

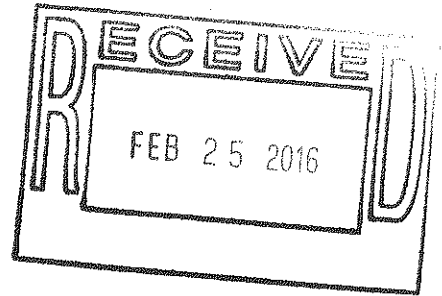
February 22, 2016

North Dakota High School Activities Association

C/O Matt Fetsch, Executive Director

350 2nd St NE

Valley City, ND 58072



NDHSAA Board Members,

We are writing this letter in regards to North Dakota Girls High School Hockey. The way girl's high school hockey is currently being run by the North Dakota High School Athletic Association is hurting girls hockey participation throughout the state at all levels. Allowing schools in the larger cities (Fargo, Grand Forks, and Bismarck) to combine and make All-Star teams is hurting girl's hockey in the smaller communities as well as the larger communities. Student athletes and their parents in the smaller communities watch their schools get pounded by these All-Star teams and think to themselves, *why would I want to play hockey for the next five to six years for this*. It also hurts the programs in the bigger communities that have these All-Star teams. Students can see the writing on the walls and know that they probably won't make the All-Star team and quit playing at the junior high level. If there were not all of these All-Star teams, girls would continue playing up through their high school career.

These schools that are combining each have enrollment in the thousands. So now you have a combined enrollment of two thousand or more going against schools with enrollment of four to five hundred or even less. That just doesn't seem fair. We have heard of girls being cut from these All-Star teams, which suggest that there are plenty of girls playing hockey in these larger communities. There are also 19U teams in these larger communities which suggest that numbers are not the reason for combining these larger schools in girl's high school hockey. Why is it that there are six smaller communities that have 19U hockey but choose not to play high school hockey where there is much less travel and way less out of pocket expenses? We are willing to bet that it is out of fear of not being competitive.

If the larger schools (Fargo, Grand Forks, and Bismarck) would break up these All-Star teams and go to girls play hockey for the school they attend, we feel that girls hockey would be better off in the long run. A Fargo, Grand Forks, Bismarck or even Minot (being it is a larger community in our state) team is probably going to win the state tournament most years but there could be a Cinderella year when a small town could win the state tournament and what a story that makes.

Whatever happened to cross town rivalries? Though we were never involved in one, we have friends that still talk about those rivalries to this day.

As you probably figured, we are from a smaller community, Devils Lake, and we have girl's hockey, but we also have family in a larger community that feels the same way we do. They are in a larger community and already fear that their daughter will not play hockey (which is the sport she loves) in

high school due to the fact that there are these All-Star teams. They already have the fear that she will be cut from high school hockey and that's sad. Not even having the chance to be part of a team, we feel, is way worse than getting beat by ten or more goals.

What kind of uproar would there be if these schools combined in other sports like boys hockey, football, or boys or girls basketball? It wouldn't be fair! Just like it isn't fair in girl's hockey in the state of North Dakota.

Recently Devils Lake Girl's Hockey was on the verge of being cut because they weren't competitive. People don't realize that our girls are playing against these All-Star teams. Our program is safe for now but it would've been a shame if we had lost it.

We realize that we will probably lose to the bigger schools more than we will win which is true for every sport in Devils Lake. You never know when we are going to have a team that can beat these bigger schools, but if these All-Star teams stay intact that chance will never come.

Your mission statement says that the purpose of the NDHSAA is to contribute to the education of high school boys and girls of North Dakota by elevating the standards of good sportsmanship and encouraging growth in good citizenship. These All-Star teams are not following that statement very well. They are not promoting good sportsmanship by forming these All-Star teams. They are taking away opportunities of girls who want to compete and play girl's high school hockey in North Dakota. To us that is not good sportsmanship.

We don't know what kind of power you have over these larger school districts. We are told you have none when it comes to this issue, but we are sure you have some influence.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you.

Eric and Amanda Klemetsrud

1121 Lafayette Rd

Devils Lake, ND 58301

701-351-7251

eric@klemetsruds.com