

Hi everyone!

This is the longest email I ever hope to send any of you, but I've tried really hard to provide as much detail as I can, knowing that there are a lot of questions about how the winter season will look.

It's been interesting (to use the mildest possible word) working through the process of reopening a school this fall, and getting some perspective on how decisions are being made, or postponed. We're learning a little bit more about the operational reality of running a school in a pandemic every day. The fact is that at no point is someone going to wave a magic wand and say, "THIS is how you can operate!" Those of us who have had to make decisions this summer and fall have quickly recognized that at some point you just have to acknowledge that what you know is all that you're *going* to know, and it's time to make some choices.

So! What do we know right now?

1. Wear a mask! Mask wearing is the single most important thing we can do to keep ourselves and our communities safe. The more masking, the better – great news for many winter sports, but for skiing/snowboarding in particular!
2. Social distance matters! Staying physically separate from other people is the second most important thing to limit the transmission of germs, both air and water-borne.
3. Wash yo' dang hands! In March we were deeply concerned about surface transmission of Covid, and here now in September it's more apparent that while surface transmission is possible, airborne transmission is much more of a risk (see point #1!) However, clean hands do limit transmission of germs, not only of Covid but also of regular old "normal" cold and flu viruses, which, given the heightened awareness of symptoms, are a serious consideration in terms of days/activity missed.

And - that's it! It can be frustrating to feel like we're waiting for some brilliant epiphany to come in and make this easier, but the reality is that those 3 things are the keys, and in summary, that's all we're going to know. So – to the more important question – what does that mean for our ski season? Coaches, administrators, and staff have been working with WVR and with our respective **sport** governing bodies (FIS, US Ski and Snowboard, NHARA, USASA, Eastern Freestyle) and our **actual** governing bodies (the federal government, the state of New Hampshire, Grafton County, and the town of Waterville Valley) all of which have created their own separate guidance and guidelines for operating in a pandemic. This is the part that is not simple. But, remember - the actual behaviors are, in fact, quite simple!

What do we not know?

1. The single biggest, largest question mark at this moment is around competition calendars. A lot of that work takes time and is complicated because of the mismatched and overlapping

layers of guidance we (programs and resorts) each have to navigate – state guidance and travel restrictions which differ between and among each New England state; US Ski and Snowboard; NHARA; USASA; Eastern Freestyle; town/county; and resort policies. I reviewed the material in this email with Tim Smith, GM of Waterville Valley Resort, before sending to all of you, and he insisted I add the following sentence: “We, WVR and WVBBS, are dedicated to competition and are committed to ensuring competitions at home this season, in whatever form it takes.”

More good news!

We know, pretty much, what skiing, riding, and training at Waterville Valley can and will look like, at least to start the season. We are encouraged, optimistic even, with the plans we’re prepared to deliver, and the way the season looks from here. It’s going to be different, no doubt, but we’re confident in our ability to deliver world-class athletic programming, as usual, and we’re also getting into some of the intangibles around our community life and feeling great about how we can make sure we don’t lose that essential thread this year. Getting kids back on snow is the priority, and we’re ready for it. All of the information contained in this email is necessarily fluid, but it’s what we’re planning for right now.

### **Base lodge**

The base lodge is going to have restricted access. We know that indoor activity is riskier than outdoor activity, and that indoor crowds are the riskiest. The resort is planning to curtail lodge access, although they haven’t specified the exact mechanism that they’ll use (pricing, reservations, other?) Regardless, we can expect that we will not be able to use the lodge as a locker room. Bringing bags into the lodge will not be allowed, and changing clothes/boots in the lodge will be strongly discouraged or even banned. Our lunchroom will also have restricted access and the same policies for bags and clothes changing.

### **So how will the groups get warm?**

*The WVBBS lunchroom will be closed to families. It will be available to coaches with athlete groups for warming and for bathroom breaks.* It will be professionally cleaned at a minimum daily, but possibly also throughout weekend days. We’ll be able to have the Mitey Mites desk person in the lunchroom in case any of the Mites gets lost or needs help. WVBBS lockers are **likely** going to be unavailable, but that’s still not finalized.

### **If we can’t hang out in the lodge what will we do?**

*Your car is your personal base lodge.* I am working with Tim to identify a parking plan so that we can mirror the gathering aspects of the lunchroom. I think we all know the value of walking into the lunchroom or the lodge on a Saturday morning and seeing all “our people,” finding a couple other folks to take a few runs with, and sharing that same community feeling that our kids are getting during the weekend. We, as always, need to ensure that behavior and courtesy in the parking lot reflects positively on our family-centered community. We know this will be harder to manage than it would be indoors, but it’s important that we demonstrate positive reflections of the club.

**What about the schedule?**

We are planning on staggered start locations and/or times – we are trying to avoid the normal congestion in front of the T-Bars building, which will be easier to do since no one will be in the T-Bars building getting dressed in the morning. Groups will have an identified meeting zone, and some groups, depending on size, may have staggered start times.

