



Dear Washington Post:

I write to express the DMV hockey community's dismay at the way your Dec. 4, 2020 article "Youth sports have been hit with few coronavirus outbreaks so far. Why is ice hockey so different?" presented our sport. As president of the national governing body local affiliate, this letter provides the facts about hockey in our region which the article omits, and did not attempt to gather.

Simply put, our risk mitigation strategy around hockey in the DMV has been very effective. There is no scientific evidence supporting the article's thesis that hockey is riskier than other sports and activities, and our region's experience thus far has been to the contrary.

The article cites outbreaks in other states primarily from the summer, and does not explain the circumstances in which those outbreaks occurred, or under which hockey is played in the DMV or in other parts of the country.

Had the *Post* engaged with the local hockey community, it would have learned that Maryland adopted strict COVID-19 safety recommendations for hockey early in the season, which have been incorporated into Montgomery and Prince George's County law, and where not legally required in Maryland and in Virginia, those standards have been voluntarily adopted by virtually by all major facilities. They would have learned that the opinions on which the article relies are based on speculation only, as the article itself conspicuously admits: as just one example, because motor vehicles (the "Zamboni") are operated in most rinks, far from suffering from "little ventilation", rinks must have powerful ventilation and air filtration systems capable of exchanging the entire air column, and regulating humidity, above an ice surface many times per day. Most importantly, the *Post* would have learned that none of the COVID-19 issues the article raises in other states have occurred here in this region, nor in neighboring states where similarly strict protocols are in place.

This is not a coincidence. The DMV's ban on using locker rooms, strict building ingress and egress procedures, social distancing requirements on player benches, masks for everyone who enters the facility, including players when not on the ice, and numerous other safety measures were all or mostly absent in connection with the outbreaks the article cites. In short, the *Post's* article portrayed our sport, on which tens of thousands of people in the DMV rely on for their exercise, camaraderie – critical when public schools are not in session – and livelihoods, in a way that is incomplete and as a result grossly inaccurate.

We respectfully request that the *Post* publish this letter to the editor as quickly as possible in order to set the record straight.

Best regards,

Linda Jondo

President
Potomac Valley Hockey Association (Maryland, D.C. and Virginia USA Hockey Affiliate)

