 RETURN TO HOCKEY

A safe return to hockey that meets the guidelines of Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch strategy is paramount. As mentioned earlier in this document there are two ways CMHA can operate programs, either **Physically Distanced** or using **Cohorts**. Hockey is a contact sport and while we can operate skill development sessions that keep players physical distanced, we understand that in order to meet all of the key objectives of our program, we will need to use a cohorts model for various phases of our return to play.

Government of Alberta Cohorting Guidelines:

Cohorting has been identified as an option for Sports teams. If an athlete is participating in a camp or program not using physical distancing, that group is considered a Cohort. A Cohort is a closed, small group of no more than 50 individuals who participate in the same sport or activity and remain together for the duration of Stage 2 of the Government of Alberta's relaunch. If Cohorting is being used, this should be clearly communicated to participants/parents prior to Cohort formation.

Sports teams can play in region-only cohorts (mini-leagues) of up to 50 players and coaches.

Cohorts include those individuals (participants, officials, coaches and trainers) who cannot maintain a 2-metre distance from others at all times.

- *Sports cohort numbers do not include parents or spectators.*
- *Instructors, Coaches and/or Team Officials can be part of one Cohort and remain with that group throughout the duration of this program, or they may maintain physical distancing from all other participants. If physical distancing is maintained, this is not considered cohorting. Individuals can only be part of one sport Cohort.*
- *Interacting with the same people and the same cohorts will be safer than constantly changing the people you interact with.*
- *The Government of Alberta has indicated that: Cohorts are only to play within the same geographical region (for example, within a county, town or quadrant of a city). Activities should be restricted to local regional opportunities. Participants should not seek sport, physical activity and recreation opportunities in other regions, or out of province. Cross jurisdictional, or inter-regional, play should not occur at this stage.*
- *An individual is only to be part of one **Sport Cohort** at any time. If an individual wishes to move to a new Sport Cohort, s/he is to complete a 14-day non-participation period prior to joining the new Cohort.*
- **NOTE: Even while using cohorting, physical distancing must be maintained in all aspects of hockey activity except while participants are on the ice (for example, dressing rooms and in public areas).**
 - *Options could include indicating physical distancing by using tape to mark areas on player benches in dressing rooms.*
 - *When using Cohorting, it is recommended to try and utilize physical distancing on the ice whenever possible.*

CMHA Program Phases

The primary concern for CMHA is that the programs offered focus on the health and safety of all athletes, coaches, and families. The intent is not to recreate the regular season structure, but to offer development, modified game play and fun.

| Phase | Timing | Activity |
|--------------------|------------------|--|
| Prep | August | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs will be delivered using Physical Distancing. • Skills camps and development sessions. |
| Evaluations | August/September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation and sorting will be delivered using Physical Distancing. • Time trials and skill-based evaluation sessions will be used to form cohorts for the 'Development Season' |
| Development Season | October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs will be delivered using cohorts. • Cohorts will group like skilled players together, 35-48 players, depending on division. • Within these cohorts, parity mini teams will be created and may play mini games against each other. • In addition, cohorts can participate in on-ice training, office training and game play. |
| Regular Season | TBD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon approval, return to regular play format • If restrictions are not lifted, we will continue with cohorts and mini games but may revise cohort groups or partnering MHAs. |

Prep Season

Prep skates and Conditioning Camps were made available for athletes during registration. These camps will be done by a third-party provider. The sessions will all be done with social distancing.

Evaluations

As in prior seasons, we may use external providers for time trials. This will ensure accuracy, efficiency and physically distancing.

Once cohorts of like skilled players are formed, cohorts can break into parity mini teams, if applicable. Evaluations for AA will be done by a third-party provider.

Development Season

| Stream | Division | Notes: |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| CAHL/Female/AA | U13 U15 U16 U18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort with another applicable tiered team(s) from other MHAs (if possible); else CMHA cohorts will be created with like skilled groups (i.e. 1-45; 45-90 etc.) and parity/balanced teams within the cohort will be created. Max 50 participants, including other MHA if applicable Mini games will be played within the cohort May practice for 2 weeks, have game play, then have solo practices for two weeks, then mini games with a different cohort. no shared practices if cohort with other MHA; if CMHA cohort, may have shared practices Transition to 1 team per tier for 'Regular Season' |
| RHL/Intro to Hockey | U7 U9 U11 U13 U15 U18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort with CMHA teams Max 50 participants Mini games will be played within the cohort May have shared practices May have mini games, 3v3, 4v4, 5v5 All HC guidelines will be followed, including U7/U9 third or half ice practices and games as per HC Intro to Hockey May practice for 2 weeks, have game play, then have solo practices for two weeks, then mini games with a different cohort. Cohorts will be like skilled groups (i.e. 1-45; 45-90 etc.) and parity/balanced teams within the cohort will be created. Transition to appropriate team sizes should we move to HA Regular Season phase. |

Withdrawals

Members that have chosen to withdraw to attend alternate programs will not be accepted back to CMHA during the 2020-2021 Season. All members will be eligible to register the following season but will not have a guaranteed spot as these are held for returning players of the last season. Once registration opens to new inbound players you will be eligible to register.

