

Robert's Rant: Provincial announcement confusing and frustrating for golf and tennis

By Robert Belardi

Opinion

Let's face it. This is what we all want.

The Provincial Government and Premier Doug Ford announced last week that public tennis courts and golf courses were going to reopen as of last Saturday.

I couldn't help but think that it was about time. Ontario had been the only state/province in North America to have closed golf's doors. If it's two sports that have social distancing in their unwritten rules, it would surely be these two.

My critique today isn't regarding anything to do with golf. Everything is running smoothly for the good old club and ball sport.

This past long weekend, I couldn't help but want to pick up my tennis racquet covered in dust.

My girlfriend, her brother and I planned to go to Beeton's public tennis court on Sunday, only to be refrained from entry by a master lock hooked into the holes on the door. We travelled over to Schomberg not too far away, only to be stymied by another lock on their door to enter the court. If courts were just allowed to open this past Saturday, according to the Premier, why had these public courts remained closed?

Quite frankly, it was frustrating. Luckily, public playgrounds and soccer fields have no restrictions. Anyone can go there, if they wish to do so. But if anyone can tell me otherwise, then I'm all ears to hear where some tennis courts have been opened. Public ones at that.

Ontarians are waiting for the next steps for soccer and baseball. Baseball registrations in the local area have their links to get your kid going on their website in plain sight. Private tennis clubs might have their doors open right now or might be waiting until the lockdown is completely gone. But when they will get back to playing competitive games against one another remains to be seen.

For the past year since COVID-19 struck we've had quotas for anything that we wanted to do. Strict number of people here. Strict numbers there. Outdoor sports facing heavy restrictions when outdoor transmissions of any kind of virus is simply slim.

But just when we sought after some sort of positive news and we received a glimmer of happiness right on our doorstep we were met with more complications and, at least for me, plenty of questions.

I'm left questioning the intentions to uplift sporting restrictions. I'm left missing the pure and innocent happy screams of children running around in a field, or a diamond, or a course. I miss the soccer ball clanging off the cross bar and I miss the baseball bat smack a ball into deep centre field.

Even after Premier Ford's announcement there still is a fight left to be had: one to fully bring back sport this summer. One for the children to get a reprieve from the stress and the anxiety of their current lifestyle and, just for one lingering second, they can forget all about the virus.

I'm no longer privy to withholding my emotions as long as I have a valid argument. As we hope that all local sporting entities get going again for the next few months, I hope nobody shuts down ever again. As we slowly return to normalcy, it's essential for the children and the youth to get back on their own two feet again.

The time is now. No more games. No more closures. In the words of The Beatles, Let It Be.