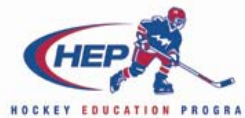




Hockey Education Program (HEP) Newsletter



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Parental Pressure in Sport Andrew Link

Pressure being placed on children by parents to excel as an athlete seems to be increasing. In addition, some children are being enrolled in competition too early. Sometimes young children will pressure their parents to enroll them in sport at too early an age, despite not being prepared mentally or physically. In these cases it becomes very important that parents closely examine their youngster's physical and emotional maturity before making commitments to athletic participation. However, the parent and child relationship in which the parent applies pressure on the child to not only participate in sport, but to aspire to elite status, is most concerning. Having a son or daughter willing and able to play on a hockey team is very positive. In cases where the child is highly motivated both parties can benefit and feel pride. But, a child should not feel pressured by a parent concerning their participation in sport.



Parental rage, the early stages.

The parental responsibility in child development includes being a supporter, motivator, facilitator, and even a coach of all facets of life. Even with this role in place it is natural that a child will feel some level of pressure to succeed and glorify their parent's aspirations. Growing up I was not negatively pressured by my parents to succeed or participate in sports. The emphasis in our household was placed heavily on academics, and athletics were extracurricular and played at my discretion. As it turned out, I loved many sports, was a fairly "natural" athlete, and was fortunate enough to play multiple sports at the college varsity level. Even though I was not subjected to pressure or coercion to participate in sports, there was no situation that got my legs moving faster or made me shoot harder than when my mother and father were in the stands. Competitive athletes are subjected to many physical, mental, and emotional demands. There is always a winner and a loser, and the competitive pressure to succeed is very high (some more so than others). Had there been any additional pressure placed upon me from them I do not think I would have been able to handle it. As I went through the levels of participation in sport I recall horror stories of pressure and abuse placed upon children by their parents to thrive in sport. Out of these situations there were very few positive outcomes that transpired.

HEP Committee Members

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Dave Margenau | Tracy Fischer |
| Aynsley Smith | Angela Nippert |
| Dave Bakke | Suzannah Mork |
| Barry Ford | Karen Jamison |
| Mark Jorgensen | Craig Turner |
| Tom Slaird | Bob "O.C." O'Connor |
| Dick Emahiser | Andrew Link |
| Bob Halverson | Jim Wings |
| Dennis Green | Greg Nagen |
| Tim Timm | Terry Evavold |
| Matt Sorenson | Hal Tearse |
| Michael Stuart | Mike MacMillan |
| Eric Olson | |

Parental Pressure in Sport (Continued)

In respect to parenting there are many responsibilities in ensuring that your child is ready to handle the real world. This involves celebrating everyday victories and also supporting them during difficult times. It is important that parents do not add additional pressure to their children's already hectic life and especially during times that are intended to be fun, such as athletics. It is a great feeling when your child makes the "A" team or scores the overtime goal, but these opportunities and situations are not always the case. You may not be aware that you are pressuring your child to become an elite athlete. Your own attitudes and behaviors can be difficult to detect. That is why it is important talk with your children and the people around you to ensure that you are focused on having fun with athletics and being a positive, loving role model.

A must see video for all hockey folks: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhE1qXOeD7g>.

A must Read, as well: <http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/sports/article/398156>

HEP—Game Data Analysis—(SMC) 'Hockey Center Team'

Of 8839 total scoresheets received, a 25% sample was randomly selected for each level (2210 total) for the 2007-2008 game data analysis. These data were compared with data from previous years'; examining "dangerous" penalties taken, Fair Play Points earned, and trends over the past four years. Analysis of game data allows the HEP committee to monitor the effectiveness of Fair Play, Coaching Education and Skill Development, to determine year to year differences in penalties and sportsmanship. Below are a few graphs illustrating comparisons over the last four seasons. In the captions below the graphs is a brief evaluation/synopsis.



