

Roseau Youth Hockey

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On behalf of the Roseau Youth Hockey Board, I am submitting this letter for your consideration. We are requesting your assistance in bringing attention to the concerns we have regarding the rule to wear a mask during sports where exertion is required. This mask requirement is not supported by any data to control the spread of COVID-19 in individuals participating in sporting events. The rule seems to go against the science behind the guidelines of the CDC and WHO along with Minnesota's own Mayo Clinic.

The implementation of this rule does not seem justified to this low-risk population all the while a vaccine is being distributed and a decline in cases is being reported. The guidance states, "We do not yet know what the long-term effects of COVID-19 are; even people with mild cases may experience long-term complications". This statement is with disregard to what complications and long-term side effects would occur from wearing a mask during activities such as hockey. We feel the risks of wearing a mask while playing hockey outweighs the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission.

- ▶ Our athletes are taught to skate with their head up as advocated by USA Hockey. Skating with heads up and a mask on, regardless of mask type, causes a loss in peripheral vision.
 - This increases the likelihood of concussions or worse injuries at center ice or along the boards.
 - The likely shift of the mask during exertion, checks, and other normal game play causes extreme concern with parents as athletes may lose total vision or find themselves attempting to adjust a mask while play around them continues including checking.
- ▶ Goalies need to see the puck to be able to get into proper position to defend shots and avoid injury.

- ▶ Mouth guards are essential protective equipment and cannot effectively be utilized while wearing a mask.
- ▶ A mask inhibits oxygen intake at a time in which the body requires it most.

This list could go on. Decision makers need to understand that similar to wrestling our athletes would be increasing their risk of serious injury vs the documented low risk of exposure and transmission on the ice. We feel wearing a mask will undoubtedly contribute to significant injuries. In addition, we feel the mental health of our athletes is being disregarded by the mandates related to youth sports up to this point.

There are several surrounding States that have opened sports up fully with no restrictions and without an associated rise in COVID-19 cases. This seems to support the lack of scientific basis for the rules and control. We ask that the requirements be reevaluated and take action to remove the mask rule as mandatory to voluntary. Our athletes, along with many others have worked hard to get to where they are. They have longstanding goals as teams and individuals. We can no longer sit back and watch their excitement, drive, and hope be taken from them with no evidence to support these seemingly unwarranted decisions.

Sincerely,

Lew Erickson

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Roseau Youth Hockey President