



November 24, 2024

Official Statement from the TORL Board of Directors

Regarding the Findings of the Review Officer and Disciplinary Action for Kim Bailey

The Thompson Okanagan Ringette League (TORL) is committed to upholding the core values of fairness, respect, and sportsmanship in the sport of ringette. These principles are enforced through the League's policies and bylaws which apply to all members, including coaches, athletes, parents, and the Board.

Respecting the importance and sensitivity of reviewing a coach's actions, TORL engaged a Review Officer to ensure the process was conducted by an experienced party who was a third-party, with objectivity, qualification, and independence. The Review Officer selected exceeded all criteria: they were external to British Columbia, had extensive experience in policy development/application, and possessed significant expertise within the ringette community, including handling multiple disciplinary matters over the years.

Ms. Bailey was notified in advance of the review process, including the appointment of the Review Officer. The Review Officer attempted to engage Ms. Bailey during the review. However, Ms. Bailey did not respond and by her inaction chose to not participate. Despite Ms. Bailey's lack of cooperation, the Review Officer felt he was able to conduct an objective, thorough analysis of the facts and reach conclusions based on the available information.

The Review Officer's findings follow below. Please see Official Review Officer's Report Date: Nov 11, 2024

Calgary, AB,

November 11, 2024

Re: Suspension of Kim Bailey, Head Coach, Zone 5 U16

As a neutral party, I have collected documentation from, and/or have spoken to, parties involved in this matter. Based on the review of received information and relevant policies, my opinions are as follows.

1. Context

Prior to the start of the season (August 28), Thompson Okanagan Ringette League (TORL), in consultation with its member associations, Greater Vernon Ringette Association (GVRA), Kelowna Ringette Association (KRA), Shuswap Ringette Association (SRA) and Westside Ringette Association (WRA), has determined that the roster size for the U16 zone teams will be 12 players, with potential increase dependent on registration numbers. A week prior, on August 21, Kim Bailey was appointed the head coach of Zone 5 U16 team, and on September 9, she selected her 12 players. Subsequently, it was agreed that the roster was to be increased to 14, and two additional players, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were added to the team. From September 9 to October 22, Ms. Bailey lobbied for an additional two players from Kelowna Ringette Association, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], to be added full-time to her roster. On September 22, TORL voted against fully releasing [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] from KRA. TORL and KRA agreed to permit [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to be affiliate players (AP) with the Zone 5 U16 team, pending approval from Ringette BC (RBC). After the initial denial, due to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] being Zone 6 players, [REDACTED] was approved as an AP by RBC on October 21. [REDACTED] was not approved as the official appeal was not received by RBC at that time. On October 23, TORL was advised by RBC that, upon receiving a request from Ms. Bailey, an exemption was approved, and a full release of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] is now permitted. On October 24, TORL voted to suspend Ms. Bailey from all team activities. On October 28, Ms. Bailey was observed meeting with a GVRA player during a team practice. Since the start of Ms. Bailey's suspension, numerous appeals to reinstate Ms. Bailey were made by parents of the Zone 5 U16 team.

2. Opinion on the Suspension According to TORL Bylaws, Section 1.04a

It is my opinion that TORL has acted with jurisdiction and according to its policies and bylaws in sanctioning Ms. Bailey for violation of TORL Bylaws, section 1.04a for "... conduct detrimental to the interests of the League or who may have transgressed any of its Rules or Bylaws, or who has failed to cooperate with the League in its efforts to ensure its successful operation.."

- Based on the provided evidence, it is clear that Ms. Bailey was aware of the reasons for the decision to limit the roster size of the Zone 5 U16 team to 12 players. This decision was made by the TORL board with the objective of ensuring feasibility and success of all club teams within its U16 division. Disagreeing with the decision, and looking out for the best interests of only her

team, Ms. Bailey continued to challenge the TORL board and pursue all available options to overturn its decision.

- By relentlessly pursuing the matter, demanding meetings, conversations and email responses, Ms. Bailey has consumed countless volunteer hours that would have been used for other league efforts and for ensuring its successful operation.
- Unsatisfied with the outcome of the discussions with TORL, GVRA and KRA regarding the release of players [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] by KRA to her team, Ms. Bailey undermined the process and the efforts of these associations by directly appealing to RBC for an exemption for these players to be released. Furthermore, by directly requesting the release of players, Ms. Bailey clearly violated RBC's Player Release Policy (1.9A i.) which states that "... Any person representing a Club Association found to be soliciting players to be released shall be suspended immediately...". As an experienced coach, and as evidenced by the documented communications between her and the associations, Ms. Bailey appears to be knowledgeable and well-informed about the team formation, affiliate player, and player release processes, which suggests that the actions taken to bypass them by appealing directly to RBC were fully deliberate. RBC has confirmed that a request had been received from Ms. Bailey.
- The decision to pursue, and the subsequent approval of, Ms. Bailey's request for an exemption for the release of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], without any consultation with TORL or KRA, will inevitably cause further harm and disruption to the club team from which these two players are withdrawn.

