

Lloydminster Minor Hockey Association



Return to Hockey

Sept 4, 2020



Return to Hockey Plan

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Return to Hockey Plan

1. Introduction

Lloydminster Minor Hockey has actively engaged with Hockey Alberta, Alberta Health, the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the City of Lloydminster in developing a 'Return to Hockey' plan that allows our young athletes to get back on the ice to enjoy the benefits of the great game of hockey. This plan will provide answers to many of the numerous questions being asked regarding how LMHA will operate under the current Alberta Health and Saskatchewan Health Authority guidelines and restrictions.

With our geographical location, we are dealing with the challenge of our City operating under the Saskatchewan Health Authority while our governing body of Hockey Alberta has different parameters under Alberta Health. We are in constant communication with the City of Lloydminster and the Saskatchewan Health Authority in working on options to allow our Association to proceed the best way possible. In the current ever-changing environment, we are doing our best to keep up to date with both government's guidelines so we can inform our membership as we proceed.

The Lloydminster Minor Hockey Associations - Return to Hockey Plan is current as **of Sept 4, 2020** and is based on the requirements of the Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan as of this date. As the situation evolves, LMHA will update accordingly to remain in compliance with these requirements. As you read this document, please note this is 'the new normal' in our current environment. This is not a typical hockey season, and it will look different. We are confident that this plan will ensure our athletes continue their development both on and off the ice.

This plan relies heavily on the honesty and integrity of our athletes, their families and a commitment by all participants to abide by the rules of the plan laid out.

There are 4 Phases to the LMHA plan that will be outlined in this document, following Hockey Alberta's footprint:

1. **Sorting/Evaluation Phase**– This phase will take place in September/early October and will be for the sole purpose of creating like skilled 'Cohort Groups' of less than 50 players. This process will be done through 'Physically Distanced' skill-based evaluations.
2. **Development Season Phase** – Once players are sorted into 'Cohorts' they will now be able to practice and compete in 'Inter Squad" games with the other members of this Cohort. Players will not be permitted to play against teams or players outside of their cohort until government restrictions are lifted. This phase will begin when cohorts are formed in late September/early October.
3. **Modified Competition Season (TBD)** – Teams and Tiers will be finalized. Teams will then be grouped into regional "Pods" for competition purposes. This will vary by league and Tier depending on age category. A Pod may include 3-5 teams depending on Government Approval. Teams will then play within their "Pod" for the duration of this Modified Competition Season.
4. **Regular Season (TBD)** - This is the final phase of the plan and has 2 options - if all restrictions are lifted, we will return to 'traditional' Hockey. If restrictions on travel are still in place, teams may play within regions or divisions within their appropriate league. This may vary and will depend on each league we are members of.



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2. Program Objectives

The guidelines in place have forced us to think differently on how our Association will operate. While the programs may look a bit different, they were developed to meet the needs of the players and are focused on achieving the following key objectives of our Association:

1. **Safety** - Create a safe, healthy hockey environment for our players, coaches and volunteers
 - Safety is paramount, this plan was built in compliance with the Alberta Government and Hockey Alberta Guidelines, to minimize the risk of all participants
2. **FUN** - Maintain a culture of Fun!! Where participants can enjoy the game they love
 - LMHA is excited to resume hockey operations that allows kids to be kids
3. **Development** - Create competitive hockey environment that allows players to develop and grow
 - Development is essential and can be accomplished in both the practice and game play environment that will be created
4. **Tiering** - Provide an environment where players are grouped in appropriate skill levels
 - Tiering ranges may look slightly different than in the past. They will be close to previous seasons and we believe they will be within an appropriate range for skill development.
5. **Gameplay** - Create an environment where 'Game Play' exists
 - Games may operate in a variety of creative formats up to the point that the regular season phase may resume. Formats may include 5v5, 4v4, 3v3, etc....
6. **Flexibility to Transition** - These phases will provide us with the flexibility to transition our programs as things evolve during the season. As government phases/stages and protocols change, so will we.
 - This will ensure we continue to adhere to all Saskatchewan Health Authority, Alberta Health, Hockey Alberta and the City of Lloydminster protocols while providing a safe and healthy environment for all our participants.

3. Requirements

1. Within the current Re-Open Saskatchewan Phase Four Part II and Alberta Health Services Phase Two, we have two different formats that we can use to operate our programs. Hockey Alberta and Lloydminster Minor Hockey will utilize both of these formats in facilitating our programs:
 - **With Physical Distancing** – Aligning with current physical distancing measures, all participants remain a minimum of two meters apart during participation, including coaches.
 - Will be used for the purpose of selecting Cohort groups of like skilled players.
 - **A maximum of 30 individuals are permitted on the ice at any one time to promote social distancing. Our goal is to have up to 24 players on the ice for this phase**
 - **Using Cohort Groups**
 - A maximum of 50 people (which includes coaches and support staff if required) that participate in drills and inter-squad play where Physical Distancing cannot be maintained.



