

**PIHL
SPORTSMANSHIP
INITIATIVE**



**Disciplinary Report
December 2019**

LIST OF MAJOR INCIDENTS THIS SEASON

1. A Greensburg Salem parent threw a bottle of water from the top of the seating section at an Indiana player on the ice during a Varsity game.
 - a. The incident was caught on video, and when presented to the Greensburg Salem association, they said that their parents had already told them that the bottle of water was thrown... by the opposing student section.

2. A Moon parent went on the ice during a post-game altercation in a Varsity game between Moon and Plum. This parent gave the middle finger to the opposing spectators, argued with the rink manager about being ejected from the building, then tried to avoid the security guard by returning to the far end of the seating section. The same parent gave a lengthy list of excuses in a subsequent email about why his behavior was justified.
 - a. The Plum parents from the same Varsity game between Moon and Plum screamed at the Moon players as they exited the ice surface, then yelled at a Moon coach because they were upset by some of the players giving them the middle finger.
 - b. An Avonworth parent who witnessed the altercation in the Moon-Plum game sent an email to the PIHL to state his belief that the referees and security guard “lost control” during the altercation and that the referees should be reprimanded. There were only 2 referees on the ice – one of whom was bleeding from the mouth because he was hit in the face by a stick – and at least 16 players on the ice. The security guard was positioned at the player runway to the locker room, where he was supposed to be.

3. A Neshannock parent confronted a referee in the parking lot after a Varsity game, and the parent’s son allegedly suggested that he was going to bring his gun to future games.
 - a. A police incident had to be filed for this matter.

4. Peters Township parents stood in a manner that surrounded a broadcast crew from North Allegheny during a Varsity game, and their yelling throughout the game disrupted the broadcast crew on multiple occasions.
 - a. A league official tried to prevent those parents from using the locker room hallway to exit the seating area after the game since they were clearly angry and disobedient and should not have been allowed near players. Three of the parents were uncooperative and attempted to push their way by, which would have put them among players of the opposing team.

5. A Cathedral Prep parent blocked the referees from exiting the ice surface, demanding that they answer questions for her because she is a "SafeSport rep." She began berating the officials and standing in their way of getting to their locker room over an incident in the game where a Cathedral Prep player was penalized for shooting the puck after a goal and nearly hitting one of the referees in the face.
6. A Wilmington parent entered the official's locker room after a Middle School game to complain to the officials about how he felt the game was called.
7. A photographer overheard a conversation between parents of opposing teams at a game between Wheeling Park and Wheeling Catholic. One parent told the other parent that he was going to punch his team's head coach in the face because his kid was not getting enough playing time, adding that the worst thing he felt that he would get for doing that is a fine.
8. A Gateway Middle School coach loudly told a player on his bench that he will "knock you the f*** out" and then hit the kid on the helmet. The coach then told a PIHL Game Coordinator that he can do whatever he wants because it's his kid.
9. Norwin scored 5 goals in the third period of a game in which they were already winning 12-0 through two periods, out-shooting the opponent 16-1 in that third period. The top scorers for Norwin were involved in most of the third period goals. The final score was 17-0 in a game in which the opponent only had 8 skaters and no wins on the season.
 - a. Several of the goals scored in the third period included celebrations by Norwin players.
 - b. The Norwin coaching staff attempted to defend these actions on two different phone calls with the Commissioner's Office.
10. The entire Upper Saint Clair student section moved to the Mt Lebanon seating section in the second period of a Varsity game at Ice Castle. When the security guard asked an Upper Saint Clair parent if the students who were sitting in the other section were from USC, the parent said, "Yeah, isn't that funny?"

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Ownership

- a. Starts from the top
 - i. League and association leaders have to take action to curb this problem.
 - ii. Everyone is against poor sportsmanship until it happens within their organization; then no one wants to take a stand against it. Example: Greensburg Salem parents blaming opposing students instead of citing that one of their own parents threw the bottle of water on the ice.
- b. Sportsmanship is everyone's responsibility!
 - i. Parents and coaches have far more ability to be proactive to sportsmanship issues; by nature, the referees and PIHL can only be reactive when sportsmanship is not upheld.
 - ii. We click more on the PIHL Suspension List in each week's PIHL newsletter than we do on everything else combined, including the sportsmanship message. This indicates we care more about knowing the problems than we care about fixing the problems.

2. Officiating

- a. No blame can be placed on the officiating – it is not the problem.
 - i. Not liking the officiating is not a reason to exhibit appalling behaviors
 - ii. Officiating is not the parents' responsibility to address anyway
- b. Officiating crisis is near, and the constant criticisms and chaos created by these behaviors are speeding up the process in this area.
 - i. Young officials are quitting every week, mainly due to being yelled at by coaches and spectators for entire U8 & U10 games.
 - ii. Over half of the officials who skated PIHL Varsity playoff games in 2016 were no longer skating PIHL games by the 2019 playoffs.
- c. The referees are the authority on the games, as representatives of the rulebook.
 - i. The coaches, players, and the parents are not in charge of the referees and therefore do not get to dictate how a game is called.
 - ii. Coaches are not owed an explanation every time they want one, particularly when a coach wants to debate a call after the game has ended.

