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The Official Report

The newsletter of the Missouri Ice Hockey Officials Association

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Newsletter of the Missouri Ice Hockey Officials Association

NOVEMBER 2008

Calm, Cool and Collected? *By Mark Heisohn, IA Official*

When I asked Andy Hudson about a possible topic for this month's article, he suggested something dealing with "Communication with coaches, players and your partner." As we'd both realize as he evaluated me and my partner in the game that followed, he needed to add "and with spectators."

Much has been written and discussed about the topic of verbal and non-verbal cues as they relate to communication between people. To wit, how we say something is often more important than what is actually said. We have often penalized players and coaches, and are encour-

aged and right in doing so, not so much for what they said but for the gestures that may have accompanied or preceded their words. And while much has been addressed under the topic of Zero Tolerance regarding the behavior of participants and fans, perhaps more attention needs to be placed squarely on our shoulders as officials, as those assigned the responsibility of keeping the peace.

Our Basic Officials Manual advises us to "be soft-spoken and honest when speaking one-on-one." On occasion, don't be afraid to admit a mistake, as it does nothing for your integrity

when you to try and bluff your way through a blown call when everyone else knows you messed up. Answer reasonable questions with brief, accurate answers as to your interpretation of what happened, and never threaten players or coaches and, above all, don't use profane language. Threatening a player or coach with penalties for repeated ill behavior is baiting them to do so, just to see if you'll carry through with your threat. While warning someone is what we're to do to encourage corrective action, don't do so in an aggressive, daring man-

...Continued on next page

Hey Ref!

I hope that everyone has cleared out the cobwebs and has had a chance to hit the ice since your seminar. I also hope that you have been continuing your education by reading your rule book and manuals. The efforts of the instructors along with your paying attention at the seminars has seemed to have paid off thus far based on the game reports that I have read to date. Keep it up.

I would like to apologize to those who had planned to attend the October membership meeting. A primary goal of the MIHOA Board is to make the monthly membership meetings as meaningful as possible. It is no secret that attendance at our meetings has declined over the years since we have initiated direct deposit of your game fees.

Let's face it, the only reason our meetings were so well attended for the most part was for officials to pick up their paychecks. We owe it to you to have our meetings be something meaningful for those dedicated officials who want to be involved with this association. Quite frankly, we were not prepared to give you just that in October, thus the cancellation of the meeting. It is our intent for the meetings to be informative and interesting. In the next two months, we hope to secure a guest speaker to address our membership about fitness and nutrition as it pertains to you, the official. We are also trying to secure an NHL official to speak to you when in town for a Blues game. We would also like to address continuing education as an official in

a few meetings with whatever medium available. As you have heard me say many times previous, this is your association. What you put into it, you will get out of it. If you can think of a topic that you feel your fellow members might find interesting, please let us know.

As a reminder, if you plan on being eligible for an elected position with the association in 2009, it is in our by-laws that you attend three membership meetings to fulfill that part of the requirement to hold office.

I look forward to seeing you at our next informative meeting.

Skate safe,

Pec

By Mark Pecoraro, MIHOA President

ner. And personal threats or vulgar language is something that we must avoid absolutely. After all, it is difficult to reasonably penalize a player or coach who is merely mirroring our language or actions.

“Treat indignity with dignity.” I heard this said so well by a presenter from USA Hockey at a local association meeting many years ago. It makes perfect sense. The more in control we are of our non-verbal cues and our overall persona, the better our “presence” when working a game. Poise, whether it is in the form of positioning, hustling, signals or discussions with players, coaches or partners, will earn us more trust and respect as officials and individuals. Do we make signals with what Andy Hudson calls a “referee’s cadence,” with a calm, deliberate tempo that displays confidence and calm? Or do we rush and stumble through, telling everyone that perhaps we’re nervous and not so sure of ourselves? Just the other night, a coach calmly asked for a minute with me between periods to which I answered “certainly” and calmly skated over to him. He politely expressed his concerns with the game we were calling to that point, and I then gave him my interpretation of one hit in particular. He thanked me for listening and for my time and from that point on we had a terrific game, wherein the players responded to our during-play directions and were reasonable when penalized, or when something went un-penalized. The players got back to the business of playing.

