



Minnesota Hockey

Safety Committee Report

January 2006

Committee Members

- Hal Tearse- Chair
- Dr. Edmund Chute- Vascular Surgeon
- Dr. Steve Oncay- Interventional Radiologist
- Martha Newell- Hockey Mom
- Barry Ford- VP Hockey Operations

Facts about Coach Injuries

- 1999 Wes Barrette died from a head injury suffered in a fall
- 2002 – Jim Fleming fell during a Squirt practice in Colorado Springs. He fractured his skull and died soon after.
- 2003- Mite coach in Syracuse NY fell and fractured his skull and died shortly thereafter.

Coach Injuries

- 2002- Two Canadian Coaches died from head injuries suffered in falls. One in Ontario and one in Maritimes.
- CHA has mandated helmets, according to Dr. Alan Ashare, USA Hockey
- Michigan Hockey mandated helmets on coaches seven years ago.

Coach Injuries

- It happens frequently. No reporting.
 - For Example
- A D1 college player suffered a concussion while skating as a guest coach at a Bantam practice in December 2005.
- An Edina MN U12 coach, fell and suffered a head injury at practice last year. He apparently bled profusely in front of his daughter's team. Former D1 player.

Coach Injuries

- December 2005- Moorhead youth coach fell demonstrating a drill. Slight skull fracture and severe concussion. Ambulance ride to the hospital and two days there. He cannot skate for 6 weeks.
- Even seemingly slight concussions can result in intracranial hemorrhages. The symptoms could show up immediately or much later. Sport Specific Head Injuries, Ohio State College of Medicine

Coach Injuries

- Dan Newell- Chaska mite coach-December 2005
 - Falls backward and hits head. Unconscious for 90 seconds.
 - Shakopee Hospital- Airlifted to HCMC
 - Fractured Skull-Severe Concussion
 - 5 surgical procedures
 - 5 weeks recovery at home- minimum
 - Lucky to have survived according to doctors

Dan Newell



Coach Injuries

- Jim Larson, former NHL linesman and WCHA linesman fell at a pee wee practice last year hitting his head. He was unable to return to work for several days.
- Carl Davis, WHS Varsity Coach, was hit in the temple with a deflected puck in practice 3 years ago. He required stitches and eventually a neck operation to relieve pressure on a nerve in his neck.

Why Coaches Get Hurt

- Because they are focusing on coaching and teaching and are not playing.
- Many are poor skaters but that is not the only determinate (see previous slides)
- Reaction times are slower as they get older
- Players run into coaches accidentally or slide into them after falling

Why Coaches get Hurt

- Shared ice practices and station practices with lots of skaters and activities occurring at the same time.



Other Issues

- Loss of motor functions or other neurological functions-delayed
- Lost wages and time away from work
- Long term issues related to closed head injuries. Reoccurring headaches-vision problems
- Repeat injuries. Cumulative damage

Reasons Why Not

- My melon is too big for a helmet
- I will quit coaching if I am required to wear a helmet
- Personal Choice to take the risk
- Uncomfortable
- Makes my hair look bad
- I cannot afford to buy a helmet

Reasons Why

- Hockey is a recreational sport and safety is first and foremost for all participants
- Coaches are role models and thus are held to a higher standard than if they are skating alone
- An object falling six feet to the ice surface is traveling 17 miles per hour on the initial impact. Slower on the bounce.

Reasons Why

- A helmet will prevent the skull from fracturing which is causing the deaths and long term disability for the unfortunate coaches.
- Helmets do not prevent concussion but they do help to reduce the severity.
- The helmet is the cheapest insurance plan a coach can buy. It will save his/her life.
- Go home in own car rather than an ambulance or hearse

Reasons Why

- Because as Directors of Minnesota Hockey we have an obligation to insure the safety and well being of the participants. The evidence is clear: Helmets on Coaches will save the life of one coach every 3 years and prevent many serious injuries each year.
- Because it is the right time to do the right thing. Put helmets on coaches.