



November 18, 2020

Today, Minnesota Hockey learned of the Executive Order by Governor Tim Walz, instituting a pause on youth sports throughout the state of Minnesota effective this Friday, November 20 through Friday, December 18. All Minnesota Hockey activities must pause as instructed during the next four weeks.

We understand this is disappointing to many, and we are concerned about the effect it can have on the mental and physical health of our youth, who tremendously benefit from the camaraderie, physical activity and inspiration that sports provide. This is especially true in a time when schools and other activities are not available to many. We would have preferred the opportunity to implement more restrictions prior to a pause taking place, but the exponential growth of infections and hospitalizations in our state made that impossible.

We are also understanding of why this decision was made. COVID-19 is a devastating virus, as too many people have found out across the country and the state. It is important that the spread of this virus is controlled so that more lives can be saved. In addition to controlling the spread, this pause is being implemented at this time in order to save the remainder of the winter sports season.

The large majority of our members have been doing everything that has been asked of them. But whether it's coming dressed to the rink, avoiding locker rooms or social gatherings, etc., we also know many of us can and need to do more. Just like in a hockey game, non-compliance to team expectations in a single instance rarely has immediate or dire consequences, but the cumulative impact over time can significantly harm a team. We're seeing that right now with hockey being associated with the most outbreaks of youth sports in Minnesota.

The good news is coming out of the pause, **we will still have a minimum of three months remaining in the season, and the Board of Directors will be meeting to discuss the potential extension of the season.** Minnesota Hockey will also implement an updated "Return to Play" plan with continued guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and Commissioner Tarek Tomes. It will be imperative that all of our members are following guidelines and policies in order to keep our players safe, and keep our game going.

There is still much more time for our kids to create lifelong memories and improve their skills. But we must do everything we can to keep our kids and their families safe and preserve those opportunities. That includes taking this pause seriously, and not doing anything to jeopardize our chances of being able to start in late December.

Stay safe over the holidays, and we can't wait to see our players back at the rinks in December.

Steve Oleheiser
President

Glen Andresen
Executive Director