

USA Hockey

Player Development Committee

Sub-Committee on Body Checking

Recommendation: the sub-committee recommends that a proposal be submitted to the Playing Rules Committee that delays full body checking until the 14 and under youth classification.

Rationale:

- Skill development is the #1 reason to delay full body-checking until Bantams.
 - Per sports science (LTAD), 9-12 yrs old is the 'optimal window for skill acquisition' – when the ADM managers ran back to back practices with a group of Squirts and then with a group of Peewees the next hour, it was obvious to all of the ADM Managers that the peewee group did not attempt to handle the puck or make plays as much as the Squirts – instead, they focused on either trying to hit or avoid being hit in the competitive games...while the Squirt group tried to handle the puck more and make plays because they weren't thinking about being hit...by delaying full & legal body-checking until Bantams, the Body-checking Task Force believes these players will benefit from two more years of developing skating, balance, strength, game understanding/ anticipation, stick-handling, passing, receiving & shooting skills.
 - Body-checking is a very important skill, too – it's like learning to drive a car – we'll require proper full body-checking to be taught for two years in peewee practices to prepare players for bantam games when full-checking will be allowed. Increased, significant, legal body-contact will be encouraged in all peewee games...we also want to increase body contact in mites with station practices & cross-ice games that will help reduce time & space & result in more collisions requiring kids to learn to keep their heads up...squirts with more small area competitive games in practice and significant body contact allowed in games...I've attached a document that helps describe legal body-contact & vs illegal for non-checking divisions.

- Player safety is the #2 reason to delay full body-checking until Bantams. By teaching progressively increased body-contact for six years, from 7 yrs old through 12 years old, players will be better prepared to give & receive legal body-

checks. Allowing players' bodies and brains to develop two more years will also provide significant advantage to player's safety.

- ◆ Among 11- to 12 yr old ice hockey players, playing in a league in which body-checking is permitted compared with playing in a league in which body checking is not permitted was associated with a 3-fold increased risk of all game-related injuries and the categories of concussion, severe injury, and severe concussion".
- ◆ Reference: 'Risk of Injury Associated with Body Checking Among Youth Ice Hockey Players' research study by Carolyn Emery. She compared 74 peewee teams from Alberta (1108 players) with 76 peewee teams in Quebec (1046 players)...all in the top 60% of divisions of play...Alberta allows body-checking/ Quebec does not.
- ◆ It was stated at the recent Mayo Clinic "Ice Hockey Summit: Action on Concussion" Symposium that:
 - The 11 year old brain is more easily concussed
 - The 11 year old brain takes longer to recover from a concussion
 - The 11 year old brain is susceptible to more serious long-term effects, if they suffer a concussion
 - The 11 year old brain is not developed enough to 'anticipate' being hit while also trying to play hockey...the ability to 'anticipate' being hit is 50% of avoiding injury
- The new age specific coaching modules will help deliver the excellent on & off-ice body-contact and body-checking materials USAH coaching education program;
(http://www.usahockey.com//Template_Usahockey.aspx?NAV=CO_07_04&ID=270654) – starting at Mites. Hopefully, through these age specific modules, we can achieve better delivery and implementation of our body contact & checking materials – which should result in better understanding, technique and performance for our players.
- The introduction of full body checking was a topic at the recent World Hockey Summit. During the summit there was a discussion session regarding this topic. Peter Laviolette and Brendan Shanahan agreed that

full body checking be delayed until the 14 and under classification. In making his recommendation, Shanahan related that his youth league did not permit body checking until the Bantam classification...additionally, Bryan Marchment was his teammate on his peewee team.