

To: District Directors
From: Terry Evavold
VP Hockey Ops
Date: 1/23/2016
RE: Mite Cross Ice Games

Good Morning to you all and I hope all is well with you and your families. I am writing you today asking you for input as I have not heard from anyone on my proposal to limiting Mite Full Ice Games from 10 to 6 and then eventual to 0 in the next few years.

Proposal:

2015-16 Leave game limit for Mite, U-8 at 10 full ice games after January 1.

2016-2017 Reduce to 6 full ice game for Mite, U-8 after January 1.

2017-2018 All Mite/8U games will be cross/half ice. (No full ice games).

Season end Jamborees at the discretion of each district director as to whether or not cross/half/full and maybe it could be a progression of cross/half/full.

There is no statistical data that allowing players at this age to skate full ice games prepares them for Squirt, U-10 the next season. The fact is playing competitive cross/half ice games provides players with the skills required on a full ice game. This season we have initiated a significant education/marketing campaign on Cross/Half ice development and games vs. full ice development and games.

I would ask all District Directors to support this and inform your association that this season you will hold all association accountable to 10 full ice games maximum.

I have copied in the note from my report this summer and I know we had a long discussion about this during our Sunday meeting. I want to formulate a plan that is fair to all and give people time adjust to what is right in player development.

Our Current Rule States-

F. MITE HOCKEY - MH strongly encourages the skill level development of all players. This is particularly critical at the Mite level so that players are provided with the foundation to enjoy and have success in the game.

1. In an effort to reduce travel expense and promote development rather than competition, Mite teams shall participate within their home association and district only. On an exception basis, the District Director(s) may, for convenience or to maintain continuity, permit a team to play outside the district. The District Director's decision is final.

2. Mites are generally organized into levels based on age, skill and the number of Mite players in the association. As a guideline, Mites should be divided into two levels: Mini-Mites (6 and Under) - the younger, beginner and less skilled players; and Mites (8 & Under) - the older, experienced, more skilled players.

3. *The focus for Mites is to teach and develop the basic skills of skating, puck handling, shooting and passing. Accordingly, cross-ice, ½ ice and small area games (Red, White and Blue) are recommended to maximize ice utilization, increase puck touches and increase the competition and fun. The American Development Model (ADM) provides the overall blueprint for player development.*
4. *At the Mini-Mite (6 and Under) level – all games shall be played cross or half ice.*
5. *At the Mite (8 and Under) level – games during the first half of the season (before December 31st.) should be played cross or half- ice. During the second half of the season there shall be no more than 10 full ice games, unless approved by the District Director and the decision of the District Director is final.*
6. *Local hockey associations are in the best position to design their programs to provide an experience where players can develop and have fun. This should be based on the principles of ADM, Red, White and Blue, the number of players in their program, the skill of their players, the availability of ice and their coaching staff.*
7. *In recognition of a need for flexibility and differences between associations, the guidelines outlined in #4 and #5 above will be monitored by the District Director. Abuses will result in sanctions against the respective association(s) at the sole discretion of the Director.*
8. *MH does not permit Mite Tournaments. MH Mite teams cannot participate in out-of-state tournaments.*
9. *Jamborees may be conducted at the Mite level. A jamboree is defined as a low-key full participation event where players have an enjoyable learning experience in a non-competitive environment*

The committee comments are as following.

Christian Koelling: *USA Hockey Minnesota District Coach in Chief, “I think we should NOT have full ice games at the mite level. I also feel that it is embarrassing to MH that we allow full ice mite games given the data that is available.”*

Mike MacMillan: *USA Hockey National Coach in Chief and Minnesota Hockey High Performance Director. Second that I think it is time!*

Patrick Westrum: *Minnesota Hockey D 6 Head Coach, Minnesota Hockey Development Director 14 program. I doubly agree. No mite games should be full ice. What a laugh. Just compare to youth level soccer. Nets and fields. Let's get smart out there parents and coaches! Westy*

Scott Macho: *Minnesota Hockey High School Boys Director. I would be in favor of this - Zero full Ice.*

Dennis Bushy: *D 15 Director Agree 100% let's not mess up mites with full ice games. Cross ice means more puck touches, more goals scored, and great retention.*

Wes Bolin: *Minnesota Hockey ADM Director it's time for this.*

Tim Morris: *Minnesota Hockey Girls High School Director. The only thing I would position for is getting this done for the 2015-16 season and not next year. Let the hockey ops group decide how we should improve the quality of our game. My two cents.*

Dick Emanhiser: *Player Development Director Bloomington Youth Hockey. Go for it! Never liked full ice Mite hockey!*

John Perry: *Vice President Good game plan Terry, I'm on board. Let me know if I can help in any way.*

I would like to have you gather data from your association as to their feelings, but again I need you all to be our voice and when we see guys like Dennis Bushy, Pat Westrum, Dike Emanhiser and John Perry saying it is time to be the leader in player development. Please let me know how I can help. I am willing to come to your districts and hear any and all thoughts so that we are in a position to make an informed decision at the 2016 Winter meeting to adjust the number and put a plan in action, but also to communicate to all members why we are doing this.

Sincerely,

Terry Evavold