



UMPIRING DIRECTIVE TO ALL UMPIRES.....Player /Coaching Bench back chat.

After regular discussions on the side lines with noteworthy observers of hockey, coaches and fellow umpires at all grades, player/bench back chat in Victoria seems to be entrenched in our game not only at a high level but at lower levels of the sport. It is recognized that it is part of any sport to a degree but the trend appears to be worsening, possibly forcing spectators and many potential umpires considering taking up officiating, from the game.

Past and current umpires can take some responsibility for the problem at hand, but it is now up to all umpires, at all levels, to take responsibility to help to control matters. Hockey Victoria runs ongoing seminars for umpires, both new and established, to address rules and game management issues which all umpires have been strongly urged to attend to promote consistency in these matters. Action will be taken against those umpires continually not showing at these seminars.

As at Round 8, all umpires are instructed to be "less" tolerant to players and coaching benches who refuse to accept the umpires decision and continue to back chat you, and protest your, and your co-umpires decisions, be they correct or not. We should all strive for perfection on the hockey field, but we all make mistakes, sometimes. This in no way gives any player the "right" to badger or belittle umpires in an ongoing fashion, leading to further distractions in the umpires concentration levels.

- Recommended actions

Once a player or bench voices their displeasure at an umpiring decision, acknowledge their grievance by either a hand gesture, a passive verbal response or by using other body language techniques. It is important that all gestures must be made in a way that does not inflame any situation or cause further retaliatory remarks from the player or the bench.

- If the player is belligerent in back chatting, they are to be suspended temporarily by use of the appropriate card, being a yellow, at the soonest break in play. Consideration may be given for a "possible" incorrect decision having been made but "Do Not" engage in conversation while the match is in progress. Discussions can take place with the captain at half time or after the game. (The captain is responsible for the conduct of his players on the ground and may be asked to intervene to "cool" down his player or players. )Rule 3:4
- Lesser action must be taken towards the offending coaching bench, in that the game must be stopped at the appropriate break in play and a warning be given to the

captain of that team ,in this case a green card. Further indiscretions during the match by the bench must be followed up with a yellow card to the captain.

These more sterner actions being taken will receive initial player and coaching displeasure in the short term, but in the long run will benefit the game in Victoria, both from an umpiring, playing and spectator viewpoint. It is your responsibility as an umpire to carry out these instructions with commonsense. Please, if you are not clear on any of these issues , call me on 9699 3908 to discuss the matter. It is paramount that we all participate in this action and not leave it up to a brave few to shoulder the burden for the rest. Good Umpiring.

Regards

Derek Pringle, Hockey Victoria Officiating Chairperson.