



DVMH

Return to Hockey Plan

August 27, 2020

Introduction

Drayton Valley Minor Hockey (DVMH) is committed to offering hockey this season while complying with Hockey Alberta's Return to Hockey plan. DVMH will also work closely with The Town of Drayton Valley and the Omniplex to ensure we are able to operate throughout the 2020-2021 season. It is our belief that our players and coaches need to get back on the ice.

Hockey Alberta (HA) first released their Return to Hockey Plan on June 30. While this document was very comprehensive some details still had to be finalized. HA then scheduled to hold virtual Town hall meetings on August 12th. These meetings gave opportunity for associations to ask questions, voice concerns, and be updated on the latest information. DVMH Board members were able to attend the Town hall meetings to get a sense of what changes were coming. We made the decision to wait until HA Updated Return to Play Document was released to finalize our own Return to Play document. That Document was released on Aug 21st.

One of the other requirements for our association was to meet with the Omniplex to understand the requirement they have for our players, coaches, officials and spectators.

With all of the information given to date we have developed our own Return to Hockey Plan. We realize that hockey will not look the same as it was when we took a pause back in March. Our goal is to offer hockey in the safest way possible so we can get back to the way the game was. With this plan and the cooperation of our membership we can make this happen. We are all in this together.

DVMH thanks you for your understanding and patience as we work through this season the best way we can.

Part 1: HOCKEY ALBERTA RETURN TO PLAY PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Hockey Alberta has worked with Hockey Canada and other provincial branches, Government of Alberta, provincial sport organizations, members, staff, and volunteers to develop Alberta's Return to Hockey Plan. The purpose of the Return to Hockey Plan is to provide options for a safe return to hockey in Alberta, to outline required safety protocols and requirements, and to assist our minor hockey associations with tasks they need to be undertaking for hockey to re-start.

Full details of the Updated Hockey Alberta Return to play can be found on Hockey Alberta's website or the link below:

<https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/members/return-hockey/>



RETURN TO HOCKEY COMPONENTS				
COMPONENT	START DATE	PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIVITY
Off-Season Skill Development	June 1 – August 31	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from the local community area; OR For a program with Physical Distancing in place, participants that reside within a 200 km radius of the host community; OR For a program using Cohorting, participants that reside within a 100 km radius of the host community. 	<p>Non-essential travel should be limited.</p> <p>Players should access programs in their immediate area where possible.</p> <p>Travel to participate in activity outside the Alberta Health Region where the participant resides is not recommended.</p>	<p>Programs may be delivered using Physical Distancing or Cohorting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-ice sessions Skills camps Development programs Hockey schools
Development Season	August 1 – TBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from the established registration area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiered Hockey - MHA Boundary Minor Female - Closest Female Program Hockey Canada Accredited Schools (HCAS) - No Restrictions AA Hockey - Recruitment Area AAA Hockey - Draw Zone Junior/ Senior - No Restrictions AAA programs can operate 'tryout' sessions for each specific level of hockey, using physical distancing, to identify a group of players to bring into a Cohort. Reminder: A Cohort is a maximum of 50 people. 	<p>Non-essential travel should be limited.</p> <p>Players should access programs in their immediate area where possible.</p> <p>Travel to participate in activity outside the Alberta Health Region where the participant resides is not recommended.</p>	<p>Programs may be delivered using Physical Distancing or Cohorting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills Sessions On-Ice Practices Off-Ice Training Inter-Squad Game Play (3v3, 4v4 or 5v5) <p>Players can be grouped by age and/or skill level; programming can assist to determine skill levels of players.</p> <p>Tournaments not permitted.</p>
MODIFIED COMPETITION SEASON	TBD (No earlier than Nov. 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Development Season criteria, participants should be registered and the evaluation/ sorting process underway for the specific level of hockey. Participants from the established registration area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiered Hockey - MHA Boundary Minor Female - Closest Female Program HCAS - No Restrictions AA Hockey - Recruitment Area AAA Hockey - Draw Zone Junior/ Senior - No Restrictions 	<p>Teams grouped into regional 'Pods' for competition purposes.</p> <p>A Pod includes 3-5 teams, depending on Government of Alberta guidelines.</p> <p>Teams play within their Pod for the duration of the Modified Competition Season.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills Sessions On-Ice Practices Off-Ice Training Game Play within Pods <p>This component provides the opportunity to finalize any tryouts/ evaluations, register rosters and prepare for an eventual return to the Regular Season, when permitted.</p> <p>Tournaments: TBD</p>
Regular Season	TBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Development Season criteria, participants should be registered and the evaluation/ sorting process underway for the specific level of hockey. Participants from the established registration area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiered Hockey - MHA boundary Minor Female - Closest Female Program HCAS - No Restrictions AA Hockey - Recruitment Area AAA Hockey - Draw Zone Junior/ Senior - No Restrictions 	<p>Restrictions on travel could still be in place.</p> <p>Scheduling play within regions/ conferences will be considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills Sessions On-Ice Practices Off-Ice Training League Play <p>Tournaments: TBD</p>

