

YOU

FANCY FILMING TO HIDE BABY BUMP

Ever since *This Is Us* actress Mandy Moore announced she was pregnant, fans have wondered how the show will deal with her character's expanding belly. And on Friday's episode of *Today*, Moore, shown, gave viewers a hint.

"I'm sure you'll see Rebecca carrying a lot of laundry baskets and oversized purses and God knows what for the next couple of months," she said.

Creator Dan Fogelman told *People* last



month he wasn't worried about concealing Moore's pregnancy.

"We are so far ahead in scripts that we can compensate for things as need be," he said. "Because our timelines are so split and because we live in so many timelines, there may be a brief period and window where you don't see a lot of old Rebecca on the show because she would have some really complicated explaining to do."

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SECTION D



The dramatic summit chalet at Bromont, montagne d'expériences. "People want to be outdoors," says CEO Charles Désourdy. "But we'll control access. We can almost predict the busy days when we will have to restrict day tickets — normally the slopes would be packed after major snowfalls and on sunny days." BROMONT, MONTAGNE D'EXPERIENCES

BUMPY CONDITIONS

ROCHELLE LASH

At least two things are certain about the downhill slide-sports season of 2020-21: it will happen, and it will have a few bumps.

Quebec's 1.4 million skiers and riders can enjoy lifts, trails, washrooms and new digital tracing, but very little in the way of avant- or après-ski. And, tucked between our helmets and our masks, we'll probably have foggy goggles.

It will be pure ski-ride mode, with few frills.

Children will be out of luck if snow school is cancelled, especially at popular beginners' areas such as Mont Rigaud and Ski Saint-Bruno.

Grown-ups will miss the camaraderie. The successful charity sport-athon Tremblant 24h, set for Dec. 4 to 6, has moved online. Elevation Tremblant Gay Ski Week is off the calendar, and Mont Sutton has suspended the rollicking music jams at Bar Le Tucker. And Bromont, with its extensive night terrain, has streamlined its moonlit Nuits Blanches — snow sports will happen, but without the parties.

Many mountain operators have been studying 2020's summer of skiing in Southern Hemisphere countries such as Chile, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.

"Tremblant is working to make this season's experience user-friendly and to promote accessibility to our mountain," said Patrice Malo, president and COO of Station Mont Tremblant, which originally scheduled an ambitious start date of Nov. 20, but changed that to Nov. 27 due to unseasonably warm temperatures. (Many other sites don't have firm opening dates, partly because the recent warm weather has complicated snow-making operations.)

"Health and safety are at the forefront of our priorities," said Malo. "We'll be monitoring our employees, strictly following guidelines and staying flexible as the situation changes."

Visitors may be in good company, possibly skiing and riding alongside Olympic champions Jasey-Jay Anderson and Erik Guay,

There will be fewer frills for Quebec skiers and riders this season, and the pandemic protocol will largely involve the honour system to 'respect the rules'



Day skiers at some areas, including Tremblant, will have to reserve dates in advance. TREMBLANT



Physical distancing will apply at Tremblant's colourful slopeside village. TREMBLANT



A freestyler at Sommet Saint-Sauveur, which opened for the season Oct. 30. ALAIN DENIS/LES SOMMETS

who are Tremblant ambassadors, and Mikaël Kingsbury and the Du-four-Lapointe sisters, whose home area is Les Sommets in St-Sauveur.

TICKETS TO RIDE

Most mountains will give priority to season-pass holders, in

order to restrict the number of visitors for purposes of physical distancing. Day skiers can buy a limited number of tickets online, and at some areas — such as Tremblant, Bromont and Les Sommets — they'll have to reserve dates in advance, occasionally facing a

"sold out" announcement. Most single-day deals, such as the under-\$30 weekday bargains at Mont Sutton, will be eliminated, along with Tremblant's Latitude, Costco and Ski Max tickets.

If you plan to ski or ride more than a half-dozen times, season

passes are great deals, with lots of perks. Owl's Head offers the NINOXE4, which is \$139 per person for the season if you buy four at once. Depending on when you buy, Mont Blanc's juniors can ski for \$259 to \$359. At Mont Habitant, a five-day, five-night adult pass costs \$135 to \$155.

Because this year is fraught with uncertainty, many areas are offering a "guaranteed season," which means a full refund by a certain date for an unused pass. If Tremblant's clients do not use their 2020-21 Tonik passes, they can receive full credit, rolled over to 2021-22. If they bought insurance, the pass is refundable in the case of illness or other reasons.

