



September 24th, 2020

To All Association Presidents and Directors:

It has certainly been an irregular start to the 2020-21 season! It seems like information is evolving, and being updated every few days. Needless to say, it has been challenging for all parties to react in a timely fashion. In any event, I did want to take the opportunity to share some important updates:

FACIAL COVERINGS (Executive Order 2020-180)

On Monday, September 14th, an updated document was released by the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) entitled, “Public Guidance for Contact Sports.” This document contained an important update, as it pertains to Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order 2020-180. Specifically, the second page makes the following clarification:

“If a cloth face covering cannot be tolerated while engaging in athletic activity, a plastic face shield covering the mouth and nose would also be acceptable.”

In response to this, the Executive Committee met with District Chairs, the Michigan Coach-in-Chief, and the Michigan Referee-in-Chief to discuss this critical update, as well as how to implement this standard within our hockey community. Given the emerging facial covering options throughout the marketplace, including from hockey manufacturers such as Bauer and CCM, many families are looking for direction on how to safely comply with the Executive Order. As the standard continues to evolve, the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) is committed to providing clarity to all participants, in an effort to ensure consistency in implementation as well as enforcement.

Please review the revised MAHA Return to Play Standards, attached to this letter. We have refined the list of appropriate facial coverings for our game. Please note that this list is subject to change, as many of the new options on the marketplace are under review by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC) and USA Hockey’s Safety & Protective Equipment Committees. The MAHA will provide continued updates as they become available.

COMPLIANCE

It has come to our attention that there are coaches / managers notifying their teams that they will not comply with the facial covering requirements, per Executive Order 2020-180, during games. In addition to violating the current rules of play, this is a very selfish approach and disrespectful to other organizations’ teams and families.

In response, I issued a Presidential Directive, approved by the Executive Committee, that states:

- 1) If a Match Penalty is assessed, under USA Hockey Rule 633 a. or b., there will be no suspension issued as a result of the Match Penalty for any Coach or Manager (if it determined that they are refusing to start the game, because the opposing team is refusing to wear the proper facial coverings).
- 2) In addition, refusal to play under this circumstance will also not be deemed a forfeit.
- 3) Furthermore, the Head Coach of the team violating the facial covering mandate will receive a 3-game suspension, from the appropriate district, for the first offense.

If your team is faced with this scenario, where an opposing team is refusing to comply with facial covering requirements in a game, you are encouraged to refuse the start of that contest.

TEAM ROSTERS

With the irregular start of the season, many organizations are still holding team tryouts, as well as finalizing rosters. We are aware that some teams may have been together for a while; however, it has come to our attention that some teams have been playing outside of their association in non-sanctioned games. Please be aware that teams cannot play games until their roster is finalized, and sealed, by the district registrar. Rostered teams cannot play non-rostered teams, so beware of the teams that have been playing games (prior to the rinks reopening) as they may not be officially rostered.

For the next 30 days, it is recommended that teams verify that opponents have established a certified roster. This is to avoid unforeseen consequences and/or liabilities, for players and coaches, by playing a non-sanctioned team.

Thank you for all you have done to get your association reactivated for the 2020-21 season. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us and we will provide the best information we have available. We will continue to provide Zoom meeting on regular basis, to keep you informed as new information becomes available.

Thank you for your continued patience and support!

Sincerely,

George Atkinson

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President, Michigan Amateur Hockey Association