When dealing with players on the ice, I find a conversational tone to be the very best manner. Don’t argue; the player (or coach) isn’t buying your side anyway and all you’re doing is enflaming the situation. Most players react well to a compliment for a nice play, or for their collective hard work in the corner or at the goal mouth just before a stoppage, and goaltenders always enjoy hearing about a terrific save. And, in those scramble situations it’s always a good idea to move

towards the players slightly and direct them to “keep the hands (sticks) down,” “don’t reach,” “easy in front.” A little authoritative direction in these areas can limit the action before it becomes an infraction that creates a stoppage that could have been avoided. Talking to players during face-offs and asking or directing them to do something, rather than telling them to do so, can go a long way towards building a relationship with the players based on a degree of mutual respect. And by all means, if a player or coach says something funny without being disrespectful to anyone, don’t be afraid to smile and enjoy the humor. After all, I hope we all enjoy participating up close and personal in this great game, made better, faster and more skillful with the new standards. We’ve got a front row seat for all the great action; don’t be afraid to let everyone know that you enjoy being out there.



“When dealing with players... don’t argue; the player (or coach) isn’t buying your side anyway and all you’re doing is enflaming the situation.”

As for communicating with your partner, much success comes in simply officiating with certain individuals and learning how they work. But some of the potential barriers can be dealt with in a good pre-game conversation. Introduce yourself, certainly, if it’s someone you haven’t worked with or don’t know. After all, you may need to call across the ice to your partner at some point during play. Beyond that, discuss potential situations where communicating with one another becomes critical, such as icing, penalties where you both have your arm up, covering for your partner, line change procedures or end zone stoppages. A brief pre-game discussion as to how you’re going to deal with these can make for great communication during play and stoppages and make for a seamless transition among partners. Nothing builds confidence in the on-ice crew like two or three officials working together and keeping confusion among one another to a minimum.

Finally, on the matter of communicating with fans, I’ll offer the following examples of what NOT to say:

(to the obnoxious mom in the back row of the stands) – “Hey lady, you better get home quick before the cops tow

away your house!”

OR

(to the dad who says you are losing control of the game) – “Look pal, I have lost control of plenty of games before and I am no where close to losing control of this one!”

OR

(to the mom who tells you to “open your eyes!”) – “Ma’am, I promise I will open my eyes as soon as you shut your mouth!”

OR

(to the dad in the top row at Webster on the verge of coming unhinged) – “Hey, we’ve got a seminar on Saturday, come join us!”

Ouch, ouch and more ouch! While these may be comical and make for some great locker room banter, they do nothing for us as officials but tell everyone that we’ve lost control, at least temporarily, and are in danger of losing it completely. Once we’ve engaged the fans, we have encouraged the others to do the same and have simply made matters worse for ourselves and for everyone else. As Andy said to me in his evaluation following my comment in that Webster game, “What were you thinking? Who cares?” Great advice. The best way to get everyone back on the game and off your back is to get play restarted. Use that line change and faceoff procedure to line ‘em up. Get the puck down, the players back to playing and the fans back to watching.

I’ll close with a story relayed by Scott Zelkin, former minor league and NHL referee. At a District Officiating Seminar locally, Scott told of the duck in the pond during a rainstorm. On the surface, the duck appears calm and collected, easily dealing with the torrent. Below the surface, however, we all know that the duck is in a paddling frenzy, trying to keep himself afloat and heading in some positive direction. So next time you get into a penalty-filled game with everyone screaming and the arena rocking, keep working hard and, above all, communicate your confidence and poise for all to see. Be the duck.

Have a great month and see you at the rink!