**Total Major Penalties-Per 100 Games:
A Four year Comparison**

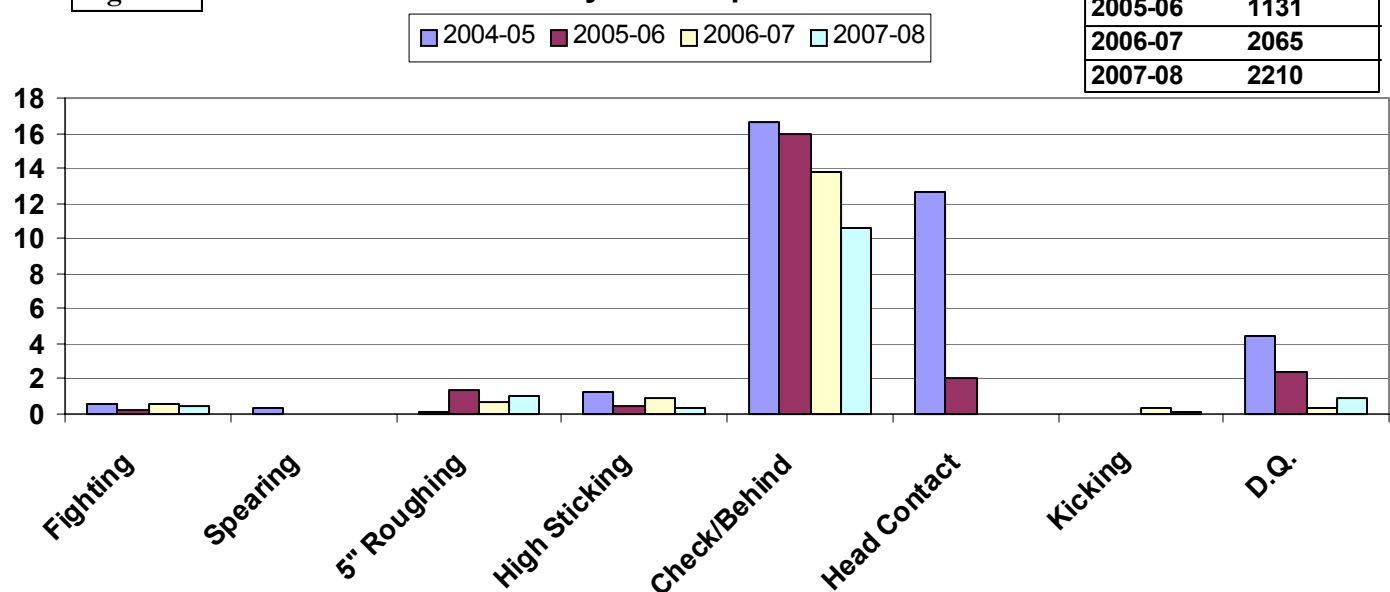


Figure 1—Of major penalties, checking from behind, head contact, high sticking, kicking, and most notably fighting (speculated to be on the rise) declined since last year. Roughing, game disqualifications, and spearing are all up slightly in 2007-08 compared to the number of those infractions reported the previous year.

HEP—Game Data Analysis—(Continued)

**Checking From Behind Penalties-Per 100 Games:
A Four Year Analysis**

SEASON	N-Value
2004-05	1543
2005-06	949
2006-07	1649
2007-08	1709

Figure 2

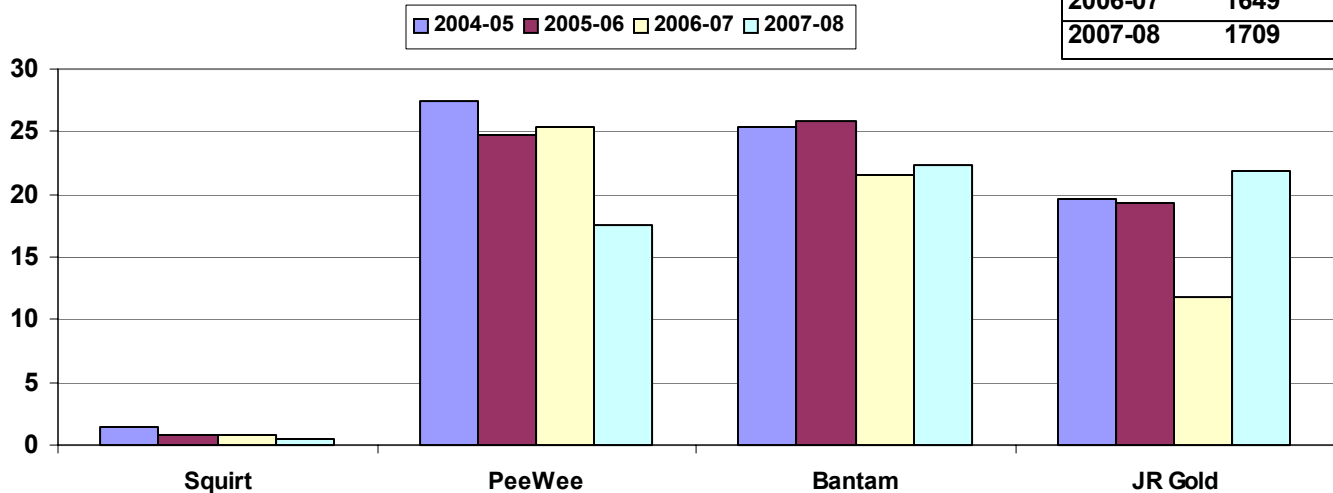


Figure 2—At the Pee-Wee level there was a dramatic decrease between the 2006-07 season and the 2007-08 season. At the Bantam level the incidence rose slightly from last season, and at the JR Gold level, there was a spiked increase in this dangerous penalty.

