



HOCKEY IS BACK!

The Norfolk, Port Dover, Simcoe & Waterford Minor Hockey Associations are excited to announce our Fall 2020 hockey program! Our associations have collaborated to ensure that together we offer our members a great program which prioritizes player safety, fun, and development.

Our Return to Play Plan was developed pursuant to the Return to Hockey Frameworks of Hockey Canada and the Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF), and approved by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA). We worked with these organizations and Norfolk County to ensure the appropriate safety protocols are present in our programming and our facilities. The result is a program we are extremely excited to offer our players.

Is the program a change from the past? Yes. Might there be changes to the program as we go along depending on Covid-19 developments? Yes. Will the kids be safe, have fun, develop their hockey skills, and enhance their physical and mental well-being? ABSOLUTELY!

Now, for some details...

Below, find information on the following aspects of our Fall 2020 program:

- 1) OMHA Approved Fall 2020 Program
- 2) Arenas
- 3) Registration Details
- 4) Some FAQ's

OMHA APPROVED FALL 2020 PROGRAM:

Our associations considered many factors in developing a **safe, realistic and equitable plan** to return to hockey. We considered several options/plans to develop multiple levels of programming to meet the needs of our players and associations. Taking this into consideration we have opted to adopt a 'tiered' Fall 2020 Program as provided for within the OHF guidelines .

All plans fall under health unit limitations, and for our Fall 2020 Session this means we will not travel outside of Haldimand-Norfolk for any reason.

The following are key details of our FALL 2020 Program:

*****First and foremost – this is NOT the commencement of any regular season play NOR will this program be used to 'Segway' into regular season play. As the OHF has suspended tryouts for all hockey associations, many players may feel disheartened about the currently delay in the opportunity to try out for a certain team. Lets be clear however – this is merely a delay. Norfolk Minor Hockey is aware of the level of interest for ALL its potential players in being part***



of its inaugural season – the Fall 2020 Program is NOT the commencement of that season – thus we will not be issuing any logo'd Jerseys nor making any effort towards assembling Norfolk Knights team units after a transparent and successful tryout program has been completed. The Fall 2020 program is focused on returning the players to the ice safely, having fun, and developing their skills.

- *The Fall 2020 Program will introduce our players back to the ice in a safe and controlled manner. Facility and Participant Protocols have been developed to best address safety concerns.*
- *The Fall 2020 Program is an 8 week program, set to run from September 8 to October 31 and available for all divisions U7 through U18 (Initiation through Midget)*
- *Norfolk Minor Hockey and its Local Associations will be offering a TIERED program per OHF Guidelines.*
- *The OHF guidelines allow for tiered team formation based on the category of play that a player was rostered to in the 2019/2020 season (excluding AP's). For our collective associations the following tiered model will be followed:*
 - *TIER 1 – Eligible players: Those rostered in OMHA/Alliance Representative category hockey in the 2019/2020 season (excluding AP's).*
 - *TIER 2 – All other players. This includes players who were not rostered in OMHA/Alliance for the 2019/2020 season.*
- *Both TIER 1 and TIER 2 programs will strive to have all players on the ice for 3 hours per week (combination of game play and practice).*
- *Each TIER will form mixed (major/minor) teams in every division.*
- *Team sizes will be a maximum of 9 players and 1 goalie.*
- *Game play will be 3-on-3 or 4-on-4, using modified game play rules. For details see accompanying document "Fall 2020 Game Play Rules".*
- *Game play will start in the third week of programming. The first two weeks of programming will focus on skill development.*
- *Once teams have been formed in every division – teams will be combined into cohorts of 5 teams maximum. This provides for a cohort 'bubble' of 50 players total.*
- *Cohorts will be limited to play within their Health Division – being Haldimand-Norfolk.*
- *TIER 1 teams will be managed by Norfolk Minor Hockey*
- *TIER 2 teams will be managed by the Local Associations of Waterford, Simcoe and Port Dover*
- *It is our expectation that TIER1 will simply play teams within its own league until expanded play or until the regular season is introduced.*
- *It is our expectation that TIER2 will play teams within our own organizations (Waterford, Simcoe and Port Dover) (i.e. nearby TIER2 teams).*
- *Additional Player Development Programming will be offered to all players regardless of TIER placement and on a first come-first served basis. To optimize our development programming players will be mixed across teams so as not to segregate players beyond game play only. This arrangement will also allow for a level of co-mingling between differing players across our associations. It is anticipated that Additional Player Development Programming will start in October and will be comprised of 5, 1.5hr development sessions focusing on skating and hockey skill development. In addition, we will be looking to offer additional goalie*



development sessions, also starting in October. To register for the Additional Player Development Programming a player must also be registered for our general Fall 2020 program.

