January 15, 2020

Parents, Players, Coaches and others,

While attending a Bantam “A” between Fond du Lac and Ozaukee this last weekend I happened to be sitting in the stands just observing a game and evaluating officials that were on the ice. At one point in time the fans in the stands became very loud and belligerent to the officials that the penalties were not being called. It occurred to me that the frustration from the fans is really a misunderstanding of the roll of the officials that were on the ice. At the very time that these fans were becoming belligerent the Referee (orange bands on sleeves) had his arm raised and was going to call the penalty that the fans were so upset about. However because the offending team had not gained possession and control of the puck yet, the penalty was not assessed yet. In addition to this it is clear that not everyone understand the differences when you have 2 officials on the ice and 3 officials on the ice.

I apologize for not sending out something like this before the start of the season. For many of us that have raised kids in the past and have had lived/breathed hockey for decades now we probably forget the fact that not everyone follows hockey or understands the rules and roles/responsibilities that on-ice and off-ice officials have. Since we are more than half way through the season it might be a good idea for an educational note to be sent out.

First I want to mention my philosophy on officiating. At the lower levels of play (Mites-PeeWee C) the roll of the official is really more of a teacher. The official has to be able to instruct the player to what is correct and not correct on the ice, around the rink, etc. in a manner that is not punitive but more instructive. But as the age and skill level increase the roll of the official turns more into a game manager and less of the teacher role. In addition to changes of player skill, there is also a tremendous change in size, strength, speed and general Ice I.Q. of the players. This is the main reason for the need for 3 officials on the ice to help manage the game. In fact if your youth players extend beyond high school, College and beyond they will experience a 4-Official system.

 I am a firm believer that all Peewee “A” and above games should be done as 3 official systems whenever possible. This allows for the Referee (the one wearing the orange arm bands) to concentrate on the management of the game, issuing penalties and not being concerned about the systematic mechanics of the game such as Icing, off sides, improper goalie substitution, too many men on the ice, etc.…. those roles are now totally controlled by the two linesman that work with the Referee in managing the game. For Ozaukee the 3 official system is new and I am diligently working on education and development of all North Shore Officials so they are knowledgeable of both 2-Official and 3-Official systems at all levels of play, hence the reason that I have tried to have so many mentoring games this season. So please keep that in mind when you are watching games. The officials themselves are also leaning something new this year.

So with all of that being said, here is a quick list of responsibilities for each of the officials:

**REFEREE:** **In the 3-Official system, the Referee is the only one that has these authorities and is designated on the ice as the one wearing the Orange Arm Bands.**

1. General Supervision of the game and his/her decision shall be the **Final** in all matters occurring before, during or after the game. He/She has full authority over all participants. Under no circumstances can the Referee change his/her decision, or that of any other official, after the resumption of the play.
2. He/She shall order the teams on the ice at the start of the game and start of each period. He/she enters the ice before the teams and will confirm all off-ice officials are in their proper position and that all timing and signaling equipment is working properly.
3. He/She shall be the sole individual to report infractions (penalties) outlined in the USA Hockey rule book and has final decision in the matters pertaining to disputed goals after consultation with the Linesmen/Goal Judges. He/She shall announce to the appropriate off-ice official all goals and assists legally scored as well as penalties imposed. He/She is responsible for ensuring each player is wearing the required protective equipment in its intended manner.
4. The Referee shall see to it that players of opposing teams are separated on the penalty bench to prevent contact.
5. At the conclusion of the game, the Referee shall check the official scoresheet, including team rosters and players in uniform for accuracy prior to signing.

**Linesmen: (The Lineman has very important role in the game and is critical to making a successful game possible.)**

1. Linesman are to determine any infractions of the rules concerning off-side play at the blue lines or any violation of the “Icing the Puck” rule. He/She shall, when requested by the Referee to give his version of any incident that may have taken place during the playing of the game.
2. He/She shall conduct face-offs at all times, except at the start of the game, at the beginning of the period and after a goal has been scored.
3. The Linesman shall stop play for the following situations:

The puck goes outside the playing area (Rule 631(a)).

The puck is interfered with by any ineligible person.

The puck is played with a stick above the height of the shoulder (Rule 621(c)).

The puck has been illegally passed with the hand (Rule 618(b)).

The goalpost has been displaced from its normal position.

When in the vicinity of the goal, the puck has entered the goal and is unobserved by the Referee.

Off-sides occurring at the face-off circles (Rule 613(b)).

Premature substitution of the goalkeeper (Rule 205(c)).

Injured players (Rule 206(a)).

Interference by spectators (Rule 626(a)).

1. The Linesman shall stop play and report to the Referee any infraction of the following rules:

Too many players on the ice

Articles thrown on the ice from the vicinity of the players’ or penalty bench

Delaying the game by deliberately displacing the goal post.

1. The Linesman shall report to the Referee at the next stoppage of play his/her version of any infraction of the rules that he believes constitutes a bench minor, major, match, misconduct or penalty shot under the rules. In addition, the Linesman shall give his version of any Injury Potential Penalty that occurs behind the play and is not observed by the Referee. The Referee, at his/her discretion, may assess a penalty for such information.

I know this is a lot of information and I hope that this will make your understanding and enjoyment of the game greater in the future.

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If anyone is interested I also recommend downloading the USA Hockey Mobile App that you can access throughout a game on your own phone. You can also download the USA Hockey Rule book and Basic/Intermediate Officiating manuals on the USA Hockey Homepage under the Officials Rule Books/Resources tab. I also recommend anyone that is working as an off-ice official to read the off-ice official manual which is also located on the USA Hockey website.

Please, if anyone has any questions about officiating in general, please feel free to reach out to me either by phone, email or text. I am more than happy to come and discuss with teams, parents, coaches and administrators any issue they may see. The most important thing to me is the promotion of a safe, secure and fair environment for the games to be held in. While Hockey is a great sport and is filled with emotions- both good and bad, the more knowledge that parents, coaches, spectators and officials have the better run the game will be. That is also the reason that I am such a big proponent of the Zero Tolerance Policy to be announced before every game as well as penalties and goals to be announced during the game.

Take Care all and good luck with your games and the balance of the season.

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