

Local hockey plays excited as CMHA makes long awaited return to the ice this week

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Since COVID-19 surged through Canada in March, it was tough to imagine hockey returning anytime soon.

Fast-forward five months and the long, egregious, wait is over. Hockey is finally coming back.

On September 21st, 2020, Caledon Minor Hockey Association's (CMHA) VP Rep, Richard Archer wrote to members their return to play proposal has been approved by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA).

Following long, strenuous months of meetings and conversations between OMHA and the Town of Caledon, knowing there's a plan is a sense of relief.

The return to play plan, states it is an overview of proposed programming for the upcoming season and any further update will be announced via social media and the organization's website. Documents are available for members to review.

Still, with details fully agreed between Caledon Minor Hockey and the OMHA, it was confirmed the Region of Peel and the Town of Caledon will justify the proper proceedings within their facilities.

As for Caledon Minor Hockey, from what was a traditional method of selecting teams and organizing house league formats, seems now all forgotten ahead of this new season.

This year, players will be selected primarily on last year's roster and will be sequestered in their ?own bubbles? so to speak.

?The maximum amount of players allowed in a single hockey bubble is 50,? the release wrote.

These bubbles will consist of multiple tiers, judged upon the previous year. These tiers, may consist of multiple age groups as well as minor and major players combined all together. That means, these 50 players, along with select coaches, can only see each other for the season. It is prohibited to see staff and players from other bubbles during this time. There will be 25 players allowed on the ice at one time.

The final date to register your child, is Oct. 1, in order to ?guarantee? your child's spot.

Once everything is completed, teams will have 120 minutes of ice time a week. Currently, return to play is in phase 3B, but, once phase 3C is introduced, bubbles may create their own teams, consisting of nine skaters and one goalie. Stats, scores and standings will be recorded. It's game on from there.

Yet while all in the fun, the biggest concern for the CMHA is safety.

Members are expected to arrive no longer than 15 minutes before the start of practice. An employee within the arena will screen the families upon entry. Entry into the building will require a mask and will require those who enter to wear the mask at all times.

Screening will consist of a COVID-19 questionnaire, hand sanitizing and contact information.

At this time, parents will not be permitted into the Town of Caledon facilities. There is exceptional entry, such as assisting their child when tying their skates for instance. This of course, can change later depending on the situation of the pandemic.

If someone contracts the virus, the release states, ?contract tracing, isolation, cancellation of ice etc.,? measures will be taken to ensure everyone else is safe. Players were set to take the ice as of this past Monday (Sept. 28).