



Snowbelt Youth Hockey League Cancels 2020-21 Season Due to COVID-19 Concerns and Will Facilitate a Pick-Up Format

Auburn, NY – The Snowbelt Youth Hockey League Board of Representatives met via Zoom this evening and came to a consensus that the 2020-21 regular season and J.A.M. Tournaments shall be canceled. The safety of players, coaches, referees, fans, and communities is paramount. While this is a disappointing decision to have to make, we feel it is the correct choice. Multiple factors came into play during the discussion, including the following:

- The Board had agreed upon a latest possible start date of January 2 or 9 if hockey games were allowed at that time. There are no indications that hockey games will be allowed within that timeframe.
- Even with a possible start to the sport in early January and a reduced number of League games, the likelihood of a large number of game cancellations due to team sickness and/or quarantine would likely prevent most or all teams from completing or rescheduling all scheduled games.
- NYSAHA is unable to provide us with a solid start date until the Governor's office gives the go-ahead.
- The New York State Governor's office will not allow high-risk winter sports while the infection rates continue to increase (and infection rates continue to increase).
- The NYSPHSAA (high school) has already announced the cancellation of all Winter State Championships and all high-risk sports are postponed until authorization is granted by state officials. (NYSPHSAA has no direct affiliation with the functioning of Snowbelt but the status of high school hockey does impact some associations and rinks.)

As an alternative to the 2020-21 season, Snowbelt will collect and publish team contacts from teams that would have participated in the League if the season had been allowed to progress. If the state allows hockey games between associations, this information will allow teams to schedule pick-up games with each other. This pick-up format will allow teams and associations to schedule games according to their comfort levels and according to the team's health and quarantine status.

The Snowbelt Board wishes everyone a safe and healthy winter season. We hope to see everyone back on the ice when it's safe to do so!