

Wallan Basketball Update

October 28th

Well it has been quite a while since our last opportunity to provide any updates. We hope this update finds all of our basketball families well and ready to leap into a 2021 full of the fun and connections we cherish so much from this amazing basketball community.

What a week! Zero and Zero for our metro neighbours and regionally we are doing everything we can to keep the freedoms we are now enjoying.

As a club it is hard to contain our excitement as we are on the road to getting our beloved basketball back up and running. We are excited but measured; conscious to make sure that we are following Basketball Victoria's and the Victorian Government's guidelines to the letter.

We have had some great news today – our COVID-Safe Return to Play plan was accepted by Mitchell Shire Council. This means that we now have access to our stadium, back to 'The Jungle'.

Keeping in mind that things can change (and trying to contain our excitement) we are really happy to give the following outline of what can be happening over the next few weeks.

Basketball Victoria under direction from the Victorian Government has announced the following for us as a regional sporting club:

- For under 18 - Level indoor Orange 20. This means that we can have 'non-contact' access to our stadium for up to 20 players. We are currently planning some back to basketball activities to kick things off.
- For 18 years and over – Orange 20 outdoor and red indoor. So essentially no indoor playing for 18 and over.

We are expecting further easing on the 8th of November that hopefully opens access for over 18s and then again toward the end of November that will see us really ramp up toward a Covid normal in 2021.

Our next steps:

- **JUNIOR DOMESTIC** – we will start some form of skills sessions for our junior players in the not-too-distant future with the hope of our Summer Domestic competition beginning in by the end November (subject to Government guidelines). We will also look to get our Aussie Hoops starting again ASAP
- **VJBL** (Representative Teams) - the aim is to have a normal 2021 season, although the grading period may be a bit different and may start in late December or even early January. Dates for this are the most fluid of all our competition so we will update as soon as more info comes to hand. Having said that we have selected our Firsts' Team Coaches and will announce these 2020/2021 Coaches soon with a view to holding tryouts in late November.
- **BIGV** - All of Basketball Victoria want the BigV 2021 season to be as normal as possible and hope to have competition kick off in late March. We expect to be recruiting and kicking off tryouts etc in early December, if not before.
- **CBL** - Fingers are crossed for a January competition.
- **SENIOR DOMESTIC** - this will take some time for us to get going, we will be able to update more on this once we have a better understanding of how this type of competition will run..

A quick shout out to Sharif, (we are all waiting patiently to unleash him in the Teal and Black). Sharif's one on one sessions will be kicked off soon, aiming for the 8th, reach out to him if you would like to shake off those cobwebs.

And a massive thank you to all our sponsors. Your support is incredible and enables us to provide our community with access to great basketball. Now is the time to support local - and we encourage all our members to support our sponsors when you can.

We take our players' and basketball community's safety seriously and now have a dedicated COVID-Safety Officer who will be managing our compliance and COVID-safe programs across our club. Being proactive with a considered 'return' to sport plan has allowed us to be able to have access to our beloved stadium again. We know things will look and feel different for the first few months back and thank everyone preemptively for your tolerance and willingness to follow any processes and actions we have to follow to get up and playing again.

So exciting times. We have appreciated your support to date during this difficult time and are really looking forward to welcoming all back in a COVID-Safe way to enjoy basketball again.

Gary O'Brien

President

Wallan Panthers' Basketball Association

July 5th

We would like to start this update with a shout out to our basketball neighbours who are back in lockdown, the likes of Craigieburn, Broadmeadows and Coburg. We empathise with those communities and the difficulties in having to unwind as many of us were ramping up. A special shout to the committees of these clubs, it's a difficult situation to manage and hard decisions are being made.

For us it certainly adds some uncertainty to our plans but we continue to push forward with the Junior Domestic Winter Season, set to go ahead on the 18th of July in its modified format. A 30% discount has been applied for registrations and those who registered prior to Covid will be given a 30% discount code for future use.

The big change since our last update is that we have submitted a return to stadium plan and based on this have been granted access to the stadium, under strict conditions. All of our plans are in line with Basketball Victorias' guidelines - <http://basketballvictoria.com.au/covid-19/covid-19-guidelines-and-tools/>. For juniors we are at Orange 50 and for seniors Orange 20.

