

Fighting in Canada's favourite sport

Fighting finds itself under the radar following the death of a 21-year-old Whitby Dunlops defenceman

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Everyone at some point has been at a game to witness a hockey fight breakout.

The gloves are dropped, and the opposing players swing wildly at each other in an attempt to come out on top. At the end of the game, hands are grasped in an act of good sportsmanship and although a rivalry may still exist between the teams, there is no love lost.

Sounds innocent enough. But what about the fights that go wrong?

Don Sanderson, the 21-year-old defenseman for the Whitby Dunlops spent three weeks in a coma before succumbing to his injuries that were a direct result of a fight during hockey.

His death has been described as a terrible and unfortunate accident, and the question on everyone's mind is how could it have been prevented?

The easiest answer would be to eliminate the fighting aspect of hockey completely. However, is that possible, and would such a concept even be accepted?

Wayne Savage is a goalie for UPEI's men's hockey team. After seeing a player from Acadia attempt to fight Savage on January 10, it's clear even those in the net have to be aware of aggression on the ice.

"I think [fighting is] necessary to keep everything un-



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der control."

When asked to explain himself further, he clarified, "With hockey, players know they have to be aware of fighting if they do something stupid."

Savage goes so far to say that fighting "acts as a policing method," but some could argue that such policing methods are meant to be in the hands of the referees.

Regardless of what AUS League players may feel about fighting, there are strict

rules. John Keefe, Communications Manager for AUS shares that "penalties for fighting are stiff and a pretty good deterrent."

A player's first fight kicks them out of that game, as well as the next. The second fight sees them kicked out of that game as well, with a two game suspension afterwards. The third fight, if they really feel the need, kicks them out of that game and means indefinite suspension following a review by the Sport

Chair.

These precautions are indeed a great deterrent to those who may have loose tempers.

However Keefe notes, "the AUS has yet to see a single fight this season in our conference."

It has been argued that fighting is a much desired part of the game, and is surely a fan favourite.

However, rules on numerous levels of hockey have been manipulated to help

the game keep up with the changing face, and intensity, of the individuals playing it.

Jonathon Roy, son of NHL great Patrick Roy and Quebec Remparts goalie, found himself suspended from the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League for seven games after a fight got out of hand against the Chicoutimi Saguenéens.

The league also cracked down on the elder of the Roy's, suspending him for

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