When our season starts, we will be entering into the Development Season as outlined in HA Updated Return to Play Document:

DEVELOPMENT SEASON

OVERVIEW

Hockey Alberta Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) may operate development programming starting off the 2020-21 season. Organizations can take player registrations and start to sort players into similar skill level groupings in preparation for a smooth transition to a competitive model once Government of Alberta guidelines permit.

The building of programming is the responsibility of the Member organization. Hockey Alberta is available to answer questions or provide clarification as required.

Types of Programs Permitted

- Skills Sessions
- On-Ice Practices
- Off-Ice Training
- **Inter-Squad Game Play** (3v3, 4v4 or 5v5)
- **Team Training** (for Junior and AAA only)
- **Exhibition Series** (for Junior and AAA only)

Program Operation

i. With Physical Distancing

- Aligning with current physical distancing measures, all participants remain a minimum of two metres apart during participation.
- Physical distancing programming should be used:
 - Any time a skill development activity involves players and instructors/ team officials from more than one group or team; or
 - Anytime a Cohort has not been put in place.
- For more details and options on Physical Distancing options, refer to Off-Season Skill Development.

ii. With Cohorting

- Forming Cohorts is at the discretion of each organization. Many factors including the number of registered players, age division, and skill range will come into play.
- To enhance the experience of all participants, it is recommended that MHAs and/or Teams use evaluation and/or sorting methods to identify like-skilled players for each Cohort within MHA boundaries.
- In some cases, only one age division will be needed to establish a viable Cohort. In other cases, organizations may need to combine age divisions to establish a large enough participant group for a Cohort.
- In cases where smaller MHAs are unable to form a Cohort, obtaining approval from Hockey Alberta to join with neighbouring MHAs is an acceptable alternative.
- Each Cohort can be comprised of a maximum of 50 people. Any game play will be limited to inter-squad play within the same Cohort. Groups in different Cohorts cannot play each other.
- For examples of cohorting, check Appendix 12 – Cohort Examples.

Development Season Cohort Makeup

Our choice as an association is to operate within the cohort model utilizing 1 or 2 within each division. Our current registration numbers support this pathway and we believe this is the best way to develop overall skill within each division and allow for competitive inter squad games. With current registration numbers, DVMH would have 1 cohort of approximately 35 players in U18, U15 will have 2 cohorts of approximately 22 players each, U13 will have 2 cohorts of approximately 30 players each, U11 will have 1 cohort of 34 players, U9 will have 2 cohorts of approximately 22 players each, U7 will have 1 cohort of just 2014's with 24 players and the 2015-16 group will also have 1 cohort with 22 players. The cohorts will be split by birth year with siblings being together wherever possible. Division Directors will have the ability to adjust players as required to start to keep the numbers between the cohorts of similar size and ensure all cohorts have goalies.

Key Points During the Development Season:

Hockey Alberta regulations for Return to Play have instructed associations to play within their MHA boundaries.

All members are to operate within only one (1) sports cohort. You cannot belong to more than one Sports cohort. Cohorts can have a maximum of 50 participants. This includes coaches.

Hockey Canada has a new Coaching Module that will be required for all coaches. It will be launched next week and is free for all to take. It is focused on Return to Play during COVID-19. Parents are encouraged to take this module as well.

At this point in time, masks will not be required by cohort members. However, if circumstances change with Hockey Alberta, the Town of Drayton Valley or the Omniplex, this point may have to be revisited. Each cohort will have masks on hand should a member show up to or starts to show symptoms during a session. In these instances, the member will be asked to wear one as they leave the facility. Any coach that is a member of 2 cohorts will have to wear a mask at all times but DVMH will try to avoid this situation as much as possible.

All members are to follow local arena regulations which can be found later in this document.

Coaches will be responsible for being cohort leaders. If the arena does not allow parents into the dressing rooms, coaches may be required to tie skates for the younger players.

Associations must screen and track all participants and interactions, maintaining records in a secure location for a minimum of 14 days from completion of activity. This is to be done as part of a daily check-in procedure for participants before any activity. DVMH will be looking at using an online tracing application through Team Snap.