USA Hockey News

By Tom Woolf, USAH Local Supervisor of Officials

Local Official Selected to Work Women's Four Nations Cup

Congratulations to Laura Johnson on being selected to work the 2008 Women's Four Nations Cup which is being held November 4-9 in Lake Placid, NY. Laura recently moved to St. Louis from Dallas and is part of the women's development program for the USA Hockey officiating program. The Four Nations Cup is an annual IIHF-sanctioned women's ice hockey tournament held be-



tween several major national teams in the sport. Currently, these are Canada, the United States, Sweden and Finland. The tournament will consist of eight games over the course of six days.

Districts & Nationals

The season will soon be in full swing. Please remember that St. Louis is hosting the 2009 Tier II Central District tournament to be held in March and the 2009 16 & Under Tier I and Tier II National Championships to be

held in April (both at the Hardee's Iceplex).

Now is the time to start polishing up on USA Hockey officiating standards and mechanics. Let's break out the manuals to cover positioning and other officiating mechanics associated with USA Hockey. Review the Standard of Play video to make sure we are on top of the correct application of this very important part of our game.

All District and National

games will use the 3-man officiating system. The levels where we currently use the 3-man system are Majors & Minors at the AAA and



CSDHL levels and the Youth Division 18UAA level. The large majority of these games

happen on weekend days and Wednesday nights. It is advisable to make an effort to be available on these days so that you may get some work in during the course of the year in preparation for both of these events being held in St. Louis.

HIGH SCHOOL & NCAA NEWS

By Jon Wells, VP Scholastic

Just in case you've been hiding under a rock for the last month or so, here are the major headlines in the world of the Scholastic Divisions:

- Mississippi Valley has resolved their registration issues with USA Hockey and have once again contracted with MIHOA to provide officials for the 2008-09 season.
- Mid-States has reevaluated their position on using the 3-official system for the upcoming season, and has elected to use the 2-official system for at least one more year.
- NCAA games we schedule will utilize a 3-official system for all games (including Women's games) this season.



MIHOA member Matt Chouinard working a recent Webster Top Hat tournament game

The High School regular season will be starting soon. Our evaluation staff has been getting out seeing a lot of individuals at the Marquette, Lafayette, and Webster Top Hat tournaments. We will continue to evaluate as many games as possible throughout the rest of the pre-season and into the regular season in an attempt to get as many officials evaluated as possible. As usual, the purpose of these evaluations is to attempt to raise the level of officiating MIHOA provides to

the clubs that contract our services. Evaluations are intended to be positive in nature, and to help you become a better official. Please use evaluations to improve

yourself and the job you do on the ice. This is why we do evaluations; they are not punishments or tryouts. They are honest assessments of where you are as an official and suggestions for how to make you better.

Due to scheduling conflicts and the relatively few High School rules changes, there will not be any formal High School meetings this season. Instead, I will post the information on the VP Scholastic web page on www.MIHOA.org shortly. Please review the materials for league-specific information and rule differences.

As everybody should know by now, this was a rule change year for the NCAA. A summary of the rule changes, the current NCAA rule book, and other ACHA information can be found on the VP Scholastic page at www.MIHOA.org. One of the major rule changes has to do with requiring all players to wear HECC approved helmets. HECC certification on a helmet requires that ear flaps be installed on the helmet, which is a big change for NCAA teams. Officials were purposely lax on enforcing this rule for the first part of the season

since it was not made clear to the teams that HECC certification included ear flaps. However, an e-mail has been sent by MIHOA to all local ACHA teams letting them know that the grace period for ear flaps has expired. All officials are now required to enforce this rule to the extent of the rule book for both teams. Please review the NCAA information and rule book for the proper enforcement, and start enforcing this rule immediately.

