



CHESAPEAKE BAY HOCKEY LEAGUE

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From the desk of Debbie Moon, CBHL Commissioner

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CBHL Players, Families and Staff,

The Washington Post published a story on December 4th, titled, "[Youth sports have been hit with few coronavirus outbreaks so far. Why is ice hockey so different?](#)" The article states that youth hockey claims the highest number of positive COVID-19 cases among any other youth sports program.

Why **IS** ice hockey different?

As hockey people, we read the Washington Post article shaking our heads. The article cites information from officials across several parts of the country, but not here in the Chesapeake Bay area. The article seems to address issues occurring early in the pandemic...when hockey was out of season, when COVID mitigation protocols were not established and when many unsanctioned or "unofficial" events occurred.

USA Hockey recently conducted their own research and has determined that there is "[no evidence that playing hockey is riskier than other activities.](#)"

We've come a long way since March, and I think it is safe to say that the Potomac Valley Armature Hockey Association (PVAHA) and the Chesapeake Bay Hockey League (CBHL) have gone above and beyond to ensure the safety of our kids while preserving their ability to play the sport they love.

Unfortunately, you won't find these points in the Washington Post' article:

- The PVAHA and CBHL staffs have worked tirelessly with multiple county and state health officials to not only educate them on youth hockey practices and standards, but to identify safety standards to apply at our rinks.
- PVAHA and CBHL have collaborated with area rinks to establish and enforce several unique COVID-19 mitigation protocols, to include banning the use of locker rooms and other small spaces, mandating mask wear in and around the facilities, prohibiting the use of penalty boxes and implementing social distancing measures throughout the rinks.
- PVAHA has taken extraordinary steps to limit the crossflow of people coming in and out of our affiliate area by providing USA Hockey sanctioning for tournaments that only allow teams from with the Maryland, D.C. and Virginia region. And they have discouraged teams within the affiliate area from traveling outside of the area.

- Our rink owners have taken excruciating steps to keep kids on the ice and to keep their businesses operational. These steps include significantly limiting, and in some cases, prohibiting spectator access to their facilities. They have modified their food sales operations and limited access to their retail sales operations. Many rink owners have physically altered their facilities to encourage social distancing.
- The CBHL has developed and implemented aggressive notification and contact tracing measures when kids or coaches are suspected of, or confirmed to have COVID-19. These measures include mandatory quarantine requirements and the ability to freely reschedule games in order to encourage quarantine.

Hockey has been happening in our region, in some way, shape or form, since the rinks were allowed to open back up this summer. Our CBHL season began on-time in October. Throughout PVAHA and their 10,320 players, coaches and volunteers (Tier 1 travel, Tier 2 travel, recreation and high school), there have been 94 confirmed cases of COVID-19 through November. That is less than 1% of the PVAHA population. Of those 94 cases, 63 of them were associated with a positive family member or they were determined to be infected at a tournament outside of the PVAHA area.

What the Washington Post also failed to mention is the concrete evidence out there suggesting that lockdowns and other restrictions imposed to mitigate COVID-19 are taking a drastically negative toll on the wellbeing of our children. There is no doubt that we all must take action to contain this virus, but we have a responsibility to provide an environment where kids can grow socially, physically and mentally...while complying with, if not exceeding all mandated COVID-19 mitigating directives and polices.

Our region has proved through its perseverance and discipline that we can conduct a safe and meaningful hockey program for our kids. Your continued support and diligence will get us to playoffs in a few months.

THAT IS what makes hockey different.

YOU make a difference.

Be safe.

Debbie Moon
Commissioner