**Total Penalties-Per 100 Games:
A Four Year Comparison**

SEASON	N-Value
2004-05	1543
2005-06	949
2006-07	1649
2007-08	1709

Figure 3

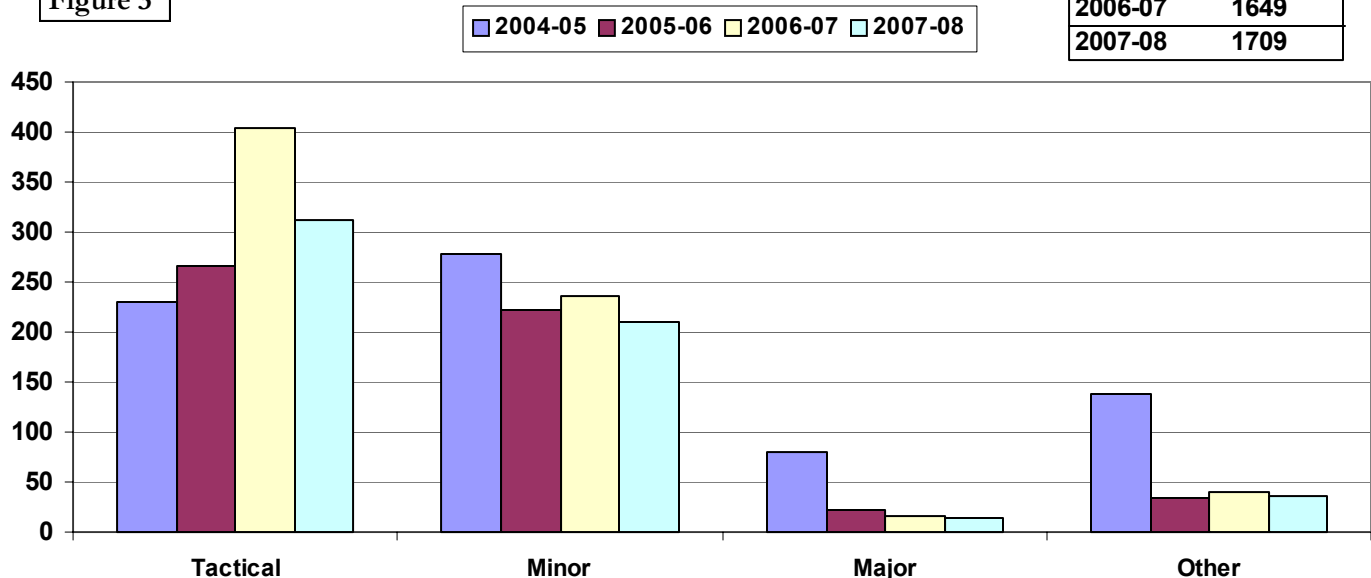


Figure 3—The total penalties per 100 games dropped most markedly in the tactical category. Additionally positive is that the numbers continued to decrease in all other categories, as well (minor, major, and other). That dramatic decrease in FPP earned was initially disquieting since there was a decrease in check/behind and most major penalties, which incur the greatest loss of FPP. Upon further evaluation the percentage drop was most likely ascribed to the large increase in tactical penalties, which can be attributed to the rule changes that took place between the 2005-06 season that forced officials to be more vigilant of the obstruction infractions. Therefore, the increase in FPP between the 2006-07 and 2007-08 seasons is what MN Hockey officials had expected, due largely in part to the players acclimating to the new rules of play.

HEP—Game Data Analysis—(Continued)

