

Dear NDHSAA Board of Directors:

I am writing to you in regards to your rule, which is found in Section III a. on page 18 of the NDHSAA By-Laws.

**A student shall not have participated in a similar athletic contest during the same sports season as a member of any other than a high school team nor as an unattached individual in non-school contests during the high school season in that sport and the penalty for this violation shall be loss of eligibility from the date of the infraction for six contests for each violation in that sport. A school may petition the Board of Directors for exemptions from provisions of this section on behalf of a talented student involving competition with U. S. Olympic or International ramifications.**

I would like to appeal this rule for one of my players, Rachel Hennessy, who is a senior this year, to attend a national girls hockey tournament during Christmas break. The tournament is called Connecticut Polar Bears Christmas Tournament. It's sanctioned by USA Hockey and is the largest girls' hockey tournament in the country. This tournament is the most highly scouted tournament of any by college scouts ranging from DI to DIII as well as Olympic personnel.

Rachel was asked to play for a team out of Wisconsin, which is part of the Midwest Elite Hockey League. This league is one of the most premier leagues in the country. She has been a part of this team since September and is now playing full time with us. She has the opportunity to play in this tournament with Wisconsin and from there attend the national tournament in April. Not only is this a once in a lifetime event, but it's also a big opportunity for her to get asked to play college hockey.

I understand your rule and understand why the rule is in place. My biggest defense on her part is that girls hockey in ND is not at the level that college scouts will take the time out of their schedule to come watch our games. There are only a select few ND girls that will go on to play at this level. Girl's hockey doesn't have as many opportunities as other sports at the college levels, its either DI or DIII. As we all know, college hockey has only been in ND for a few years on the girls' side. One of the D1 colleges that she is interested in suggested this team to her and they will be attending this tournament to scout.

I think it would be more suitable for everyone if a player could play an athletic contest of the same sport during that same sport high school season. That way, it is up to the coach of that high school team to allow her to miss if needed, instead of having another coach of a different sport understand the importance of her attending. In this instance, Rachel will not miss anything with our team back in Williston during this time since it's during our Christmas break.

Please consider the situation and the circumstances involved. This would be a huge opportunity for Rachel to be seen by many college scouts with the chance of getting a scholarship to play for a college hockey team. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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