



Ontario Grandmasters Curling Association
c/o The Thornhill Club
7994 Yonge Street
Thornhill, ON L4J 1W3
www.grandmasterscurling.com



August 15, 2020

Ontario Grandmasters Curling Association – COVID -19 Update

The Executive of the Ontario Grandmasters Curling Association hope that this update finds you, your family, and friends in good health during these trying times with COVID-19.

As you know we chose to postpone the Championships in March 2020 at The Thornhill Club as the COVID-19 was starting to gain traction in Ontario. As disappointing and difficult as this decision was your Executive is proud that we were one of first to cancel an event with full regard for the safety of the curlers and their families, and friends. This proved to be wise and well accepted position by the curling community.

Now we need to look forward to the resumption of our Championship. The Executive met on Wed Aug 5th to determine when and how we can move forward. We considering the following known items:

- 1) The status of the Province with regards to phase 2 and phase 3 reopening regulations
- 2) The guidelines issued by Curling Canada on reopening curling
- 3) The status of curling clubs reopening
- 4) The health and safety of our participants all being within the most vulnerable age group for severe problems resulting from contracting COVID-19.

Our overwhelming concern is for the health and safety of the curlers and their families. Without, a vaccine and or drugs to offset the effects of COVID-19 we are reluctant to reopen competition.

The phase 3 reopening in the province allows you to create a bubble of 50 people for indoor sports. This means being able to join your own club within one section for the season. Bonspiels and Zone Playdowns would not be allowed as they bring together teams from many clubs thus breaking the curler's 50-person bubble. Many clubs in the GTA are not allowing rental leagues to even start until possibly January 2021.

Given the limitations on curling within your own club there is a growing uncertainty of how many will reopen in the fall. Currently we are in Phase 3 Reopening within Ontario. But there is much talk of a second wave of COVID-19 along with a normal flu season that we may be reverting to a Phase 2 operating structure come the fall.

Curling Canada's reopening guidelines bring new rules for player positioning and participation during the game. Clubs are trying to figure out how to maintain Social Distancing while on the ice and within the club. Locker rooms would be out of bounds, you may possibly be able to use only every other sheet of ice thus severely limiting what league play will look like.

With all this in mind the Executive has decided to cancel Zone Playdowns for the 2020-2021 season.

We will reconvene in January to see if it is possible to run the postponed 2020 Championships at The Thornhill Club in March or April 2021. We would only do this if we could maintain the quality of the Championships, meaning being able to run the event in the normal 2 ½ days, with the banquet and spectators. Maintaining the quality of the event is as important as holding the event. The Executive has decided that the Zone winners that would have competed at the March 2020 Championship will be invited to participate. There will not be time to organize new Zone playdowns in the spring of 2021 and we feel that teams try hard for years to get to the Championship and they should be allowed that opportunity to compete. We realize that in a year's time some qualifiers may not be able to put the full qualifying team on the ice come March/April 2021, either due to health or safety concerns of team members. We will address this matter in January should be able to stage the event in March or April of 2021.



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We trust that our Grandmasters community understands the position that the Executive finds itself in. We understand the significance that the zone playdowns and the championship play in the comradery and enjoyment of the game within the grandmasters curling community.

Providing that a safe and comprehensive vaccine becomes readily available we would expect to reopen Zones and the Championship for the 2021-2022 season.

Until we are in touch again, please wear masks, social distance, resist large indoor gatherings so we can once again restart the Ontario Grandmasters Curling Association activities, STAY SAFE.

On behalf of the Executive

Gary Norris
President

