



## Vancouver Island Amateur Hockey Association

2301-E McCullough Road Nanaimo BC V9S 4M9

info@viaha.org [www.viaha.org](http://www.viaha.org)

Ph: 250-751-8811 Fax: 250-751-8812

January 16, 2015

**TO:** VIAHA Membership  
**FROM:** Jim Humphrey, VIAHA President  
**COPY:** VIAHA Officers, BC Hockey District Director, VIAHA Staff  
**SUBJECT:** Spectator Conduct

---

The problem of spectators abusing on-ice officials and players during minor hockey games has become such a serious issue that VIAHA Executive Committee members are considering a 'Spectator Free Weekend'. In this scenario access to the "cold" area of all arenas on Vancouver Island District would be restricted to players, on and off ice officials, team officials, MHA Presidents, game supervisor, VIAHA Officers and Staff during minor hockey games. Referees would be instructed not to start games until all spectators have left the cold area and/or to stop the game should spectators access the arena during the game. Should spectators refuse to comply, the referees would have the teams leave the playing surface, thus cancelling the game. If the game was to be cancelled, VIAHA would conduct an investigation to determine the affiliation of the spectator(s) and rule accordingly.

The Executive Committee is reluctant to resort to such drastic action. They understand that the vast majority of parents and other fans are supportive and positive toward players and game officials however, a very small minority feel they have the right to verbally abuse and harass young men and women, frequently little older than the players in the games they are officiating. The vindictiveness is resulting in a loss of both promising young officials and senior officials alike, as well as making the game difficult for the players to have fun.

It is incumbent upon everyone who supports minor hockey to recognize that it must be a safe and harassment free environment for our players, volunteers and Officials. At this time, we ask that everyone help and try to do a better job policing each other in the stands and around the rink in an attempt to mitigate the need for the Executive Committee to take such a drastic measure. We are asking, on behalf of the game, that parents get involved and either ask those that are being inappropriate towards those on the ice to either cease and desist or leave the arena. Most spectators are known to one side or the other and parents are encouraged to be two deep when approaching an unruly spectator. We need to make people understand that rude comments are not part of the game and they are not welcome.

If we are unable to stop this disrespectful behaviour from this small number of our minor hockey spectators, VIAHA will have no other option but to ban all spectators over the course of a weekend to show people what the future of our game will look like if we do not put a stop to these very few disruptive people. Please be reminded that we are fast approaching play-off season thus a 'Spectator Free Weekend' may fall within the playoffs. During this time, no spectators would be allowed within the cold area of any rink on the Vancouver Island District during Minor Hockey games.

We apologize to those undeserving of these potential consequences but hope that you will support us in our mission to improve the hockey environment on Vancouver Island.

Respectfully,

Jim Humphrey  
VIAHA President