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- This will be used for the purpose of evaluating players, introducing competition into the Development Season and finalize the selecting of our teams.
 - Cohort participants can be grouped together to participate in small area games, scrimmages etc. (5v4, 4v4, 3v3, etc....) This will resemble regular practices, and gameplay
2. LMHA is currently bound by the Public Health orders implemented by the Government of Saskatchewan on the City of Lloydminster as follows;
 - Large public and private gatherings – indoors and outdoors – are prohibited. Effective June 22, 2020, indoor gatherings of up to 30 are permitted where space allows for two meters of physical distancing between participants. Outdoor gatherings of up to 30 people are still permitted with appropriate physical distancing.
 - No single group on the field, court, ice surface, etc. shall exceed the gathering limits in the public health order. Teams need to be separated while on the sidelines, and players cannot exceed gathering limits during games, practices or training. (Pg. 81 of Re-Open Sask document
 - Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan as of Aug 5, 2020 found below;
<https://pubsaskdev.blob.core.windows.net/pubsask-prod/120024/Re-Open%252BSaskatchewan%252B-%252BAugust%252B5.pdf>
 3. No competitions or other interactions with other Teams/cohorts will be permitted until approved by our governing body.
 4. LMHA is required to track all participants and interactions while maintaining records of each session in a secured location for 14 days from the completion of the activity. (More detailed information is found in the Protocols and Safety section of this document).
 5. League Play
 - Traditional NEAHL, ECAHFL League Play is not permitted at this time.
 - Mini games are only permitted within your 'Cohort Group' and can consist of 3v3, 4v4 or 5v5.
 6. Travel Permits and Tournament Participation
 - Tournaments are not permitted during STAGE TWO of Alberta Health Services relaunch plan.
 - No exhibition games, travel or tournament permits will be approved prior to the approval of Hockey Alberta sanctioning for member organizations.
 7. City of Lloydminster Guidelines
 - All members must follow all the City of Lloydminster facility guidelines
 - Currently as part of the Re-Open Saskatchewan guidelines, Spectators ARE NOT allowed in the Arenas. LMHA is currently working with the City of Lloydminster and the Government of Saskatchewan on this matter. More details to come as information arises.



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4. Protocols & Safety

PLAYER REGISTRATIONS

- All players must be registered with Lloydminster Minor Hockey prior to joining any ice session, tryout and or prep skate.
- All fees must be paid in full prior to player being placed on any Roster or in a 'Cohort' grouping.

RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS AND PLAYERS

Parents and players 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.
- ensure each player has his/her own water bottle which is sanitized prior to each session
- 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 found below in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 - Hockey Canada Roles and Responsibilities

COACHES AND OR EVENT LEADERS

- When possible, communicate with athletes a minimum of 24 hours prior to the session the plan so players can review and be aware for physical distancing purposes
- Communicate to see if athletes or family members are feeling unwell or showing signs of COVID-19 symptoms and if so, they are not to attend practices for 14 days. A player who has a negative COVID-19 test and their symptoms have resolved are permitted to return within the 14-day period
- Complete the Hockey Alberta contact tracing template prior to each session and submit to Division director after each session via email. This document can be found in Appendix 2.
- Remind athletes and families of physical distancing guidelines, the need to label all equipment.
- Disinfect all training equipment prior and after training sessions, including pucks
- Ensure athletes retrieved all their own personal equipment after session. (ex. water bottles, sticks, etc.)

Appendix 2 - Hockey Alberta Contact Tracing Template

COVID-19 CHECK-IN

24 hours prior to each session, or when arriving at the session, the coach or leader will communicate with all players and families to do the Hockey Alberta health status check. If any athlete or family member of the athlete is or has experienced any of the following symptoms in the previous 14 days,



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they will not be permitted to participate in any events, training etc. for the next 14 days or until 14 days after the last symptom, whichever is longer. This information will be held in confidence by the coach:

Appendix 3 - COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist

What to do if a participant answers YES to any of the mandatory check in questions or begins to show symptoms during the training session:

- The participant is immediately removed from the session and sent home as safely as possible
- Coach or Activity Leader to notify Division Director immediately following any participant being removed from any session
- Division Director will contact LMHA's General Manager to facilitate the required Sask Health or AHS protocols under the contact tracking guidelines

More information can be found on Hockey Canada's Reporting a Positive COVID-19 case below in Appendix 4.