The only group that we think could see a substantive change in schedule will likely be the Mitey Mites. We're planning right now on a single longer session for Mites rather than 2 two-hour sessions in the morning and afternoon: this isn't finalized but it is in draft form right now.

**Chairlift policies?**

At Waterville Valley Resort this season, no one will be required to load the chairlift in a way that makes them uncomfortable. That means that if you're happy to ride 4-up on the quad with some singles, you will be able to do so. If you're only comfortable riding by yourself and/or with your immediate family members, you will be able to convey that and that's fine.

In order to participate in our programs, we are going to require parents to authorize a fully loaded chairlift. Coaches will use their discretion as to whether 2, 3, or 4 athletes should load in a given moment, but parents must give permission for the chairlift to be loaded to capacity.

Mitey Mites parents are also going to be required to authorize coaches to load chairs fully, and to specifically sign off on coaches using their discretion in allowing members of the public to load the lift with Mites to assist with loading and with the bar. We will, per normal, prioritize asking BBTS community members to assist with Mites whenever possible.

**What is our mask policy?**

Masks shall be worn at all times when social distance can't be maintained, indoors and outdoors, by coaches and athletes. This policy will also be the policy of WVR across all mountain property.

**Is there going to be a reservation system?**

WVR is developing the technology for a reservation system in case there is a mandate to limit ski area capacity. WVR is committed to doing everything possible to avoid making season pass holders make reservations.

**What if I or my child gets Covid-19?**

If you or your child gets Covid, you may only return to our programming once you've cleared the "return to participation" guidelines currently in effect in New Hampshire. At the moment (*Safer at Home, Amateur & Youth Sports*, Sept 15, 2020) that criteria is to isolate for 10 days past onset of first symptoms PLUS 72 hours past resolution of fever.

If a person with whom you have been in close contact has either a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19, you may not participate in our program for 14 days during which you're intended

to be self-isolated. (Exceptions are for health care workers who were wearing full PPE during their contact or exposure).

**What if I or my child is just sick, and it's affirmatively NOT Covid?**

If you can confirm that you're sick with any *other* thing, not Covid, either through testing or through medical clearance, you'll be allowed to participate in programming once you/your child's symptoms are controlled. For instance, this means a lingering cough or snuffle is fine, but hacking, spitting, or an uncontrolled (colorful) running nose is not fine. The risk of a common cold is that although you're affirmatively sure it's not Covid in your family, once it passes to another family they won't be allowed at school, training, or to participate in activities until they also get screened or tested.

**Should my family get flu shots?**

Getting a flu shot can help when a doctor is determining if your sniffles are the common flu or Covid-19. Additionally, preventing the flu will help lessen the burden on the health care system. We are highly recommending that everyone in the WVBTS community gets a flu shot this year.

**What are the options for training this winter? My school has gone remote!**

WVBTS weekend athletes are going to have the same access to training as in a 'normal' year – weekends from Thanksgiving through March, plus the December vacation week, plus one of the February school vacation weeks. If you wish to have additional midweek training opportunities, anyone may purchase a 5-pack of training days which can be used during the season.

Given the circumstances this year where so many schools will be remote, we're limiting the number of 5-packs to one per athlete. We are cognizant that with so many schools having gone, or going, remote, we'll have many BBTS kids around midweek (which is – on all levels – great! Skiing is awesome!) but which will run into conflict with the small group sizes (and, frankly, the tuition paid) of WVA groups midweek. I know this is a sticky wicket – possibly the stickiest wicket in all of our organization – but we have to be fair to all our programs and deliver the product that we have committed to and that a family has chosen.

I am happy to say that WVA is fully enrolled for the full-year program – actually exceeded our target – and that our winter term is about one student away from full enrollment. We have no space in the dorm, and our middle school program is also almost fully enrolled. If you're still on the fence about WVA enrollment, I'd love to hear from you, but our enrollment has been robust this year and we're super excited to have such a full and vibrant student body.

Whewwww...if you read this whole thing, I very respectfully give you a remote high five for your diligence. As I started saying at the beginning, I am confident and excited about the winter at Waterville, as more and more detail becomes known. There are several relevant documents linked below – the NH Safer at Home "Amateur and Youth Sports" guidelines, the US Ski and Snowboard competition guidelines, the US Ski and Snowboard Alpine guidelines (no corollary

document exists yet for non-Alpine events). We circulated our refund and credit policies earlier in the summer, and those are also linked here again for your review. I hope you'll take all this information into consideration as you make plans for the winter.

Lastly, a plug for the Waterville Valley town forum Zoom sessions, which have been happening since early summer. I participate weekly, as do many of our coaches. There are often discussions about ski area operations, and the public, passholders, residents, and community members are encouraged to log in and ask questions at any time. Email Tim Smith [tsmith@waterville.com](mailto:tsmith@waterville.com) to be added to the distribution list for the weekly agenda.

As always, thank you for your time, energy, optimism, and support. I truly can't wait for winter!

Best,  
Tory