

9/9/2020

RETURN TO HOCKEY

Leduc Minor Hockey Association



RETURN  HOCKEY

COVID-19 RESPONSE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Leduc Minor Hockey Association (LMHA) has been actively engaged with Alberta Health Services, Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta, the Hockey Leagues, and the City of Leduc in developing this Return to Hockey plan. The purpose of the Return to Hockey plan is to provide information to our members about the re-start of hockey within LMHA. There will be hockey this season. However, we have to understand that the hockey season will look a little different as the health and safety of our members has been at the forefront for the LMHA Board in planning what a return to hockey will look like.

This plan is current as of September 9th, 2020 and it will continue to evolve as rules and regulations are updated focusing on the safety and wellness of our members. Updated versions of this plan will be posted on the LMHA website.

This plan relies on the cooperation and commitment of our members to abide by the rules of the plan. This plan is subject to changes based on updates from Alberta Health Services, the Province of Alberta, The City of Leduc, Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta, and the Hockey Leagues.

2.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF RETURN TO PLAY

LMHA will utilize six phases during the implementation of our Return to Play plan:

2.1 Off-Season Training – Phase 1

The off-season training phase involves a series of player development and conditioning camps that are scheduled for late August. These camps include PEP camps for coaches, U7, U9 & U11 prep skates, U11 & U13 female development camp, and NCI U15AA & U18AA conditioning camps. Registration for these camps is available through the LMHA website. These camps will run using the physical distancing format of our Return to Hockey plan.

2.2 Player Evaluation & Player Sorting– Phase 2

The Player Evaluation Phase will take place in September. This phase involves the cohort group format for evaluating our players through a series of drills and scrimmage. Player Evaluations will consist of a minimum 3-4 skates. Player Evaluations are scheduled as follows:

AA Program (U13AA & U15AA & U18AA): Evaluations scheduled to begin September 19, 2020.

NCI Program (U15AA & U18AA): Evaluations scheduled to begin September 11, 2020.

LMHA Tiering (U9 through U18): Evaluations scheduled to begin September 19, 2020.

LMHA U7 Initiation: Evaluations scheduled to begin October 3, 2020.

Following Player Evaluations, players will be sorted (Player Sorting) into groups that will skate together using physical distancing for at least 14 days prior to creating new cohort groups for Team Development - Phase 3.

2.3 Team Development – Phase 3

Once players have been evaluated and sorted, they will be placed into equally skilled cohort groups of 2-3 teams (excluding AA and U11-Tier 1). These cohort groups will consist of a

maximum 50 participants. Teams within each cohort will have normal practices and the opportunity to compete against other LMHA teams in their cohort group in the form of inter-squad games. Games outside of LMHA or your cohort group will not be permitted during the Team Development Phase. The Team Development Phase will exercise the cohort group format.

2.4 Exhibition Series – Phase 4

Hockey Alberta and the respective Hockey Leagues will determine pairs of Teams (by region) to pair up for competition purposes.

2.5 Modified Competition Season (PODS) – Phase 5

The fifth phase of our Return to Hockey plan is the Modified Competition Season (PODS). Teams will begin games with other associations in regional PODS. A POD will include 3-5 teams within close proximity to each other. Teams play within their POD for the duration of the Modified Competition Season. Dates for the Modified Competition Season are dependent on the changes put in place by Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta. Modified Competition Season is tentatively scheduled for November 16th, 2020.

2.6 Regular Season – Phase 6

The final phase of our Return to Hockey plan is the Regular Season. Restrictions on travel could still be in place. Scheduling play within regions/conferences will be considered. Dates for the Regular Season are TBD.

