

March 30, 2017

Tom Christianson, District 9 President

Rich Rakness, District 8 President

Subject: RWAHA District Placement

Gentleman,

As we struggle to find ways to attract and retain hockey players one of the contributing factors may very well be the district RWAHA is assigned too. For the past several years the Red Wing Amateur Hockey Association has participated in MN Hockey District 9. The experience has been positive and competitive for our hockey players. As we face declining numbers in players, we wish to review the change in district league play for RWAHA. RWAHA is requesting to move back to D8. We are seeking to move back to District 8 for the following items.

- Declining participation.
- Decrease travel expense
- Late night for travel time

Our participation during the 2010-11 season was 202, boys 153, girls 49 during the 2016-17 season 146, boys 109, girls 37. This decline is not solely resulting for the move to D9, but we feel it has had some direct effect.

We understand most associations out-state must travel great distances to participate, In the case of Red Wing, it is a matter of just over 50 miles to the farthest D8 ice rink vs 80 to 105 miles for three of the D9 teams from RW – Albert Lea, Austin and Mankato. During the team league scheduling meeting, teams try to schedule AL and Austin on the same weekend day to reduce the travel time; it is not always possible to schedule for weekends. If it not possible it adds several long distance trips per season.

Other contributing factors exist, closing of Bergwall Arena, single sheet of ice for local hockey, figure skating, boys and girls high school hockey teams and Community Recreation all seeking ice time strains the availability of prime ice. Single sheet has forced us to limit team home tournaments to accommodate team practices and prime league games. RWAHA is working with the community to add a refrigerated out door sheet to relieve some of this pressure.

Some hockey families have several kids participating in hockey so it multiplies the travel. RWAHA has several families that have more than one player and they are at varying levels. The move to D8 would help support them in reducing costs and staying in the game.

We have been hearing more and more about the expense of hockey and the travel time as to why parents are not returning or not entering hockey in the first place. We understand this is an age old concern, but we must try to reduce those burdens as much as possible. This is our first attempt to do so. With this change it not only helps Red Wing, it also helps the teams like AL, Austin and Mankato reduce travel and road time.

Looking at D8 teams travel to Red Wing it is a one-time trip per season were RW would still bare the most travel to D8 teams.

RWAHA would be participating at the single A level.

With your support of moving RWAHA back to District 8, the board believes that our participation will grow.

Chuck Kinney

RWAHA President