Figure 4

% FPP Earned-Per Level: A Four Year Analysis

SEASON	N-Value
2004-05	1845
2005-06	1131
2006-07	2065
2007-08	2210

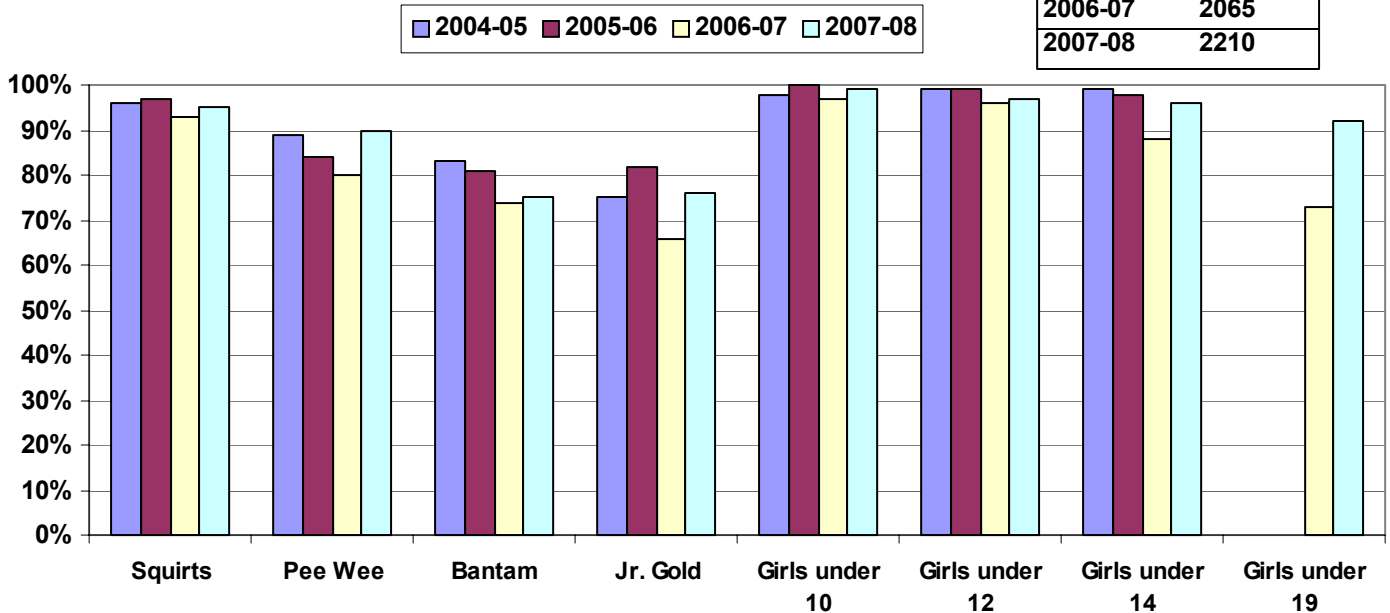
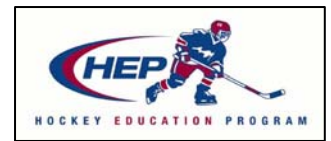


Figure 4—The percent of FPP earned by both boys and girls increased at every level of play during 2007-08 compared to the 2006-07 season. In last years analysis every level of play had the exact opposite trend and every level, both boys and girls, dropped in percentage between the 2005-06 and the 2006-07 season, thereby supporting the MN Hockey explanation from Figure 3.



HEP Implementation Guide Distribution 2008-2009



Planning- Implementation

This guide is intended to assist the local hockey association ACE Coordinator and association board in developing plans for their 2008 - 2009 HEP implementation. It is likely that each association's plan will differ based on past accomplishments, current needs and priorities and resources they can devote to HEP. The following outlines the tools that are available:

Fair Play

Use Fair Play in your Invitational Tournaments. Guideline is available on HEP page of Minnesota Hockey website.

Use Fair Play results to set sportsmanship goals and provide feedback to teams and coaches.

(Continued)

HEP Implementation Guide 2008-2009 (Cont.)

Parent & Coach Education

The 2008 - 2008 HEP Parent Education:

Can be delivered in small group meetings or as a part of the parent team meeting.

For details see "Parent Education Overview" and "Parent Education Leader Guide" on the Minnesota Hockey HEP webpage at <http://www.minnesotahockey.org/hep/default.asp>.

Should be delivered by someone familiar with the materials to best lead the discussions.

Designed to be delivered for these three levels

Parents of first year player who have not had any HEP training

Parents of Mite/8U players who do not play games with league standings where Fair Play applies

Parents of Squirt/10U players competing in games where Fair Play applies

For new coaches or those who have not received the HEP coaches manual "Coaches Who Never Lose", provide a copy of the manual.

Skill Development

Examine your practice to game ratios, set goals and take steps to move toward the HEP guidelines.

Distribute coaching aids. HEP Skill Progression manuals designed for Mite/8U, Squirt/10U and Pee-Wee/12U coaches. Minnesota Hockey coaching Skill DVD's.

Encourage coaches to use the HEP Skill Progression and Practice Time Allocations to plan and guide their season and individual practices.

Minnesota Hockey is offering coaching clinics for teaching the basic hockey skills, skating, stickhandling and passing. Minnesota Hockey will provide instructor at no cost. Contact Gary Gregus at skills@minnesotahockey.org to make arrangements.

Use Skill Challenge testing program to provide players with feedback on how he/she is progressing. Specific program testing details are available on the Minnesota Hockey website at http://www.minnesotahockey.org/hep/skill_resources/skill_resources.asp or in the Skill Challenge manuals. An Excel program can be downloaded from the Minnesota Hockey website to record testing results and print individual player evaluation forms. Go to <http://www.minnesotahockey.org/hep/default.asp> to download the program.

Awareness - Promotion

HEP e-Newsletter providing current information about the program will be distributed through the season. Encourage parents to go the Minnesota Hockey website to get on distribution list.

HEP Essay Contest. - "What teamwork in hockey means to me" Watch for upcoming announcement and encourage players to participate.

HEP Coach Recognition Program to recognize coaches whose behaviors are examples of the principles of HEP. Watch for announcement and encourage participation.

