

Date: Sept. 14, 2013 #1307

To: Association President's & Administrator's

From: Kevin Kobelka – Executive Director

CC: HC Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Mouth Guard Policy – Hockey Calgary

Earlier this month the Referee In Chief for Hockey Alberta released a statement regarding the status of mouth guards within amateur hockey in Alberta (see full Hockey Alberta Bulletin 13/08 attached). An excerpt from this bulletin is below:

Hockey Alberta does not have an approved rule or regulation that mandates the use of mouth guards for any division or category of hockey and therefore can only abide by and enforce the Hockey Canada Playing Rule.....

Hockey Alberta officials **will not** be enforcing any league, club or MHA mouth guard rules that are in addition to the Hockey Canada Playing Rules.

Based on the above regulation change Hockey Calgary is reviewing our policy regarding the use of mouth guards moving forward. Our initial findings regarding the benefits of mouth guards are as follows:

1. Recent research (McCrary et al, 2013) has indicated that mouth guards do not mitigate concussion risk, and are therefore not required for this purpose.
2. Primary purpose of mouth guard is to protect the teeth of players. Despite the use of full face masks for all players, blows from below to the chin area can cause dental damage
3. Mouth guards also limit soft tissue injuries (such as biting through the tongue), when there is contact to the facial area.

Considering these findings Hockey Calgary still believes that the use of mouth guards is beneficial to the safety of our young athletes and therefore **we recommend the continued mandatory usage of mouth guards at all levels (novice to junior), for the upcoming season.**

A resolution will be forwarded to the Board of Directors and if passed will be voted on at the Hockey Calgary fall members meeting on October 22, 2013.

In the interim we ask that you continue to enforce the mandatory mouth guard policy at both games and practices within your association. Coaches, managers and administrators will be responsible for enforcing this rule but there will be no in game penalties handed out by the referees.

I thank you in advance for your support of this policy, more information will follow prior to the Fall Members Meeting.

Regards,



Kevin Kobelka
Executive Director