Some competition updates:

JUNIOR DOMESTIC - planned to commence 18th July, those from locked down postcodes need to wait for the Government green light before attending.

SENIOR DOMESTIC - Will not commence until Summer Season

VJBL - the planned 17th July kick off has been postponed, an update will be provided in the coming days.

BigV - two options are being considered for a modified BigV season with plans still aiming for an early August start.

COUNTY BASKETBALL LEAGUE (CBL) - planning to start as normal and run a full season beginning October 10th.

AUSSIE HOOPS - still planned for a July 17th return

KEY POINTS

The big message for this update is we have created an FAQ for families (link will be added here). This is designed to answer some of the questions around returning to the stadium and how this will operate, as well as general questions we have been getting. We encourage anyone who has a question that is not covered in the document to contact us. We will continue to add common questions to the document.

The committee continues to work hard to keep the club stable and prepare for returning to competitions as best we can. There is a lot we don't yet know and things will no doubt continue to change so preparing for any situation is important. Finances are being watched carefully, for example a full cancellation of the winter season and VJBL would be very difficult for the club's financial position. We also carry a degree of outstanding fees etc at any point in time, there is a focus on getting this down as low as possible to support the club's position but will always be mindful of our families in need in these crazy times. We promise to remain transparent with members and give you all the information we have when making decisions that are in the interests of the long term sustainability of the club. We have been very grateful for how the basketball community has responded and the support we have been given. Thank You!

Our priorities remain the health of all our players and families and making sure we can keep this wonderful club afloat to bring basketball to the community.

June 11th

Well there is a bit of optimism starting to build that as a community we are winning the COVID battle and Basketball is on the way back. We see kids starting to shoot hoops with friends at home and small groups of 10 in outdoor, socially distant, activities to re engage with Basketball and teammates.

While we are not yet in a position to give absolutes yet, we are starting to get a clearer picture of the return and what it may look like. The stadium remains closed but indications from the State government are we will get limited access in late June and more open access mid July.

JUNIOR DOMESTIC: All planning is underway for a winter season starting after school holidays. We are playing with different format options to ensure as normal a season experience as possible. One of our guidelines is to return to normal as soon as possible so whilst we are trying to protect the summer season from any impact at all, this will play into our winter planning. We are also looking to add in some other experiences for the domestic kids like free clinics and training days leading up to the season, as part of your winter registration.

BIGV and VJBL: The first steps are starting to be taken, getting teams interacting and in some cases running outdoor fitness sessions as we prepare for the representative seasons. Planning is around possible August to December seasons, will get plenty of notice though so we can get a preseason in.

SENIOR DOMESTIC: A season kick off will be planned once we have a clearer picture of Junior Domestic and Rep dates. A proper Senior Domestic season needs a bit more room than Juniors so it may mean a summer season alignment as a kick off date. Options for other competition types until then are being considered also.

KEY POINTS

There are some things we need parents and players to start preparing for. When we do return we will still be under restrictions that will need strict adherence. Things will not be as they were for a little while, in fact kids will have more freedoms at school than at Basketball. Some things you might expect:

- Separate entry and exit doors.
- Limits on attendees eg 1 parent (we hope not but it may happen), and in own cars.

- Restricted seating areas and not being able to sit with friends in stands
- Changed times with a requirement to leave straight after your game and no entry prior to game time
- No training, to allow for a time slot change over a period of 20 minutes.
- Social distancing and sanitisation rules
- The need to leave your name and phone number as you enter the stadium for Contact - tracing purposes

We are working closely with the state and local Government, Basketball Victoria and the Stadium Committee to work through all the guidelines and implement everything necessary to keep everyone safe while getting back to playing sport.

It will be a bit awkward no doubt but we have a lot of confidence in our basketball community that we will all be in it together and do what we need to to put on a great experience for our players. We will have a lot of signage to help and are also looking to put together an FAQ prior, that you can refer to.

April 30th

Again we hope this finds all of our community safe and well.