3. Opinion on Ms. Bailey Soliciting Players

With regard to Ms. Bailey directly soliciting players [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to join her team, in my opinion, there isn't sufficient evidence to suggest that the communications were initiated by Ms. Bailey. However, knowing that TORL and KRA had denied the release of these players, Ms. Bailey should have ceased communicating directly or through a proxy with the players' families, and asked them to follow established processes and direct any further communications or formal appeals to the TORL or KRA boards.

4. Opinion on Breach of Terms of Suspension

In my opinion, based on the provided evidence, Ms. Bailey has breached the terms of her suspension, by sharing confidential details about the matter with her team, which were later disclosed in a social media post and an online petition by her team manager. Ms. Bailey was clearly asked to only discuss the matter with TORL representatives. Furthermore, Ms. Bailey was observed by multiple GVRA members engaged in a discussion with a potential AP for her team [REDACTED] at an arena during the Zone 5 U16 practice on October 28. The player has confirmed that this meeting had occurred. However, the terms of suspension only prohibit Ms. Bailey from attending "team activities" in her capacity as a coach, without explicitly indicating which activities are included, thus leaving room for interpretation. Her presence at the arena was as a parent, and she denies meeting with [REDACTED] during the course of that practice. While no evidence of this meeting exists other than witness statements, if the meeting did in fact occur, described as a one-to-one coach and player discussion, there are concerns that the "Rule of Two" was not followed.

5. Opinion on Further Sanctioning

Any further sanctions, should they be imposed as result of the findings herein, are at the discretion of the TORL Board, in accordance with the Ringette BC Discipline and Complaints Policy (3.6) and should be mindful of proportionality and precedent.

Regards,

Review Officers Discipline Consideration

In my opinion, when deciding upon the sanctions, one should be mindful of proportionality, precedent (previous and one that this will set), as well as the direct and indirect impact the sanctions will have. Our board tends to follow escalatory sanctioning that starts with a warning and can go to multi-year suspensions or expulsions from the association. In this case, I would take a few points into consideration:

| <i>Consideration</i> | <i>Assessment</i> |
|---|--|
| <i>This is not KB's first offense</i> | <i>Sanctions should be more severe than last time.</i> |
| <i>KB has not been cooperative with the associations or the league</i> | <i>Increased sanctions warranted</i> |
| <i>KB has not complied with the interim suspension by meeting with player on Oct 28 (*still to be 100% proven though)</i> | <i>Increased sanctions warranted</i> |
| <i>Actions KB has taken are self-serving and for the benefit of strengthening "her" team.</i> | <i>Removing her from the team would set an example that such self-serving behaviours are not tolerated going forward.</i> |
| <i>Removing her from the team will have a significant impact on the players</i> | <i>While the players will obviously be impacted by the removal of their HC, this sets a precedent that doing whatever one wants is not tolerated. I cannot comment on the strength of the rest of the coaching staff, so I would consider how this will impact the competitiveness of the team going forward. You don't need or want to punish the players for KB's actions.</i> |
| <i>Short suspension or leaving her on the bench will have indirect impacts</i> | <i>Too short of a suspension will be seen as a "slap on the wrist", and may not deter similar actions by KB or other coaches in the future. It could be seen as a price worthy of paying for the desired outcome.</i> |

Have you had similar cases in the past? Or other suspensions?

If so, how have they been dealt with – has the precedent been set? Need to think about proportionality...

Based on my understanding of this case, if this were a coach within our organization, I would argue for her removal as the coach of this team, and barring her from coaching in any capacity until at least next season. Taking into consideration her influence within the community, I would also argue for barring her from any involvement with this team, even as a parent. Her child may continue playing, but she is not to be involved in any way with the team. Failure to comply would result in expulsion from the association. This opinion is based on a handful of cases that we've been directly involved with, or aware of in the Alberta ringette community over the past few years. If you'd like some light reading, one of them is public record here: <https://ringettealberta.com/content/safe-sport> (see near the bottom of the page). In a different case, our association had to suspend a coach for two seasons (and ultimately expel) for breach of various policies, codes of conduct and leading to harassment and intimidation of other members of the association. It was a difficult decision, but ultimately a right one.

Following a thorough review of the findings presented by the independent Review Officer findings indicate a violation of TORL Bylaw 1.04a., the TORL Board of Directors has made the decision to suspend Kim Bailey, Head Coach of the U16 Zone 5 team. The suspension will take **effect on November 24, 2024, and will remain in place until January 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM PST.**

At this time, TORL will not provide further public comment on this matter. Details may be published at a later date at the discretion of TORL and/or Ringette BC.

TORL Board of Directors