

Official Release 26/1/2010

To: All District B Coaches and Managers

From: Bruce Gray, District B Referee in Chief

Re: Bench Communication

Over the last several weeks we have had many occasions where coaches and officials have run into conflict over the officiating at a game. In many of these situations, one party has felt it necessary to speak with the other and try to address an issue and to provide an explanation, but the end result has been far from desirable. In an effort to limit the chances for on and off-ice discussions to escalate, I have provided clear guidelines for all our officials and would like to pass along those guidelines to all coaches and managers that make up our associations.

As we all know, hockey is very emotional and players, coaches, spectators, and officials can become very excited with the play on the ice. Coaches often seek clarification on rulings made by the officials on the ice, but this can often result in the situation escalating to the point where something regrettable is said. To reduce the chance of such an exchange Hockey Canada has a series of guidelines regarding communication with coaches and I have requested that all Bytown officials follow these protocols very strictly. Officials are NOT to engage in ANY discussion with a coach or bench staff unless 1 of these 3 situations arise: **1) There is a disputed goal situation 2) There is a multiple penalty situation 3) something truly bizarre occurs on the ice.** These guidelines are in place to protect both **coaches** and **officials** from situations where something could be said that would be regrettable.

To this end, if an official does come over to provide clarification, I will remind you it is not a debate but rather he is informing you of what has been called. To engage in a debate with him will not change his mind, will leave you increasingly frustrated, and opens up a chance for something to be misconstrued and to have the situation escalate. If you are not satisfied with the clarification, please use your association presidents or association convenors to contact me. I will do my best to provide clarification to the question.

Many will argue that this does not help communication between coaches and officials, but instead stifles discussion. Hockey Canada has laid down these guidelines due to the fact that many discussions, regardless of how well intentioned both parties are, escalate and result in lengthy penalties to coaches and officials for regrettable choices in words. The alternative channels of communication after the game are much preferred and will ensure that both coaches and officials continue to be involved in our great game.

Thank you very much and I look forward to seeing you all in a rink soon.

Bruce Gray, District B Referee in Chief