An interesting stat to share, it apparently takes 66 days for human behaviour to become a muscle memory habit, there will be some interesting changes to society as we come out of this. On the positive side perhaps time with family and friends will be even more valued and we have learned the real meaning of necessity, learning to live without things we perhaps thought were more important in our busy lives. Basketball though is definitely on the necessity side :)

We are certainly missing all of our domestic kids and families and interacting with everyone on a Saturday.

The club continues to manage costs and we are currently comfortable that we will pull through this ok and Basketball will be back bigger than ever in the near future. Recent meetings with Basketball Victoria are very much in the vein of future planning and preparation to ramp back up.

The big news there is we are being asked to begin preparation for the return of Junior Domestic, to be ready on a two week notice. No indication of exactly when the notice will come but it's exciting to think it's close. We have a team thinking through what that will look like, how to start in a two week ramp up and then rolling on later into the summer comp.

There is also still an absolute intent for a VJBL and BigV season in 2020. Clearly there will be some modification to timing and we may go longer in the year but it is all positive news assuming conditions continue to improve as they are. The current focus will be working with the Government to get stadiums re-opened and training activity up and going.

We have our competition going for kids to post videos to our Facebook or instagram accounts and have had some great entries so far. We think it's an important way for the kids to stay connected and have a chance to win a new pair of basketball shoes along the way. The competition is open to all the kids, domestic and rep so we encourage everyone to get involved.

Lastly a shout out to our Platinum Sponsor Wallan McDonalds who have renewed their sponsorship for another few years, supporting the club in a time of need.

Stay safe all, if anyone is in need we continue to encourage you to reach out to us. Any requests will be kept confidential. Our members are our priority at this time.

<https://www.wallanbasketball.com.au/community-support-program>

Regards
Gary O'Brien
President WBI (on behalf of the committee.)

April 6th

Well we are certainly in strange times indeed.

First and foremost we hope our basketball family is doing well and staying safe. We have launched a Community Support Program to both help our basketball families and also give local business the opportunity to interact with you so we can support them, if you know of anyone in need or of a local business that wants to contact our community point them at:

<https://www.wallanbasketball.com.au/community-support-program>

We encourage you to reach out to our committee if in need. Any requests will be kept confidential. Our members are our priority at this time.

As a club we have managed to minimise our costs as much as we can and are feverishly working to ensure our survival and to be ready to go when Basketball gets a green light. It's a balancing act but I'm confident the committee is a strong one and full of the skills we need to guide us through. We want to shout out to our sponsors who have been amazing in these times and very supportive. Know that basketball is here to stay, we are not going anywhere and will be back.

Many of you will know Sharif has chosen to stay in Aus with us, one of very few Imports to remain in the country. I get asked about him often and want to assure everyone he is doing fine and enjoying creating training videos etc for everyone. Feel free to remain in touch with him. Also a great big thank you to Kim Johnson and her family for being amazing hosts for him at this time.

One thing we would love to see more of is our kids on social media, training away and staying connected to the game, show us how you are going and give us a glimpse of your talents.... Don't be shy, tag us on instagram or send a video to Sharif and he will take care of it.

In regard to our programs, we continue to interact with government and Basketball Victoria and are in preparation mode for basketball to return. Domestic juniors will be our priority and we are discussing what that will look like and how we get up to speed as soon as possible. We recognise that many have registered already, for any families facing hardship please reach out and we will organise refunds, however our intent is still to get the season up and running. VJBL is in the same boat. We await advice from BV on the season but at the moment the season is simply suspended. We expect further advice after easter.

Stay safe and stay home.

Regards
Gary O'Brien
President WBI (on behalf of the committee.)

MARCH 19th

Just keeping everyone in the loop as much as possible. Clearly people are seeking information and a degree of certainty about competitions going forward, we will attempt to give as much as we can when we can using this format.

These are certainly odd times and it's tough to balance the number one priority of everyone's health, with helping our community stay positive, have fun and stay connected to this wonderful game we love so much.

Clearly as an indoor sport we fall into the new category of no more than 100 people congregating at a time. This still leaves a range of opportunities for basketball activities and a general means by which we can keep kids active, connected and positive. There are a lot of discussions ongoing across the basketball community, government and medicos to consider options especially in relation to grassroots basketball. We will share strategies as they emerge.

AUSSIE HOOPS / KINDY BALL: These remain suspended until further notice.