DIVISION	WEEK	Aug 31	Sep 07	Sep 14	Sep 21	Sep 28	Oct 05	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 02	Nov 09	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	
		Sep 06	Sep 13	Sep 20	Sep 27	Oct 04	Oct 11	Oct 18	Oct 25	Nov 01	Nov 08	Nov 15	Nov 22	Nov 29	Dec 06	
U18 AA		Prep Skates		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U18 AA Female		Prep Skates	Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play				
U18 Tiered		Off-Season Training		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U15 AA		Prep Skates		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U15 AA Female		Prep Skates	Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play				
U15 Tiered		Off-Season Training		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U13 AA		Prep Skates		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U13 Tiered		Off-Season Training		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U11 Tier 1		Prep Skates		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U11 Tiered		Off-Season Training		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play			
U9 Tiered		Prep Skates		Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		Player Sorting Physical Distancing		Team Development Cohort Groups			LMHA Modified Competition Season					
U7 Tiered		Off-Season Training				Prep	Skates	Player Evaluations Cohort Groups		14 Day Break		LMHA Modified Competition Season				
Female Rec		Off-Season Training			Team Development Cohort Groups					Exhibition Series		Modified Competition Season POD Play				

Note¹: Transition from Player Evaluation (cohort groups) to Player Sorting (physical distancing) may be different dates for each division and tier
 Note²: Transition from Team Development Phase to Exhibition Series may require Player Sorting (physical distancing) depending on each league schedule.
 Note³: Divisions with 2nd try-outs coming in or leaving may have to deviate from the proposed timetable.

3.0 PLAN OBJECTIVE

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to change the way that we will operate for 2020-2021 season. Although hockey will look a little different, there are clear objectives that we will want to focus on in our Return to Hockey plan. These objectives include safety of our members, enjoyment of the sport, player development, and competition.

3.1 Safety of Members

The health and safety of our athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators is the most important part of our Return to Hockey plan. To ensure safety of all participants will require the discipline, cooperation, and commitment of all participants. This plan has been designed to minimize the risk to all those involved with the Return to Hockey in LMHA.

3.2 Enjoyment of Sport

Many of our athletes have been isolated for the last couple months, including being removed from school, travel restrictions, and the cancellation of activities. This is an exciting time for our athletes to get back on the ice and return to some sort of normal. Certainly, hockey will look a little bit different, but we have a great opportunity to continue developing our athletes and even create some healthy competition within a safe environment. Enjoyment of Sport is a key objective not only for this season, but for every season to promote “Hockey for Everyone, Hockey for Life”.

3.3 Player Development

Player development is always a key objective for LMHA. This season we have a unique opportunity to really focus on player skill and team development. During each phase of our Return to Hockey plan we will focus heavily on individual player development and team concepts.

3.4 Competition

During the Development Phase of this plan we are restricted from competing outside of our association. LMHA will be doing player evaluations in September and will use these evaluations to create cohort groups of 2-3 equally skilled teams (depending on registration numbers for each age group). Each team will practice as a team and will have the opportunity to compete against other teams within their cohort in the form of inter-squad games during the Team Development Phase of this plan.

Our AA, NCI, and U11-Tier 1 program will be hosting tryouts in September as well. Being regional teams, these teams will be formed through the normal evaluation process. These teams will be excluded from the creation of the cohort groups of equally skilled teams. The AA, NCI, and U11-Tier 1 programs will form their teams as they have in the past and begin normal practice during the Team Development Phase of this plan. There is the potential to create 2 team cohort groups across these programs for the opportunity to compete against each other in inter-squad games (example: Coed U13AA vs. NCI U15AA), if necessary.

Once permitted by the Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta, LMHA will progress to the Exhibition Series – Phase 4, Modified Competition Season (PODS) – Phase 5, and Regular Season – Phase 6.

4.0 PROTOCOLS

There are two different formats that will be used during our Return to Hockey plan. LMHA will be utilizing both formats in an effort to keep our players on the ice during the Player Evaluation & Player Sorting Phase.

4.1 Physical Distancing

All participants (including coaches and organizers) must be at least 2-meters apart from each other at all times and wear masks within the facility. Players may only remove their face masks immediately prior to placing their helmet on and leaving the dressing room. Coaches and support staff are to wear masks while on the bench but can be removed while coaching on the ice.

Skill development sessions will be the focus during this format. The number of players participating in each ice session will be kept low to properly accommodate the physical distancing requirements. A maximum of 30 individuals are permitted on the ice at one time.

Player Sorting – Phase 2: Physical distancing will be used for the sorting of players during the Player Sorting Phase. On-ice sessions will consist of a maximum 24 players + 6 coaches on the ice at one time.

