



## ***Hockey Games and Scrimmages Not Allowed in Phase 3, Step 1***

We are sad to announce that hockey games and scrimmages are not allowed at this time in MA ice rinks. We received guidance from the state late Monday that classifies ice hockey as a "higher risk" sport and only allows non-contact practices, skills development and drills. This guidance will be in place for at least two weeks but could potentially prevent hockey games until Phase IV which could eliminate the upcoming hockey season.

We cannot let this happen as we all understand the long-term impact to our sport and the closure of many ice rinks will follow. We have been working with a group of stakeholders including MA Hockey (*see their advisory below*) and many ice rinks from all across the state to find a reasonable and safe solution to getting games back quickly. We have proposed to use a modified no-contact game format to mitigate any potential for transmission risk as well as incorporating social distancing, face coverings when not on the ice and limitations on bench and team room occupancy. We are awaiting a response to our proposal and **NEED YOUR HELP URGENTLY!**

This is a list of [State Senators](#), [State Representatives](#), and [State Administrators](#) that we urge you to contact right away to express your support for this proposal. A sample message is included. We have received significant cooperation from the state up to now and just need to convince them that we are ready and capable of modifying the game to minimize contact so we can get back to games again. If we cannot get this approved many rinks will be forced to close until potentially Phase 4 whenever that is or forever!

There is also a petition to the Governor that you can [sign here](#).

Dear (Senator, Representative, Administrator),

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am writing to urge you to allow for no-contact game play to be allowed in hockey rinks across Massachusetts. Hockey is as safe, if not safer than other sports currently allowed to play games due to the equipment worn and nature of the game. I fully support the proposal outlined by MA Hockey and the rink committee to allow for no-contact game play and ask for your help to get this approved by the state. #letusplay

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_



## ***PHASE III REOPENING UPDATE***

**TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020**

### **UPDATE ON PHASE III REOPENING RELATED TO ICE HOCKEY IN MASSACHUSETTS**

As the governing body of ice hockey in the state, Massachusetts Hockey believes first and foremost in creating a safe environment for our players where they can learn, play and excel at our great game. We have been working diligently with a combined group of facility and league leaders throughout the state in order to provide for a progression of play to return to a competitive format. We strongly believe that if proper guidelines are followed, that our sport can support the safe playing of games and we have requested that the state reconsider where non-checking hockey should be categorized in relation to Phase 3 guidance.

On Thursday, July 2, Governor Baker issued COVID-19 Order No. 43. This order provided the outline for the state's progression to Phase 3 of the Reopening plan in Massachusetts. In this order, the Governor set a date of Monday, July 6, 2020 as the official start of Phase 3.

In addition, the Governor ceded the responsibility of all guidance related to youth sports to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), subject to his approval and in consultation with the Department of Public Health.

Yesterday, the updated guidance for Phase 3, Step 1 were issued and it placed ice hockey in the newly-created "Higher Risk" category. This designation includes sports and recreation activities that "involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of protective barriers and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants."

Much of the hockey that takes place in the summer is non-checking, whether by age-governed rules or league choice. We are hopeful that the Department of Public Health (DPH) and their medical advisors are willing to consider data that shows the limited amount of time that players are in proximity to each other during the course of a typical game. We have also offered to make modifications to the game format (modified face-offs, non-checking at all levels, etc.) to further create a safe environment for our players while we continue to gather more information in order to resume what would be considered a typical game environment.

We will continue to work to create a plan that provides for the safety of all players, coaches, officials and participants while also allowing for the progression of play to return to a competitive format. We are prepared to meet with the DPH, EEA and other government officials as soon as possible and create an open dialogue on this topic.

In large part, the hockey community has been cooperative and respectful of the reopening process. We are hopeful that we will be provided with the opportunity to communicate our concerns in a timely fashion and that the DPH and EEA will have an open mind in these discussions so that our hockey families can continue to be included in the state's reopening plans.

Bob Joyce  
**President - Massachusetts Hockey**  
[bjoyce@mahockey.org](mailto:bjoyce@mahockey.org)

Kevin Kavanagh  
**Executive Director - Massachusetts Hockey**  
[kevink@mahockey.org](mailto:kevink@mahockey.org)