

OWHA SUSPENSION POLICY and DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

SUSPENSION POLICY

- (A) All OWHA members must follow the OWHA Discipline Policy and Procedures.
- (B) The OWHA Chairperson or designate shall have the power to suspend summarily any player, coach, manager, person, team, member or individual for any breach or violation of any of the provisions of the OWHA, By-laws, Regulations, Rules, Policies Values, Code of Conduct, playing rules or any decision or ruling of the OWHA, or for unsportsmanlike conduct on or off the ice, or for abusive language to any of the officials, or for the alleged infraction of the amateur definition, provided that the Chairperson is satisfied that such player, coach, manager, person, team, member or individual as the case may be has committed such breach or violation, such suspension to be automatically and continuously effective until dealt with by the OWHA who shall deal with such suspension within fifteen days thereof.
- (C)
 - (1) Any suspendible offense which occurs in any OWHA game (league, tournament, exhibition and/or Regional Playdown or Provincial Championship in or outside of Ontario) during the current season must be reported to the OWHA office within twenty-four (24) hours of the infraction(s) by the coach or other team official OR prior to the player or team's next game, whichever is less.
 - (2) Additional suspensions will be imposed wherever conditions and circumstances warrant.
 - (3) Leagues, local associations, individual teams and the OWHA may assess additional suspensions if warranted.
 - (4) Player/Team official may also be required to appear before an OWHA disciplinary board.
 - (5) Once a player or team official has been suspended/ejected from a game, she/he cannot return to the ice to participate in any post-game ceremonies (hand shaking, medal presentations, etc.). If the suspended person does return to the ice, further suspensions will be issued.
 - (6) It is the responsibility of each team manager and/or coach to ensure his/her players and/or team staff sit out their minimum suspensions. If a team plays twenty (20) games or less during the season, the person will sit out the minimum suspension or three weeks, whichever is less. When in doubt as to the relevant suspensions, contact the OWHA office. If you are unable to reach an OWHA designate, sit player(s) and/or team officials in question until clarification can be obtained.
 - (7) Any player or team official currently under suspension is not eligible to participate in any OWHA games until his or her suspension has been completed. The OWHA may extend the suspension to include all OWHA activities if warranted. Note that suspensions are valid in all branches of Hockey Canada.
 - (8) Minimum Suspensions cannot be appealed and any individual suspension of seven (7) games or less may not be appealed.
 - (9) The OWHA will uphold additional suspensions issued by teams, leagues and/or associations upon written notification to the OWHA Office.
 - (10) The coach or team official of a team whose member commits a suspendible offence must send a copy of the game sheet to the OWHA office (stats@owha.on.ca) within twenty-four (24) hours of the infraction OR prior to the player or team's next game, whichever is less. Game sheets must be submitted electronically. Faxes will not be accepted.
 - (11) Copies of game sheets confirming suspensions have been served, must be forwarded within twenty-four (24) hours of the game, by the coach or other team official, OR prior to the player or team's next game, whichever occurs first, to the OWHA Office (stats@owha.on.ca) Game sheets must be electronically submitted. Faxes will not be accepted.

OWHA DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

PREAMBLE

It is the responsibility of all OWHA members and participants to know and follow the OWHA By-Laws, Regulations, Rules, Policies, Procedures and Code of Conduct.

The OWHA wishes to see team members participate in the game of hockey. The OWHA takes a very negative view on individuals who act in a manner that is inconsistent with the Regulations, Rules, Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics and Values of this Association. These actions are costly to the individual and team against which the infraction was committed and to the operations of the OWHA in terms of finances and human resources. Prevention is much more desirable than suspension. It is important that all stakeholders buy into the challenge and aggressively promote fair play.

Who Shares in the Responsibility for Safe and Fun Hockey?

- Parents
- Team
- Association
- Coach
- Self
- Players
- Peers
- Game Officials
- Leagues

The collective Goals and Objectives of all stakeholders must be to provide a safe and fun environment geared towards positive hockey and life experiences.

REFERENCES FROM OWHA BY-LAWS

- (p) Participant – A person registered with the OWHA or an OWHA Member or program.
- (q) person – includes individuals, associations, and corporations.

Discipline

- 1.2 A Participant may be disciplined in accordance with the policies, procedures, rules and regulations relating to discipline which are passed by the Board from time to time.

