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RETURN TO PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

PREAMBLE

The Atlantic Amateur Hockey Association (AAHA) is the sanctioned Affiliate of USA Hockey, operating in the States of Delaware, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Rockland County, New York. The AAHA Return to Participation Guidelines (“Guidelines”) include recommendations and best practices for participating in ice hockey within its jurisdiction. These Guidelines are meant to supplement Federal, State, and Local regulations as well as local facility rules and requirements regarding the containment and spread of COVID-19. This document is not intended to modify or replace Federal, State, or Local health guidelines or medical or expert advice relating to participation in any activity. Please consult your state and local Public Health officials or your qualified healthcare provider about any specific questions you may have.

The AAHA RETURN TO PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES are subject to change as the need and regulatory requirements demand.

Everyone in the community can help bring competitive youth ice hockey back by consistently wearing masks in public, social distancing, practicing good hand hygiene, emphasizing the importance of disclosing exposures with parents and athletes, avoiding congregating in crowds, including informal gatherings, and avoiding traveling with teams to other areas that aren’t practicing similar measures to control the virus. These measures will help decrease the virus in the community and allow all of us to get back to the game we love.

ICE RINK FACILITIES OPENING FOR BUSINESS

The AAHA does not direct or control the opening or operations of rink facilities, and rinks may impose measures that are stricter than, or in addition to, those outlined in these Guidelines. Rink facilities are required to follow Federal, State, and Local Executive Orders as well as Department of Health mandates. To the extent your local rink facility hosts AAHA-sanctioned activities or events, the following is applicable:

- The AAHA sanctions certain ice hockey activities managed by registered member Associations of the AAHA.
- AAHA sanctioning requires compliance with current Federal, State, and Local governmental and Health Department regulations in order to be eligible to host AAHA, and USA Hockey sanctioned activities.
- Participants should note that not all ice hockey activities occurring in an ice rink facility are under the auspices of the AAHA and USA Hockey and, therefore may not be AAHA / USA Hockey sanctioned events. Ice Rinks may very well comply with Federal, State, and Local governmental requirements while operating programs outside the jurisdiction of the AAHA and USA Hockey.



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- AAHA recommends that each rink facility communicate its operating policies and participation procedures with the public entering its facility. This communication may include health screenings before entry, sanitization protocols, maximum occupancy in the facility, face mask requirements for everyone entering the facility, etc.
- Participants should be aware of the rink facility's Policies, Procedures, and Operating protocols prior to arriving at the facility.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR PLAYERS, PARENTS, COACHES, OFFICIALS, AND VOLUNTEERS

1. All participants should be aware of and comply with the latest guidance from their State and Local governmental requirements and recommendations.
2. All players, coaches, officials, and volunteers must register as a member of USA Hockey for the 2020-2021 season to participate in any AAHA sanctioned activity.
3. Players, Coaches, or Officials who may be at a higher risk for severe illness should not participate in any on-ice activity.
4. Everyone should arrive and leave at the scheduled time to avoid overlap in groups.
5. Any Player, Coach, Official, Volunteer, Parent/Guardian, or Spectator exhibiting any symptoms or signs of illness should not enter the rink facility. If you do not feel well, you must stay home.
6. All on-ice participants should bring their own re-hydration liquids to the rink facility in a re-sealable container that is clearly marked with the participant's identity. Participants should NOT plan on refilling their containers at the rink facility.
7. Participants and Parents/Guardians should make every effort to be aware of all Policies, Procedures, and instructions provided by the rink facility, concerning access, arrival and departure times, arrival and departure locations, restroom availability, locker room access for dressing and undressing, etc. to ensure expedient movement in and out of the rink facility. The rink facility management is responsible for clearly communicating these expectations to those using the facility.
8. Coaches and team managers should have accurate contact information for all players on their team in the event of an emergency while the player is at the rink.
9. Off-ice interactions (socializing, team meetings, dry-land activities) must follow Federal, State, and Local regulations as well as facility mandates.
10. Maintaining social distancing, frequent washing of hands or using hand sanitizer, and cleaning of equipment between uses are important methods in mitigating the spread of COVID-19.
11. Equipment should be cleaned in-between uses. Most equipment can be machine laundered.
12. Officials must have up-to-date contact information in all game assigning programs profiles.



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POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR ASSOCIATIONS

All AAHA Associations should develop their own plan for returning to the rink facility, which should conform to all Government requirements and these Guidelines.

The following requirements are directly from the State regulations of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Please review the links at the end of these Guidelines for further detail. These points of emphasis may not be applicable in all locations within our Affiliate, but where required by governmental regulation or guidance, they must be followed. These are separate from the AAHA recommendations beginning with item 4 below. The AAHA recommendations are a supplement to and not in place of current Federal, State, or Local guidance.