Note: There will not be any on ice officials during the development season

The next step would then be to enter into the Modified Competitive Season. At this point, evaluators would conduct Tryouts to form our teams to then be eligible to join a pod within our region.

MODIFIED COMPETITION SEASON

When Government of Alberta restrictions on travel and the number of people allowed in a gathering are lifted, Hockey Alberta and our sanctioned Leagues will have a plan in place for a safe and productive transition into a 'Modified Competition Season'. Communication will be integral to ensure everyone is educated on what precautions are in place and what alterations to the traditional regular season structure exist.

This Modified Competition Season will not commence (for any level of hockey) before November 1, 2020. Depending on the Government of Alberta guidelines and recommendations, the start of this component could be delayed until later in the 2020-21 season.

- Teams will be grouped into regional 'Pods', by level of hockey, for competition purposes.
- A Pod will include 3-5 teams, depending on Government recommendations.
- Teams will only play within their Pod for the duration of this component.

Types of Programs permitted:

- On-Ice Practices
- Off-Ice Training
- Pod Games – Teams may be grouped into regional 'Pods' of 3-5 Teams for competition purposes.
- Tournaments – Timelines for tournament dates will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

Registration Protocols:

Sanctioning:

- Members (including MHAs, Club Teams, Sledge Hockey, Accredited Schools, etc.) can schedule and operate sanctioned events without having to complete any additional application processes.
- Members can operate activity in accordance with Hockey Canada guidelines and, when doing so, they know they have coverage.
- Out of Province travel may be restricted depending on Federal and Provincial government recommendations and restrictions.
- Timelines for when requests for tournament sanctions will be considered will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

Participant Registration:

- Team Order and Registration deadlines may be amended based on start-up dates.
- Deadlines for Team Official/ Coach education requirements may be amended based on start-up dates.
- Register all participants onto rosters in accordance with the normal procedures. (This is only recommended if your organization has been able to complete the player evaluation/ tryout process and/ or know which players should be on each Team).
- With a later start to the season, Minor Hockey Affiliation deadlines will move to January 15, to align with all other levels of hockey.
- All carryover suspensions from the previous season will be applied to players and team officials for this stage and must be served in full prior to participating.

Officiating

Certified on-ice officials will be used during the Modified Competition Season. Requirements and other details of the integration of officials into Cohorts will be finalized and distributed once known.

Part 2: NORTHERN ALBERTA INTERLOCK RETURN TO PLAY PROGRAM DETAILS

As of August 17, 2020 NAI has not released any plans or documentation with regards to return to play within the NAI League. We have reached out to NAI Executives, who have informed us that they will keep us posted with any details in regard to return to play. NAI's Annual General Meeting is on September 12, 2020 after which will hopefully provide more details on NAI's return to play guidelines.

League Play within the NAI will not commence until HA Regular Season Component starts.

Part 3: DRAYTON VALLEY MINOR HOCKEY RETURN TO HOCKEY PLAN

DVMH will be working with AHS, Hockey Alberta, NAI, and the Omniplex to ensure a safe environment for our kids to return to playing hockey.

The health and safety of the players is our primary concern, and our focus is to ensure all players and their families have a positive experience in the 2020-2021 Season.

We are in a constantly changing environment and as new rules and regulations are updated by our governing authorities, we will continue to evolve our plan as we enter different stages as outlined by NAI, Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta. This plan is subject to change based on orders from the Chief Medical Officer, the Province of Alberta, the Town of Drayton Valley, Hockey Alberta and NAI.

Our association's goal is to reach a point where it is safe to resume league play within the NAI when the regular season resumes. Until then we are limited to staying within our MHA Boundary.

During the development phase we will be utilizing the Cohort option for each division. These cohorts will be managed as per the guidelines presented in this document, which follow the guidelines put forth by AHS and Hockey Alberta. Our current registration numbers allow us to maintain one Cohort per division. This number includes both players and coaches.

The Development phase is a great opportunity to develop skill and have competition within each division, with inter squad games. The use of our PEP Equipment will be beneficial during this time.

We are also working with Hockey Alberta personnel on a player development/practice plan.

We are currently looking at potentially longer ice times for practicing and inter squad games. We will be updating the practice format to be announced at a later date.

Once we enter the Modified Competition Season, we will then conduct tryouts and form our teams for the remainder of the season.

There will not be any officials utilized during the Development Phase. Coaches will fill this role during the inter squad games.

