



TIMBER TIMES

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MUSKEGONLUMBERJACKS.COM 231.799.7000 MERCY HEALTH ARENA

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME: MUSKEGON LUMBERJACKS ORGANIZATION WILL KEEP COMMITMENT TO PLAYERS

A letter from Lumberjacks' owners, Dan Israel and Bob Kaiser; to the fans, sponsors and the entire Lakeshore community

Since Dan Israel purchased the team in 2014, with Bob Kaiser joining as co-owner in 2018, every decision we made was with our mission statement in mind: to become the best junior hockey organization in the world, both on and off the ice.

In the past six years, with support from the City of Muskegon, we have developed a top-tier venue and established worldwide recognition. To play for the Lumberjacks represents not only the opportunity to uniquely elevate a player's game, but to grow as a person in ways they may not otherwise have imagined. The values and the work ethic instilled in them during their time on this team is invaluable.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way we live and work. At this time, the State of Michigan will not allow Lumberjack fans inside Mercy Health Arena. This directive will have a serious impact on the organization's ability to function economically. Beyond the financial implications, these young men have worked nearly their entire lives to play for a team like the Lumberjacks. To turn them away this season could have detrimental, permanent setbacks.

Further, the USHL did grant the Lumberjacks permission to "go dark;" essentially, the opportunity to shut down our hockey team for the season.

As fathers to D-1 college hockey players, we know firsthand how important it is to create a safe environment. As lifelong hockey fans and owners of an elite junior hockey organization, we feel a responsibility to protect a player's dream. We cannot, in good conscious, take the game away from these young men at such a pivotal time in their lives. We will not allow temporary circumstances to permanently jeopardize what they have worked so hard to achieve.

That is why, in accordance with all government directives, we have made the important decision to play the 2020-2021 season.

At no time will we jeopardize the health of our team. In fact, it is with their well-being in mind that we have come to this decision. In any season, to play at this level requires tremendous concentration on physical health. We have created a robust organization in Muskegon, with an expert staff dedicated to protecting the athletes' well-being on and off the ice. While we will miss the in-person support of our fans, it is our sincere

hope that at some point this season we can all be together again, cheering on this great team at Mercy Health Arena.

In the meantime, you can still join us from home all season long by tuning in to HockeyTV. Furthermore, Muskegon offers free audio via Mixlr for every home game, and many other USHL teams do the same.

Finally, we want to thank you. The Muskegon community always has been and always will be an essential part of the Lumberjacks' success. Thank you for your unwavering support for not only this organization, but for these outstanding young men.

We hope to see you soon,
Dan Israel and Bob Kaiser



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