



Officiating Abuse - Zero Tolerance Policy

All spectators, including parents, grandparents, guardians, siblings, relatives and friends are an important part of any athletic competition, including hockey. Spectators should be in attendance to support the athlete and the team, not to taunt, berate or belittle on-ice or off-ice official(s) assigned to the game.

The officiating ranks are diminishing and the reason most often cited is abuse by spectators, coaches and players. Officiating abuse has a direct impact on the recruitment of new officials and retention of existing officials. The diminishing population has the potential to jeopardize the ability to provide adequate officiating coverage for the increasing number of games in our geographic footprint.

Montana Amateur Hockey Association affiliate of USA Hockey in Montana will not tolerate spectators, coaches players or team administrators who do not conduct themselves in a sportsman like manner while attending or participating in games or events sanctioned by USA Hockey, its Affiliates, Leagues and Clubs.

The following behaviors/actions will not be tolerated and may be penalized under this **Zero Tolerance Policy**, in addition to any other penalties assessed by the game official(s):

- Verbal abuse of official(s).
- Harassing comments, behavior or threats directed or inferred towards on-ice and off-ice official(s).
- Physical abuse of official(s)
- Any issue concerning crowd control which results in summoning of the police.

The process for identifying/documenting the above referenced behavior(s) is as follows:

The USA Hockey Online Game Incident Report shall be used to document and communicate the removal of any person(s) attending a USA Hockey sanctioned game. These Incident Reports are automatically electronically distributed to MAHA (and where applicable, the TSL sanctioned League Commissioner) as soon as they are submitted by the on-ice Official(s).

Violations of this Officiating Abuse – Zero Tolerance policy will be managed as follows:

MAHA OFFICIATING ABUSE SANCTIONS FOR NON-PARTICIPANTS (Spectators and all those not on an approved USA Hockey Roster)

If the non-participant is removed from a sanctioned youth hockey event by an on-ice or off-ice Official (i.e. Referee, League or Affiliate Administrator or Arena personnel), or is otherwise reported for abusive behavior by any person(s) in attendance at the sanctioned event (and substantiated by preponderance of proof), the minimum suspension will be issued for those offenses investigated and adjudicated by MAHA (notwithstanding any other sanctions imposed by local associations or sanctioned Leagues) as listed below.

MAHA maintains a strict **Zero Tolerance Policy** with **NO** appeal available to non-participant(s) removed from an event.

First Offense:

Two week suspension from All “Team Activities and \$150.00 fine payable to MAHA, with the fine issued to the local association of the offending non-participant’s team. Individual will be placed on probation for one year, which commences at the end of the suspension period.

Second Offense:

Four week suspension for ALL “Team Activities and a \$300.00 fine payable to MAHA, with the fine issued to the local association of the offending non-participant’s team. Individual will be placed on probation for two years, which commences at the end of the suspension period.

Third Offense:

Suspended from ALL “Team Activities” indefinitely until individual completes a certified anger management class and provides MAHA a certificate of completion or other documentation satisfactory to MAHA. Individual will be placed on probation for three years, which commences at the end of the suspension period.

“Team Activities” are defined as games (whether League, non-League or tournament), practices (dry land and ice), and any other team activity that may be considered a part of the usual team experience.

Fines collected by MAHA as a result of the above offenses will be segmented from the General Funds of MAHA and used to fund recruiting, retention and training of officials.

MAHA OFFICIATING ABUSE SANCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS (Club Administrators, Players & Coaches)

Coaches are well aware of Playing Rule 601, which addresses “*Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct.*” Coaches, in conjunction with their Club, prior to the start of their season, shall conduct a meeting with their players and parents to set appropriate expectations, guidelines and penalties to discourage officiating abuse. Such a policy shall be in writing and issued to all players and parents.

Team personnel (coaches and players) collectively receiving three or more penalties under the Playing Rule 601, which specifically identify as physical or verbal abuse of a game official, shall be subject to MAHA Disciplinary Review, as provided in Rule 410, and such discipline shall include;

- 1) Suspension of coach(s) not to exceed 180 days
- 2) Suspension of player(s) not to exceed 180 days
- 3) Team declared ineligible for post-season play (State and or Nationals)

Abuse Enforcement (Officials)

USA hockey provides its registered Officials specific playing rules to discourage and enforce Officiating Abuse. All Officials within MAHA are compelled to enforce such rules with very little latitude. All MAHA on-ice Officials shall use this policy as defined below:

- 1) In accordance with Rule 601, physical and/or verbal abuse by a participant must be called if it is evident. While we understand that an Official may sometimes believe that providing some latitude is

appropriate “game management,” that approach has, in part, created the necessity why “Zero tolerance” must actually mean “ZERO TOLERANCE.” Officials(s) refusing to enforce Rule 601 violations shall be disciplined according to the current MAHA and USA Hockey requirements.

- 2) At the first sign of any inappropriate, hateful or abusive remarks by non-participants, the on-ice Official(s) shall first report the conduct to the head coach of both participating teams and issue a warning. The Official(s) shall also advise the head coach should direct an assistant coach to address their attending non-participants.
- 3) Should hateful or abusive remarks continue after the warning, the on-ice Official(s) shall advise the head coach of the home team to immediately contact arena management to clear the spectators from the arena.
- 4) All warnings and subsequent issues shall be documented by the on-ice Official(s) through the USA Hockey Online Game Incident Report.
- 5) MAHA sanctioned Leagues may impose additional duties of their game Official related to the enforcement of Zero Tolerance, which may be subject to MAHA RIC approval.