

2023-24 Referee in Chief's Report

We are excited that the officials from WRA were invited to be involved with the Western Region Ringette Championships in London, the 'A' Provincial Championships in Waterloo/Kitchener and the 'AA' Provincial Championships in Waterloo. These events are the peak of the sport in our province at the various levels and we are proud of those officials that were able to represent the Waterloo Ringette Association again this season.

We were very lucky to have a small group of core officials that were willing to always pick up and cover games at the Regional/ Open and A level, without them, many more games would have been canceled.

We have a very small number of officials in our association, which makes the future of the Waterloo officiating program unknown. As an association we need to continue coming up with different ways to encourage more officials to join and get involved within the sport. This season we hosted our first Come Try Refeing ice time where individuals who have not yet taken the Level 1 clinic were able to try officiating an exhibition game with Fun3 and U12R players. We had a successful turnout of 6 people who stepped on the ice and tried refeing with a senior official shadowing them. Hopefully by running more events like these, we can attract more people to come out and try it and then sign up for the Level 1 clinic. Like every season, there are many factors that contribute to the lack of officials, for example moving away for post secondary, work schedule, school, family priorities, personal teams, etc. However, unfortunately one of the biggest contributing factors that has become prominent over the last few years is the number of officials that are quitting due to the treatment they receive while on the ice from coaches, parents and players. People become officials because they love the game and want to be involved in the sport in ways other than playing or coaching. They take the course and commit many hours to learning how to officiate a game properly. In a game, players make mistakes, coaches make mistakes and of course officials can make mistakes as well. However, officials are immediately yelled at and ridiculed for an incorrect call or missed call, which is extremely inappropriate under any circumstance. We have seen firsthand how out of control coaches, players and fans can get and the significant impact it has on the individuals officiating the game, the association and the sport. No one deserves to be yelled at or treated in any such way when they are giving their own personal time to officiate so a game is able to be played. Next time you are at a game and you do not understand why a call was or was not made, please consider how to appropriately go about asking the question. Remember, an official, a coach, a player and a fan all have different angles of the game, which means things are seen differently by each person and 9 out of 10 times an official has an explanation for calling or not calling something.

All this said, the Waterloo Ringette Association's officiating program has been the home to many strong and skilled officials, but we always need new officials each year. If you are interested or know someone that is interested in becoming an official, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss (jessica.verutis@gmail.com)

I would like to thank all the officials for a fantastic year. I look forward to being a part of GWRA for another season and see what we can accomplish together!

Jessica Verutis (Mezenberg)
Referee-in-Chief
Waterloo Ringette Association