



Thunderbirds 2020-21 Season Program Frequently Asked Questions

The questions and answers below were captured from the August 27 Virtual Town Hall

Safety

Q. Will someone be responsible for contact tracing at each ice time?

- A. Yes. We will be using TeamSnap's new Health Check program for all players and coaches. We will need a Group Manager and HCSP for each group to be identified who will be responsible for verifying all players have completed this prior to entering any of our venues.
- We have asked for confirmation on if we need to collect parent information for those dropping off or only for those who enter the building but a process will be in place for any that are required.
 - We are required to provide a list of names and contacts to the facilities.

Q. Will you be asking all players to label their water bottles?

- A. Yes! As you prepare for the season, please be sure to:
- Clearly label the water bottle with your player's name
 - Ensure your player has a mask with them at all times. Some venues will require a mask to be worn until the helmet is put on – especially for those allowing access to dressing rooms or as our numbers increase to a game level making physical distancing not as easy to maintain
 - Include a small bottle of hand sanitizer and a package of tissue in their hockey bag for use as needed
 - Each player will need a good set of skate guards (be sure to label these). Please do not use the roller skate type as both the Oval and UBC have stairs.

Q. How will two deep supervision be managed?

- A. Team staff, including coaches, will need to be diligent. For most of our venues, open spaces will be replacing dressing rooms and players will need to be entering the building mostly dressed with very little time inside the building both before and after.

Q. Is spitting permitted?

- A. NO! This will be a habit that must be broken. No exceptions.

Q. What will the process be if our child is injured during the game? Will parents be contacted during the game? Will parent be permitted into the arena?

- A. The HCSP will take the lead as usual in any injury situation. If it is in a venue that parents are not allowed to watch, one of the team staff will contact the parent and if it is required will follow the venue safety plan to allow the parent to enter to support their player.



Q. How do we drop off younger kids? Will somebody be taking them in?

A. There will be a check in process at all arenas and the group will be escorted in. We are also looking at implementing a sign out process for some of our divisions similar to a camp setting.

Q. For U7, if parents are not allowed in the building what is the process if a child needs to go to the washroom in the middle of training?

A. First of all, we hope that all players get in the habit of going to the washroom before they come. We are hopeful that by delaying the start of the U6/U7 age divisions, we will be able to be at a point where one parent is allowed in for this very reason. We know it is going to happen and if parents are not allowed in, we will certainly ensure that a process is established.

Q. Will players be required to wear full face shields instead of cages to reduce the chance of transmission?

A. Bauer and CCM both have launched new products, but they will not be mandatory. There will not be enough supply to do so, but it is a recommended piece of equipment that will be a decision for each family.

Q. Can TBirds prevent people from playing in HPL and TBirds as it is a separate cohort?

A. We are awaiting clarification from BC Hockey and viaSport on this. viaSport staff indicated that players should only participate in one cohort per sport but they could play in multiple sports which has led to the question around if they limit the number of sports can they participate in more than one in hockey. Once we have more clarification we will communicate it out.

Q. How will we be notified if there is a case of Covid-19 within the cohort?

A. Hockey Canada has a very detailed protocol on how to manage a positive case within the hockey environment and we will follow that. Please see [page 20](#) of the [Hockey Canada Return to Hockey Safety Guidelines here](#). We will follow all guidance from the health authorities.

Programming

Q. Will there be additional programs offered this year?

A. Yes. We are working with viaSport and BC Hockey to determine if these will be required to be offered under a physically distanced practice or if an internal cohort structure is permitted as a choice for families to make. We will offer programs such as the HP program offered by Derek, Thunderbird Goalie school, recreational skills sessions and additional training for the U6-U9 ages in the manner permitted. If we are permitted to create internal cohorts, all sessions will be offered as a multi-session package to decrease the number of potential contacts and we will create the 14 day schedule break in between new sessions.

Q. How many skill groups/teams will be formed for U8?

A. The number of groups/teams for all divisions will be completely dependent upon the number of participants permitted in the venue. For the first part of the season we are permitted a maximum capacity of 20 (players and coaches) on the ice and we are working with our venue partners to identify the stepping stones to increase that number towards full roster game play if that is the option chosen by PCAHA.



Q. How are skill groups/teams going to be formed?

- A. *To start the season, all divisions will be placed into training groups based on last season where they will be assessed.*
- *U6-U9: based on the skill group last season. After the first couple of skates, groups will be reshuffled into internal training cohorts to create skill groups.*
 - *Recreational: players will be placed into loose “balanced” groups based on the season ending ratings (same process as last season). Balancing process will officially begin in late Sept/early October based on PCAHA decision.*
 - *Rep: all players registered for tryouts will start in tiered skill groups based on where they played last season. They will be assessed within these groups and placed into tryout cohorts for the official tryout process.*

