



HOCKEY DURING COVID-19

CVSA is pleased to open registration for the 2020-21 hockey season but expects this season to at least look different amidst COVID safety protocols and evolving guidance. For the safety of all players, coaches, officials, volunteers and their families, we will all need to work collaboratively and adhere to all health and safety measures set forth by Federal Guidance, State Agencies, USA Hockey, VT State Amateur Hockey Association (VSAHA), rinks, clubs and beyond. The CVSA Board is committed to holding a season that may adapt and evolve as necessary, but please understand much may be outside of our control. This uncertainty is hard for many and we will do what we can to communicate any and all changes, but also believe we have the demographic and flexibility that will allow us to keep our players at least skating for the foreseeable, while continuing to build our hockey family.

- We understand this is challenging for all – the rink, our club and our hockey families - but accept everyone’s safety must remain the priority. Early registration will help us plan for the amount of ice time we will need to accommodate team sizes and also, coaching requirements.
- Especially for our youngest skaters, these measures and the absence of a comforting parent rink-side may be unsettling. Parents and guardians should consider their player’s comfort level and ability to march into the rink, fully dressed and unaccompanied for a physically distanced practice or game when registering.
- Those participating in Summer Hockey are already paving the way for what support looks like for our players and their families with a social, yet physically distant, lot scene. Weather conditions will always be a factor, but rink parking lots are looking more like tailgates these days. You’ll find cornhole games, pop-up shelters and much excitement for the sport we all know and love. There are even preliminary plans for outdoor concessions and the potential for broadcasting the on ice, live action to those of us outside CVMCC.
- [CDC Guidance](#) on returning to organized youth sports has encouraged a phased approach beyond the safety measures outlined above. Fortunately, CVSA already adheres to this method, beginning our season with skill drills and conditioning, then building into team practices and intra-squad scrimmages before playing other teams – all within our state.
- Hockey, mostly because of the equipment employed, has been deemed to have much lower risk than other contact sports.
- CVSA Board Members have been meeting with more frequency and attending sessions with USA Hockey and VSAHA to understand and adhere to all guidance. There are developing protocols requiring more cleaning of surfaces to include the benches, penalty boxes and even the pucks themselves. And there will be more changes in the name of safety, including a forfeiture of the customary shaking of hands at the end of the game. Instead, teams will lineup on their respective blue lines and tip their sticks in sportsmanship and respect for the game.
- We’re very lucky to be in Vermont. The above measures, coupled with a low exposure rate in our state and region especially, have afforded us options. We believe if all members of our hockey family can adhere to the safety guidance, including for [leisure travel](#), we will be a safe population, enjoying hockey for the season. Failure to comply with state requirements is a breach of our code of conduct.
- That said, we recognize the need to be proactive and are prepared to pivot as needed and are already exploring creative alternatives. Again, we’re fortunate to be in the Green Mountains, where winters afford us opportunities to take the game outside if rink options dissolve.

- While we expect our fundraisers to be negatively impacted this year and costs to rise with added ice times and additional cleaning requirements, we have been fiscally responsible as an entirely volunteer organization. As such, we are in a position to weather this storm and uphold our mission to promote, supervise and assist in the development of youth skating and hockey programs by providing the best possible experience for all participants, including their spectators.
- In summary, we expect our season to unfold, but likely, look different. The teams we play may be in a smaller physical radius. Rinks may not be accessible to spectators, but technology can still offer viewing opportunities. Indoor events may be forfeited, but we have outdoor venue options.

2020-2021 Season Outline – What you need to know before coming to the rink:

Expectations for play in Vermont:

- Follow the [Vermont Recreational Sport Guidelines in section 9.1](#) and the [restart plan](#) previously mentioned. The guidance includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - No jamborees or tournaments and no checking at all ages during practice and games
 - Follow masking guidelines (updated 9/3 to require face coverings at all times beginning 9/8)
 - Occupancy guidelines - rinks have the right to lower their capacity allowance as they see fit
 - Additional guidelines required of host rink – more to come on this once schedule is solidified
- Travel to/from out of state approved counties only (refer to the [VT Cross State travel guidance](#)) and eligibility must be confirmed no earlier than Friday at 4 pm.
- VT Player Safety Coordinator and our association Player Safety Coordinator will assist in the event that COVID contact tracing is required, more information below.
- Teams must be rostered in accordance with VSAHA and USA Hockey rules and regulations.

Our Home Rink Expectations:

- At this time, we are limited to the capacity limits of the [Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center \(CVMCC\)](#). This will likely require us to rent more ice to accommodate smaller groups for practices and any games we may host. Occupancy rates have been set by the [Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#) and while this limitation will require accommodations, we understand it is a safety measure and are just pleased our Montpelier Rink has found a way to open under constraints when so many surrounding rinks remain shuttered.
- This occupancy is limited to active participants – players, coaches and rink staff. That means no spectators are allowed into the rink at this time and those who enter, must sign their waiver and certify they are not symptomatic and have not had known contact with a positive case. Temperature checks are also performed at a now all too familiar hand sanitizing station at the entrance.
- Locker room use is limited at best. Players and coaches will need to be fully dressed before entering the building. Walking skate guards are recommended, especially for our youngest skaters who may need help lacing up.
- As the Host association, we are responsible for sharing guidelines and making sure visiting teams are aware of them.

CVSA Family Expectations:

- If you are not feeling well or showing any symptoms of sickness please stay away.
- Facial coverings MUST be worn at all times (updated 9/3)
- 6' Social Distancing must be adhered to at all times (except on the ice)
- Visitors must be VT residents or meet [ACCD's travel requirement](#)
- Mandatory health screening and temperature checks will be **completed before** entering the arena
- No entry will be permitted if you have any symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, fever > 100.4, chills, muscle

pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.)

- Locker rooms and showers are **NOT** available at this time. Skaters should come dressed and can put their skates on in the lobby (if they can tie their own) or in the community area outside the rink with parental help. Please do your part to stay distanced while getting dressed.
- Chairs/benches will be available with 6 feet distance.
- Public bathrooms will be available.
- All skaters must vacate the arena 15 minutes after scheduled ice time, via the appropriate exit doors.
- **No Parents or spectators allowed at this time.**
- Please be aware of posted signs at the rink indicating that people should not attend practices who have been symptomatic, nor shall they enter the building and should not participate in any hockey-related event.
- All members must adhere to guidelines of the host arena and host association.

UPDATES TO GUIDELINES:

09/03/2020:

Beginning September 8, cloth face coverings will be required at all times when physical distance of six feet cannot be consistently maintained, including during practices, scrimmages, games, meets and competitions for sports that involve contact or close proximity. Please refer to the State of VT Guidelines [here](#).

10/16/2020:

In response to COVID-19 outbreak and two-week closure of rink operations in New Hampshire, Gov. Scott has issued [Addendum 7](#) to freeze skating facility schedules to avoid an influx of new users in VT ice rinks.

10/26/2020:

Due to rising COVID-19 case counts throughout the Northeast, and the decisions of Massachusetts and New Hampshire officials to suspend ice rink activities due to numerous outbreaks, the State of Vermont has announced [updated policies](#) to reduce risk. Vermont-based youth and adult recreational sports are now restricted to in-state activities only, with strict limits on the number of spectators permitted in attendance at indoor sports events. Social events are also strongly discouraged.