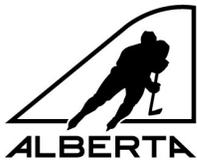




# RETURN TO HOCKEY



SENIOR & JUNIOR PLAN



# RETURN TO HOCKEY PLAN SENIOR & JUNIOR HOCKEY

Hockey Alberta has built a Return to Hockey Plan that provides information about the protocols for operating camps, practices and playing games. Work is currently ongoing with Leagues to establish timelines for the start of League play within each level of hockey. Based on current government guidelines, a modified structure for game play can be put in place. This plan provides a consistent structure, using a Development Season and a Modified Competition Season, for Junior and Senior hockey Leagues and Teams to plan out their season.

Development Season			Modified Competition Season
Prep Skates, Tryouts & Team Practices	Exhibition Series	Team Training	League Series Play
Currently Operating	Can Start October 5	October 15-29	Can Start October 30
* Dates within this chart are subject to change and may differ slightly by League and level of Hockey. * Leagues will schedule all Exhibition Play amongst Teams within their League. * After selecting their roster, Teams must take a 14-day break from Cohort activity prior to playing exhibition. * Leagues will schedule all game play ensuring Teams have the 14-day break from Cohort activity. * Each League will determine the exact start dates of League Play, no earlier than October 30.			

## DEVELOPMENT SEASON

During the Development Season, Member Teams may operate on-ice activity (such as prep skates, skills sessions, tryouts, and intra-squad game play) as well as off-ice programming. Programming can be structured using either Physical Distancing measures or Cohorting guidelines.

### Physically Distanced Programming:

- All participants (including coaches) must be 2 metres apart from each other at all times.
- The number of players in each ice session should be kept low to properly accommodate physical distancing requirements. **A maximum of 30 individuals are permitted on the ice at any one time. The recommendation is only 16-24 players on the ice at one time.**
- The number of people participating in off-ice training sessions should be limited based on the guidelines of the specific facility being used (or total space available if outside).

### Cohort Programming:

- Based on AHS guidelines, when playing a sport or engaging in a physical activity that involves or requires multiple participants (players and team officials), and where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other participants, the individuals in the group should form a Cohort.
- Participants (players and team officials) included within a Cohort are not required to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from each other.
- Participants outside of the Cohort must keep a physical distance of 2 meters from all other participants and wear a mask when they are not able to and perform proper hand hygiene.
- Players leaving one Cohort for another must not engage in new Cohort activity until a 14-day break has taken place from activity within the last Cohort.



### Prep Skates, Tryouts and Team Practices

- Member Club Teams may operate on and off-ice sessions to start training for the 2020-21 season and selecting players.
- Programming can be operated using either Physical Distancing measures or Cohorting guidelines (see above).
- If Cohorting, players leaving one camp for another must not engage in new Cohort activity until a 14-day break has taken place
- Activities during the Development Season should be divided to focus on the four components that play an important part in helping a player have a successful season.
  - **Physical:** Warm Up/Cool Down, Performance (Hydration, Nutrition, Sleep)
  - **Mental:** Team Identity, Goal Setting
  - **Life Skills:** Team Building, Citizenship
  - **Technical/ Tactical/ Team Skills:** On-Ice, Off-Ice Development

While operating programs, work can be done in all four areas. Resources can be found by visiting the **Coach Resources** webpage ([hockeyalberta.ca/coaches/coaching-resources/](http://hockeyalberta.ca/coaches/coaching-resources/)).

- Whenever possible, tryout sessions should be conducted using physical distancing in order to mitigate the risk of transmission.

### Exhibition Series

- Exhibition Series play can include pairs or groups of teams, to a maximum of 50 total people (a 'competition cohort'), playing only each other over the defined timeframe.
- To abide by the cohort maximum of 50 total people, games will be scheduled in Series'. Pairs of teams (a 'competition cohort') will be identified by the League and scheduled to play multiple games over a defined timeframe (ie – 1 week).
- Leagues will schedule Teams to compete in Exhibition games only amongst other Teams within their League.
- New 'competition cohorts' can then be assigned as needed provided both Teams adhere to the required 14-day break before playing in a new pair of Teams.
- Any player with a carryover suspension from the 2019-2020 season will have their suspension deferred for exhibition and will not be required to apply for a suspension deferral. These deferred games will not count as games served and must then be served during League Series Play.
- An Exhibition Series cannot be used to serve a carryover suspension from the 2019-2020 season.

### Team Training

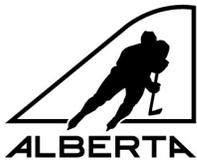
- Team Training provides an opportunity to operate additional practices, skill development and/ or off-ice training sessions with a selected Team of players.
- Team Training should focus on the following four components (Physical, Mental, Life Skills and Technical/Tactical/Team Skills).
- The Team Training timeframe aligns with Government guidelines and provides a 14-day break from cohort activity prior to Teams being placed in 'competition cohorts' for Tiering Play.

