

INTRODUCTION:

For some time now BC Hockey has been concerned with the behaviors and attitudes that have become a negative influence in the game of hockey. Incidents arising from these negative interactions between partners have increased not only in frequency of occurrence but in intensity or force. At times these have resulted in serious physical or emotional injury to one or more of the partners. Many of these behaviors and attitudes would be completely unacceptable in any setting but all too often they are ignored in hockey and are considered “just part of the game”. Many of our players, coaches, officials, and volunteers are leaving because these issues are not being addressed or resolved. As an organization we are committed to eliminating these negative behaviors and changing the attitudes through our “Team First” initiative.

The “Team First” program was developed around two important philosophies:

1. The concept of “team” is greater than the players and their coaches. The “team” is as far reaching as the zamboni driver, the community sponsor, the timekeeper, and the fans. Just as “it takes a village to raise a child” it takes teamwork, commitment and role modeling by **all** of the game **partners** to provide the hockey opportunity we want for our youth. The challenge of truly putting the “team first” is for everyone to recognize and respect not only their role and responsibilities but also those of the other game partners.

2. Sport is built on the ideals of Fair Play (respect, integrity and fairness) and on these basic principles:

- Respect the rules
- Respect the opponent
- Respect the officials and their decisions
- Give everyone a chance to participate
- Maintain your self-control at all times

Together these form the standard of membership within BC Hockey and the premise upon which the privilege of membership is extended and continued. These standards of membership will apply to every association, team or league within BC Hockey. It is expected that each association, team, or league will incorporate this program within their constitution and implement it as an active and ongoing component of their local hockey program delivery.

How do we get back on track? Our first priority is to implement this program to truly put RESPECT and FUN back into hockey. It is a positive and informative program designed to educate all partners on what is acceptable and supportive behavior. It defines what acceptable behavior is and contains a “Contract” to be signed by each parent, guardian, team official, on-ice official and player.

Second, this program contains an educational component from the “Chevrolet Safe & Fun Seminar” for parents that should be given at the beginning of each season, especially to “new hockey parents”. It is obvious that many of today’s parents do not realize how hockey has changed over the years. For example:

- how hockey is organized and structured today;
 - the reasons why children today play or leave hockey;
 - safety and risk management concerns;
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- the many hours spent by the volunteer coaches and officials to be trained and certified;
- the pressures unwittingly placed upon players (by parents and associations) to play more games than to learn and practice their skills;
- how the attitudes and behaviors of some parents/fans take the fun out of hockey for the players, officials and coaches; etc, etc.

Third, "Team First" promotes the recognition and reward of positive contributions to the game of hockey. For example, have parents/spectators select a "Fan of the Game" and present that person(s) with some form of recognition (perhaps a lapel pin, or certificate or free pizza from a sponsor, etc). Another form of recognition is the 3 Star Initiative – see Team First brochure for details.

Have parents/fans complete a "Fair Play Team Assessment Sheet" during selected games or tournaments. This form will serve as a reminder of what is acceptable behavior by everyone (a sample is enclosed at the end of this document)

"Team First" refocuses our attention on who is responsible for setting the acceptable behavior of all partners.

Here is the first step.

CONDUCT MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

The intent of the "Conduct Management Initiative" is to ensure that the environment in which all BC Hockey activities take place is as positive as possible for everyone.

Included in the "Conduct Management Initiative" are the five main participant groups identified as major **PARTNERS** in the game:

- Players
- Parents/spectators
- Team officials
- On ice officials
- Sport administrators

It is the objective of the "Conduct Management Initiative" to address issues arising from the interaction between the partner groups at any BC Hockey sanctioned event in any arena or community venue.

OBJECTIVES

This 'Conduct Management Initiative' applies to all partners of BC Hockey teams, leagues and associations. The basic objectives of the program are:

- to foster and enhance mutual respect, understanding and the principles of good sportsmanship and Fair Play amongst everyone during all BC Hockey events;
 - to promote safety, respect, enjoyment, and good competition at all BC Hockey events;
 - to eliminate behaviors and actions which detract from the safe and sportsmanlike environment in which all BC Hockey events take place and
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- zero tolerance of any form of abuse and/or harassment during all BC Hockey events.