JUNIOR DOMESTIC: The Summer Domestic season is officially over. Competitions will be awarded based on who finished highest on the ladder of the remaining teams. Singlet drop off will be organised once we have more info.

BIGV and VJBL: The season start has been delayed, alternative scheduling options are being considered to complete a full season as normal. Training remains cancelled pending Basketball Vic advice.

BIGV will not start prior to *May 15th*, we will be given 4 weeks notice on the eventual start date

SENIOR DOMESTIC: Our Summer Senior Domestic competition has been cancelled. The team that made it into the Grand Final already will be deemed the winner of the competition.

OTHER POINTS:

- The Junior Domestic Winter Season remains as planned and registrations are open for the season to begin after the Easter Holidays.
- One on One sessions with Sharif are still on and small group sessions in **school holidays** will be available instead of holiday clinics, contact Sharif directly on Facebook or via the club to organise.
- **Weekly video training sessions** hope to be starting next week on the PanthersTV channel and linked to facebook.
- We have had a few questions regarding insurance, details regarding COVID-19 and Basketball can be found at <http://basketballvictoria.com.au/insurance-covid-19/>

If you have any concerns or questions please feel welcome to contact the club directly at Wallanbasketball@gmail.com

Regards
Gary O'Brien
President WBI (on behalf of the committee.)

MARCH 16th

The committee met today to discuss the ongoing response to the COVID-19 virus. We ask all families to keep an eye on Facebook or TeamApp as this is where we will continue to communicate from.

Firstly we want to thank everyone for their understanding. This is a very unique situation and we are all learning and adapting as we go. The situation continues to evolve and no doubt it will change again in the near term, this update is based on the information we have today. Basketball Victoria are in constant contact with the Government and Medical bodies so we will take our guidance from them.

There are a number of absolutes and then a range of evolving recommendations that we as a committee are keeping a watch on and will make decisions based on as more information comes to hand. We will attempt to provide as much clarity as we can for each competition in this update.

The Absolutes are:

- The BigV season opening is delayed so there are no BigV games
- The VJBL season opening is delayed so there are no Friday night games.

The following are our response to the Basketball Victoria 'recommendations', again these can change fast and we will keep the community informed as things progress.

AUSSIE HOOPS / KINDY BALL: These are both suspended until further notice.

JUNIOR DOMESTIC: The Summer Domestic season is officially over. Competitions will be awarded based on who finished highest on the ladder of the remaining teams. We hope to be able to provide a fun presentation day in the future to award trophies.

VJBL: The VJBL season start is delayed. In addition we have cancelled all training for the following week and will reassess toward the end of next week.

BIGV: BigV season start has been delayed. As per VJBL we are cancelling training this week, to be assessed later in the week.

NOTE: For VJBL our intent is to offer some optional skills training sessions for teams if we can. We also intend to resume BigV training ASAP. However we will only do this in line with government and medical industry recommendations and with increased hygiene practices. We are aware several other basketball clubs and other sports are implementing this but we would want more information from Basketball Victoria before we would do this. We would also not force anyone to participate if they felt uncomfortable and recommend anyone in a high risk category (e.g. low immune system or pre-existing conditions) not attend until we get the all clear to resume.

SENIOR DOMESTIC: Our Summer Senior Domestic competition has been postponed. We will reassess and make a final decision in the next 2 weeks whether we can run the rest of the games. If not the team that made it into the Grand Final already will be deemed the winner of the competition.

OTHER POINTS DISCUSSED:

- The Junior Domestic Winter Season remains as planned and registrations are open for the season to begin after the Easter Holidays.
- One on One sessions with Sharif can still go ahead

- Sharif and Leo will produce **weekly video training sessions** that can be completed at home so kids can keep themselves tuned up, these will be posted to PanthersTV channel and linked to facebook. We will do one for rep and one for domestic/hoops.
- We hope to still provide **School Holiday Basketball** activity/clinics but if we do it will be in age group sessions across a few days, reducing the numbers of attendees in any one time slot. This will only occur if the circumstances allow.

If you have any concerns or questions please feel welcome to contact the club directly at Wallanbasketball@gmail.com

Regards
Gary O'Brien
President WBI (on behalf of the committee.)