Entitlement to be a Participant

- 1.3 A person may cease to be entitled to be a Participant:
 - 1.3.1 as a result of and in accordance with the outcome of a discipline hearing in accordance with the Corporation's policies, procedures, rules and regulations related to discipline; or
 - 1.3.2 as determined by the President/CEO, for failing to pay fees or monies owed to the Corporation by the relevant deadline date(s) prescribed by the Corporation; or
 - 1.3.3 pursuant to a decision of the President/CEO in relation to the safety or security of any person.
- 1.4 Participant Ceasing to be in Good Standing – A Participant that ceases to be in good standing, as determined by the Board or by any committee or task group delegated this authority by the Board, shall not be entitled to the benefits and privileges of being a Participant until such time as the Board or by any committee or task group delegated this authority by the Board is satisfied that the Participant has met the definition of good standing.

MINIMUM SUSPENSION GUIDELINES

- (a) All suspensions as listed in the OWHA Handbook are treated as individual suspensions.
- (b) Multiple suspensions in a single game or over a period of time, will each be treated individually as minimum suspensions.
- (c) Any individual suspensions of seven (7) games or less may not be appealed.
- (d) Violations of the OWHA Code of Conduct or any incidents occurring while under suspension will result in additional suspensions being assessed.
- (e) Player/team official may be required to appear before an OWHA Discipline Board.
- (f) In cases where a player or team official appears before a discipline panel/committee, it shall be the responsibility of that panel/committee to rule on both the length of the suspension and whether the suspended individual will be permitted to practice and/or participate in other sanctioned activities while under suspension. All such incidents must be reported to the OWHA office within 48 hours of the decision.
- (g) An OWHA on-ice official must forward the original copy of the game sheet for all match penalties and gross misconduct penalties to the OWHA office by delivery or e-mail to stats@owha.on.ca no later than 12:00 noon the following day and by regular mail within 24 hours.
- (h) Upon receipt of a potential disciplinary situation, the OWHA Discipline Review Board will determine a process as follows:
 - a. Any Match Penalty, Gross Misconduct Penalty, a suspendible offense to a Repeat Offender (any individual who receives a second or subsequent suspendible offence in one season), a suspendible offense to an OWHA member currently on probation and/or a violation of the OWHA Code of Conduct shall be handled by the OWHA Discipline Review Board. The individual will not be allowed to participate in any sanctioned OWHA activities until there has been a decision rendered by the OWHA, to that effect.
 - b. In other situations, a determination shall be made by the OWHA Discipline Review Board as deemed appropriate.
 - c. The OWHA Discipline Review Board and/or OWHA Board reserve the right to take additional action as deemed appropriate.
- (i) Multiple Offences will not be tolerated
 - a) 2nd suspendible offence in one season – minimum plus two (2) and shall not participate in any OWHA sanctioned activity until permission granted by the OWHA Discipline Review Board.
 - b) 3rd, 4th, 5th, etc. suspendible offence in one season – indefinite - minimum plus four (4) and shall not participate in any OWHA sanctioned activity until permission is granted by the OWHA Discipline Review Board.

Note: Previous years' suspensions are subject to review and consideration

SERVING SUSPENSIONS

- Once a player or team official has been suspended/ejected from a game, she/he cannot return to the ice to participate in any post-game ceremonies (hand-shaking, medal presentations, etc.) If the suspended person does return to the ice, further suspensions will be issued.
- Minimum suspensions are just that, minimum suspensions.
- Exhibition games are not permitted for serving suspensions except in extreme situations with written approval of the OWHA Discipline Review Board. Minimum suspensions apply and additional suspensions may be assessed.
- It is the responsibility of each team manager and/or coach to ensure her/his players and/or team staff sits out their suspensions.