Parent and Player requirements- Labeled prefilled water bottles, come dressed as much as possible, for more info see: [Roles and Responsibilities – Appendix 5 HA](#)

Coaches Clinics as they become available will still be held with social distancing.

Team Snap Health Screen function within app. Players are required to do questionnaire before every session.

Travel

There will be no travel during Phase 2. All practices and games will be held at the Omniplex until we transition to playing games outside our MHA Boundary. No travel permits or tournament sanctions will be approved during this development phase.

Tournaments

DVMH will follow all guidelines from Hockey Alberta. Currently, this means that tournaments will be TBD.

Part 4: OMNIPLEX GUIDLINES AS OF AUGUST 26, 2020

Spectators are permitted to watch practices or Inter Squad Games. Social distancing is required.

Players and coaches can only arrive 20 minutes before practice and head straight to the dressing room. Players can come partly dressed to ensure they can finish dressing within 20 minutes.

Players and Coaches are required to leave the Omniplex within 20 minutes after practice.

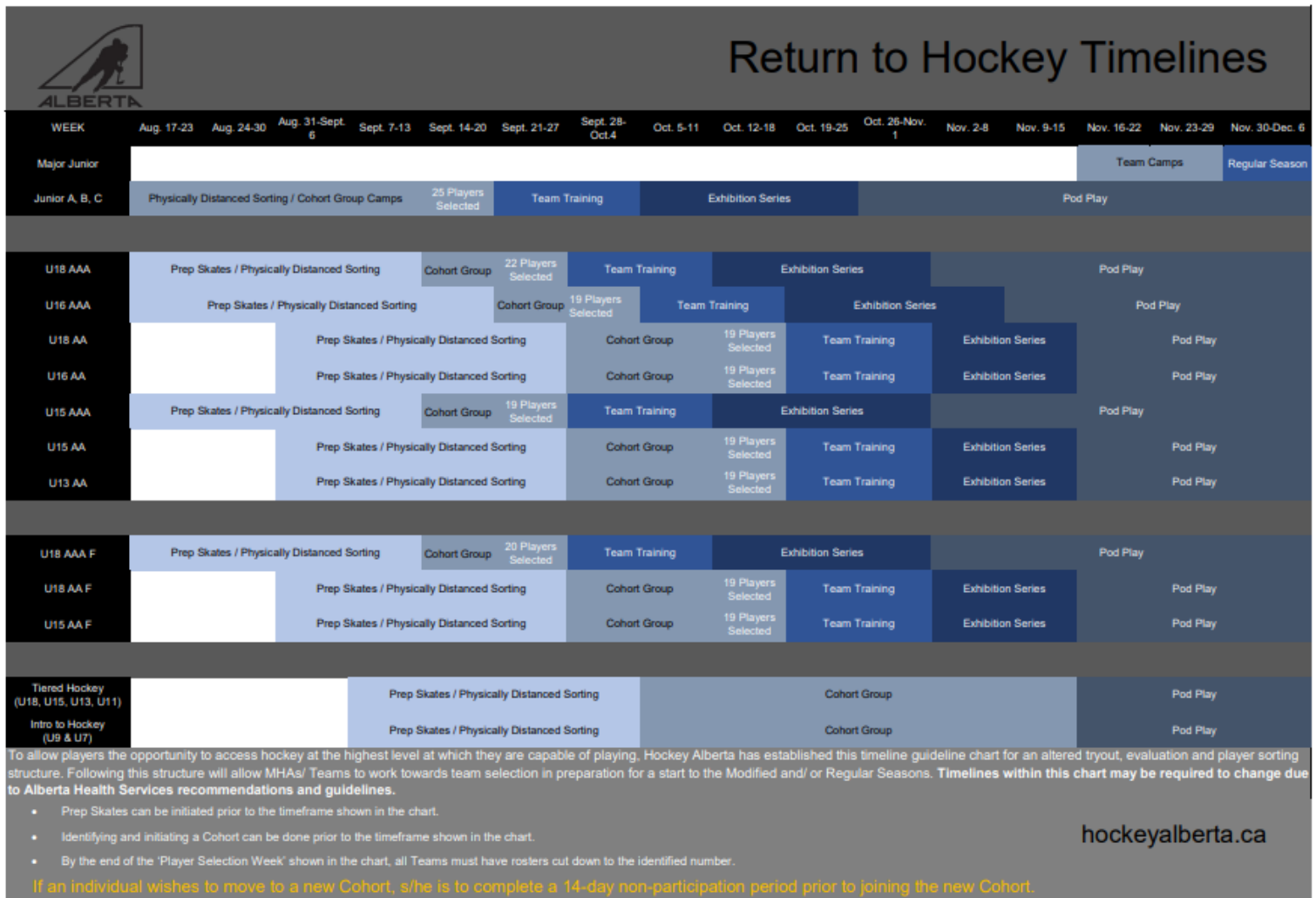
Players and coaches will arrive through players entrance beside the main door and will leave through the Omni 2 entrance.