Appendix 4 - Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case

GENERAL STAY SAFE MEASURES

Please follow the current provincial stay safe measures as well as the following:

- Driving alone or with people they are living with (no carpooling).
- Staggered approach to the site e.g. physical distancing of 2 meters.
- Avoiding touching common surfaces while in public.
- Come straight to the Arena from home and go straight home.
- Practice good hygiene by:
 - Coughing into a sleeve.
 - Sneezing into a tissue.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Washing hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water.
 - When water and soap is not immediately available, using hand sanitizers with a minimum concentration of 60% alcohol.
 - Wash hands prior to and immediately following practice/ training, using the washroom, after handling equipment.
 - Sanitize your phones and devices often, leave them in the car or at home when possible.
- Help each other with helpful reminders, this is new to everyone.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING PROTOCOLS FOR REQUIRED SESSIONS

Physical distancing has been identified as one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. With that in mind the following are the minimum protocols that **MUST** be adhered to for team training/ practice:

All participants will wash their hands before coming to training.

- All participants will use hand sanitizer:
 - At the beginning of all events, prior to entering all arenas
 - At the end of each session once leaving arena.



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- All participants are required to maintain at least 2 meters distance from each other and avoid person to person contact unless they are participating in a practice within their designated 'Cohort Group'.
- Coaches will coach from a safe distance at least 2 meters from athletes.
- Nonessential activities that require close contact between individuals will not be permitted.
- NO SHARING OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - Sticks, gloves or any other personal equipment.
 - water bottles.
- NO SPITTING.
- Participants will avoid touching their face.
- All participants will be expected to follow the social distancing rules put in place by the City of Lloydminster facilities.
- Player equipment and clothing must be cleaned with disinfectant where appropriate and or washed prior to each session.
- No unnecessary physical contact e.g. high fives.
- All commonly touched surfaces will be disinfected after each session by Arena Staff.
- Gear, equipment etc. must be sanitized prior to each use.

SCREENING/ CONTACT TRACING/ SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

LMHA 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.

For all Prep skates and Evaluations, this will be done using the Hockey Alberta Contact Tracing Template as seen in this document under Appendix 2.

Once cohorts/mini teams are created this may be done using an online tracing application such as TeamSnap or similar platform.

5. Refunds

LMHA Refund Policy will be in effect as per our Associations Bylaws & Policies. Refunds will be based on the date written request is received by the LMHA Office. The refund rates are as follows:

100% of annual fee less \$20 - Until September 1st of the current year or prior to first evaluation/tryout skate

80% of annual fee less \$20 - Sept. 2 – Oct. 31st of the current year

60% of annual fee less \$20 - Nov. 1 – Nov. 30th of the current year

40% of annual fee less \$20 - Dec. 1 – Dec. 31st of the current year



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6. Facilities

Below are the current City of Lloydminster Facility Guidelines in which LMHA will be following. Any changes and or updates to any of these will be communicated to our membership via our website and email.

- Building Access– SSC enter and exit via the North doors only. CCC enter via the Southwest doors only and exit through the Northwest doors only.
- 24 participants can be allowed on the ice surface at a time for physically distanced/sorting skates. We are only allowed 30 people at an indoor gathering as we are legislated by the Saskatchewan Health Authority. This allows for proper physical distancing.
- Players are only allowed 10 minutes in the dressing room before and after your skate – You must wait in the parking lot until a coach or session official comes to the entrance doors to let you into the arena.
- Players are not allowed to bring hockey bags into the arena. Carry in skates, gloves, helmets, sticks and filled water bottle.
- If dressing rooms are available; the number of individuals allowed in a dressing room varies from 5 – 9 between facilities.
- Please come dressed in your hockey gear because we cannot enter the building until 10 minutes before our allotted ice session and we must be out of the building 10 minutes after our allotted ice time has ended. You will be directed to your designated skate tying area when you are allowed in the arena.
- Goalies will be allowed to dress in the dressing room BUT within the same 10-minute time allotment.
- There will be no access to showers. Showers remain off.
- Each Player MUST bring their own water bottle with their name clearly marked on it. Water Fountains continue to be closed off. Bring water bottles filled- as there is no access to water fill stations.
- The City will be scheduling bookings 30 minutes a part to ensure there is adequate time to disinfect the common areas in between bookings. Physical distancing X's will be placed on the dressing room wall / bench to indicate a designated spot.
- Sanitizing wipes will be provided in each dressing room. Please wipe down your station before and after use.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be provided at the entrance/exit of the arenas.
- User groups will be responsible for ensuring their participants are following the above procedures and exiting the building in the schedule time frame.
- Public washrooms are available on the main floor at the SSC and in a downstairs dressing room at the CCC.
- No spitting allowed (COVID-19 Guidance).
- No spectators are allowed (City of Lloydminster Facility Guidance).