## **MODIFIED COMPETITION SEASON**

Hockey Alberta and our sanctioned Leagues have a plan in place for a transition into a 'Modified Competition Season'. Leagues will pair or group teams, to a maximum of 50 people, to create competition cohorts. Competition cohorts (the pairs of Teams) will be scheduled to participate in League play against each other for a defined timeframe.

### League Series

- Leagues will schedule game play in Series' ('Pods' if permitted), assigning pairs or groups of Teams to a 'competition cohort', and having them play each other multiple times over a defined timeframe to provide meaningful competition within a tiered division of play.



- It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that a 14-day break from Cohort activity has taken place prior to the start of League Series play. Teams that have not completed this required 14-day break will not be eligible to be scheduled for games until this requirement has been met.
- Using the Government guidelines, Cohorts can then be changed by taking a 14-day break from cohort activity prior to new pairs of Teams being put in place to continue League Series play.
- Each week of play will require the Leagues to schedule multiple games for a competition cohort in order maximize the amount of game each Team can play.

## ADMINISTRATION & OTHER INFORMATION

**Officials:** When using Officials for any type of game play there are two options to consider and be determined by the participating teams and officials.

- Officials can be included within a Cohort and follow all cohorting guidelines provided by the Government of Alberta; or
- Officials who primarily interact with individuals or teams at a distance of 2 metres or greater do not need to be part of the Cohort. In this case, officials will be required to wear a mask:
  - and practice physical distancing and perform proper hand hygiene;
  - and keep a distance of 2 metres between all other officials while in the change room and during the transition from the change room to the ice;
  - whenever dropping the puck;
  - when talking with a player, team official or another official inside a distance of 2 metres.
- Given the size of rosters within Junior and Senior Hockey, including officials in the cohort is not realistic and we anticipate having most officials work games using physical distancing and mask protocols.
- Hockey Alberta's Officials Committee is currently working to identify and appoint RIC's for each Senior and Junior League to be the point person for all questions coming from League representatives and Teams.
- The League RIC (or designate) will be responsible for assigning officials for all Exhibition and League Series game play.

**Registration Protocols:** Standard registration procedures are currently in place for Teams to begin confirming their rosters in HCR. Some deadlines and registration related regulations may be adjusted depending on the official start dates of each specific level of hockey. Player and Team Official Registration:

- Because AHS cohort limits are a maximum of 50 total people (Players and Team Officials), in order to allow for game play to occur, each Team will have to determine a maximum listing of 25 people to be included in a 'Competition Cohort'. Teams can submit this listing using the Cohort Roster Declaration form.
- Teams will be permitted to register a maximum of 25 Players, at any one time, throughout this season.
- Teams must determine whether or not they wish to include Team Officials within their cohort. Including Team Officials within a cohort will reduce the number of Players that are able to be included in a 'Competition Cohort'.
- It is possible for Team Officials to act outside the cohort provided they follow physical distancing measures at all times and wear masks when necessary (ie – on the bench). Team Officials that come into contact with players most often should be the ones in the cohort (ie – Trainer), if any.
  - For example, including 2 Team Officials within a cohort will reduce the maximum number of players permitted within a cohort to 23.
- Teams will still be able to access a maximum of 45 allotments (35 for Junior Female), to register new players as the season progresses (adhering to the 14-day break from cohort activity when necessary), however the total number of players registered at any one time is 25.



- With each Team being allowed to dress 20 players for a game, a roster of 25 provides a Team with 5 additional players to use when injuries occur or some players are not available.
- Because of the cohort rules, Affiliate players are not currently able to be used at any level of hockey.
- Without the use of Affiliate Players, some Teams may encounter the need of a 'Substitute Goaltender'. Requests for access to Substitute Goaltenders will be considered by the League and Hockey Alberta on a case by case basis and will adhere to all cohort, physical distancing and/or masking precautions.

#### **Sanctioning:**

- Camps (e.g. tryouts, conditioning, etc.)
  - Junior and Senior Club Teams wishing to operate camps during the Development Season must apply via Hockey Alberta's online Special Event Sanction System in the Centre Ice Portal.
  - A complete participant listing must be submitted to Hockey Alberta via the online platform upon the conclusion of the camp.
- Exhibition Game Sanctions and Travel Permits
  - Junior and Senior Teams will have all Exhibition games arranged for them by Hockey Alberta and the respective League, therefore no further permits are required.
  - Exhibition Games versus Teams from outside the respective League will not be permitted this season.
- Members can operate training 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 consideration will be given to requests for tournament sanctions will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.
- Hockey Alberta reserves the right to rescind a sanction for any program that does not adhere to these guidelines.

**Out of Province Play:** Based on current AHS guidelines, Hockey Alberta Teams are not currently permitted to travel out of the Province to play exhibition games.

- For the NWJHL, Hockey Alberta and BC Hockey are confirming with our Provincial Health Authorities whether or not Fort St. John and Dawson Creek will be able to participate within the League again this year. If permitted, those BC Teams will have to abide by the Hockey Alberta Return to Hockey Plan.
- For the Sask-Alta, it has been confirmed by SHA that their Teams will not be permitted to cross the border to play any Hockey Alberta teams and therefore the league will be operating in two separate Divisions this year.