



PLAYER ADVOCATE ROLE

The Player Advocate role is a volunteer position within the West Ottawa Ringette Association and has an arm's length reporting and non-voting relationship with the WORA Executive. The Player Advocate will provide guidance to assist WORA players and parents resolve issues that cannot be resolved at the team level.

Candidate Criteria

WORA will review all nominees; however, preference will be given to those who are 19 years of age and older, have experience with conflict resolution or mediation, and do not have a family member actively playing on a WORA team.

Responsibilities

1. Provide a collaborative conflict resolution path for players/parents when an issue is not addressed satisfactorily at the team level.

This could be related to many different matters, including but not limited to:

- bullying (on ice, in change room, at school, social media, etc.);
- not being a team player;
- change room rules not being followed;
- manager/bench staff losing their cool/yelling;
- perceived preferential treatment;
- not following policies for that age group/level;
- parents in conflict with each other;
- perceived inappropriate touching;
- parents and/or coaches disrespecting referees, players, or parents;
- removing individuals from certain roles due to serious infractions or dangerous behaviour (e.g., parents fighting); and
- rules interpretation.

2. Ensure they are providing guidance in accordance with WORA's [Conflict Resolution Policy](#) in all situations.

3. Provide input on any policy review that would have an impact on the players.
4. Upon request, participate and provide input into the coaching selection interviews with a special focus on ensuring candidates will have the aptitude required for player development, communication skills to interact with players and parents, team building, fair play, conflict resolution, etc.

Administrative Process

1. When a situation arises, the Player Advocate should hold a review with the complainant to gather initial information. Depending on the results of the information gathering, they should then consult with the team and other members involved. This can be in a formal or informal way, such as via WORA network (e.g., other Board members or contacts on the team where the issue is happening; casually bump into parents, players, coaches etc. and ask how it is going on their team, what is going great, what needs improvement, etc.).
2. All assessment of every situation is based on the WORA Code of Conduct (players, bench staff, and parents) and any other applicable RO, ERRRA, NCRRL, and WORA policies (as indicated on the [West Ottawa Ringette website](#)).
3. All issues must be documented for accountability purposes and in the event the situation escalates.
4. Establish a collaborative positive way forward and define steps to resolve the situation. This often means having face-to-face meetings with one side or the other and/or both simultaneously.
5. When meeting face-to-face, the Player Advocate must ensure there are 3 individuals present at all times to prevent misinterpretation of the information presented (i.e., Player Advocate +1 other Board member + 1 coach/manager, etc. depending on situation).
6. Resolutions always come from indicating a “failure to follow [a particular item outlined]” in the applicable Code of Conduct that each member has signed or a breach in policy.
7. Identify the behaviour required by whomever to rectify the situation (e.g., I will not engage in bullying....; I will do my best to be a team player....; I will show respect to officials, etc.).
8. Once a resolution is developed with an agreeable path forward, close the loop in writing and, depending on the situation, remind them that failure to follow the Code of Conduct in the future could lead to suspension.

Reporting

The Player Advocate **must** present all situations to the WORA Executive

Privacy

Requests can be submitted to the Player Advocate on an anonymous basis (e.g., the person does not want to identify themselves to their team; they are not happy with the team level response). We respect their request at all times unless it could put someone in danger. The Player Advocate must respect the privacy of each complainant and only divulge names and concerns if authorized by the complainant.

Term

The term is for 1 year and to be renewed or filled after the AGM.

Reviewed and approved November 2022.