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7. Return to Hockey

Facilitating a safe return to Hockey that meets the guidelines of Alberta Health Services relaunch strategy for stage two and the Saskatchewan Health Authority Phase 4 is paramount. As mentioned previously, Hockey Alberta and LMHA will be utilizing two distinct procedures in delivering programming, Physically Distanced skates or using Cohorts. Hockey is a contact sport and while we can operate skill development sessions using physical distancing, we understand that in order to meet all of the key objectives of our program, we will need to use 'Cohort Groups' for various phases of our Return to Play.

Cohort Information from Alberta Health Services for Sports Teams

Definition of Cohorts:

A COVID-19 cohort – also known as bubbles, circles, or safe squads – are small groups of the same people who can interact regularly without staying 2 meters apart.

A person in a cohort should have little to no close contact with people outside of the cohort. Keeping the same people together, rather than mixing and mingling, helps reduce the chance of getting sick, and makes it easier to track exposure if someone does get sick.

Under Stage 2, cohort types and sizes include:

- core cohorts (families and households) – up to 15 people
- childcare programs – up to 30 children and staff
- sports teams – up to 50 players (may include coaching staff)
- performing groups – up to 50 cast members or performers

You should only belong to ONE CORE COHORT, which is your family or household cohort. It is safest to limit the number of other cohorts you belong to reducing the risk of getting sick or spreading COVID-19.

Sport Team Specifics:

With modifications, team sports are permitted under Stage 2, including contact sports. Sports teams can play in region-only cohort groups of up to 50 players or “mini leagues”.

If participating in or organizing a sports activity as part of a cohort group:

- avoid travel outside of regions
- tournaments and large events are prohibited
- clean shared equipment regularly
- maintain physical distancing when not in play (for example, players on the bench)
- decrease/eliminate use of shared locker rooms



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8. Evaluation/Sorting Phase

The purpose of the Sorting/Evaluations phase is to group like skilled players. This process is like the evaluation and tiering process that occurs each year. The key difference is that to ensure the safety of the players and to help reduce the number of player to player contact, these sessions will be entirely Physically Distanced. Once in formal LMHA Cohorts, players are permitted to engage in drills where they will come into close contact with other players.

Tiering ranges may look slightly different than in the past. However, they will be close, and we believe they will be within an appropriate range for skill development. As always, coaches are encouraged to group players based on similar skill abilities for different drills and station work to maximize development.

1. U7 – Minimum 2 sorting/evaluation sessions prior to assigning cohorts
2. U9 to U18 – Minimum 3 sorting/evaluation sessions prior to assigning cohorts
 - a. Once players are placed into Cohorts, further “Game Play” evaluation will proceed
3. U11 Player Pathway (NEW As of 2020) – 2 Prep Skates for mainstream players and 3 sorting/evaluation sessions prior to assigning cohorts
4. Goalies – Goalie only evaluations as previous seasons
5. Once an age Category has completed their Sorting sessions
 - a. Rank players top to bottom based on skill evaluations
 - b. Cohorts of 30-48 players will be created (depending on age category and registrations)
6. All coaches and evaluators must remain physically distanced during sorting/evaluations.

9. Development Season

Association Based Play

For each age category, LMHA will create similar sized Cohorts of no more than 50 players based on rankings from the physically distanced sorting/evaluation sessions. These Cohorts will now be locked for either the entirety of the Alberta Phase 2 relaunch, or until the New Year where LMHA will have the opportunity after the 2-week winter holidays to create new cohorts.