Materials

There is no cost to local associations for HEP materials. Materials can be ordered using the form on the HEP page of the Minnesota Hockey website at <http://www.minnesotahockey.org/hep/default.asp>. Complete the form and Fax it to 294.8230 or toll free 866.667.7042. (Continued)

HEP Implementation Guide 2008-2009 (Cont.)

If you have distributed HEP manuals, "Sports and Your Child" and "Coaches Who Never Lose", in the past, please only order manuals for parents and coaches who don't have them.

Mite/8U Workshop

Minnesota Hockey is offering a workshop on October 4, 2008 for associations to learn the best practices in the areas of Mite/8U program design, skill development, parent education and player recruitment. Go to Minnesota Hockey website for details.

Questions

If you have questions and/or suggestions regarding the HEP program, please contact your District ACE Coordinator; District Director; Terry Evavold, Minnesota State ACE Coordinator, at terry.mnhockey@gmail.com or Dave Margenau, HEP Committee Chair, at dmargenau@aol.com.



**Minnesota Hockey offers
coaches skill clinics
for local associations**



The popular skill development camps provided by Minnesota Hockey will return in September and October of 2008. The camps are a chance for local associations to sponsor skills clinics for their youth coaches to help them prepare for the up coming season.

The format has been revised slightly from the past couple years to include a stick handling and passing session in addition to the skating skills session. The format will comprise of one session devoted to helping coaches learn to teach skating fundamentals and how to implement the drills into their season practices. The second part of each session will cover the basics of stick handling and passing skills.

The sessions are designed for 25 coaches and 8-12 players in full uniform. The players are given instruction and go through the drills and exercises. The coaches observe and are also encouraged to participate at various times throughout each session. The teaching methods of tell-show-observe & correct are discussed and implemented.

Each participating coach receives a skills DVD from Minnesota Hockey which include all of the drills and exercises that are done on the ice. Additionally they will receive the newest Skills DVD with advanced skating drills and stick handling/passing drills.

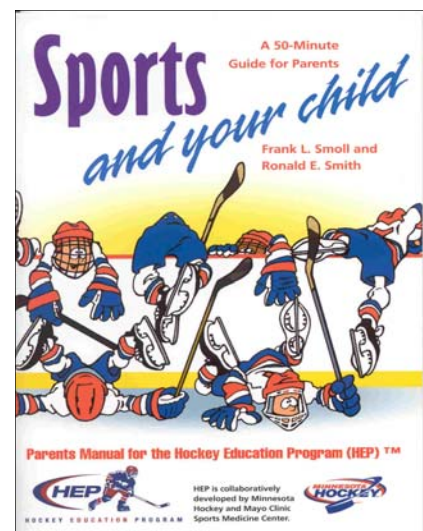
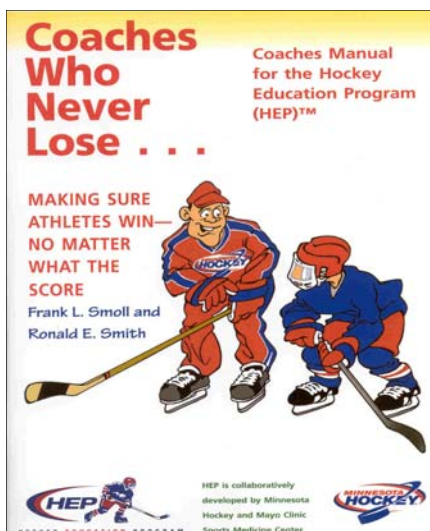
The skills sessions are offered free of charge to local youth associations. The local association needs to supply the ice time, coaches and skaters. Minnesota Hockey, under the direction of Gary Gregus will supply the on ice coaches and the DVDs. The metro area associations should schedule a week night clinic and non-metro associations weekend clinics to allow for travel. Non-metro associations may consider doing joint clinics with nearby programs. Last season 24 associations' hosted clinics and we hope to do 30 or more this year.

The skills clinics are not part of the USA Hockey Coach Education Program but rather are a great complement to helping coaches improve their coaching skills.

Interested associations should contact Gary Gregus at skills@minnesotahockey.org

Free HEP Materials!!!

HEP materials are available to all hockey associations at No Cost. Materials include the HEP manuals, “**Sports and Your Child**” for parents and “**Coaches Who Never Lose**” for coaches. Parent education materials, coaching manuals and DVD’s are also available at no charge. One third of our 160 hockey associations have ordered their materials for this season. If your association has not received your free HEP materials, it’s not too late. Have your association’s ACE Coordinator send your order in and join the others that already have theirs. Order forms are available at <http://>



Questions?

If you have questions and/or suggestions regarding HEP, please contact your District ACE Coordinator; District Director; Terry Evavold, Minnesota State ACE Coordinator at tjevavold@charter.net or Dave Margenau, HEP Committee Chair, at dmargenau@aol.com.

