



Jim Smith
President

October 30, 2019

Dear USA Hockey member –

As the hockey season begins in full, we continue to receive reports of disturbing incidents involving racial and other derogatory slurs, behavior which is reprehensible and has absolutely no place in our game, especially around our children.

As you are all aware, USA Hockey has long had a Zero Tolerance Policy towards any type of abusive conduct, specifically under Rule 601 (e.3), which states that anyone who uses language that is offensive, hateful or discriminatory in nature anywhere in the rink before, during or after the game, shall be assessed a game misconduct penalty. For reasons which I cannot explain or understand, this penalty does not seem to be enough of a deterrent to stop this conduct.

I am issuing a directive effective immediately that anyone assessed a penalty under Rule 601 (e.3) will now receive an **automatic Match Penalty**, in lieu of the game misconduct penalty that currently exists, and shall be immediately suspended until a hearing is conducted by the governing USA Hockey Affiliate or junior league. The applicable Affiliate or junior league is required to conduct a hearing within 30 days of the incident and the individual may be subject to further discipline.

Further, our on-ice officials have protocols in place that address situations where a player is accused of saying something that violates Rule 601 (e. 3) but is not heard by the officials. While the officials cannot assess a penalty in that circumstance, they are instructed to notify the coach of the offending team and it is critical that the coach take immediate and appropriate action. Officials must also report the incident through the game reporting system, and Affiliates must review all incidents, whether penalized or unpenalized, to ensure proper application of the rules.

We also receive reports of racial harassment and discrimination among teammates; this behavior must be addressed through submitting appropriate reports through our SafeSport Program.

Parents and coaches, please take the time to address these issues with your kids. Helping educate them on these topics is an important part of our overall effort to eliminate any type of discriminatory language or behavior from our sport.

While the vast majority of our hockey games are conducted in the spirit for which they were intended, we must remove offensive, hateful or discriminatory language or behavior from our game. Please join me in stamping it out and ensuring we have an environment that is free from discrimination of any kind.

Thanks for doing your part and I hope this will be the best and brightest hockey season for you and your family.

Yours in hockey,

Jim Smith



USA Hockey, the national governing body for the sport of ice hockey, is a member of the International Ice Hockey Federation and the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee



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