Dryland activities will not be permitted.

Coaches or managers within the Cohort will be able to assist players (i.e. tie skates)

Each cohort will appoint a manager who be responsible for administration duties

Part 5: HA Season Timeline



https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix%2014-RTH%20Timelines.pdf

Part 6: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. When will the season start?

A. See Hockey Alberta timeline [HA TIMELINE](#)

Please keep an eye on website and Facebook for updated DVMH ice session start dates

Q. When will players be evaluated?

A. Players will be evaluated in the same manner as past years once the Modified Competition Season starts.

Q. How will cohort teams be formed?

A. Cohorts will be formed based on each age within all divisions.

Q. If a player no longer wants to participate, can I get a refund on my registration?

A. Refunds will follow the steps outlined in the DVMH bylaws. If a COVID 19 outbreak cancels the minor hockey season at any point through out the season, the DVMH board will have in place a refund schedule based on when the shutdown happens. Anyone wishing to receive a refund must contact the registrar Trish Enyedy at registrar@draytonvalleyhockey.com as well as Katrina Dawes at treasurer@draytonvalleyhockey.com. If you choose to withdraw your registration, you cannot re-register at a later date.

- A \$25.00 fee for being on the ice once will apply to everyone
- A \$50.00 fee after the player has been carded or team sheeted
- If a player withdraws after October 14th, ¾ of the registration fee is refunded
- If a player withdraws after November 14th, ¼ of the registration fee is refunded
- If a player withdraws after November 30th, no fee will be refunded

Q. Can I register mid-season after the cohort phase is over?

A. We will not be accepting registrations after the start of the cohort season, unless due to special circumstances.

Q. What happens if someone in my cohort is sick or tests positive for COVID 19?

A. Hockey Canada has established a protocol for addressing illness. Anyone present who is feeling unwell will be required to leave the facility immediately upon detection/reporting. Each player will also be required to submit a questionnaire before each ice session. For more information, visit the Hockey Canada return to hockey document.

Q. Can I leave my sport cohort and join a new one?

A. Movement among sport cohorts requires a 14-day period before joining a new sport cohort.

Q. Can I belong to more than one sports cohort?

A. Players, coaches, and officials must belong to only one sport cohort. A sport cohort is defined as a small group of the same people who can interact regularly without staying 2 meters apart. In choosing to coach/play within your hockey cohort, you are not able to join any other sport/performance cohorts while in phase two of Alberta's relaunch plan.

Q. Can I participate in a pre-season camp and join a cohort before the 2-week period lapses?

A. If you participated in a camp that maintained physical distancing, you do not need to wait 2 weeks before joining a cohort. If you participated in a cohort-camp whereby physical distancing was not maintained, you must wait two weeks before joining a cohort

Q. Will my cohort operate as a team?

A. Cohorts are intended to act as a temporary grouping until AHS restrictions are loosened; at which time, we plan to form traditional teams.

Q. Do I have to wear a mask?

A. As per Alberta Health regulations, masks should not be worn during intense physical activity. Players and coaches are not required to wear masks unless they are coaching in multiple cohorts which will be avoided wherever possible.

Q. Can I go into the dressing room with my child?

A. Unless you are a designated coach, you will not be permitted to enter the dressing room. During this phase, players are encouraged to dress at home as much as required to meet the 20 minutes timeline to get onto the ice. Specific guidelines outlined by the spirit Center need to be adhered to.

Q. If my child is trying out for Elite Stream hockey (AA, AAA) and is released, can they join their designated cohort immediately?

A. Any player that has been a part of another cohort, must wait the mandatory 14 days before joining their designated DVMH cohort.

DIVISION START DATES FOR DVMH

U11 – U18 start the week of September 14th

U9 start the week of September 28th

U7 start the week of October 5th

Important links:

Hockey Alberta Return to Hockey Plan:

https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Return_to_Hockey_Plan_-_UPDATE_-_Aug21.pdf

Return to Hockey Frequently Asked questions:

https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix%206-Member%20FAQ.pdf

Return to Hockey Timelines:

https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix%2014-RTH%20Timelines.pdf

Roles and Responsibilities:

https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix_5-Roles_and_Responsibilities.pdf