A message from our ACE Director

Terry Evavold

I have been thinking about this for sometime and I keep coming back to a favorite television program of my son's and that is Jeopardy. It forms it self around a question. What is ACE? What is HEP & how do they interconnect with each other?

I first would like to give a definition of the acronym ACE and what it stands for, **Association Coaching Education**.

What is ACE?

USA hockey defines the person that holds the position as an experienced individual with a strong coaching background who serves as the administrative link to USA Hockey and its Coaching Education Program (CEP). In their role, Association Hockey Directors organize and manage CEP requirements, assist the local association in the development of a well-trained coaching staff, promote parent education and provide clear goals and objectives for player skill development.

Let's take a look at another acronym, HEP, and what it stands for, **Hockey Education Program**.

Mission Statement

HEP will ensure a positive athletic experience for youth hockey players by integrating a progressive approach to skill development with coaching excellence and accountability through Fair Play.

What is HEP?

HEP is an educational program that will serve as the foundation for Minnesota youth hockey. Started in the 2004-05 season, HEP is entering its fifth season.

HEP addresses four main areas for improvement in the youth hockey culture: skill development; athletic participation; moral behavior and sportsmanship; and enjoyment by players. Three integrated components address these four challenges: **Skill Development, Education, and Accountability**

Now let's look at how these two very important pieces fit together and what they mean to you as a Coach, a Player, and Parent. As a coach they assist you with your education part making sure that all coaches are certified by USA Hockey to coach hockey. They provide you with skill development workshop focusing on various topics from cross ice to shooting. They also help you as a coach to understand that it is all about the kids and that with quality skill develop, it will bread success! As a player they help you to understand that the game can be played at the highest level and it has to be fair! You have done a great job working on your skill development and fair play. As a parent, well this maybe the hardest thing for us to do. You see this is an area that we have our greatest challenges. This past season as I traveled around the state and watched hockey, both practices and games. I was amazed at the quality of play and how the coaching is becoming more positive. I also spent time sitting next to you, although you didn't even know that I was there. We did cheer together sometimes, but other times I had to bite my tongue with what was coming out of your mouths. This is the tricky part you see, as a parent myself, I find it hard to tell you what to do but I want to challenge you this season.

A message from our ACE Director (Cont.)

I want you to find the HEP manual "Sports and my Child" by Smith and Smoll. This is where you the parent can help the coach. If you're a positive role model for your players you can change the outcome. If all that your child knows is that when they tried their best you yelled at them for what they could have done and not for what they tried to do. Please go back to the book and review the principles of the Mastery Approach to Parenting. This book is not a hard read and the information can not only be applied to hockey but to all sport. Your children look up to you and will have a more positive healthy experience. Now it is time for you to give them something to look up to. If you do not have a copy of the HEP material look to your District ACE Coordinator they would be glad to assist you in finding a copy or just ask at your team meeting.

think that you can see ACE/HEP or HEP/ACE it does matter. Together we all can make this a better game and make hockey a positive experience for all. Cheer and Cheer with zest but know the line and when someone you know is over it, talk with them and encourage them to read the book so they too can get it!

As for my team we have been busy this summer planning for the upcoming season. I would like to introduce you to your District ACE Coordinators:

Minnesota ACE Director

Terry Evavold
237 Kings Way Sartell MN 56377
terrye@minnesotahockey.org

320-229-2983-Home 320-529-4579-Work 320-766-1419-

District 1

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danm@minnesotahockey.org
651.292.9853 – Home

District 8

Steve Morse
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stevem@minnesotahockey.org
651-480-8539—Home 612-221-4444—Cell

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7146- Fax

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1099 - Cell

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d11director@aol.com

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(Continued)

A message from our ACE Director (Cont.)

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 1548 Cell

District 12

Jerry Havel

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jerryh@minnesotahockey.org
 218 327-3274-Home

District 5

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terryd@minnesotahockey.org
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 5559 -Cell

District 15

Rick Lowe
 315 1st Street NW, Glenwood, MN 56334
rickl@minnesotahockey.org
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 - Cell

District 6

Mark Palmer
 6040 McKinly Place Shorewood, MN 55331
markpep@minnesotahockey.org
 952.380.1143 Home; 612.325.8068 Cell

District 16

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 124 North Broadway Crookston, MN 56716
scottr@minnesotahockey.org
 218-281-2189-Home 218-281-1242-Work 218-281-
 5609-Fax

Please if you have any question on or about the HEP/ACE program contact your district ACE coordinator and ask how you can get involved. We look forward to seeing you at the rink and remember if you see a strange face seated next to you at your child's next game be kind and be polite, and most of all, be someone that your player can be proud of each and every day.

See you at the rink!

-Terry

Cold Dry Hands: The Short Bench

Hal Tearse, Coach in Chief
Minnesota Hockey

Hockey is a team game and youth hockey is for the enjoyment and development of all the players. At the college and professional ranks teams play 3 lines regularly and often times use the fourth line. In youth hockey the holy grail of "winning" is to often used to relegate the third line to the bench in many games.