4.2 Cohort Groups

Cohorting has been identified as an option for sports to use if athletes are not always able to practice physical distancing during activity. A cohort is a closed, small group of 50 individuals who participate in sport together. The Government of Alberta recommends that an individual only be part of one sport cohort at any time. If an individual wishes to move from a sport cohort to a new sport cohort, a 14-day non-participation period must be implemented prior to joining a new sport cohort.

A maximum of 50 individuals (including coaches and support staff) that are grouped together to participate in drills and inter-squad play. Cohort groups will be used for the purpose of evaluating players, team development, exhibition series, and modified competition play. Face masks are not required in the dressing room, player's bench, or on the ice while in cohort groups.

Player Evaluation – Phase 2: Cohort groups will consist of a **maximum 42 players and 8 coaches** for Player Evaluations. Cohort groups will allow for competitive drills and scrimmages during the Player Evaluation process.

Team Development – Phase 3: Cohort groups will consist of a **maximum 41 players and 9 coaches** during the Team Development Phase. These cohort groups will consist of 2-3 equally skilled teams (depending on registration numbers for each age group). Each team will practice as a team and will have the opportunity to compete against other teams within their cohort in the form of inter-squad games during the Team Development Phase of this plan.

The AA, NCI, and U11-Tier 1 programs will form their teams as they have in the past and begin normal practice during the Team Development Phase of this plan.

4.3 Coaches and Support Staff

Coaches and support staff can only be part of one cohort within LMHA and remain with that cohort throughout the duration of that “Phase” of the Return to Hockey plan. If an individual wishes to move to a new sport cohort, a 14-day non-participation period must be implemented prior to joining a new sport cohort.

Coaches and support staff who primarily interact with individuals or teams at 2-meters or greater do not need to be counted as part of the cohort. These individuals are required to wear a mask and perform proper hand hygiene if it becomes necessary to temporarily interact with cohorting participants at a distance less than 2-meters.

LMHA is recommending that coaches belong to one team. Any coach that wishes to be involved with more than one team shall exercise physical distancing with each team and must be approved by the LMHA Coach Selection Committee.

As Phase 1 through Phase 3 of this Return to Hockey plan involves skill development and inter-squad play, on-ice officials will not be necessary. Coaches and support staff will officiate all inter-squad play. Penalty boxes will not be used. Penalties will be awarded as a penalty shot for the player that the infraction was committed on.

Hockey Alberta will maintain the same requirements for all coaches and team officials for the 2020-21 season (November 15 deadline), with the addition of an online Hockey Canada Return to Hockey Safety Guidelines module for head coaches. The module is now available at:

<https://ehockey.hockeycanada.ca/ehockey/Account/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fehockey%2fDefault.aspx>

4.4 Officials

As Phase 1 through Phase 3 of this Return to Hockey plan involves skill development and inter-squad play, on-ice officials will not be necessary. If officials are deemed necessary, given the challenges of physical distancing on the ice, those officials must be included as part of the cohort group.

Certified on-ice officials will be used during the Exhibition Series – Phase 4. Requirements and other details of the integration of officials into cohort groups will be finalized once known.

