



Discipline and Complaints Policy

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) “*Association*” – **Hinton Ringette Association**
 - b) “*Complainant*” – The party alleging an infraction.
 - c) “*Days*” – Days irrespective of weekends and holidays.
 - d) “*Individuals*” – All categories of Membership within the Association Bylaws, as well as all individuals engaged in activities with the Association, including but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, directors and officers.
 - e) “*Respondent*” – The alleged infracting party.

Purpose

2. Membership and/or participation in the Association, brings with it many benefits and privileges. At the same time, Individuals are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities and obligations including, but not limited to, complying with the Association Bylaws, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and Code of Conduct and Ethics. Irresponsible behaviour by Individuals can result in severe damage to the image of the Association. Conduct that violates these values may be subject to sanctions pursuant to this policy.

Application of this Policy

3. This Policy applies to all Individuals as defined in the Definitions.
4. This Policy applies to discipline matters that may arise during the course of Association business, activities and events, including, but not limited to, its office environment, competitions, practices, training camps; travel, and any meetings.
5. Discipline matters and complaints arising within the business, activities or events organized by entities other than the Association will be dealt with pursuant to the policies of these other entities unless accepted by the Association in its sole discretion.

Reporting a Complaint

6. Any Individual may report to the Association’s Head Office any complaint of an infraction by an Individual. Such a complaint must be signed and in writing, and must be filed within fourteen (14) days of the alleged incident. Anonymous complaints may be accepted upon the sole discretion of the Association.
7. A Complainant wishing to file a complaint beyond the fourteen (14) days must provide a written statement giving reasons for an exemption to this limitation. The decision to

accept, or not accept, the notice of complaint outside the fourteen (14) day period will be at the sole discretion of the Association. This decision may not be appealed or is grounds for defence.

Case Manager

8. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Association will assign a Case Manager to oversee the management and administration of complaints submitted in accordance with this Policy and such appointment is not appealable. The Case Manager has an overall responsibility to implement this Policy in a timely manner. More specifically, the Case Manager has a responsibility to:
 - a) Determine whether the complaint is frivolous or vexatious and within the jurisdiction of this Policy. If the Case Manager determines the complaint is frivolous or vexatious or outside the jurisdiction of this Policy, the complaint will be dismissed immediately. The Case Manager decision to the acceptance or dismissal of the complaint may not be appealed;
 - b) Determine if the complaint is a minor or major infraction;
 - c) Appoint a Mediator and/or Panel, if necessary, in accordance with this Policy;
 - d) Determine the format of the hearing;
 - e) Coordinate all administrative aspects of the complaint;
 - f) Provide administrative assistance and logistical support to the Panel as required; and
 - g) Provide any other service or support that may be necessary to ensure a fair and timely proceeding.
9. The Case Manager will inform the Parties if the incident is to be dealt with as a minor infraction or major infraction and the matter will be dealt with according to the applicable section relating to the minor or major infraction.
10. This Policy does not prevent an appropriate person having authority from taking immediate, informal or corrective action in response to behaviour that constitutes either a minor or major infraction. Further sanctions may be applied in accordance with the procedures set out in this Policy.

Minor Infractions

11. Minor infractions are single incidents of failing to achieve the expected standards of conduct that generally do not result in harm to others, the Association or to the sport of ringette.
12. All disciplinary situations involving minor infractions will be dealt with by the appropriate person having authority over the situation and the individual involved (the person in authority may include, but is not restricted to, staff, officials, coaches, organizers, or Association decision makers).
13. Procedures for dealing with minor infractions will be informal as compared to those for major infractions and will be determined at the discretion of the person responsible for discipline of such infractions (as noted above in point 12). This is provided that the Respondent being disciplined is told the nature of the infraction and has an opportunity to provide information concerning the incident.

14. Penalties for minor infractions, which may be applied singly or in combination, include the following:
 - a) Verbal or written warning;
 - b) Verbal or written apology;
 - c) Service or other voluntary contribution to the Association;
 - d) Removal of certain privileges of membership or participation for a designated period of time;
 - e) Suspension from the current competition, activity or event; or
 - f) Any other sanction considered appropriate for the offense.
15. Minor infractions that result in discipline will be recorded and maintained by the Association. Repeat minor infractions may result in further such incidents being considered a major infraction.