When I coached Bantam A teams our opponents regularly shortened their bench early in the game. We beat a better team in the regional play-offs a couple years because they only played two of their three lines. We changed our three lines every 30 seconds and wore them out. When we went through the post game handshake there were 5 cold dry hands. The last game of the season for them and the third line did not skate a shift. In another instance, the third line never played a shift against us in a scrimmage game, in October. In high school games I see opponents have left the third line sitting for entire games not to mention the fourth line. In Pee Wee B, our opponents routinely shorted the bench and in one instance, during the first period. Tournaments seem to bring out the short bench syndrome.

So what is this all about? Is it about winning? Perhaps or maybe it is about not losing. Perhaps the fear of losing is stronger than the joy of winning. I cannot actually understand what is so important that a coach needs to sit a third of the team down in the important games. The impact on those players is devastating. Winning cannot heal the damage. *(Continued)*

Cold Dry Hands: The Short Bench *(Cont.)*

I am often told that the parents and players were told by the coach at the beginning of the season that this might occur and that everybody agreed to it. This is self serving for the coach because when would a parent or player speak up against a policy like this? After all, every parent and player thinks it will be the other kids who sit out. It is not until it occurs to them that the reality sinks in. By the time it happens, it is too late to object. The parents of the players who are getting the extra ice time are suddenly in favor of the short bench and will not speak up.

I know that there are two schools of thought about this. The first is that winning is the salve that heals all wounds. A player relegated to the bench during the championship run should be happy to be along for the ride. The second is that we play all season together as a team and as a team we will finish by playing together.

At the higher levels of hockey where it is a business and winning actually effects players and coach's careers, playing time differences are accepted by the participants. Players are delegated certain roles and they need to fulfill those expectations. In youth hockey, winning feels good but there are little other benefits other than adult ego gratification.

I believe that in youth hockey there is no place for the short bench. A good coach can manage the players so that all of the skaters participate in the game. A good coach will spend extra time with the weaker players through out the season to improve their skills. A coach who starts the season by talking about skill development, teaching, self esteem, and having fun would not break his word by shortening the bench. The short bench is the easy way out for a coach who has not prepared his team properly.

Does this mean a youth coach should run the lines 1,2,3? Well for the most part yes. I would suggest that a skilled coach can find a way to equal the ice time out. Will some players get more ice time than others? Yes. In fact some players do not want to be put into the game in pressure situations. Are there specific reasons to reduce ice time for individual players? Yes there are (discipline or perhaps illness) but to relegate 5 skaters and a goalie to the bench for extended periods of time in order to win is not a valid reason. In effect, the message is to those benched players is that they are being penalized for lack of talent and they are not really part of the team.

The game is for the kids, all of the kids. Research nationwide tells us that players would rather play on a team that wins 50 percent of their games than sit on the bench of a championship team with little or no playing time. The bottom line is that all of the kids want to play. Each year we lose 10,000 players nationwide as they move from Pee Wees to Bantams. Many cite the reason they quit because they are not having fun.

I can personally cite numerous conversations with Pee Wee and Bantam parents over the past several years that told me that their boys had played for 5 or 6 years and they were about to quit because there is so much pressure to win and it was not fun. I received numerous emails this past season from parents upset that their child's coach was routinely running a short bench. One instance was from the parents of a Squirt C team.

This is an issue that needs to be resolved at the beginning of each season. The parents and coaches need to all understand the policy. With a no short bench policy there are no problems. If your team is going to have a short bench policy, perhaps it is better to not have three lines but rather roster only 14 players. That would solve the problem. This one issue alone ruins the season for hundreds of kids and parents each year. Even in victory, it is hollow for the players who sat and watched their teammates play. I know several instances this past year where the teams had a problem with the policy in mid season and the teams fell apart for the rest of the year.

Parents of youth players should not put up with short bench policies. You need to get a commitment from your coaches at the beginning of the year that they will not shorten the bench. Be proactive about this issue at the beginning of the season because once the train leaves the station it is too late to get off.

“What is Teamwork?”



***Share what Teamwork means
to you!!!***

**Now is your chance to become part of *Hockey Day in Minnesota* on January 17, 2009. All registered Minnesota Hockey players are encouraged to enter by completing the following:
In 250 words or less**

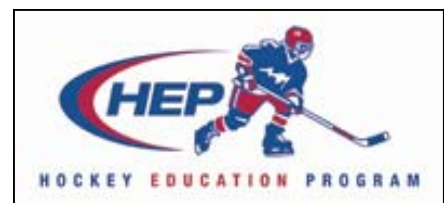
“What Teamwork in Hockey Means to Me...”

Send your essay to:

**Attn: HEP Essay Contest
Executive Director
Minnesota Hockey
317 Washington St.
St. Paul, MN 55102-1609**

Essays are due by December 1, 2008.

