



Dear Hockey Community:

Here is an update to Derek Zike's condition as of January 22, 2009.

As you know, Derek Zike, a 1992 birth year player on the Chicago Fury minor midget team was seriously injured in a tournament game in Ann Arbor, MI on January 16, 2009.

As a result of a head-first collision with the boards, Derek sustained a burst fracture of the 5th cervical vertebrae. This is approximately where the neck joins the shoulders.

Derek was taken into surgery and the fracture area was stabilized by the surgeons.

For the next 48 hours following the surgery, Derek was regaining some feeling and motion through his forearms and tingling into his hands and fingers. He was also removed from his breathing tube and a substantial portion of his pain medications and the medical staff permitted him to sit up at a 90 degree angle.

As with any injury of this magnitude, there are certainly days which are better than others, and the hope is that each day brings more improvement than the previous day.

However, this type of an injury also has days which are not as good as the prior day and either there is no improvement or perhaps a backwards step is taken.

Yesterday, Derek was permitted to eat some soft foods and he seemed to enjoy a sampling of popsicles, French toast and soft lasagna. While he was eating, some of the food was apparently ingested into his lungs and is causing an issue with his breathing.

As a result, Derek was placed back in intensive care and was placed on an assisted breathing apparatus. He is currently medicated and sedated to permit assisted breathing with little difficulty. In addition, Derek was placed on high dose antibiotics to combat any possibility of infection to his lungs.

While this is seemingly a step back, there is still every hope that Derek's strong will and excellent health will take him through the next few days and escape any difficulties with his breathing and permit him to continue the neurologic progression he was making before this recent event.

Please return frequently to the Chicago Fury website for updates on Derek's condition and forthcoming information on how the hockey community may help Derek and his family. We will place information on the website shortly indicating how you may contribute to Derek and his family through this difficult time.

Thank you for your thoughts and concerns and please keep your prayers coming.

The Chicago Fury