- *Discovery/Beginner Programming – As many of you know, these programs require the largest number of on ice volunteers and coaching staff to be successful. All coaches and on ice volunteers (including a parent helping their own child) are considered participants and this is where we are struggling. Under the stage 3B OHF Return to Play, we are required to limit the numbers of on ice participants to a maximum of 30. This affects the ability to deliver a quality program as well as the per participant ice costs. In addition, the hands on assistance required at this level present physical distancing challenges that need to be incorporated in the program. As such, we require more time to evaluate options, run scenarios and finalize a plan that ensures we can deliver a Beginner/Discovery program that is both safe and economical for the newcomers to the game. Our goal is to have a modified program designed and ready for implementation by Oct 1, 2020. We will keep the “Intent to Play” package for the Beginner/Discovery group active and we encourage participants to complete their intent to play. These numbers will assist us in the planning effort.*

ARENAS

Norfolk County has advised the Minor Hockey Associations that Waterford, Delhi and Port Dover arenas will be opened for use on September 8 (Waterford is open now). Langton arena is proposed for opening at the beginning of October. At the moment there is no confirmed timing for Talbot Gardens in Simcoe. We do recognize that with limited ice centres that scheduling and travel will be a challenge for some. That said, the significant majority of our ice rentals in the Fall 2020 Program will be in the Port Dover and Waterford arenas, helping to limit travel for our members. Further, every effort will be made to be fair and equitable under these circumstances, however some level of travel away from your home arena will be necessary.

In addition, new arena protocols will be in place to ensure the safety of all players and visitors. For arena protocol details, please see the accompanying document “Arena Protocols”.

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Registration remains open for “intent to play”. This can be accomplished by attending any of Waterford, Port Dover, Simcoe or even Norfolk Minor Hockey websites which provide you a link to the Hockey Canada registration. **Your intent to play registration will be construed as your intent to play in the Fall 2020 Program.**

If you played Representative OMHA/Alliance hockey in 2019/2020, register with Norfolk Hockey. Otherwise, register with the local association you played with in 2019/2020 (Port Dover, Simcoe or Waterford).

No payment is due for registering as ‘intent to play’ however funds will be due before players are allowed to step onto the ice under the Fall 2020 Program. We plan to open registration for the Fall 2020 Program on September 1st.

Registration will CLOSE on September 7th. The cost of registration will be \$275.00 for this 8 week program. Cost is the same for both Tier 1 and Tier 2.



Note that the registration fee was determined on a straight cost-recovery basis. Our ice time costs have increased due to a new Norfolk County \$25/hr Covid fee surcharge. Also note that the Fall 2020 Program cost includes your annual Hockey Canada and insurance fees (approx. \$50 combined), which will not have to be paid again for future 2020-2021 programming sessions.

Under the OHF Return to Play Framework there are special limitations on who can register to play with our associations. Per OHF guidelines, **for the Fall 2020 program we are able to roster/accept players that are either:**

1. Registered with the Waterford, Port Dover or Simcoe associations last year (2019-2020 season).
2. Any player whose home centre is Norfolk/Simcoe/Port Dover/Waterford. This includes players wanting to return to our associations who played on any zone-based regional team within the OMHA/Alliance (such as the Brantford AAA centre as an example). *Note: These players may be able elect to remain in the affiliation AAA zone centres they were in last year if they choose.
3. If you are new to hockey, and are living within our geographical footprint or right of choice.
4. If you've physically moved within our geographic boundaries and you can successfully obtain a transfer from the OMHA.
5. NOTE: If your association declares that it is not operating a Fall 2020 Program, you may have the opportunity to register with one of our local minor hockey associations; please talk to your local registrar for further information.

*For those who've already registered with intent to play, and are not able to obtain a transfer for the reasons provided, we highly encourage you to register in your home centre to try and secure spot for your child there. If you have registered already, and know now that you'd like to withdrawal your registration please email the registrar with the title heading "Please withdrawal my child's registration" and please provide the "child's full name and date of birth" so we may remove them from our numbers.

FAQ's

How much is hockey going to cost this year?

Answer: The cost for registration will be \$275 per player for the 8 week program (September 1st to October 31st). We respect that the fee for this program represents an increase in overall programming cost when you compare the traditional fee of \$575 for a 28 week season to \$275 for an 8 week program. The increase in cost is mainly attributed to 2 key factors:

1) Ice Rental Fee: Norfolk County has applied a COVID fee of \$25 plus HST per hour to ice rental rates. This represent an overall hourly increase in ice costs of 22%

2) Team Sizes: Having smaller teams means less players on the ice per hour. Programming costs are divided by the number of players on the ice on any given hour. With less players being permitted on the ice per operating hour, the cost per hour per player increases.



3) Hockey Canada & Insurance Costs: Players must pay their annual Hockey Canada and insurance costs as part of the Fall 2020 registration fee, and are therefore front-loaded for the season. These costs will not need to be paid in any subsequent program sessions.

How will you determine which players will be in which tier? Will there be try-outs or evaluation skates?

Answer: Players are placed in TIERS based on their 2019/2020 category of play (excluding AP's). Those rostered to an OMHA/Alliance representative team in 2019/2020 will be placed in TIER1. All other players will be placed in TIER 2. The intent is to create a greater opportunity for all to enjoy and gain from the experience. A player eligible to skate in TIER1 may elect to register for TIER2 should they wish to do so.

I was able to register, but I don't fit the aforementioned criteria to transfer, what happens?

Answer: Any transfer requests that have been remitted thus far will be adjudicated very shortly from the OMHA. If you requested a transfer and haven't actually moved within our geographic boundaries, and/or were previously rostered to an association that is still operating your request will most likely be rejected, returning you to your home centre for this upcoming season. If your home association elects not to operate and offer an early start program, you may be approved for a transfer at that time. It will depend what your home centre elects to do.

My child has never played hockey before, can they start this year?

Answer: They definitely can. Please register and get them involved in the best sport played.

If I wait to register, will my child still get to play?

Answer: Due to limited numbers in public spaces, the limited number of ice centres being made available and capped team sizes, if you choose to wait to register, you could miss the opportunity as registration is first come, first served.