Q. How much ice time are we losing? Will sessions be 60 minutes instead of 75 minutes?

A. *It appears that we have a very similar amount of hours in our allocation this season as compared to last season. We have just received our allocation from the Vancouver Park Board so it is not possible to confirm anything beyond that we have been given the ice time, but some venues such as UBC will be requiring a standardized block of time so that may create some impact that has not been determined just yet. We anticipate that the total ice time will average out to be similar to last year, it just may be on a bit of a different schedule due to the condensed nature of the cohort group games with the 14 day breaks.*

Q. Is hitting going to be allowed?

A. *This is an answer that will come from BC Hockey and we will communicate that as soon as we are told.*

Q. With the limited amount of skaters on the ice, will on ice parents and helpers be allowed?

A. *We will need to remain within the restricted numbers from the venue. Initially it will be likely the primary coaching staff but as additional numbers are added, then we expect there to be more opportunities for on-ice helpers. With the younger ages, we will have less skaters to allow for more coaches and on-ice helpers are likely going to be utilized earlier than in the older ages.*

Q. U6 practices were historically on Saturday/Sunday am. How likely will that schedule be in October?

A. *It is likely to be similar this season but until we have a chance to sort through the ice allocations we won't be able to determine a final schedule.*

Financial

Q. Why are you increasing the fee now and not when you first announced them in the spring?

- A. *We typically create the budget for the next season in February and March. This year, Covid-19 created an uncertain situation on the 2020-21 hockey season and we knew from the survey responses submitted that many of our families were impacted financially in March/April. The Board opted to keep all fees the same as last season initially even though we typically do raise fees a little each season due to inflation on costs such as ice rentals. As the season became clearer in August, and registration numbers were better understood, a small adjustment was required in order to cover the additional cost of extra ice at private facilities and a smaller number of players overall.*



Q. What can we expect the rep fees will be?

A. We will be announcing rep fees in early September as it is fully dependent upon the number of coaches secured. We do expect that the U11 (atom) and U13 (peewee) fees will increase from last season as we have confirmed a couple more coaches and are in discussions with others which will complete our search and finalize the fees. For U15 (Bantam) and U18 (Midget), we are finalizing the dryland program costs with the Richmond Olympic Oval and will be able to provide this information as well. The U15 and U18 costs had been previously communicated that they would be under \$4k for the A1 teams and under \$3k for the A2/A3 levels.

Q. Has TBirds considered the amount of money that will be saved on referee costs due to fewer games being played. Did it factor into the decision to raise fees?

A. At this point, the PCAHA plan still has league play as an option and so we cannot remove the referee fees from the budget.

Venue

Q. Are parents allowed in the venues?

- A.
- UBC: not at this time **except** if a player needs assistance to assist participants that require their skates tied but then will be required to leave immediately.
 - Vancouver Park Board Arenas: not at this time **except** if a player needs assistance to assist participants that require their skates tied but then will be required to leave immediately.
 - Richmond Oval: not at this time.
 - Richmond Ice Centre: TBD

At this point, coaches and, in some venues, HCSPs are the only ones permitted.

Q. Can we arrive early to warm-up?

A. At this point, all venues will have a limited time to enter prior to the ice time (ie 15 minutes) so it will be up to the player to find the best way to warm up as needed outside the building. If done in a group, physical distancing and two deep supervision is still required.

Q. Is anything being done with UBC and the Oval to assist with parking costs?

A. The Oval is replacing their parking system so they are currently offering free parking. UBC is an ongoing question and it is operated by Campus Parking who has not offered any reductions in any previous seasons either.

Q. What about goalies? It is pretty hard to come dressed. Can we help them? Can goalies use the dressing rooms?

A. Goalies can get most of their gear on before entering the building and in some venues a parent will be allowed to enter to assist them get ready. If the building will not allow it, then coaches will be able to help. They can also put everything on by the car and walk in with the rest of the group. Dressing room use will only be allowed in the venues that allow it and it will not be restricted to goalies only. Many players will get ready in/around their cars – might be an idea to bring a lawn chair!



Miscellaneous

Q. Are we still allowing graduating players to play with buddies?

A. Yes. Those that submitted their friend requests by the deadline will be accommodated, likely from the first ice times.

Q. How do the new restrictions affect volunteer hours?

A. We expect that there will actually be a higher amount of volunteer hours needed than a normal year with the added need for contact tracing and additional organization. We will have more information over the coming days as we begin to identify groups and ice times. Stay tuned to the Volunteer portal (all information on how to log in can be [found here](#)).

Q. What about live recording of games for parents and grandparents to watch?

A. In the latest update newsletter, a call was put out for a volunteer to look at the options for video streaming and to manage the program. As much as we would love to jump on it and find the solution, our focus right now needs to be on getting the ice schedule and groups formed to get the kids on the ice. We hope that someone will be willing to help with this program as it would be a wonderful thing for the parents and others to be able to watch.

Q. Who will be scheduling games when we're allowed to play them?

A. PCAHA will be setting the schedules and assigning teams to the cohorts.

Q. Will midget players still be able to participate in the Players Giving Back program (helping with younger teams)?

A. We absolutely want to have this program again this year. We expect it will be a delayed start to it but as soon as we see a bit of a higher number of participants on the ice, we will launch the program.