



To all Lightning Families,

As we are all aware and affected by the COVID 19 pandemic across the province and country, London Lightning has also felt the impact on our 2020 season planning, not only at the team level, but Board level as well.

COVID 19 has not only challenged our normal daily activities and lives but changed the way we will be able to participate in organized team activities until a proven vaccine can be found. The Lightning Board applauds PWSA for their continued work and diligence in working with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture on a return to play document for 2020 activity to resume.

### **London Lightning Board action**

The London Lightning Board considered each of the following points:

- Our desire to give every London Lightning athlete the maximum opportunity to play and develop in this game they love – safely.
- Protocols that may be required by PWSA and how that adds responsibility to Associations, coaches and volunteers each and every time we gather at a park.
- Our inability to guarantee that opposing teams/Associations/clubs will adhere to protocols that will be outlined in the return to play document when approved.
- The cancellation of the 2020 Softball Canada Canadian Championships, Eastern Canadian Championships and Grand Valley League play.
- Provincial/municipal government restrictions (#'s allowed per gathering).
- The lack of a definite date for return to play from the various governing bodies.
- The uncertainty of City of London and Fanshawe College diamond permits.
- The cancellation of the majority of scheduled tournaments.
- The uncertainty of whether we will have umpires for games & PWSA events.

Through long and difficult discussions, on the basis of all of these concerns, we have decided to not affiliate with PWSA for the 2020 season. This decision was made with the safety and best interests of our athletes, coaches, volunteers, families and extended families (our biggest fans) in mind.

### **What does this mean for the remainder of the summer?**

Although London Lightning teams are not participating in PWSA Qualifier & PWSA Grand Championship events, this does not mean we are closing the door to softball activity this summer as teams or an Association. The Board has decided to shift our focus to:

- Adapting our on-field activities to comply with the PWSA's return to play documents & protocols.
- Planning how we provide the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our players, coaches, volunteers, families and fans.
- Safely use the necessary protocols, screening and social distancing at practices and future exhibition games with other teams.
- Continue to develop our players through our current coaches and player mentors.



We feel this will help protect our players, coaches and families, prepare our players for tryouts and make our Association stronger for the 2021 season. This approach will require all hands-on deck from the Board, coaches and players from our senior teams. Any participation in these activities will be voluntary and the choice of the player and player's family. Anyone who cannot participate or does not feel safe doing so will not in any way be penalized going into 2021 team selections. Ministry of Health guidelines on size of public gathering will impact greatly on what activities we maybe be able to run and when.

Although this may not be a popular decision, we feel it is the right one for our Lightning families to ensure safety. We do feel for all players, especially those who were in their final year of Lightning minor ball and now are graduating to senior ball. We wish you the best and thank you for your success at the minor level, and welcome you back to mentor our younger players.

### **Next steps**

At this time, we are still not permitted on the diamonds for practice or play. We will keep all Lightning players and families updated as these conditions change and we hopefully move toward returning to the diamond.

Please also note that we will also be addressing 2020 registration fees, sponsorship's and team fundraising once we have greater certainty about what practice and game play opportunities will exist. More information on this will follow once we are in a better position to give specifics.

If any parent or player wishes to discuss this decision further, please feel free to reach out to me, I can arrange to make myself available.

Thank you

*C. Askew*

Chris Askew  
London Lightning President