Cohorts

- 36-48 players (depending on age category and registration breakdown)
- Players can now compete as a group (practice & play together as per any other season)
- LMHA will still follow Sask Health’s Maximum allowance of 30 people on an ice surface at one time. Likely 2 ‘Mini Team’ groups of 18-24 players per session depending on age category.
- Within the Cohort the groups can change and move around
- Within the Cohort, ‘Mini-Teams’ will be created to facilitate game play

‘Mini Teams’

- LMHA will create 3 or 4 evenly balanced ‘Mini Teams’ of 9-12 players (with goalies within each cohort (NOTE: there are min. & max. sizes to mini teams based on division)
- LMHA has the ability to rebalance ‘Mini Teams’ if they are not competitive



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- Coaches can be assigned to a 'Mini Team' or moved around to share resources and expertise

Benefits of the Model

- Groups players into similar skill abilities
- Opportunity for players to develop
- Facilitates game situation competition
- 3/4 'Mini Teams' provide variety in competition
- 'Mini Teams' size means more ice time for players
- 'Mini Teams' size helps with dressing room utilization (when available) & bench spacing when games are played – spacing in dressing rooms and on benches is mandatory as per Hockey Alberta, AHS, and the Government of Alberta & Saskatchewan
- Reduced travel - meets the government recommendation of keeping kids more 'regionally based' during this stage of return to play
- Players are playing with and against their peer group (friends)
- Cohorts are likely more in line with community and school programs, therefore confining the spread
- If an outbreak occurs it is easier to shut down 1 cohort in our Association, as opposed to shutting down the entire program

11. Coaches, Team Officials and On Ice Officials

As per Hockey Alberta Return to Hockey, Updated August 21, 2020.

The structure of certification and training clinics and seminars for Coaches, Team Officials and On-Ice Officials has been confirmed by Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta for the 2020-21 season. Certification programs will include a combination of in-person clinics (using physical distancing) and online programming.

COACHES/ TEAM OFFICIALS

Hockey Alberta will maintain the same requirements for all Coaches and Team Officials for the 2020-21 season (November 15 deadline), with the addition of an online Hockey Canada Return to Hockey Safety Guidelines module for all head coaches. The module is now available.

[RETURN TO HOCKEY SAFETY MODULE >](#)

The list of current coaching requirements is available under the Coaches tab on the Hockey Alberta website: [GO TO COACH EDUCATION](#)

ON-ICE OFFICIALS



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For new officials, and returning Level I and II officials, in-person certification clinics will not start until after Thanksgiving weekend. The current targeted start date is the weekend of October 17-18, but that is subject to change based on developments within the province regarding COVID-19.

For Levels III-VI officials, they are eligible to sign up for virtual (video conference) session to obtain their certification for 2020-21. These clinics will be available starting in late September.

For any official who was certified in the 2019-20, that certification remains valid until January 31, 2021. Normally, certification from the previous season remains valid until December 31, but for this season, Hockey Canada has provided a special exemption extending that deadline by one month.

Clinic registration will begin in mid-September (specific date TBC). Check the Hockey Alberta Officials website (officials.hockeyalberta.ca) for updates and current information pertaining to officiating and the 2020-21 season.

These revised timelines for clinics and certification align with on-ice officials are not required until the Modified Competition Season component of the Return to Hockey Plan. Once officials begin to work on the ice, Hockey Canada has developed a set of COVID-19 officiating guidelines and an FAQ. Information can be found on the Hockey Canada website (<https://hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/exclusive/return-tohockey/plans/officiating>).

12. Appendices & Links

Appendix 1 - [Hockey Canada Roles and Responsibilities](#)

Appendix 2 - [Hockey Alberta Contact Tracing Template](#)

Appendix 3 - [COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)

Appendix 4 - [Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case](#)

Appendix 5 - [Hockey Alberta Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Appendix 6 - [Hockey Alberta Return to Hockey Plan – Updated Aug 24](#)



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Appendix 7 – Example Division Breakdown

Example U11 Division Breakdown		Varies with Registration Numbers & Tier 1 Tryouts	
Sorting/ Evaluations		Development Season	
		Cohort 1 'Mini Team' 1 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 1 'Mini Team' 2 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 1 'Mini Team' 3 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 1 'Mini Team' 4 (~10-12 Players)	
	Cohort 1 (Players 1-42)		Tier 2 Team (15-17 players)
			Tier 2 Team (15-17 players)
		Cohort 2 'Mini Team' 1 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 2 'Mini Team' 2 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 2 'Mini Team' 3 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 2 'Mini Team' 4 (~10-12 Players)	
3 Sorting Skates	Players Ranked 1-126	Cohort 2 (Players 42-84)	Approval to move to traditional teams
		6 Even Teams for City League	
			City Team 1 (13-15 players)
			City Team 2 (13-15 players)
			City Team 3 (13-15 players)
			City Team 4 (13-15 players)
			City Team 5 (13-15 players)
			City Team 6 (13-15 players)
		Cohort 3 'Mini Team' 1 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 3 'Mini Team' 2 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 3 'Mini Team' 3 (~10-12 Players)	
		Cohort 3 'Mini Team' 4 (~10-12 Players)	
	Cohort 3 (Players 84-126)		