

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Awareness and education advised on youth bodychecking in hockey

VICTORIA – In light of research highlighting the frequency and severity of injuries as a result of bodychecking, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development Bill Bennett today encouraged education and awareness about youth bodychecking for parents, coaches, and all involved in youth hockey.

In June, members will consider a resolution at the BC Hockey Annual General Meeting to raise the age of the introduction of bodychecking in youth rep hockey. BC Hockey is encouraging members to let their associations know if they support raising the age.

Bill Bennett, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development -

"I played defense in hockey. Both of my sons played, I coached and I managed hockey teams, but I don't pretend to be any sort of an expert. I just want parents and coaches to be aware of the medical information available today on the impact of bodychecking at a young age, so that they can make an informed decision."

Wilf Liefke, president, BC Hockey -

"Many local associations are holding their AGMs in the weeks leading up to the provincial AGM, so this is a good opportunity to discuss the issue and make informed decisions."

Bill Barrable, CEO, Rick Hansen Institute -

"Increasingly medical research confirms that the adolescent brain is especially vulnerable to traumatic brain injury. A growing body of research is also telling us that body checking in youth rep leagues is a major risk factor for spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury. It's very important that minor hockey associations promote awareness among all parents, coaches and players with these facts."

Quick Facts:

- The BC Hockey Annual General Meeting will be held June 7-9 in Sun Peaks near Kamloops.
- Hockey Canada rules do not allow bodychecking below the age of 11. Each provincial or territorial association sets its own rules for bodychecking for players 11 and above.
- Many health organizations, including the BC Provincial Health Office, Canadian Paediatric Society, Rick Hansen Institute, BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit, Sport Med BC, BC Health and Safety Council, and the Canadian Maternal and Child Health Network recommend that bodychecking should not be allowed in peewee (ages 11-12) level hockey.

Fact sheet:

http://stage.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/Bodychecking_Factsheet_April_2013.pdf

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