On a general note, as everybody heard at the seminars, it is expected that all our officials conduct themselves in a professional manner both on and off the ice. Rule knowledge, proper rules application, non-fraternization, proper positioning, and appropriate demeanor are all part of being a good official. Whether you are in the parking lot of a rink, in the lobby, on the ice, or in the stands, everybody sees us as officials and applies what they see us do and hear us say to the job we do on the ice. The job we do on the ice is tough enough without adding preconceptions people get because of sloppy dress, arriving late, dirty sweaters, or constantly being out of position. There is still a lot of hockey to be played this season. Let's start the season right, and continue it all year long. You will be surprised how the little things make each game go smoothly.

As always, if anybody has any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Peter Perry

Age: 43 Level 2 Official

Pete is a Firefighter/EMT-B with the St. Louis Fire Department and a refueler with the 131st Fighter Wing in the Missouri Air National Guard. After graduating from El Camino College (Torrance, CA) with a degree in Fire Technology, he served four years on active duty with the United States Marine Corps. Pete plans on returning to school to pursue a degree in Emergency Management.



country of ours and finding new and interesting things to do around St. Louis. I am also involved with two local bag piping bands, one of which is comprised of St. Louis area firefighters. My next big venture is to play in Pipefest 2010 in Scotland."

"I just bought a house this summer in St. Louis. It is 81 years old and it needs some work so this will be my new hobby for the next few years."

What got you interested in refereeing?

"I have always had a passion for the game. A grade school classmate introduced me to the game and I have been watching it since I was about 12 years old. When I joined the Fire Department three years ago, they asked me if I could play. I told them that I could kind of skate,

but my playing abilities were pretty much nil. They told me to come join them anyway. I have had a great time playing on the Fire Department's team as we skate against the boys from the Police Department every Tuesday at Webster Groves. And, as we all know, when you work for the Fire Department, you have lots of time off. So, wanting to improve my skating ability and learn more about the game, and pick up a few extra bucks on the side, I did some searching to find out how to become a referee. I found MIHOA and went to a seminar. Now, it has become more than making a little extra money and getting better at skating.

Any interesting experiences on the ice?

"Nothing really crazy to speak of. One thing I did learn while working the penalty box at a St. Louis Bandits playoff game, you MUST keep your head on a

swivel and watch out for those flying pucks and sticks."

Any thoughts for new officials?

"Don't be afraid to make mistakes. We are all human, but when a mistake has been made, own up to it and learn from it."

"Be firm in your position, but also be respectful to the coaches, players and staff"

What are your goals for this season?

"I want to gain as much experience as possible by doing as many different level games as I can. I am also working hard on my skating. I have only been on skates regularly for three years.

Two MIHOA members will be featured each month: one senior official and one official who is new to MIHOA.

Mark "Pec" Pecoraro

Age: 52 MIHOA Member: 19 years
Years Officiating: 34

Due to an unfortunate situation last season, MIHOA needed a new president. Pec stepped up! Given his background and love of the game the decision to help out was an easy one.

Pec's wife, Connie, is an Elementary teacher in O'Fallon, Illinois. They have two sons, Dominic and Andrew. Pec works for Birki's (division of Birkenstock). His list of activities includes travel, cooking and spectator sports. Pec is also on a mission to visit all Major League Baseball parks. He also has an extensive collection of hockey pucks.

Why did you get into refereeing?

"I originally got into officiating as a way to be involved in my favorite sport. I was an average goaltender and did not have illusions of hockey as a career. Now it is all about an outlet for fitness and giving back to the game."

Any interesting on-ice experiences?

"I called an icing on a goal last year in a High School game in my 33rd year as an official! (Senior Moment)"

"I guess we all have a "shoulda-coulda-woulda" story, but here is my greatest blunder as an official and it didn't even happen on the ice."

"When I was in my early twenties, I worked for a hockey stick manufacturer as a pro stick representative to NHL teams.

