



COVID-19 Association Impact Report & Resources

The following is a report from a committee examining the impact the COVID-19 pandemic may have on Minnesota Hockey associations. The report offers a collection of ideas and resources for associations to consider.



Assessment

A number of youth associations from every Minnesota Hockey District were contacted and asked about the potential impact the COVID-19 pandemic would have on their association's finances, membership and programming. Their assessment, which is reported below, guided the development of this report

- The associations appreciated Minnesota Hockey reaching out to them.
- They looked to Minnesota Hockey for guidance.
- Anticipated revenue losses – up to \$200K
 - Charitable gambling – 88 hockey associations benefit from charitable gambling
 - Local sponsorship – up to 50% reduction
 - Loss of fundraising events – (golf benefits, etc.)
 - Concession profits
- Anticipated a membership decline of up to 20%.
- Believe there will be a greater need for scholarships for families in need.
- Some are considering a fee increase for members.
- May have to cut back on the hockey experience – less ice, less tournaments.
- Have concerns over COVID-19 liability.
- Asked if fees could be reduced – USA Hockey, MH, screening.
- Expressed concerns over community arenas financial viability and when arenas will open.
- Majority are planning registration to begin in July or August.
- Have started planning for next season and felt they can manage through this challenge.

While each association is likely to experience different degrees of impact from the COVID-19 pandemic, the following is intended to provide ideas to mitigate the impact and potentially come through as a stronger association. These observations are categorized into three areas:

- Association financials
- Membership – recruiting new and retaining existing members
- Hockey programming



Association Financials

- Quantify revenue losses.
 - Charitable gambling
 - Confirm return of local sponsors.
- Reduce expenses – to avoid a player fee increase
 - Schedule less ice per team. Utilize 2 or 3 team practices.
 - Coaching staff apparel.
 - Reduce tournament participation.
 - Reduce tryout expenses.
 - Schedule fewer games.
 - Limit hiring of outside staff.
- Limit financial obligations – COVID-19 contingent contracts.
- Explore any potential debt or loan refinancing the association could leverage.
- Explore loan programs
 - PPP “Paycheck Protection Program” Loan
 - EIDL “Economic Injury Disaster” Loan
 - MN DEED “Department of Employment and Economic Development” Loan
- Consider new fundraising opportunities.
 - Reach out to association alumni – “Adopt A Player”
 - Explore the use of raffles
 - Research fundraising platforms such as FlipGive or SportsEngine
- Establish a scholarship fund for families in need.
- Establish standard to minimize team apparel expenses (warm up, hats, etc.).

Membership

Recruiting new and retaining existing members.

- Connect with members – establish a communication plan.
 - Establish a “Return to the Rink” page on web site.
 - Connect with members on their status on returning to play this season.
 - Email to all families letting them know that hockey will be starting soon, inviting them back and offering new playing opportunities.
 - Conduct a social media campaign to launch the season.
- Showcase positive messaging.
 - Hockey will return.
 - It is safe returning to play.
 - Excitement of reconnecting with your hockey family.
 - Athletic and social development playing hockey provides.
- Social Media Toolkit is available from USA Hockey
- Assign a dedicated Membership Chairperson to lead your association’s recruiting and retention efforts.



- Hold District “Grow the Game” Zoom workshops.
- Utilize Minnesota Hockey programs.
 - Grow The Game grant.
 - Family Mentor program.
 - MN Hockey Model Association program.
- Watch USA Hockey Growth Webinars on YouTube – Katie Holmgren.
- In cooperation with your rink and local figure skating club, conduct “Back To The Rink” events.
- Conduct Try Hockey For Free events.
- Register with USA Hockey for “Try Hockey For Free”.
- Contact by phone players who have not registered for the upcoming season and suggest alternatives such as MH Rec League.
- Establish a scholarship program for families in need.

Hockey Programming

- Evaluate your current hockey programming and cost/commitment to meet membership needs.
- Consider in-house/recreation opportunities.
- “Drop In Hockey” – don’t have to be on a team to participate. Just register with association.
- 3 v 3 – half ice league/tournaments for squirts/10U.
 - State/District/In-house
 - 3v3 - 10 player team formed independent of association team
- Evaluate District leagues – number of games.
- Transition from a competition/practice model to a practice/competition model (MDM)
 - Squirts/10U – 3:1 practice to game ratio – 30 games.
 - Peewee/12U – 2.5:1 practice to game ratio – 37 games.
 - Bantams/15U – 2:1 practice to game ratio – 45 games.
- Establish an association team to participate in a recreation program or league.
- Utilize outdoor ice.
- Off-ice programming – floor hockey.

For question or additional information feel free to contact Minnesota Hockey COVID-19 Impact Committee members:

David Margenau – Chair

Chuck Sawicky – OMGHA Treasurer

Rob Gramer - Moorhead Youth Hockey Executive Director

Jeremy Reed – MH District 4 Director

Kevin Suoja – MH District 2 Director

Jacob Mars – MH Hockey Director Committee Chair

Derek Ricke – MH Marketing and Communications Director