



PRESS RELEASE

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## NWHL Announces Plan for Sixth Season and Isobel Cup Playoffs at Lake Placid's 1980 Rink-Herb Brooks Arena

The National Women's Hockey League today announced a plan to present the upcoming season and 2021 Isobel Cup Playoffs at the 1980 Rink-Herb Brooks Arena in Lake Placid, NY between January 23 - February 5, 2021.

The event is presented in partnership with the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA). The goal of the NWHL bubble season is to play in a protective environment that prioritizes the health and safety of the players, staff, and surrounding community.



"The NWHL is excited to provide hockey fans a fast-paced schedule of thrilling games on the road to the Isobel Cup," said NWHL Interim Commissioner Tyler Tumminia, who led the Lake Placid project since taking over in mid-October. "The continued challenges brought by the pandemic resulted in a mandate for our league, players and partners to collaborate on creating a controlled environment protecting the health of everyone involved. At a time of hyper-growth for girls' and women's hockey, we see this season as a celebration of the sport. This will be a historic moment as the hallowed arena that was the site of the "Miracle on Ice" in 1980 hosts its first women's professional championship. It is a proud moment for the NWHL, the players, and all hockey fans."

The competition in Lake Placid will feature the NWHL's six teams – Boston Pride, Buffalo Beauts, Connecticut Whale, Metropolitan Riveters, Minnesota Whitecaps, and first-year expansion club the Toronto Six – and will be played without fans in attendance. The NWHL's initiative comes in the wake of tremendous work in 2020 by the WNBA and NWSL, which executed successful and safe seasons while igniting massive increases in television viewership, streaming, apparel sales and fan engagement.

"ORDA and the NWHL are hopeful that our plan for the tournament will be able to move forward," said Director of Sport Paul Wylie. "ORDA has been involved in the development of Women's Hockey for many years, including hosting the World Championships, countless

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international tournaments and camps, as well as a training base for the U.S. Olympic Women's Hockey Team."

The teams will arrive separately in Lake Placid in a staggered schedule on Jan. 21 and 22. Beginning Jan. 23, they will each play five games (one against each team in the league), followed by a playoff round that will determine the four teams advancing to the Isobel Cup Semifinals. The single-game Semifinals will feature the top-seeded team against the fourth-place team, with the teams ranked second and third facing each other. The winners of the Semifinals will advance to the Isobel Cup Final on Friday, Feb. 5.

The entire season will be conducted in Lake Placid with regular COVID-19 testing provided by Yale Pathology Labs. All participants will follow strict adherence to protocols established by the medical team from the NWHL's partners at NYU Langone Health, led by Drs. Andrew Feldman and Guillem Gonzalez-Lomas. With the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape, these protocols will be modified based on the most current research and evidence.

All of the professional players who signed contracts this year for the NWHL season will be compensated in full, despite the condensed game schedule. Players were given the opportunity to opt-out of the tournament and still receive their complete salaries. At this date, more than 95 percent of the players have committed to the competition, giving each team a full playing roster for Lake Placid – the site of the iconic "Miracle on Ice" by the U.S. Olympic Team in 1980. Following local and national health guidelines, NWHL teams began voluntary workouts in September and started official practices and workouts in October.

The complete schedule, broadcast information, and additional details will be made available in the weeks leading up to the season.

This 2021 NWHL season remains subject to the final agreement by and among the NWHL, the Olympic Regional Development Authority of New York and the State of New York as to the NWHL Return to Play Plan, consistent with the New York State Forward Guidance for Professional Sports and Training Competitions. The State of New York has provided the Olympic Regional Development Authority of New York with approval to operate its facilities in Lake Placid, including Herb Brooks Arena, consistent with New York State Forward Guidance.

### **About the National Women's Hockey League (NWHL)**

Established in 2015, the NWHL was the first professional women's hockey league in North America to pay its players. The mission of the league is to fuel the continued growth of the sport and brand of pro women's hockey. The league is made up of the Boston Pride, Buffalo Beauts, Connecticut Whale, Metropolitan Riveters, Minnesota Whitecaps, and the Toronto Six. Visit [NWHL.zone](https://www.nwhl.zone) and follow on Twitter and Facebook @NWHL and Instagram @NWHL.zone