5.0 FACILITY ACCESS

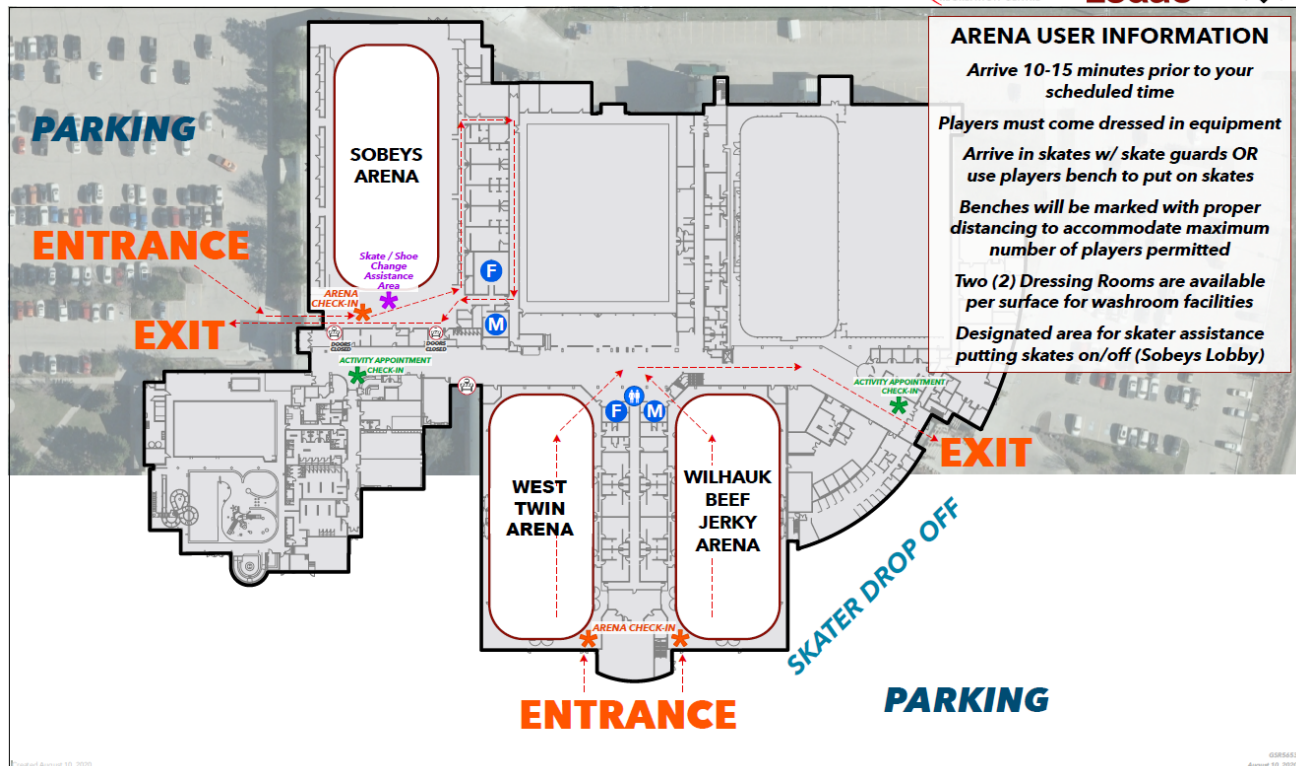
LMHA and the Lead Instructor or Session Organizer will ensure the details for access to the Leduc Recreation Center (LRC) and all other facilities are shared with our members, including spectators, and that they will enforce the guidelines.

- Players will access and exit the facility through the designated doors at their respective arena for

their on-ice session. Refer to the below Leduc Recreation Center – Arena Access Flow Diagram.

- Participants will not be allowed to access the facility until 15 minutes prior to the scheduled session. To avoid congestion at the entrance, the Lead Instructor or Session Organizer will arrive early for the initial check in. Participants will need to physically distance and wait in or near their vehicles until they are signalled to the arena entrance.

Leduc Recreation Centre | Arena Access Flow Diagram



- Players must arrive in their hockey equipment ready to play, except for skates and helmets. Dressing rooms and benches will be available to put on skates. Social distancing is always required while in the facility, including when putting on skates. **There will be NO changing in or out of equipment inside the facility.**
- No more than 50 people, including participants, instructors, and organizers will be permitted per ice surface area. On-ice Participants will include a maximum of 24 players and 6 coaches for physical distanced sessions.
- Only 7 participants per player bench and 6 participants per change room will be allowed to provide adequate physical distancing. Coaches wearing masks will be permitted to put on and remove participant's skates for physical distanced sessions.
- Any participants exhibiting signs related to COVID-19 may be asked to leave the facility.

- There will be **NO spectators** allowed in the facility at this time. An update should come from the City of Leduc soon.
- Washroom facilities will be available in the dressing rooms, if necessary.
- It is recommended that NO hockey bags are brought into the facility. A small duffle bag may be used to transport skates, skate guards, water bottle, tape, and helmets. All duffle bags will be stored under the player benches.

