

## WHO CARES ENOUGH TO MAKE HOCKEY SAFER FOR KIDS? (Dec. 13, 2018)

**Aynsley M Smith, RN, PhD, Michelle Caputi, BSc and Michael J Stuart, MD**

Although there is increased awareness of the incidence and consequences of concussion in hockey, we lack reliable diagnostic tests, quantification of severity and treatment- other than rest and time. Therefore, concussion prevention is critically important.

Fair Play is an injury prevention strategy introduced to Minnesota, by MN Hockey and Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine. Fair Play (FP) rewards sportsmanship and deters violent behavior by awarding a Fair Play point (FPP) to teams that do not exceed a pre-set number of penalty minutes. Fewer injuries, including concussion occur when players compete with sportsmanship and mutual respect. However, behavioral change only happens if the consequences are meaningful to both players and coaches, such as a lower tournament standing due to lost FPPs.

Although, the use of Fair Play is not mandatory at the national or individual district levels: Rob Cothorn, Rochester Youth Hockey Association (RYHA) tournament director and Bob Montrose, hockey coach and Graham Arena Manager, collaborated to run all RYHA tournaments by Fair Play rules.

Jeff Lamb, PT, SCS, a former collegiate and professional hockey player who now coaches Dodge County Bantam A boys, emphasizes the importance of Fair Play to his players. He explains “that 33.3% of all points available to teams are from Fair Play. Teams earning their FPP may move up 2-3 places in the standings and earn a more favorable play-off position.”

Fair Play guidelines are explained in the correspondence to all teams who seek entry to RYHA tournaments. Teams are advised that the FPPs earned or lost in each game will be posted on the score sheets and tournament score board. FPPs earned are added to the score and also influence which teams advance in the event of a tie.

On behalf of Rochester and Dodge County youth hockey players, all visiting teams and our Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine Center, we applaud **Rob Cothorn, Bob Montrose and Jeff Lamb**, for creating environments where hockey is played safely “at its very best.” Fair Play rules at RYHA Tournaments also help ensure that players, parents, coaches and officials participate in a sportsmanlike environment with less injury risk.

## Fair Play Tournament



To promote sportsmanship, this tournament will be governed by Fair Play rules that apply to players, coaches and parents on participating teams.