RATIONALE

Negative incidents and situations do occasionally occur during hockey events. These vary in degree by the number of partners involved, who those partners are, and the interpretation for the cause(s) of the incident(s). Due to these variables, the following procedures outline measures to be used by all associations to deal with inappropriate incidents at any BC Hockey event.

Local associations, teams and leagues are obviously better suited to determine 'specific' actions within their own organizations. However, having all BC Hockey associations follow a standardized format will ensure consistency when dealing with these situations.

This format includes a process to deal with incidents involving other associations partners. When everyone follows the same basic procedures and program, the message of appropriate conduct management impacts upon all of us in a fair and consistent manner.

The Conduct Management Initiative includes a process to educate all partners with respect to their accountability for any inappropriate situations and to their responsibility in preventing and resolving incidents should they occur.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE CONDUCT MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

EDUCATION OF PARTNERS

Hockey Canada along with BC Hockey has led the field in many programs designed to make hockey a fun and safe experience for its' partners. These programs are aimed at educating and training coaches, managers, safety people/trainers, on-ice officials and sport administrators. Where we have not kept up is with our educational and training program for the other important partners in our sport - **the parents**.

The Chevrolet Safe & Fun Hockey Program (Parent Seminar) should be given to ALL hockey parents/guardians at the beginning of the season to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities.

All BC Hockey Associations will now have the same set of expectations and criteria advertised to all of their partners to ensure we are working together. Thus, the same rules apply, regardless of the event.

An Awareness Campaign, (explained a little further on in this document) now exists to educate all partners that they are accountable for their actions. It should be made evident to everyone that a process has been established, that it is consistent in every Association, and that it deals with inappropriate incidents amongst any of our partners.

ASSOCIATION EXPECTATION

Implementation Process

Describe how the program is to be implemented in the Association. Make it clear how the program will be presented.

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At the start of the season (DATE HERE), a meeting is to be held with all team management and representatives of the officials to present the program. At this presentation, the _____ Association will:

- Detail the objectives
- Outline the expectations
- Lay out the consequences
- Explain the team's responsibilities
- Explain the Association's responsibilities
- Explain the distribution & collection method of the Contracts and Complaint Procedure

All player registration forms should include some information to ensure everyone is aware of their association, team or league expectations regarding partners' rights, privileges, responsibilities, and behavior.

PARTNER CONTRACTS

The "Team First" philosophy returns our focus to the conduct and attitude of our game partners by providing them with clearly defined expectations of behavior. This can be achieved through BC Hockey Fair Play Codes and negotiated partner contracts. The "Fair Play Codes" (which are enclosed with the Conduct Management Initiative outlined below) are to be used as the basis of the contracts. Historically, people will have; "buy in, acceptance, and ownership" when they are allowed to participate in the process.

Partners are not only expected to sign acceptance of these positive expectations but to abide by these established standards at all BC Hockey related events.

PARENT CONTRACT: The purpose of the Parent Contract is to educate hockey parents of their membership rights, responsibilities and privileges.

The Contract may be modified to define the association's expectations of their team parent group. The Parent Contract should indicate that everyone shall adhere to the BC Hockey Conduct Management Initiative.

The Parent Contract should indicate the team rules (which were formulated by the players and the coaches), the coaching staff's expectations of the parents, players, their discipline procedures, and any other items the coaching staff consider important to adhere to during the season. While the team parent group should be given an opportunity for input, it should not detract from the main purpose of the Conduct Management goals and objectives.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) for each individual player must sign the Parent Contract and return the signed portion to the coaching staff (in order to attend any BC Hockey sanctioned event) prior to their first game. Failure to do so shall prevent the player from participating in any association, team or league activities such as games and practices.

PLAYER CONTRACT: The purpose of the Player Contract is to define expectations of behavior/conduct and commitment to the team and to the game. The contract may be modified/negotiated to include specific team rules as decided by the coaching staff, players, the association, and the parents.

The Player Contract should clarify any discipline procedures coaches may use during the season with players.

The Player Contract is handed out as soon as the team has been selected. Players are to return their signed portion of the contract to the team coaching staff prior to their first game. Signing the contract indicates that the player has read all the content and agrees to abide by it.



