



Date: Friday, November 13, 2020

To: Affiliate Member Associations

Since early April, the Potomac Valley Amateur Hockey Association (PVAHA) has worked diligently with local governments within our Affiliate to allow rinks to open and hockey to be played. While some rinks have mandates that are not ideal for playing games instituted by their respective local governments, it is the world we currently live in, and as such, we must strive to stay in compliance. In September, PVAHA issued “Return to Play Guidelines” to all participating member associations. In concert with this letter, the PVAHA COVID-19 Playbook will be posted at PVAHA.org.

These protocols are MANDATORY. We need to maintain a record of all possible COVID-19 exposures. Since we started keeping track on October 2, 2020, we have documented over 60 cases. However, most of these reports had to be chased down by the Affiliate and the CBHL as reports of positive cases from parents and third-parties began to surface. Member association officers and staff did not report each case — this is not acceptable. We are not getting information in a timely manner and, in some cases, we are not getting reports at all.

When there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 from a player/parent/sibling/coach in your association, it could potentially affect the other teams you have been in contact with. This includes opponents, high school teams, skills clinics, officials, and rink staff. This does not affect just one person, it spreads. The spread may continue to someone’s home where a high-risk person may become infected. We need to stop the spread as soon as possible to keep people healthy. This is the only way to keep hockey being played in our Affiliate.

We have traced many of the positive cases to our PVAHA teams attending tournaments/showcases outside of the Affiliate (states other than Maryland, D.C., and Virginia). As of this writing, all of New England (Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey) has closed down hockey for teams outside their respective states. All of these states are closed due to COVID-19 issues in their states and they do not want COVID-19 brought into their states from outside sources. Most of these teams are the teams your associations are playing in tournaments outside of the Affiliate.

The State of Maryland announced it strongly recommends that any non-essential travel outside of the State of Maryland to places with high COVID-19 positivity or case rates be cancelled. Contact tracing data by the state suggests out-of-state travel is to blame for a substantial increase in positive cases. If you decide to travel out of state, it is imperative you follow your state's return-to-state guidelines.

The Affiliate strongly recommends the following:

- There should be no use of locker rooms in rinks, even if permitted by the rink.
- Please limit the number of parents allowed in a building to one per family and no siblings.
- Continue to wear face masks and wash your hands.
- Do not gather in large groups, either in the lobby or outside in the parking lot.
- Stop huddles for goal celebrations
- Stay physically distanced on benches.
- *Do not...*
 - ...gather for chalk talks or time-out talks.
 - ...share equipment, i.e., bring your own personally marked water bottles.
 - ...use the penalty boxes.
 - ...congregate in hotel rooms, host team dinners, allow players to linger in training rooms, warm up in close proximity, play hall hockey.
 - ...allow tailgating or gatherings of parents/siblings in parking lots.

Yes, it's not the same and it is not going to be for this season. In short, if we want our rinks to stay open into next season, we all need to cooperate.

Hockey is in a very precarious situation; we are just one thin sheet of ice away from being shut down. We cannot stress enough how we are all in this together and we must work as a team to keep hockey open in PVAHA.

Willful failure to follow the affiliate and COVID-19 mandatory guidelines and immediately notify the Affiliate of an exposure may be construed as conduct unsuitable for the sport of ice hockey and will result in sanctioning for the participant, team, association and/or facility.

For more info and available resources please refer to the Affiliate web page:

<https://www.pvaha.org/page/show/5968456-pvaha-covid-19-information>