ACTIONS ITEMS

1. Safe Areas

- a. All parties must place a strong emphasis on parents and other non-authorized individuals not being in locker room hallways or passing through those hallways as they please.
 - i. No reasons, no excuses – non-team personnel just cannot be there.
 - ii. A lot of time is invested into SafeSport training, but we still ignore this basic restriction that would be extremely preventative.
 - iii. Teams must work within their associations to ensure everyone knows of the restrictions and urgency of the matter.
 - iv. The PIHL will discuss with the rinks the possible addition of signage to reinforce this.

- b. There is now a ban on use of alternate entries/exits that take the players through the lobby or through spectator areas when moving between the locker rooms and ice surface.
 - i. Trend has started that teams seems to want “their own” entry/exit from the ice surface; coaches have to put an end to this desire.
 - ii. Players are to use only designated runway(s) for accessing locker room areas, even if that runway is shared with both teams.
 - iii. Generally, the team with the bench farther from the runway will enter the ice first and leave the ice last, which means a team may have to wait by their locker room door or by their bench. Common sense should prevail, and the on-ice officials will provide direction, when needed.
 - iv. Head Coaches have to take ownership of this immediately and make their teams aware of the new requirement.
 - v. At least one coach should be with their players as they enter and exit the ice surface, particularly when there is a potential crossover of players and spectators or when there is increased tension within the game.
 - vi. Associations need to establish plans for helping control this restriction when their home rink has seating and locker room setups the lend to crossover traffic.

2. Security Guards

- a. Security Guards will be instructed to be positioned at the runways when the teams enter and exit the ice (pregame, intermission, postgame).
 - i. At some rinks, this may involve the need to block pedestrian traffic to prevent spectators from engaging with players as teams enter/exit ice.
 - ii. The associations must inform their parents of this directive and demand their cooperation; no one should be trying to push their way past a guard, ignoring the restriction, nor using a restricted area to avoid the block.

- b. Security Guards will now have the authority to remove entire spectator sections if spectators become unruly and uncooperative.
 - i. This might apply to both teams, if necessary.
 - ii. There will no longer be consideration for “innocent bystanders” who may be forced to leave a game; they will simply be collateral damage to the effort to put an end to unsportsmanlike behavior from spectators. This measure will not be necessary if everyone takes on the responsibility of sportsmanship and puts an end to inappropriate behaviors by themselves and others.
 - iii. The PIHL reserves the right to ban any spectators from one or both teams from attending a game.

- c. A Game Coordinator will check with the Security Guard at the end of the night before leaving the rink; the Security Guard will inform the Game Coordinator of any spectator issues/ejections; the Game Coordinator will relay this information to the PIHL Commissioner’s Office.
 - i. The PIHL will assign multiple Security Guards at games for teams that are continuing to have spectator issues. This will come at the expense of the problematic association.

- d. It is suggested that each team establish a point-of-contact for each game, and this person should introduce himself/herself to the Security Guard prior to the game.
 - i. This person should be cooperative with security any time an issue arises among their spectators.
 - ii. To avoid confusion, at no time should this person refer to himself/herself as a “PIHL rep” because this person does not actually work for the PIHL.
 - iii. This person should actively alert security any time an issue begins to surface among the spectators of either team (or both). Spectators should not be attempting to take matters into their own hands.

3. Corrective & Preventative Measures

- a. Associations are asked to be proactive in considering their seating arrangements at their home games.
 - i. Several organizations have already established assigned areas for their students to sit, keeping them away from opposing spectators and even away from the glass.
 - ii. Seating sections that create crossover/interaction with teams entering and exiting the ice surface may need to be blocked for use or limited only to individuals who are always calm and cooperative.
 - iii. Parents using the top row of seating to allow their voice to carry on to the ice surface during play should be forced to sit (not stand) or move to a different location in the seating area.
 - iv. Spectators must not stand/sit in areas blocked off by ropes, barriers, or signs at rinks; the seating sections are designated for spectators.
 - v. Spectators are to be reminded that video recording services now exist at most PIHL rinks.

- b. There must be corrective consequences to parents/spectators who have been removed from multiple games or have exhibited extremely unbecoming conduct in a single game.
 - i. Associations need to know of their own offenders and address it directly.
 - ii. The PIHL can provide guidance to the association and can always assist with enforcement, where needed.

- c. There is now a ban on negative communication directed at officials by coaches after the game.
 - i. Specifically, there are to be no attempts to initiate disputes and state criticisms regarding penalties or performance. Again, coaches are not entitled to explanations.
 - ii. Disrespectful comments about any official by a coach – including from a distance or when communicated indirectly to another person within listening distance of an official – are also prohibited after games.
 - iii. Violation results in an immediate Game Misconduct to the offending coach, which shall carry a 2-game suspension since it will be assessed after the 5:00 mark of the third period.
 - iv. Coaches are always free to communicate with the officials if the communication is in the spirit of good sportsmanship.