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Dear Members,

I am sure you would agree it has been an extremely difficult start to 2020 for everyone. I imagine we are all extremely keen to begin the staged return and our Government is beginning to relax social restrictions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State Government has released a roadmap for recovery and this contains some key dates for community sport. Basketball Australia has also released a paper detailing requirements for basketball to resume working and complying with the guidelines and structures outlined for community sport.

This week BTAS and the Statewide CAMs were invited to attend a webinar to discuss the virus, its impact on sport and the resumption of engagement in basketball. Links to all of these documents can be found either through the LBA or BTAS websites and our respective social media.

BTAS are preparing a new guide for their member CAMs to follow in the resumption of basketball activities. This is currently with the Department of Sport and Recreation for approval before it is released to the CAMs. Once we have this we will be able to formulate our own plan to resume in Launceston. What we do have for now are the following three key dates, all subject to final advice and approval from the Public Health department;

- Monday 18 May – basketball teams can train outside with social distancing and in groups less than 10. No indoor activity.
- Monday 15 June – still subject to further advice from Public Health, however we are hopeful that training can resume as gatherings increase to 20 people at a time for indoor and outdoor.
- Monday 13 July – still subject to further advice from Public Health, however we are hopeful that we may be able to resume further activities as gatherings increase to 100 (still with limitations).

With these dates in mind, the LBA has chosen to suspend our competition, for now, until **Monday 13th July**. This date will be reviewed as it approaches and we will continue to keep you informed as soon as we are in a position to provide greater clarity and direction.

From the 15th June, training indoors for up to 20 people will be allowed. LBA is seeking to offer some programming in this space. Once we have the revised documents from BTAS we can begin working through scenario planning around different options. We can then attempt to get a basketball competition in place as soon as possible.

One of the key realities around any scenarios or models for the resumption of basketball competition, is obviously accessibility of venues for these competitions to be played in. As you would be aware, Elphin has been commandeered by the Health Department as a COVID-19 testing site. Whilst this facility is in place Elphin Stadium is not available for sport at any level and our latest advice is this will likely remain for potentially several months at the very least. The LBA is currently in discussions with all known local venues to ascertain availability and suitability of courts for us to run competition. Mitch Duhig, our General Manager is working hard and exploring every option to source venues to enable a basketball season that is similar to what our members have come to expect.

The portion of your fees related to membership of the LBA is allocated to salary costs of the LBA General Manager. Mitch has been working diligently sourcing courts, making sure we are clear about the guidelines we will need to comply with for any resumption of competition and lobbying government to assist with the resumption of basketball. It is also likely that there will be some additional costs associated with cleaning, employing additional staff to enable competitions to run within the guidelines given. On advice from Basketball Australia and BTAS these membership fees will not be refunded.

If, at the end of all this, LBA is unable to provide a competition commensurate with the fees and charges initially outlined to the clubs, then refunding of fees will need to be explored. LBA has not invoiced our clubs for future competition games. This will remain the case until we have formulated the structure for the resumption of competition. Until we know if we can provide basketball in 2020 these fees will be retained by the clubs.

I would like to close by saying, basketball is going to look very different in the short to mid-term at least. We need to accept this as a reality if we hope to have basketball competition to return in any form. LBA is following the guidelines and directives issued by our governing bodies. These are all based on the best medical and government advice to keep everyone safe. We as an Association do not want to increase the risk to our members by acting in a way contravening this advice. We are working very hard to find a way to get everyone back on the floor playing the game we love as soon as we can and in the safest way possible. We would like to thank all our clubs and members for their support and understanding throughout this unprecedented year.

Warm regards,

Craig Gibson
President

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