

Minnesota Disabled Hockey Report
January 13, 2021

USA Disabled Hockey:

The USA Disabled Festival is still scheduled for April 2021. A final decision will be made February 1st as to if it will be held this year.

Minnesota Disabled Hockey:

Minnesota Warriors:

MN Warriors are at a stand still because most of our players can't wear masks. 1 is pulling out of a league and another is currently voting on if they need to also. Sad, as this is what some of our players live for, the weekly camaraderie with other vets.

Minnesota Sled Hockey:

Now that the rinks are open again, we have scheduled another weekend at Tria Rink St Paul and Coon Rapids. Our first one in October went really well with Hope coming down for Saturday and Sunday games. It really confirmed that we would like to do this once a month during the season and just make it open to all MN Sled players/teams instead of trying to invite a specific team on a specific weekend. It would just enhance sled hockey in Minnesota, provide more opportunities for ice time and competition for our players.

Rochester team update:

COVID has forced some positive changes for our sled hockey processes. We have become very efficient getting on and off the ice which is something we will benefit from even after the pandemic (the Sled Hockey Chariot has been a game changer – check out the cool video: <https://www.creatingability.com/sled-hockey/>) and I have learned how to use technology like Zoom, YouTube and Google forms to socialize remotely, provide education from trainers about how to improve player performance, take attendance so we are better prepared for every practice and are able to contract trace if needed, collect COVID screening data electronically, and develop a Challenge to all our players to do dryland drills/training with an end of the season prize for who has the most points.

We will have a winner for the Student Athlete of the Season as well. We have created a detailed COVID plan and have attended training related to return to the rink plans from MN Hockey. All of that has kept us very busy but has also forced some organization that we will benefit from even after COVID. Check out the 4 videos we have added to our

newly created YouTube page. More to come J
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0uiaXIA05mWa2g4u-6q3LA>

Minnesota Special Hockey:

Minnesota Special Hockey had our first day back to practice yesterday after the pause and our athletes were so excited to return to the ice. We have made some changes since the pause. We decided to eliminate our Jamboree style games. 2 or 3 teams would be combined, and the athletes would play other athletes of the same ability.

For the remaining of this season, we have created pods for games. Each team will only play games against 1 other team. This will minimize exposure to many teams, while still giving our athletes game experiences. We are planning to have 3 to 4 games this season. Holding pod games also allows us to need less ice time.

We are also planning on extending our season until March 7th. Like many other organizations our registration numbers are down to 204 participants, but we had 23 new athletes register to our program. Minnesota Special Hockey is really looking forward to continuing to play hockey this season.

Minnesota Blind Hockey

MWBH returned to the ice on Sunday, January 10. It was good to get back as we had four Beginners, five Advanced and six Coaches/Volunteers. One of our Advanced skaters hadn't been on the ice since March but, other than feeling a bit winded, was happy to hit the ice. Winnie, our newest and youngest player, celebrated her 6th birthday by "making snow" with her skates!

We continue to have weekly Zoom meetings and support each other off the ice during COVID!

Minnesota Disabled Hockey Committee:

We participated in the first virtual disabled hockey coaching clinic and certified 10 new coaches. We hope to make this an annual event.

Minnesota Disabled Hockey supplied 2 teams with clear masks. They both have a deaf/hard of hearing players and this will allow them to still be able to lip read and also see expressions, which they rely on greatly.

Respectfully submitted,
Antonia Gillen
USA Disabled Hockey Director
Minnesota District