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TEAM OFFICIALS' CONTRACT: The purpose of this Contract is to define expectations of Team Officials (coaches, trainers, safety people) with regard to conduct, attitude, philosophy, and team and player management. The Contract may be modified to include specific association, team or league expectations and rules.

This Contract is to be handed out as soon as a coach/assistant coach(s) is/are selected and signed as acceptance of the position and the responsibilities it entails.

ON-ICE OFFICIALS' CONTRACT: The purpose of this Contract is to define their integral role in hockey and the expectations of conduct in the management of the game. They must recognize their impact on the game and their fellow partners.

SPORT ADMINISTRATORS' CONTRACT: This contract defines the expectations of conduct for those volunteers involved in the off-ice management of the game. It may be modified to include specific goals, attitudes and rules of the association, team or league. The contract must be handed out to each volunteer in a designated position and signing of it constitutes acceptance of the position and the philosophy.

NOTE: Enclosed at Appendix A are samples of contracts that are based on the Fair Play Codes. These can be used until the association has the time to create their own.

TEAM OFFICIALS:

- Respect all facilities and their staff.
- Respect the officials and their decisions.
- Respect opposing team players, coaches and other participants.
- Take responsibility for the actions and behaviors of their team on and off the ice.

OFFICIALS:

- Respect all participants of the game.
- Maintain open and positive communications with players and coaches.
- Promote the rules of the game to all team participants.
- Keep the integrity in all games.
- Maintain professionalism on and off the ice.

SPECTATORS:

- Remember that players are not participating in the game to entertain the parents.
- Spectators should not judge players by professional standards.
- Spectators should maintain their self-control at all times.
- Spectators should demonstrate respect for all officials and their decisions.
- Spectators should demonstrate respect for all participants of the game.
- Spectators should encourage sportsmanship, effort and positive attitudes of all participants.

PLAYERS:

- Players should respect all facilities and their staff.
 - Players should respect the officials and their decisions.
 - Players should respect the opposing team players, coaches, and other participants.
 - Players should take responsibility for their actions and behaviors on and off the ice.
 - Players should respect their own teammates and team officials.
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SPORT ADMINISTRATORS:

- Give all players the same chance to participate.
- Discourage any sport program from becoming primarily an entertainment for the spectators.
- Make sure that all equipment and facilities are safe.
- Make sure that program development, rule enforcement and scheduling match the age level of the players.
- Remember that play is done for its own sake and keep winning in perspective.
- Make sure all coaches and officials are certified.
- Make sure that all the partners promote Fair Play.

RESOLVING ISSUES

Issues throughout a season may involve inappropriate behaviors of coaches, players, officials, spectators, or combinations of any of these partners groups.

Officiating complaints must focus upon official's actions towards other partners **not on how a game was called by the officials**. Regardless at which BC Hockey event an incident occurs, all concerns must be forwarded in writing to the respective association(s) executive member(s).

General procedures to be followed are:

- Every reported incident **MUST** be in writing and given to an association executive(s) within **5 days**.
- Every reported incident **MUST** be followed up by the association(s) involved and notification of the resolution forwarded to the Association President within **10 days** with a copy to the BC Hockey District Director.
- Reports are welcomed from anyone within their own association, or from another association.

Included in the report should be the following:

- - description of the incident
- - names of the people involved and/or other witnesses and
- - date, time, and other details and all other relevant information
- The severity of the incident may require:
 - - communication between associations and/or meeting with the people involved and/or
 - – BC Hockey District Director involvement and mediation
- Actions and responses by associations:
 - - investigate the incident
 - - record and file the incident and
 - - send a copy to the BC Hockey District Director
 - - if partners of both associations are involved then a joint meeting should held (depending on the severity of the incident)
 - - depending upon the severity of the incident, a MHA Executive member should chair the meeting to resolve the situation.

During the process, all parties must be kept informed of all actions, responses and consequences.

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NOTE: If the incident involves any chronic forms of Harassment or Abuse, then the Association's Harassment and Abuse Policy shall be followed.