Major Infractions

16. Major infractions are instances of failing to achieve the expected standards of conduct that result, or have the potential to result in harm to other persons, to the Association or to the sport of ringette.
17. Examples of major infractions include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Repeated Minor Infractions;
 - b) Intentionally damaging Association property or improperly handling Association monies;
 - c) Incidents of physical abuse;
 - d) Pranks, jokes or other activities that endanger the safety of others, including hazing;
 - e) Disregard for the bylaws, policies, rules, regulations and directives of the Association;
 - f) Conduct that intentionally damages the image, credibility or reputation of the Association or the sport of ringette;
 - g) Behaviour that constitutes harassment, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct; or
 - h) Abusive use of alcohol, any use or possession of alcohol by minors, use or possession of illicit drugs and narcotics.
18. Major infractions will be decided using the disciplinary procedures set out in this policy, except where a dispute resolution procedure contained within a contract or other formal written agreement takes precedence.
19. Major infractions occurring within competition may be dealt with immediately, if necessary, by an appropriate person having authority. In such situations, disciplinary sanctions will be for the duration of the competition, training, activity or event only. Further sanctions may be applied but only after review of the matter in accordance with the procedures set out in this Policy. This review does not replace the appeal provisions of this Policy.

Procedure for Major Infraction Hearing

20. If the Case Manager is satisfied that the complaint is a major infraction, the Case Manager will, with the consent of the parties, seek to resolve the complaint through mediation using the services of an independent mediator or the Case Manager.
21. If the complaint cannot be resolved through mediation, then a hearing before a Panel will take place. The Case Manager will appoint the Panel, which will consist of a single Adjudicator, to hear the appeal. In extraordinary circumstances, and at the discretion of the Case Manager, a Panel of three persons may be appointed to hear and decide the complaint. In this event, the Case Manager will appoint one of the Panel's Individual to serve as the Chair.
22. The Case Manager will determine the format of the hearing, which may involve an oral hearing in person, an oral hearing by telephone, a hearing based on written submissions or a combination of these methods. The hearing will be governed by the procedures that the Case Manager and the Panel deem appropriate in the circumstances, provided that:
 - a) The Parties will be given appropriate notice of the day, time and place of the hearing.
 - b) Copies of any written documents which the parties wish to have the Panel consider will be provided to all Parties in advance of the hearing.
 - c) The parties may be accompanied by a representative, advisor or legal counsel at their own expense.
 - d) The Panel may request that any other individual participate and give evidence at the hearing.
 - e) If a decision in the appeal may affect another party to the extent that the other party would have recourse to an appeal in their own right under this Policy, that party will become a party to the appeal in question and will be bound by its outcome.
 - f) Decisions will be by majority vote.

Decision

23. After hearing the matter, the Panel will determine whether an infraction has occurred and if so what appropriate sanction will be imposed. The Panel's written decision, with reasons, will be distributed to all parties, the Case Manager and the Association. The decision will be considered a matter of public record unless decided otherwise by the Panel.
24. Where the Respondent acknowledges the facts of the incident, he or she may waive the hearing, in which case the Panel will determine the appropriate disciplinary sanction. The Panel may hold a hearing for the purpose of determining an appropriate sanction.
25. If the Respondent chooses not to participate in the hearing, the hearing will proceed in any event.
26. In fulfilling its duties, the Panel may obtain independent advice.

Sanctions

27. The Panel may apply the following disciplinary sanctions singly or in combination, for major infractions:
 - a) Verbal or written reprimand and/or verbal or written apology;
 - b) Service or other voluntary contribution to the Association;
 - c) Removal of certain privileges of membership;
 - d) Suspension from certain Association teams, events and/or activities;
 - e) Suspension from all Association activities for a designated period of time;
 - f) Withholding of prize money;
 - g) Payment of the cost of repairs for property damage;
 - h) Suspension of funding from the Association or other funding;
 - i) Expulsion from the Association;
 - j) Other sanctions as may be considered appropriate for the offense.
28. Unless the Panel decides otherwise, any disciplinary sanctions will commence immediately. Failure to comply with a sanction as determined by the Panel will result in automatic suspension until such time as compliance occurs.
29. A written record will be maintained by the Association at their head office for major infractions that result in a sanction.

Serious Infractions

30. The Association may determine that an alleged incident is of such seriousness as to warrant suspension of the Respondent pending a hearing and a decision of the Panel.

Criminal Convictions

31. An Individual's charge or conviction for any of the following *Criminal Code* offenses will be deemed a major infraction under this Policy and will result in expulsion and/or suspension from the Association and/or removal from Association competitions, programs, activities and events upon the sole discretion of the Association:
 - a) Any child pornography offences;
 - b) Any sexual offences;
 - c) Any offence of physical or psychological violence;
 - d) Any offence of assault; or
 - e) Any offence involving trafficking of illegal drugs.

Confidentiality

32. The discipline and complaints process is confidential involving only the Parties, the Case Manager and the Panel. Once initiated and until a decision is released, none of the Parties will disclose confidential information relating to the discipline or complaint to any person not involved in the proceedings.

Appeals Procedure

33. The decision of the Panel may be appealed in accordance with the Association's Appeal Policy.