- If a team plays twenty (20) games or less during the season including playoffs, and tournaments, the person may be permitted, only with the approval of the OWHHA Discipline Board, to sit out the minimum suspensions or three weeks, whichever is less. When in doubt as to the relevant suspensions, contact discipline@owha.on.ca and, if you have not received authorization to participate, sit player(s) and/or team officials in question until clarification can be obtained.
- No person shall participate in any capacity in an OWHHA sanctioned game or event while under suspension. (i.e. if suspended while playing, the player cannot act as a coach, referee, etc., until the suspension is completed as a player. If suspended as a coach, the person cannot play, referee, etc., until the suspension is completed as a coach, and so on.) Persons found participating while under suspension are subject to further suspensions.
- Any player or team official currently under suspension is not eligible to participate in any OWHHA and Hockey Canada sanctioned games. Any individual who violated the terms of any suspension will be subject to discipline by the OWHHA or Hockey Canada.
- In cases where a player or team official is serving a suspension that player or team official may, in OWHHA authorized cases, participate in all OWHHA sanctioned activities except hockey games for the duration of the suspension. The suspended individual is not permitted on or near the bench or dressing room during any games. The OWHHA may extend the suspension to include all OWHHA activities if warranted.
- Teams and Associations have the authority to add additional suspensions but do not have the authority to lessen the suspensions. These must be reported, in writing, to the OWHHA email stats@owha.on.ca within 48 hours of the assessment of the suspension.
- Leagues do not have the authority to issue suspensions without prior written approval from the OWHHA.
- If it is deemed that the minimum suspension may be inappropriate due to extenuating circumstances, an approach may be made to the OWHHA to request relief. The OWHHA designate(s) has the authority to give relief to minimum suspensions only in situations deemed extreme with such decision(s) final and binding with no opportunity to appeal. Disagreeing with the judgment of an official is not an extenuating circumstance.
- If any OWHHA member fails to serve the minimum suspension without proper approval, the individual(s) and those others involved are subject to additional suspension.

Examples of situations where relief may be granted:

- It is proven that the official called the wrong rule or misinterpreted the rule – not the judgment of an official,
- It is proven the wrong person was assessed a penalty and the appropriate person has been identified,
- Compassionate grounds, but only in extreme circumstances,
- Where an individual wishes to participate in a professional development activity (i.e./Speak Out! Session) while under suspension, they may receive special permission for that activity.

END OF SEASON SUSPENSIONS

Individuals under suspension are not eligible for any involvement in Hockey Canada hockey programs until their suspension is served. Due to the reality of the game, rules, regulations, policies and procedures, this sometimes creates a challenge.

Case One: A player has a one game suspension for a relatively minor infraction – technically, she would miss tryouts, practices, exhibition games, team functions, etc. etc. until next season when her suspension is served – is this reasonable and effective?

Case Two: A player receives a fighting penalty because her team is eliminated and she decides to get rid of her frustrations on the nearest opponent/official. If we take no serious action, will we create a dangerous free for all at the end of each season?

END OF SEASON SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

- 1) Before a suspended individual is allowed to participate in any OWHA/Hockey Canada game/activity, they must write a letter addressed to discipline@owha.on.ca stating why he/she should be allowed to participate prior to their suspension being served.
- 2) The OWHA Discipline Review Board shall review each situation and make a determination as deemed appropriate.

If a suspended individual does not participate in the OWHA/Hockey Canada for a full hockey season or more and then returns to the OWHA, the OWHA shall make a determination of eligibility, on a case by case basis. Until the above process has been completed, the individual(s) shall not be eligible for participation in any OWHA/Hockey Canada programs of any kind.

APPEALS

(j) All appeals must be submitted and filed in accordance with the OWHA Appeal Policies and Procedures.

Examples of possible Discipline Appeals:

Example 1: A player is assessed a GM 20 and a GM 21 at the end of one game. The minimum suspension is GM20 (1 game), GM 21 (3 games) plus implied GM for second major penalty in one game (2 games). The total minimum suspension is 6 games. This is not appealable.

If the player had been suspended earlier in the season, she is considered a Repeat Offender resulting in an additional 2 game minimum. In this case the total minimum suspension is 8 games. This is not appealable.

(k) Grounds for Appeal

(i) Supplementary game(s) above the minimum suspension added by the OWHA that takes the suspension to 8 games or more.

Example 2: A player is assessed a combination of 3 different penalties in a hockey game that add up to a total minimum suspension of 10 games. The 10 game suspension is not appealable. The OWHA Discipline Review Board adds 4 games for a total of a 14 game suspension. The additional 4 games may be appealed. The Appeal Tribunal has the authority to remove, lessen or add to the 4 games. The Appeal Tribunal must leave the minimum 10 game suspension in place.

Example 3: A suspension imposed by a Team or Association where there has been a conflict with the By-Laws, Regulations, Rules or Policies of the OWHA; or a material procedural error; or adopted an error of fact; or did not provide a fair Hearing; or did not have the authority or jurisdiction to make the decision.