The names of all who submit essays will be published. Well written and thoughtful essays representing each level of participation will be entered into a drawing for prizes. Finalists will be featured during FSN “Hockey Day in Minnesota” programming on January 17, 2009. The team of the grand prize winner will receive special recognition. Please include; Name, Hockey association, Team/level, Address, and Phone Number with your entry. All entries will become the property of Minnesota Hockey.



Catastrophic Injury Registry

USA Hockey National Registry for Catastrophic Injuries in Ice Hockey

Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine Center

Principal Investigator: Michael J. Stuart M.D.

Research Coordinator: Matthew Sorenson M.A.

Hockey Center Team Member, Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine Center

The USA Hockey Safety and Protective Equipment Committee and Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine Center have established the "USA Hockey National Registry for Catastrophic Injuries in Ice Hockey." This project is funded by a grant from the USA Hockey Foundation.

The purpose of this USA Hockey registry is to collect information on the prevalence of catastrophic injuries for both genders in youth, high school, junior, college, national program, adult amateur, minor league, and professional ice hockey in the United States. The goal is to design and maintain a comprehensive registry of catastrophic injuries in ice hockey that will be the primary source of catastrophic ice hockey injury data in the United States. The registry will provide data to support potential rule and equipment changes.

A **catastrophic injury** is defined as any ailment occurring during ice hockey participation (youth, high school, junior, college, national program, adult amateur, minor league and professional) that results in death, cranial fracture, spine fracture or dislocation with spinal cord involvement, complex concussion with permanent cognitive deficit and eye injury with permanent visual impairment/blindness or a permanent disability resulting in a substantial reduction of physical ability.

A **potentially catastrophic injury** includes spine fractures/dislocations without spinal cord involvement, lacerations with involvement of arteries, veins or nerves (including neck lacerations), internal organ rupture/laceration (spleen, liver etc.), and eye injury with transient visual impairment, occurring during ice hockey participation. This determination shall be based on the circumstances of the injury and the assessment of the qualified medical professional in that instance.

This registry will provide a valuable resource for analyzing types of injuries and their influences. Factors such as mechanism of injury, level of player participation, position, rule violations at time of injury, volitional intent, and equipment or lack of, at time of injury will be analyzed. More sophisticated analysis will be conducted as the number of catastrophic injuries accumulates over time. Feel free to visit us at our website at:

http://clinicaltrials.mayo.edu/clinicaltrialdetails.cfm?trial_id=100744

Please do not hesitate to contact us either by phone at: **1.866.926.2563** or E-mail at: hockeyinjury@mayo.edu if you have any information on a catastrophic or a potentially catastrophic injury.



Catastrophic Registry

This registry will provide a valuable resource for analyzing types of injuries, their influences, and the type of equipment



Mayo Clinic

**Sports Medicine Center
(SMC)**

'Hockey Center Team'

Michael J. Stuart, MD

Aynsley M. Smith, PhD

David A. Krause, PT

Joseph J. Eischen, PT

Matthew Sorenson, MA

Andrew A. Link, BA

Neck Laceration Study-Conclusions



A USA Hockey funded E-mail survey was sent to all USA Hockey registered players with an E-mail address, and revealed that nearly half of USA Hockey players who responded currently wear a neck laceration protector. A total of 485 players (1.8%) reported that they were cut in the neck area by a skate blade while playing hockey, despite the fact that 27% of these players were wearing a neck laceration protector at the time of the injury. A detailed interview with 33 injured players revealed that all lacerations were superficial without involvement of neurovascular structures. Approximately half of these players were treated with a bandage only and one third required sutures. No injured players experienced subsequent symptoms or had a permanent deficit.

A neck laceration from a skate blade while playing ice hockey is an uncommon occurrence. The reported injuries were mild, but the potential for serious consequences due to nerve, artery or vein involvement remain a concern. The currently available neck laceration protectors do not appear to reliably prevent the injury; therefore, design enhancements are necessary to improve materials and maximize coverage of the vulnerable anatomic regions. Further research and improved standards testing are required to determine the effectiveness of these protective devices.

Revised Position Statement endorsed by the USA Hockey Safety and Protective Equipment Committee:

*“USA Hockey is very concerned about neck lacerations and the potential catastrophic involvement of arteries, veins and nerves. To date, there is sparse data to describe the prevalence of such an occurrence, the severity, or whether or not a neck laceration protector (neck guard) reduces risk or severity. Based on a survey of USA Hockey players, neck lacerations from a skate blade are rarely serious, but the potential for severe consequences due to nerve, artery or vein involvement remain a concern. In addition, current neck laceration protector designs do not eliminate the risk of a neck laceration. **USA Hockey recommends that players wear a neck laceration protector, choosing a design that covers as much of the neck area as possible.** Further research & improved standards testing will determine the effectiveness of these devices.”*

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