Restrictions regarding facility access will be updated as known through the LMHA website. Please check the website regularly for updates.

6.0 COVID-19 ASSESSMENT FORM

LMHA will provide a COVID-19 Assessment form (pre-screening questions) to all participants attending each scheduled activity, each day, prior to accessing the facility. This form needs to be filled out the day of the scheduled activity. Participants who fail to meet the pre-screening requirements will not be permitted access to the facility.

LMHA must screen and track all participants and interactions, maintaining records in a secure location for a minimum of 14 days from completion of an activity. This is done as part of the daily check-in procedure for participants.

7.0 COVID-19 PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY

The following information should be reviewed and followed as this Return to Hockey plan is implemented.

7.1 Parents, Players, and Coach Responsibility

- Stay home if you are experiencing any symptoms.
- Complete the COVID-19 Assessment Form the day of the activity, prior to arriving at the scheduled activity.
- Become educated on the safety protocols and procedures and adhere to them while at the activity.
- Ensure each player has their own, clearly identified water bottle. Do not share.
- Ensure equipment is dried and cleaned following each activity.
- Arrange for appropriate transportation to and from the scheduled activity.
- Do not spit, blow nose freely, or release any body fluid anywhere in any facility due to an extremely high risk of virus transfer.

7.2 In-Game Protocol

COVID-19 enters the body through the eyes, nose, or mouth (not through the skin) when an individual touches their face. Participants should:

- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose, mouth, and face during activities.
- Limit celebration gestures (handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, chest bumps) during activities that bring participants within 2-meters or promote contact.
- On-ice officials are not to shake hands with coaches or players.
- Off-ice officials (timekeepers and penalty box staff) must wear a face mask.
- Opposing teams are not to shake hands. They may acknowledge each other through a stick tap, or other means, from a distance of at least 2-meters.

7.3 Masks

All activities are expected to follow the guidelines put in place by the Government of Alberta, the City of Leduc, and the facility with respect to wearing masks. During Hockey Alberta sanctioned activity, it is recommended that coaches, team officials, off-ice officials, on-ice officials, players, volunteers, and parents wear masks when they are not separated by a physical barrier or are unable to keep a 2-meter distance from all other participants.

Players participating in a Cohort: masks are not required in the dressing room, on the bench, or on the ice. These areas are considered within the “field of play” for the sport.

Coaches participating in a Cohort: masks are not required in the dressing room, on the bench, or on the ice. These areas are considered within the “field of play” for the sport. When cohorts are being used and some coaches are not part of the cohort (they are instead physically distancing from all other participants), those coaches are required to wear masks while in the dressing room and while on the player’s bench.

Players participating in Physical Distancing: must maintain 2-meter physical distance and wear masks within the dressing room. Players may only remove their mask immediately prior to placing their helmet on and leaving the dressing room to go on the ice.

Coaches participating in Physical Distancing: must maintain 2-meter physical distance and wear masks within the dressing room and on the player’s bench. Masks can be removed while coaching/instructing on the ice.

7.4 Planning for Rapid Response to Sick Participants

If a coach, team official, or participant becomes sick during a scheduled activity, the following requirements apply:

- While preparing to immediately leave the facility, symptomatic individuals should perform

proper hand hygiene, put on a mask, and maintain at least 2-meters distance from all others.

- The individual should arrange, with assistance from team officials or the facility as necessary, for immediate transportation to their residence to begin isolation.
- Once a sick individual has left the facility, facility staff should clean and disinfect all surfaces and areas with which the individual may have come into contact with.

Provided this guidance is being followed, there is no need to cancel an activity, or postpone the undertaking of a cohort group, in the event that an individual becomes sick. Team officials should immediately consider and record the names of all participants in which the sick individual has been in contact. This information may be necessary to assist public health officials if the sick individual later tests positive for COVID-19.

7.5 Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case

If an individual tests positive, Alberta Health Services (AHS) will only request information about the individual's participation in sport if it is deemed that a potential exposure is likely to have occurred during such activity.