CONSEQUENCES TO PARTNERS

For the person(s) involved in any reported incident(s), the consequence **shall** be one of the following:

- letter of education (association action)
- letter of warning (association action)
- probation period and/or restitution (association, district association and/or BC Hockey District Director's recommended action)
- suspension (association or district association)
- recommended suspension from BC Hockey events as per BC Hockey Constitution, By-Laws and Regulations (District or BC Hockey District Director's action)
- criminal charges (Local Police detachment/department action)

The following is an example of how to investigate and resolve complaints.

COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURES

An Association needs to provide an explanation as to how complaints are handled. In particular, what triggers a complaint investigation, the reporting process, the method of enforcement, and the method that will be used to handle the complaint.

Implementation Trigger

The reporting of unacceptable behavior at a rink by a spectator, coach, player or official is the triggering event of the complaint handling procedure. The person(s) responsible for investigating the complaint will be governed by this reporting process. The methods of enforcement will vary dependent on the severity of the event.

What is Unacceptable Behavior?

An individual is displaying unacceptable behavior if they are verbally or physically harassing and/or abusing a game player, coach, official or spectator. When there is a situation of "unacceptable behavior" the responsibility of the Association, coaches, spectators, and on ice-ice officials are as set out herein. The focus is on achieving the program objectives. Confrontation should be avoided and reporting is encouraged, as it is an important step to attaining the objective.

Reporting Process

An individual (or committee) shall be appointed by the Association to receive and investigate complaints. Depending on the number of sub-organizations in an Association, the expectation would be to resolve the incident at the lowest level first. All submitted incident reports should be reviewed by the Minor Hockey Association Executive to insure the appropriateness of the response and consistency of enforcement within the Association. If a report is submitted to the Association directly, bypassing the sub-organization, then the sub-organization must be notified of the incident.



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If an incident occurs which meets the definition of unacceptable behavior and in the opinion of a player, spectator, coach, official or administrator, is serious enough to warrant a formal complaint, then an Incident Report Form (Appendix B) must be completed.

The Incident Report Form should be submitted to the individual responsible for complaint handling.

PARTNERS REPORTING CONCERNS

On/Off Ice Officials

If, in the opinion of an official (on-ice or off-ice), any spectator who is verbally or physically harassing or abusing a game partner (team official, player or on-ice official), the official will, at a stoppage of play, identify the offending individual and through discussion with team officials, request that the offending individuals cease this unacceptable behavior.

If the behavior continues, the official will document the offense or action on a game incident report form or the back of the game sheet. A copy of this game sheet will be forwarded to (the Association's designated individual), triggering the complaint handling process (**Remember, if the behavior warrants it, the complaint should be made under the Association's Harassment and Abuse policy**).

Sport Administrators, Spectators, Players

If in the opinion of any Sport Administrator, spectator, or player an individual is verbally or physically harassing or abusing a team official, player, on-ice official, or spectator, an incident report form is to be completed and forwarded to the individual responsible for complaint handling. This will trigger the complaint handling procedure.

Enforcement

Provide a description of who has the power to assess discipline within the Association. Part of this process should include getting the facility owner's concurrence and support for discipline, which may include restricting a participant from entering a facility during an Association event. The sample description below allows the President or a designate to assess discipline.

After investigation, the _____ Association President shall have the power to suspend any player, team official, trainer, manager, off-ice official or spectator of any team under the auspices of the Association for any conduct on or off the ice which in the sole discretion of the President is deemed to be unbecoming or detrimental to the game.

The _____ Association President shall have the power to prevent any spectator from viewing any game or other activity or entering a facility to view such game or activity under the auspices of the Association for any conduct, which in the sole discretion of the President, is deemed to be unbecoming or detrimental to the game.

Further, the President shall have the power to suspend the player, team official or the team to which the spectator is attached.

This authority may be delegated to such Association directors and officials as the President may designate.



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The power and delegation granted to the President allows for effective and quick action against inappropriate behavior. The Association is prepared to enforce these provisions because they are an integral part of the reporting and enforcement initiatives.

Appeal Process

To insure a complaint has been handled with impartiality and fairness, the Association must have an appeals process in case there is a perception that an incident has been mishandled or discipline improperly applied.

Upon receiving written notice of an appeal the _____
(Association) will hear the appeal as per the association's established Appeal Process.