I was lucky enough to be in NHL locker rooms and arenas pretty often. I thought about going down to Madison Square Garden one Sunday, but stayed home with my family for a Sunday meal. So here comes the biggest blunder in my officiating career: if you older guys remember back in 1980, the US Olympic Hockey Team played the Soviet Union in a tune up game at Madison Square Garden a week before the Olympics. What is not known about that game is that the U.S. Olympic Committee neglected to assign officials to that game. During a last minute scamper to find officials, I received a call at my house that was answered by my parents. It was from my assigning agent to see if I was at the USA-CCCP game. Unfortunately, I was not. My assigning agent and the USA Hockey local Referee-in-Chief (who were at the game), along with a local



official, ended up working the game with borrowed equipment. The Soviets won the game, like 9-1. I picked the wrong day to be a good family guy and not go to a hockey game. Oh yeah, just in case you forgot, that same USA Olympic

Team managed to beat the Soviets in Lake Placid a week later on their way to an historic Gold Medal."

Goals for this season:

"Drop 20 pounds by playoffs and get in some kind of reasonable shape. Work on backwards cross-unders as well as cross-overs to the left side with power."

What advice do you have for new officials?

1. "Always have your gear packed and ready to go."
2. "Blow your whistle like you mean it when you make a call."
3. "If you show confidence in your ability, then you will earn the respect of the coaches, players and fellow officials."

Big Brother Program

By Wayne Kidd, Big Brother Coordinator

Well, the season is upon us again. I trust you had a relaxing summer and are ready to go. I need to apologize to those who have sent me e-mails or talked to me about the Big Brother program. I am not ignoring you; rather, I was waiting until the parameters by which I believe Big Brother will be the most effective had been formulated. That being said, I will get to the points of this article.

As you learned at the seminars, I have been given the task of revitalizing the Big Brother program. This program offers a way for MIHOA to retain the Level 1 and 2 officials who register each year while our senior officials are lost to attrition.

Let's face it guys...as much as we would like to, we can't all officiate at the level we once did. The problems in the past have been that the Level 1's and 2's officiate for a year or two and then, for whatever reason, are never heard from again. We need to establish bonds necessary to support these new officials and retain them for years to come. We, as an association, must find a way to encourage the younger officials to come back year after year.

I realize that as the season goes on we all get a little sick of being at the rink. In the past, we asked our senior officials to spend an extra night skating with the younger officials and found that not only

was this too much of a commitment, but it also resulted in a loss of income. Of course officiating isn't all about the money, but it is still a consideration.

So after learning from the past, I now envision the Big Brother program being not one of increasing time commitment, but more of a checking in and being available to the younger officials when we are needed the most. For instance:



when a young official has a particularly difficult game and needs someone to talk to, we check in to see how their game went and in turn become a much needed (experienced) sounding board. We may also contact the parents to introduce ourselves and offer our assistance

when they notice their son or daughter coming home upset and ready to hang up their skates. By getting a heads up, we may be able to intervene and avoid the loss of another up-and-coming official. We can all remember the feeling of coming home after a bad experience at the rink and wanting to dump the rest of our schedule and give up officiating forever. We obviously had someone to lean on and help us which is what the Big Brother program needs to be for the young officials we have now.

Now, don't get me wrong, on-ice instruction is still the best way to help young officials. So if this is a commitment that you are willing to make as a

senior official, we will do our best to pair you up with a young official at the rink nearest your home, thereby saving on the increasing cost of fuel.

As far as getting game assignments with your little brother, you can contact me directly by email at kidder@fidnet.com or by cell phone at (314) 210-8524.

You can also contact Hardy Woodward or Tom Woolf. Hopefully we can get you the games with the little brother that you request.

Finally, this is our Big Brother program. It will only work if we make it work. Try to work with young officials whenever possible. Always ask a younger official how their season has been going and talk with them about any concerns they might have. This program is not set in stone, so any comments or ideas on how to make the Big Brother program more workable are always welcome. Have a great season and we'll see you at the rinks!