- When interviewing a person who has tested positive, AHS investigators will determine if there are close contacts that should be made aware/notified based on the period of infectivity and LMHA's compliance with public health guidance. This might involve a call to team representatives or players, but only if necessary.
- An individual participant is under no obligation to inform LMHA or other participants, coaches, instructors, officials, or volunteers of:
 - the reason for missing an activity,
 - if they are pursuing COVID-19 testing, or
 - the results of a COVID-19 test.
- LMHA and team officials should be respectful of the privacy and sensitivity of every participant's personal health information and comply with relevant requirements set out by Alberta's *Health Information Act*.

8.0 WARNINGS

We recognize the physical distancing requirement for our young participants is new and will require regular reminders from our Instructors. Participants who demonstrate lack of concern for physical distancing will be given a warning. If a participant reaches a third warning, they may be withdrawn from LMHA without refund. The participant's parents may be notified of warnings issued.

9.0 TOURNAMENTS

Timelines for tournament dates / sanctioning will be confirmed by Hockey Alberta based on Government of Alberta protocols.

10.0 TEAM ACCOUNTS

All team accounts will be suspended until the Modified Competition Season – Phase 5 begins. Prior to that, there should be no team funds collected.

11.0 REFUNDS

LMHA recognizes that these are unprecedented times. Anticipating delays to our season, LMHA reduced all registration fees by \$100 for this season. The season schedule is somewhat unpredictable and potential delays or cancellations are somewhat out of the control of LMHA. Refunds would be considered at the discretion of the LMHA Board if additional significant delays occur. LMHA is committed to being accountable to our members if significant delays or cancellations occur.

Should a member decide to remove their athlete from Leduc Minor Hockey Association prior to stepping on the ice, a full refund will be awarded to members in good standing.

The following Refund Policy from the current LMHA Policies and Procedures will be followed as normal:

- Refunds for players withdrawing from the program will be paid, upon written application to the Administrator, on a pro-rated basis as determined by the LMHA Board.
- Players suspended or expelled for disciplinary reasons shall be ineligible for a refund of fees.
- Refunds from the registration date and prior to the time that the player has participated in any on ice activity shall be 100% of the registration fee paid.
- Refunds from the registration date and prior to the time that the player has been registered on a team but has begun participation or tryouts will be pro-rated less the \$25.00 administration fee.
- Refunds after a player has been carded on a team will have a minimum of \$100.00 deducted for the LMHA Administration Fee, Registration Fees, and the Hockey Alberta Carding Fee. In addition, a prorated refund amount will be calculated on the remainder based on participation. The Administrator will provide the details at time of refund.
- The Administrator and Financial Administrator in joint are charged with the responsibility of using reasonable discretion with respect to portioned months.
- For players withdrawing because of personal injury, the minimum \$25.00 administration fee will not be charged. (All prorating and carding fees, based on participation, will still apply)
- For players withdrawing because of a residential move outside of LMHA's boundaries, the \$25 admin fee will not be charged. Proof of new residence will be required along with written

application to withdrawal. (All prorating and carding fees, based on participation, will still apply)

- Late Fees are non-refundable.
- No refunds will be allowed after December 31. The Hockey Alberta Carding fee, once paid, is not refundable to Leduc Minor Hockey.

12.0 COMMUNICATION

This Return to Hockey plan is current as of September 9, 2020 and it will continue to evolve as rules and regulations are updated focusing on the safety and wellness of our members. Please refer to the LMHA Website www.lmha.ab.ca for updates regarding return to hockey.

13.0 SUMMARY

This Return to Hockey Plan has been established by countless volunteer hours and the collective efforts of LMHA, Alberta Health Services, Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta, and the City of Leduc.

The health and safety of our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators is the most important part of our Return to Hockey plan. To ensure safety of all participants will require the discipline, cooperation, and commitment of all participants. This plan has been designed to minimize the risk to all those involved with the return of hockey in LMHA.

LMHA is extremely excited to have hockey returning for our members. Please remember that hockey will look a little different as we return this season. It's important to not dwell on these differences, but to celebrate the enjoyment of sport for our athletes. Hockey for Everyone, Hockey for Life.