



July 8, 2020

Hello Storm Players and Families,

I hope that you are enjoying this warm weather, keeping safe and healthy. I am writing to you all to provide an update on our planning for the Fall and to try and answer some of the questions that have come my way recently.

Return to Play

Today, Ringette Ontario released its "Return to Play" guidelines. This is an important document as it provides detailed guidance for all associations in the province as they begin to make plans to return to the ice. However, it is important to note that the ultimate decisions and plans will need to be approved by local government and health officials. Now that I have this document in hand I can begin to meet with the City of Oshawa and Durham Public Health to establish a safe return to play.

Ringette Ontario has developed a 5- stage process, we are currently in stage 1: "Focus on Family" which means that no sanctioned Ringette activities can take place (off or on the ice). Stage 1 is in place until September 1, 2020. Assuming that things go as planned we should see a move to Stage 2 in September. At this point, we will be able to proceed with a "Return to Modified Practice/ Training".

Return to Modified Practice/ Training

Our Return to Play committee is hard at work planning what the Return to Modified Practice will look like in the Fall. Many details still need to be worked out but here are some of the guidelines we are working with;

- A limit to the number of players on the ice
- A limit to the number of coaches and bench staff personnel
- Focus on modified practices and modified scrimmages
- Self-screening procedures prior to attending a session
- Enhanced screening procedures at the rink
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures for bench staff and players of equipment

We will wait for confirmation from the City regarding our ice contract (hours and facilities) to determine how many weekly sessions we can plan for, however, we do anticipate that player development sessions only will be permitted (no league games or inter-squad games for the first while). It is very likely that our plans could be modified every few weeks as restrictions are loosened (or tightened).

Preparing our Players

As we continue to anticipate a return to the rink I encourage parents and guardians to speak to their players about the different approaches we will experience. The focus will continue to be on fun and player development. Team formation will be delayed until all regions can proceed in a fair manner. In the meantime, the OSRA Player Development committee along with our Coaches will provide a skill-based player development program.

There are some things that you can begin thinking about now that are explained in detail in Ringette Ontario's document.

1. Players may need to dress in their equipment prior to arriving at the rink
2. All players will require skate guards
3. All players will require a separate small bag for their helmet/mask and gloves

The OSRA will be providing all players with a new water bottle and a Storm practice jersey (distribution of team jerseys will be delayed). These items will be provided to everyone at their first ice session.

All players in Central Region will be asked to register with their Home Association. We anticipate that once team formation takes place that there could be some player movement which we will address when this arises. I continue to have regular meetings with the Presidents of Whitby, Ajax/Pickering, and Sunderland along with the Central Region executive. We are coordinating our planning and will ensure a fair and equitable process is followed across the region.

Registration

Accurate registration numbers are very important to the planning process. As I prepare to meet with City officials to discuss our ice allocation I need to know with some certainty how much ice our association will require. If you have not already done so please register your players for the upcoming season. At the moment we are asking for a \$50 deposit towards your fees. This deposit will be fully refundable if our situation changes. We will not require any further payments until we have more specific details about the Fall program (start date, ice times, number of weekly sessions etc...). Today we will be launching a social media campaign featuring a raffle for Hometown Rivalry prize packs for everyone who has registered by July 30th. Keep an eye out for all of the details.

Provincial Team Tryouts

We will wait for specific guidance from Ringette Ontario and will coordinate our tryout schedule with the other Central Region Associations. I anticipate that tryouts will be held after all players have an opportunity to return the ice and start practicing/ training again before participating in a tryout cycle. Specific details will be released as soon as they are available.

In closing, I want to assure everyone that we are very excited to be actually planning for a return to the ice. We elected our new Board of Directors in May and since then we have all been focused on getting back to the game we love. We all appreciate your continuing support and understanding as we navigate these challenging times.

Please feel free to email me if you have any questions and as always I will do my best to answer them.

See you at the rink (soon!)

Holly Davies
Oshawa Storm Ringette Association