1. Local Associations must create a program preparation plan that outlines steps for the resumption of activities. As part of that plan, program leaders should identify adult staff members or volunteers to help remind coaches, players, and attendees about social or physical distancing measures and other safety guidelines.
2. Associations must designate a point-of-contact person who should be familiar with these Guidelines, be available to answer questions, notify members and others, including leagues, rink facilities, officiating assignors, etc. if there is a diagnosed positive outbreak with a team, Association, or the surrounding community.
3. Athletes and staff (including officials) must be screened through a temperature check and a health questionnaire prior to practices and games. If an individual has symptoms, they cannot participate in activities. It is recommended that attendance records be maintained.

The AAHA recommends the following:

4. If your local governmental guidance includes screening as described in item 3 above, the AAHA recommends that these records are kept by each Association as applicable.
5. As soon as possible, at the start of the season, Association leaders should host a video conference with their membership to review operating procedures and to answer any questions.
6. Coaches should be as prepared as possible prior to practices to ensure complete utilization of the allocated ice time. Coaches should divide players into smaller groups whenever possible, keep players active and engaged at all times. Players should not leave the ice during a practice unless absolutely necessary.
7. Players need to maintain as much physical separation as possible at all times. Whenever possible, coaches should wear face coverings, promote social distancing on the ice, while recognizing that there may be times of close contact by players.
8. Coaches should maintain social distancing and avoid talking in close face-to-face proximity with players. It is recommended that coaches wear masks on the ice at practices unless they are exerting physical effort.
9. At the end of a practice, players should be excused from the rink one by one and through



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different exit points of the rink. Do not ask players to participate in picking up pucks or other equipment from the ice.

10. SafeSport policies will continue to be in effect in all phases. There should always be a minimum of two SafeSport certified adults at every on-ice event, and there should be no unsupervised one-on-one interaction between a player and a coach.

GAME PROTOCOL

The AAHA does not sanction contact practices or competition for its membership in any rink facility where these activities are not permitted by Federal, State, and Local governmental or Public Health regulation or guidance. Any such activity that is held in contradiction to this statement is not covered by USA Hockey insurance. Associations must share this information with their membership.

- The home team must provide hand sanitizer in the scorekeeper box.
- Coaches must wear masks on the bench.
- No handshakes between coaches, players, or officials.
- At the end of the game, both teams will line up on their blue lines and perform a stick salute in lieu of a handshake line.
- Players must have their own re-hydration bottle, which is labeled with their name. They must be filled before arriving at the rink. NO Sharing of water bottles is permitted.
- Any player utilizing a towel on the bench during games or practices must clearly label their towel with their name, and there must be no sharing of towels amongst players.
- Coaches must insure that benches are left clean at the end of each game. All trash and empty water bottles must be removed.
- Rink facilities will designate whether dressing rooms, showers, etc. may be used, and if permitted, the time limits for their use.
- SafeSport protocols remain in effect.
- Officials will encourage players to refrain from any interaction with an opponent during a stoppage in play. Players and coaches must understand the seriousness of the potential for the spread of the virus and conduct themselves with the utmost sportsmanship and class at all times.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

As previously stated, these Guidelines are not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or for the guidelines of the federal, state, or local health authorities. Your child's participation in any sport, and in particular, organized amateur hockey under the auspices of USA Hockey and the AAHA, is a personal choice for all parents and/or guardians. **Exposure to COVID-19 is possible, even using the most extreme caution.** Information regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing. We encourage our hockey families, coaches, officials, and volunteer and paid administrators to stay current on the latest developments and information on COVID-19.



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Please see the following links below for additional reference.

CDC – If You Are Sick

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

USA Hockey

<https://www.usahockey.com/playersafety>

Aspen Institute Project Play

<https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/return-to-play>

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

State of NJ COVID-19 Dashboard

<https://covid19.nj.gov>

NJ Guidance for Sports Activities July 9, 2020 (Links to pdf)

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/reopening-guidance/can-organized-sports-practices-resume>

Commonwealth of PA COVID-19 Information Guide

<https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/>

Pennsylvania Guidance for Sports Permitted to Operate During Covid-19 Disaster Emergency

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/sports-guidance/>

State of Delaware COVID-19 Response

<https://coronavirus.delaware.gov>

Delaware Play Safely Sports Guidelines

<https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/reopening/youth-sports/>

State of New York COVID-19 Response

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

New York Interim Guidance for Sports July 6, 2020

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf>