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Dear Oakland Rec. Families,

Over the past three weeks, the Oakland Recreation Department has been deliberating on holding a soccer program. We have closely monitored the guidance provided by the national and state CDC, information provided by the Maine Recreation and Parks Association, and held discussions with surrounding youth sports directors. Our goal has been to determine whether we can safely hold our youth soccer program.

Last week, the state updated their "Community Sports" guidelines. Under these guidelines, soccer is categorized as "Moderate Risk", which allows for outdoor practice and "competition between teams from the same geographic area". After careful deliberation, we have decided to move forward with our youth soccer program. The towns of Belgrade and Sidney have made the same decision.

With our decision to play in mind, our number one goal is to keep all children, parents, and spectators safe. We have developed COVID-19 specific safety measures that will be in place for practice and games. These guidelines are detailed in the "2020 Messalonskee Youth Soccer Health and Safety Policies", which can be found on our website and Facebook page. We also have copies available at the Oakland Town Office. Please read this document prior to registering and ensure that you are making the best decision for your family.

The success of our program is dependent upon the cooperation of everyone in our community. We need everyone involved to strictly follow our policies. We are currently limited to 100 people for public gatherings. This may impact families' ability to view practices and games. We ask that spectators are limited to as few family members as possible. Those spectators in attendance need to practice social distancing. Most importantly, if players, coaches, or spectators do not feel well, they need to stay home.

No matter how stringent the safeguards we put in place, we cannot guarantee that COVID-19 will not become an issue for us. We will tell you that we will work very hard to keep all involved safe and healthy, while allowing our children to get some exercise and play soccer with their friends.

Lastly, we understand the financial impact that COVID-19 has had on many families in our community. Every child in our community deserves the opportunity to play soccer, regardless of ability to pay. While we will maintain our regular fee structure, we will not turn anyone away. Please inquire about one of our scholarships if necessary.

Please understand that all of this is subject to change at any point. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out. Feel free to give us a call at 465-7357 or send an email to rsucy@oaklandmaine.us.

Thank you,

Oakland Recreation Department