



**June 4, 2020**

**On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association approved a 'Return to The Game' framework for use by all our players, coaches, officials, associations, leagues and rinks in Michigan. This framework was put together by reviewing all areas that affect our sport -- identifying opportunities to align our efforts with Michigan governmental transitions and requirements, health protocols, and USA Hockey guidelines to be able to provide a safe and fun environment, when we are allowed to return.**

**During this downtime, we have had five different task force teams that have been looking at different areas of our program. Each area has been gathering first-hand data and direction from our local association leadership, coaches and officials, rink management and league leadership to determine how to create a flexible framework that will allow hockey to return, when the rinks reopen.**

**Each group focused on their area's own unique challenges, recognizing there must be collaboration across all areas to ensure a shared outcome of a safe return to hockey. As hockey returns to Michigan, we expect that it may return at different speeds (capacity limitations) and different times across the state. We also anticipate there may be stops and starts, as we move through the season. Our framework anticipates some of those things, and it provides guidance on how to deal with them. However, we ask for everyone's patience as we continue to deal with restrictions that are placed upon us. While the game may look a little different at times, our goal is continuing to get back to normal and bring the game of hockey back to all Michigan communities.**

**The 'Return to The Game' guidelines also allows travel teams to commit to players prior to traditional tryouts. We have heard from parents, expressing anxiety over where their child will be playing next season, and if they will have a spot. Coaches and associations are concerned as well as they try to plan ice time, and other things, needed to get the season underway. We believe this solution, although not perfect, will greatly reduce anxiety and stress for all participants and allow them to gain some certainty for next season and begin planning and looking forward to that time. As part of the process, we are also instituting a Financial Hardship Refund Policy to protect families, should their financial situation change whereby they would not be able to honor the commitment they made to a team over the summer.**

**The health and safety of everyone involved in the game will determine we can return - not just our desire to get back on the ice. We will continue to follow the guidelines set by the State of Michigan, as well as the CDC recommendations set to help limit the spread of the virus. By working together, and following the guidelines, we will be able to safely return. Hopefully, we will get to a point where the virus is past... and we can return to a more normal state of play.**

**Thank you for your passion and dedication to the great game of hockey... and thank you for working to make your local program, and our game, the best it can be during these challenging times.**

**George Atkinson  
President, Michigan Amateur Hockey Association**