7 RETURN TO HOCKEY (Cont'd)

Regular Season

CMHA will follow the lead of the Government of Alberta, Alberta Health, and Hockey Alberta to determine when it is appropriate to transition from the 'Development Season' to a return to normal 'Regular Season'. We are optimistic that we will be able to transition to a traditional 'Regular Season', perhaps with a different timeline. However, we will only do so when it is safe and when the approval has been given.

One of the key objectives of the CMHAs Return to Play plan is to allow for flexible transition between the phases. CMHAs 'Evaluations' and 'Development Season' phases are designed with the intent to transition easily to a traditional 'Regular Season'.

If and when we are able to transition cohorts to league teams we will prepare an evaluation plan.

CMHA will be prepared to transition into the next phase of Hockey Alberta's Return to Play Regular Season phase if and when it is safe to do so. In house cohorts will have rich data from the 'Development Season' to form applicable teams.

Referees

Decisions still need to be made with regards to the use of referees. As always, Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta will determine training and clinic protocols. During the 'Development Phase' referees are not required. CMHA is waiting on further clarification from Hockey Alberta, who in turn is waiting on further clarification from AHS and Hockey Canada regarding several important clarifications regarding referees such as:

- Are referees part of the cohort?
- Can they effectively do their job while physically distancing (ex. breaking up a scrum)?

Coaches, Team Officials and Off-Ice Officials

Decisions still need to be made with regards to coaches, team officials, and off-ice officials. As always, Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta will determine training and clinic protocols for coaches. Hockey Alberta has announced that coaching clinics will be available this season and deadlines remain the same.

Coaches are permitted to coach in multiple cohorts provided they are only a 'cohort coach' (contact with players) in one cohort, i.e. A coach can be a 'cohort coach' with a U7 team, and a 'physically distanced' coach with a U13 team.

- CMHA still needs to determine the proper usage for coaches, managers and other team officials such as:
Will their roles and responsibilities change?
- Will they assist with contact tracking and symptom screening?
- Will they need to use PPE?

8 FAQ

General:

Q. CMHA's fees were based on a regular season, what if there isn't a regular season?

A. At the time the fees were calculated, the budget was based on a regular season. Because of the uncertainty of the season, we cannot begin to recalculate fees with so many unknowns. CMHA will be fiscally responsible with our members' fees.

Q. Are players allowed to opt-out of the development/early phases and rejoin for the Regular season?

A. No, players must be registered with CMHA from the beginning.

Q. Can my child be involved in multiple cohorts? For example, can they be in a school based cohort as well as a hockey cohort?

A. Cohorting guidelines state that "an individual is only to be part of one Sport Cohort at any time." This means that they can be involved in a hockey cohort in addition to a school-based cohort. Technically they may also be part of another sport program that operates under the 'physical distancing' criteria. I.e. A power skating class or school based 'skill based' program that has limited #'s and operates under physical distancing criteria.

Q. Why is physical distancing mandatory in the dressing rooms if they are within their cohort?

A. This is a Government of Alberta guideline and a Hockey Alberta mandate. Technically, there should be no activities with any close contact. HOWEVER, if the activity must have close contact (i.e. hockey), then the contact should only take place when it is necessary, in the play itself. All other efforts to distance must be taken in the dressing rooms.

Q. Would elite releases need to isolate for 14 days prior to participating in evaluations?

A. No. Technically they would be going from a cohort or physically distancing skills to physically distanced evaluations, which means they are not entering a new cohort. However, if evaluations take less than 14 days, they may need to sit out the balance before engaging with their assigned community hockey cohort. Each situation will be assessed accordingly, to ensure everyone's safety.

Contact Tracing/Screening

Q. How will CMHA handle contact tracing and symptom screening?

A. Hockey Alberta has set guidelines to follow to ensure we track all interactions and that symptomatic players do not participate. We are actively looking at ways to make this easy for families and coaches. However, regardless of the method, this will be a required step prior to participation at any session.

Q. What happens if a player answers yes to any of the symptom screening questions?

A. Any participant who answers YES to any of the questions may no longer participate in the camp/ program until a minimum 14-day quarantine period has elapsed.

COVID-19

Q. What happens if there is a positive test in a Cohort? If that participant gets tested and the result is negative, can they return to the activity?

A. There will be a formal reporting process if any participant contracts COVID-19. CMHA will take all direction from the Alberta Health Services. We do not have any more clarity at this time and may not have any more clarity as our programs begin. AHS is treating every situation differently and are not providing concrete 'what ifs'. We must simply follow reporting guidelines and take direction as it is given.

Coaches

Q. Are coaches part of the cohort number?

A. Coaches will not be part of cohorts at the U11 and up levels. Therefore they must physical distance and will not be included in the cohort number. U7 and U9 will have cohort coaches, who will be able to be in contact with players and will be part of the cohort number. U7 and U9 can also have additional coaches who are physical distance coaches and therefore are not part of the cohort and must physical distance.

Q. Can a coach be part of a U7 or U9 cohort and also coach (physically distanced) with a different cohort?

A. Yes

Q. What happens if a coach notices a player is showing symptoms before or during participation?

A. Like an injury, coaches will have full authority to deny a player participation if they believe the player is sick. Coaches will be given resources to help assist them. However, if parents and players are honest in their preparticipation symptom screening, we should avoid any situation where a coach must deny participation.