2008-09 Membership Meetings

Tue, Nov 4, 2008
Maryville University
Reid Bldg 2317

Tue, Dec 2, 2008
Maryville University
Reid Bldg 2317

Tue, Jan 6, 2009
Maryville University
Huttig Chapel

Tue, Feb 3, 2009
Location TBA

Tue, Mar 4, 2009
Maryville University
Donius Center 107

Sun, Apr 26, 2009
Annual Meeting
4:00 p.m.
Hardee's Iceplex

All meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

MIHOA APPAREL AVAILABLE

A variety of MIHOA shirts, sweatshirts, hats, warm-ups and more can be purchased by contacting Jim Galligan. Pictures of all items are available in the "Members" section



of www.MIHOA.org. Or, [CLICK HERE](#) to go directly to the merchandise page. Purchases can be deducted from your monthly paychecks.

Proceeds from sales



of MIHOA apparel benefit the Bill McKenna Memorial Scholarship Fund.

For more information, contact Jim Galligan at (314) 640-4011 or jimmygesp@aol.com.



Member Contributions

With the conclusion of the recent fall seminars, I would like to thank the 58 MIHOA members who have contributed just under \$4,000 to the Bill McKenna Memorial Scholarship Foundation. The support and generosity that the

BMMSF receives from the MIHOA family, makes me proud to be part of this organization. Even with the current economic situation we all face, our membership stepped up to support this cause.



Bill is smiling on us, so please smile back to him next time you are on the ice!

Missed sending in a contribution? Just send me an e-mail to bhowenstein@sbhsmg.com with the amount you would like to contribute. Questions, comments or suggestions are also welcome.

Thanks again to all and best wishes for a great season!

2nd Annual Bill McKenna Memorial Golf Classic

Save the date for the 2009 Bill McKenna Memorial Golf Classic! This second annual golf tourna-

ment will be held Saturday, May 2, 2009 at the Norman K. Probst Golf Course in Forest Park.

The inaugural event attracted 120+ participants from throughout the St. Louis hockey community and raised more than \$6,500 for the BMMSF. We hope to continue this success in 2009. Stay tuned for more details in this newsletter and on www.MIHOA.org.



Champions of the inaugural McKenna Golf Classic (from left) Chris Meyer, Gino Cavallini, Brad Webb and Craig Alles.

Senior Men's News

The Senior Men's Fall/Winter season is off and running with all leagues in progress as of the week of October 13. Some things to remember when working Senior Men's hockey:

- Do not wear a USA Hockey crest during Hockey North America (HNA) games.
- Please review Rule 404 (d) of the USA Hockey playing rules. This rule is being misapplied by a number of officials. An adult player who receives five

penalties in the same game is ejected from the game with no further suspension. The player simply leaves the game and you do not assess a game misconduct.

- Know the league rules for each building you are working.
- Make sure the score sheet is completely filled out (names and numbers) before the game starts.
- Check during warm ups to be sure all players have numbers

By Jerry Burt, VP Seniors

(may not be taped on) and that no other player on that team has the same number.

- Name plates are not required for officials working Senior Men's games.

Thanks to all of you who have worked Senior Men's Hockey and keep working hard.



GENERAL NEWS & NOTES

New Pay Structure

There have been questions concerning our new pay structure and why we are not getting paid at the beginning of the month. Please see an excerpt of the letter I wrote to the entire membership on June 8:

"I also want to inform you that the way we invoice the clubs and organizations will be changing this September.

Taking Phil Lovecchio and Tom Woolf's suggestion, we will be invoicing the clubs for the months' games just completed that we just officiated at the beginning of the month. This will eliminate the majority of the invoice conflicts we have with our customers. What it means to you is that you will be receiving your check in the middle of the month instead of the beginning of the month."

Conflict of Interest

I have also heard of occurrences of fellow parents/officials entering the officials locker room after games to inquire about calls made on the ice. Please be cognizant of the fact that just because you are an official, it does not entitle you access to the officials locker room after a game in which your child played. The officials locker room is the game officials' sanctuary and you

are not entitled access just because your one of the fraternity. At this point, you are considered a spectator.

Please also remember to alert the appropriate VP's if you have a conflict with a league or club by either your involvement with that organization or if you have a child playing in that league.