SHADES OF SUMMER

The 2019-20 season was truncated in March. Downhillers were bereft of the annual spring bacchanalia, while mountain operators posted a cumulative \$60-million loss. Then, summer was a surprise. While commerce, sports and hospitality reopened sluggishly in cities, there was an exodus of urbanites to the countryside, where sports provided a release. The same intense interest is expected for winter.

"Based on our mountain biking and water-park success, we will be very popular," said Charles Désourdy, CEO of Bromont, montagne d'expériences. "People want to be outdoors, and some who aren't travelling south will return to skiing."

"But we'll control access. We can almost predict the busy days when we will have to restrict day tickets — normally the slopes would be packed after major snowfalls and on sunny days."

PANDEMIC PLAYBOOK

"We are counting on everyone to respect the rules," said Yves Juneau, CEO of the Association des stations de ski du Québec (ASSQ), which has 75 members. "We can have a great season despite the pandemic, but it's an honour system, especially for people coming from a red zone."

SEE SKI ON D2



Mont Sutton is prized for its glade skiing. *SKI MONT SUTTON*

COLOUR-CODED PROTOCOLS ON THE PEAKS

SKI FROM **D**

The government's colour-coding will rule, but regardless of the alert level, two-metre distancing will apply and double-layer face coverings will be mandatory. That means whisper-thin neckwarmers won't make the cut. That's part of the honour system.

"We do not want to be unwelcoming," said Juneau, "but we advise people to arrive at the mountain dressed and ready to go, then ski or ride and depart promptly, all with limited contact. That might mean eating a sandwich in your car."

One hitch is that people will not be able to leave their gear in the lodge, so they'll have to suit up and boot up in their cars.

Technology will also be a factor. To track possible contagion, the ASSQ is developing an electronic tool — which may be ready by December — to enable mountain operators and health authorities to trace skiers, based on their online purchases of tickets and scanning at the lifts.

Juneau explained the pandemic protocol: If an area is in a green, yellow or orange zone, most facilities will operate and there will be food service, but with limitations. If an area is in a red zone, chalets will be used only for brief warm-ups and washroom breaks, and there won't be snow school or locker access, although ski shops will be open and daily rentals will be available.

The ASSQ has developed a colour-coded chart that clarifies the intricate regulations, especially on lifts (visit mysnow.ski). Skiers and snowboarders from the same household will be asked to ride together. If the ski zone is green, yellow or orange, chairlifts will run at normal capacity and gondolas will be at 50 per cent. If the area is in a red zone, gondolas will carry two at a time. Singles from red zones have to distance by two metres; this means two single skiers can ride on the six-person chairs at Mont Orford, Sommet Sauveur, Bromont and Le Relais near Quebec City, but singles would ride alone on a quadruple.

OFF-TRAIL

This might be the ideal time to try an hors-piste adventure. Powder hounds can frolic in an average seven metres of snow with cat-skiing and riding at Massif du Sud, east of Lévis, and heli- and cat-skiing at Chic-Chac in Murdochville, in the Gaspé.

Tremblant and Mont-Sainte-Anne operate alpine touring — cardio-busting uphill treks. Le Massif de Charlevoix offers scenic cross-country at Sentier des Caps, as well as guided backcountry touring over the mountains and through the woods.

THE NUMBERS

In other years, Quebec slide sports represented an \$800-million industry and generated almost 33,000 jobs, but this won't be a profitable season.

One Laurentian manager said it would be "survival mode," with additional technology, fewer skiers and reduced revenues from food and beverage sales, equipment sales and rentals and possibly ski school.



Mont Orford has a vertical drop of 589 metres, the longest in the Eastern Townships. *EASTERN TOWNSHIPS TOURISM*

For example, the mini-empire of Les Sommets' five areas in the Lower Laurentians and Gatineau tallies approximately 700,000 skier visits during an average season. Anticipating less traffic, Olympia and Morin Heights will offer night skiing only on weekends, and Gabriel not at all, and the three areas will close on Mondays and Tuesdays. But exceptionally for this year, those pass holders can access the big sister, Sommet Saint-Sauveur/Avila, although you'll need a Gabriel-Plus pass.

"Being so close to Montreal, we usually have a strong market of day skiers who we'll integrate as best we can," said Louis-Philippe Hébert, CEO of Les Sommets. "We're among the leaders in both accessible pricing and night skiing, and we'll still be the first in Quebec to open and the last to close." (Sommet Saint-Sauveur opened Oct. 30 and has operated intermittently since.)

"Our goal this year is to keep people's spirits up by keeping them skiing and riding," said Hébert.