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Regular season cancellation spurs talk of refunds & spring hockey

Hockey Alberta's cancellation of the balance of the minor hockey league seasons across the province has spurred conversations on two fronts: refunds of fees and spring hockey options.

As we have said all along, there will be a refund of fees. We will be sending them to our member organizations and interlock partners; they, in turn, will refund the hockey families. We are working through the process as quickly as possible. We are waiting to hear details from Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta as to how much they will reduce their fees so we can pass on those refunds, as well as one from Hockey Edmonton.

Costs will vary since there are different types of programs within our organization and teams have had varying numbers of games and practices earlier this season. As well, as we have mentioned previously, we need to be mindful all these organizations have fixed operating costs that must be considered to ensure financial stability and future operations.

Our members have also expressed an overwhelming desire to play hockey as soon as possible. We have secured ice slots and are ready to re-launch should health restrictions be eased March 1. Those restrictions will shape the on-ice activities. For example, they may force us to begin with physically distanced ice sessions with an emphasis on skill development. If that is indeed the case, we will advance to game activities as soon as we have the green light. These activities would end by April 30, as some kids want to head off to other activities such as baseball and soccer.

For the many parents and players who have told us they want to keep playing, we have plans for development programs in May and June, health conditions permitting. We are pulling out all stops to provide hockey activities for our children because the majority of our members have made it clear they want this kind of programming. They have told us their kids not only love they game but that they need this kind of outlet more than ever for their physical and mental well-being.

It would have been easiest to simply shut down all hockey operations and start planning for next year. We chose to fight to get our kids back on the ice. We know there have been complaints about what we have done and speculation as to what we did not do. I want to assure you we have worked hard lobbying the province throughout the season, demonstrating how we did things safely when our kids were able to play as well as how they could safely return to the ice.

We thank our hockey family for the ongoing understanding and support during this trying season. We hope to see our kids back on the ice soon.

Steve Hogle
General Manager

Joe Spatafora
President