

Hockey is Back!

Saturday, August 1, 2:00pm. It is marked on my calendar. Blackhawks vs. Oilers. Kane vs. McDavid. Toews vs. Draisaitl.

On March 12, our lives changed in many ways. Sports disappeared; sports on TV, sports that kids played, sports that we played.

But we are slowly getting back to the games we love. We first got back to golf, and we are now back to hockey. Live sports are back, and yes it is weird to see a PGA Tour event with no fans, or Wrigley Field with no fans. However, we can adjust.

Over the past two months we have cautiously returned to the ice. We started slowly, holding our sessions to no more than 20 on the ice at one time during the month of June. In July we moved to Phase 4 where we have permitted more kids on the ice. The Winnetka Ice Arena has just hosted the Impact Hockey Camp over the past three weeks. A special shout out to Paul Schwartz, manager of the Winnetka Ice Arena, for having a well-crafted plan for use of the facility.

Moving forward, it is the Club's intent to offer a full season of hockey for both House and Travel levels. We are excited about welcoming all players for the 2020-2021 season. Please know that in preparing for this season, we have been working closely with [USA Hockey/AHAI](#), the leagues we participate in, and the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) to help us create a safe, valuable and fun experience for our players.

Additionally, we have created a "COVID Task Force" consisting of Anthony Savino, MD, Dania Lees, MD, and Sara England-Nettesheim, RN, and staff members Tom Gullen and Evan Nielsen. Dr. Savino is the WHC board Health and safety liaison, while Dania and Sara both have multiple children in the program. We will use their experience to guide us safely into this season, developing protocols and procedures designed to keep both our players as well as visiting teams safe.

While we have been away from the ice for most of the past five months, it has been a very productive, and successful one for our club. We were overwhelmed by the support our spring participants showed in helping ensure that our coaching staff was compensated despite the cancellation. The club was also successful in obtaining a Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan.

We went through an extensive search process that resulted in the hiring of Evan Nielsen as Hockey Director. Additionally, Bobby Acri was given additional responsibilities and our goal of having Evan and Bobby lead our skill development program for both House and Travel players with the support of Ryan Davlantes and Charlie Widmar, has created a team of skills instructors that will show immediate and long-term results for our players. We have made it our goal to add additional "ice touches" for our Travel players and adding a much-needed instruction component to our House League.

We are excited for the season ahead of us. Working together, we will meet the challenges that lie ahead and make this club stronger.

WARRIORS FOREVER!