Planning Committee

Survey On Changing the Age Cutoff

Minnesota Hockey is considering moving the age cutoff from July 1 to June 1. We do not use the USA Hockey age cutoff of January 1 due to our desire to try to keep players grouped by school grade. Although the Minnesota Department of Education age cutoff is September 1, we have been using July 1 for several years due to the increasing number of July and August players, especially boys, who wait until age six to start Kindergarten. Now we are being asked to make the same accommodation for players born in June.

We surveyed the parents of players born in June to see how many started KG at age six, and found it to be about 30%. While these roughly 800 players are certainly in the minority compared to the 70% that started KG at age five, they are still statistically significant. That's 800 players who every other year are on teams with players one to two grades older than them.

Moving the cutoff obviously also affects the 70% who started KG at age five. They would now be the oldest kids on the team every other year, which many will view as an advantage. However, in those years where they are the oldest players they will primarily be playing with kids that are one to two grades younger than them. This might seem like an advantage, but it can catch up to them in the transition to HS. While most players have five years to work with (typically two years as a Bantam and three years in the HS program), these players will only have four years. Accordingly some forward-thinking parents may want their June birth-date kid to "play up" to the next level (if we were to change the age cutoff) so that they will always be participating with the other kids in their grade.

Minnesota Hockey Youth Rules require that each association have a policy on whether players are allowed to "play up" to the next division. If we were to change the age cutoff to June, there may be a significant number of "play up" requests so that kids would be able to participate with the other kids in their grade. We do not know how this would be viewed by individual associations. While we would encourage these requests to be thoughtfully considered, we are aware that some associations' policies prohibit play-ups or have extreme requirements (such as must finish in the top 5 at tryouts).

Based on the above, Minnesota Hockey is looking for input from associations on this issue before making a decision. District Directors are asked to give the attached survey to five associations in their district (preferably the largest five). The Planning Committee will provide summary results to the Board, perhaps by district to see regional differences. Individual survey results will not be shared outside of the Planning Committee.

We would like to have the surveys returned to Dave Bakke by July 31, 2010. Your cooperation is appreciated.

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Survey On Changing the Age Cutoff

Minnesota Hockey is considering moving the age cutoff from July 1 to June 1. A cover sheet for this survey explains the proposed change and how it could affect individual players. Please fill out this survey and return to your District Director by July 20, 2010.

District: _____ Name of Association: _____

Person filling out survey: _____

Position with association: _____

	Yes	No
My Association has a policy for handling play-up requests (please attach a copy)	☐	☐
My Association's Play-Up Policy (leave blank if you have no policy):		
Considers school grade in the decision process	☐	☐
Includes a pre-defined skill requirement (such as top 5 in tryouts)	☐	☐
Allows play-ups to supplement short team rosters	☐	☐
Does not allow play-ups under any circumstances	☐	☐
My Association would seriously consider amending its policy to allow play-up's based on school grade if encouraged to do so by Minnesota Hockey	☐	☐
To achieve consistency, Minnesota Hockey should mandate approval of play-up requests based on school grade rather than leaving it up to Association discretion	☐	☐
My Association would support changing the age cut-off to June 1	☐	☐

Comments: _____

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