



NORTHERN ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

110 LAKESHORE DRIVE
NORTH BAY, ONTARIO P1A 2A8
PHONE: (705) 474-8851 • FAX: (705) 474-6019
www.noha-hockey.ca



NOHA Officials Fan Abuse Policy

In the last several seasons, we have seen a significant decrease in the number of registered Officials within the NOHA. This trend is very concerning, as Officials – like players and volunteers – are an integral part of the game.

While there are several reasons for the loss of Officials across Northern Ontario, one of the most significant reasons is abuse from team officials and from fans. It is very concerning, particularly when parents receive education on being a positive parent, that the NOHA dealt with several situations of abuse towards Officials this past season.

The Hockey Canada rule book provides the Official with methods to deal with abuse from participants of the game (i.e., penalties), whereas inappropriate actions from parents/fans towards Officials is not as clear.

Procedure

Through feedback from our District Referees-in-Chief and many discussions amongst the NOHA Board of Directors, the following procedure has been approved for dealing with inappropriate actions by parents/fans:

- Officials will be instructed to remove any fan who threatens, directs threats, or makes personal comments about the Official and/or their family;
- The Official will skate into a stationary position, make eye contact with the individual, and point to them and the lobby area;
- The Official will determine which bench to approach first and inform the Coach that if the individual does not leave within two (2) minutes, the game shall be suspended. The Official will communicate the same information to the opposing Coach;
- The Official shall be responsible to submit an incident report in the same manner that a game misconduct is reported. The report shall be forwarded to the District Council Director and Referee-in-Chief;
- The District Council Director will follow up with the Minor Hockey Association so that the matter can be dealt with appropriately. The Council Director shall also notify the Minor Hockey Association that any further similar actions from the parents/fans of the same team may result in a suspension.

Role of the Minor Hockey Association

While we recognize it is not possible to have representation at every game played within your respective areas, we can all play a role in minimizing abuse against Officials and to be a positive participant in our children's activities. Any loss of Officials creates a very



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negative situation and can also impact an Association financially if Officials need to be brought in for games.

How We Can Create a Positive Environment

- Provide all parents with a code of conduct along with expectations of zero tolerance for bullying or harassment. Reminders may be given at any team meetings that are held during the season.
- In a situation where parents/fans are witnessing an abusive fan, take a leadership role and let the individual know that they are acting inappropriately. It is recommended that more than one person approach the individual. If the person will not stop, it should be reported to the Association.
- Teams may wish to identify individuals who will monitor behaviours in the stands.
- Promoting positive behaviour, via arena, website, social media, etc.
- Discuss with the arena staff who is responsible for removing spectators (if necessary).

Reverse Abuse

Abuse of any kind will not be tolerated. Officials are to remain professional at all times, and any use of inappropriate comments or gestures will be investigated and will be dealt with if proven.

The NOHA will continue to remind its Officials that “Silence cannot be misquoted!”

Any reports of reverse abuse are to be directed to the District Council Director.