



It has been suggested that our decision to start hockey back up tomorrow, October 24, 2020, is a wrong decision. It has been suggested that we are prioritizing hockey over all else, including the health and welfare of ourselves, our children players, our coaches, and their families.

We want to assure you that is the last thing we want to do. The decision to open the season has been the most difficult we have had to make. Why? Because we don't want to be wrong.

In light of the fear of being wrong, the easy answer is of course to shut down the program. That would certainly be the most cautious approach. It would also not provide our players for playing an activity they enjoy. So there must be a middle ground, right? The question becomes, when is a good time to resume? What standard is that? When do we know it is "safe"?

Unfortunately, there will be no bright line difference between "safe" and "unsafe." That will have to be a judgment call, based on the most and best information to the decision makers at the time. The decision to begin again is based on many factors:

1. The youth hockey program at the Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center (CVMCC) is not CVSA. We were not the organization that had the outbreak. Due to privacy concerns, the state did not divulge many details. We know that increased fears within our community; we wish more details could have been divulged sooner. Those decisions were not ours to make.
2. As soon as the adult league positive case was identified, CVMCC shut down. They initiated cleaning and sanitizing procedures that went above and beyond any requests by the State of Vermont. CVMCC management consulted with the state every step of the way and received clearance to open before they even did. The rink was not the cause of the outbreak. Adults using the facility and ground inappropriately was the largest number of cases. The youth league mentioned was not our league. From information we have been able to learn from the State, playing hockey was not the cause of the transmission. The cause was other activities (carpooling for example). The activity/game of hockey is deemed low risk. Based on everything we have learned, playing hockey on the ice and the incidental going into and out of the rink has not been attributed to the transmission of the virus.
3. CVSA has one of its board members who has been in frequent contact with the various groups within the Department of Health to determine under what conditions youth hockey could and should resume. Their input results in the guidelines that we have published to our

player families. We have attempted to be as direct and forceful with requiring strict compliance with those guidelines.

4. Safety is the first priority for this season. Hockey is a second priority. If at any time the State had even suggested that our program not resume, we would not be having this discussion. On the contrary, we would have been immediate and direct with the decisions to continue to suspend play. We have even been in contact with the State after the school began seeing other positive cases not related to hockey, and after the closure. At no time was there an indication that it would be an additional risk to resume our program.
5. The State has given CVMCC and CVSA the green light to begin again.
6. CVMCC and CVSA have had and will have procedures in place to limit the contact. Information has been distributed about the procedure of coming to the rink, how to check in, etc. That information has been sent to all members of our organization, through our SportsEngine app. Players will be expected to comply with all safety measures.

It is with the utmost sense of responsibility to our families and communities that we weighed the risks with opening with the benefits. Overall, every official and guidance we have consulted has indicated that our planned resumption of activity does not increase the risk to our constituency.

We do recognize that the decision to participate in any activity is a personal choice to your family. If your family is not ready to resume activity at this time, we understand. Please join us when your family is ready. In regards to the tryouts scheduled, there will be alternate dates available in the future to be able to be evaluated for the different levels. There is no state tournament this year, so the tryouts are merely held so that a neutral evaluator can place similarly skilled players together, so they can play evenly with other teams that we may be able to play this year.

In the same sense that a hockey team is a collection of players working together towards a common goal, so it is our individual responsibility to keep each other safe. That is why the state has published the questions which will be asked before entry. Please be honest, and do not put others at risk by being less than truthful. Our hockey community is based on the individual families' independence but also shared responsibility for one another.

We hope that this summary helps you to understand the factors that led into our decision to resume activities. The Board of Directors firmly believes that this winter, youth hockey (and any sport or activity for that matter) will only happen if we all remain vigilant, cautious, and careful. Yet hockey, or any activity, will not happen free of all risk. Unfortunately, this is the world in which we now live.

- CVSA Board of Directors