

May 17, 2023

Board Members of the ALA,

The ALRA Board met late in the evening on Monday, May 15th to discuss the escalating numbers of Official's reports citing Abuse of Official claims, and most importantly the situation where an adult Coach stepped on-floor, during dynamic play, and placed his hands on a minor aged Official. During this Emergency Meeting, an insightful discussion was had, and various actions/reactions (with their pros and cons) were discussed at great length. After a bit of deliberation and collaboration, on behalf of its members, the ALRA would like to request the following steps be taken to deal with the problem of Official abuse:

1. Review of any previous Abuse of Official suspensions from the 2022 and 2023 seasons to ensure that ALA regulation 12A.01 is being followed and that such Abuse of Official Game Misconducts/Gross Misconducts are treated as Match Penalties as per the regulation with any additional games to be served immediately while ensuring that all future Abuse of Officials Game Misconducts/Gross Misconducts are handled as per regulation 12A.01.
2. Similar to the RMLL website's Suspension List, we would like to request the LGBs and ALA track, and post, any and all repeat offenders for Abuse of Officials suspensions publicly on their websites (going back to 2022 as well). This will serve as a reference for escalating suspensions to repeat offenders and also may serve as a deterrent for such future behaviour. This will be a historical list that never resets, and previous season's suspensions will move forward with the respective individual from the 2022 season and beyond.
3. Establishment, and enforcement, of an escalating suspension scale for offenders ie. 1st offence – 2 games (as per proper application of the existing ALA Regulations) 2nd offence – 6 games, 3rd offence – 12 games, 4th offence – life-time ban from coaching in ALA sanctioned events.
4. Any and all non-playing personnel that are issued a Game Misconduct/Gross Misconduct for Abuse of Officials must take an Officials course, that we will offer as often as needed in season at their expense of course, and must also Officiate the same number of games as they are suspended before they may return to the bench.

We would like an immediate response to the requests above and would like action taken by Tuesday, May 23rd at 6:00pm MST. If we feel that the actions taken have not been in good faith in fulfilling these requests, our first course of action will be to stage a Silent Night on Wednesday, May 24th. Our Officials will be instructed to not Officiate any game that has any non-registered individuals in the building. This meaning only coaches, trainers and players will be allowed in the facilities. We would also ask that, in a show of support for our

members, the Executive Members of the Clubs participating in those games be at the facility to ensure that only rostered individuals are permitted in the facility.

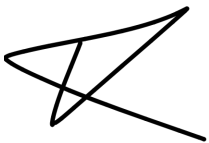
If the above-mentioned requests are not completed by Tuesday, May 30th at 6:00pm MST, we will then stage a communicated walk-out to take place on Wednesday, May 31st. The ALA and LGBs will be informed by Tuesday, May 30th at 7:00pm if the Wednesday games will have Officials or not.

The 2023 Season has had 22 reports submitted by Officials for Abuse of Official claims. A more interesting number is that we had 219 new Officials last year with only 65 returning (29.6% return rate) so we lost 154 (70.4% attrition rate). Although we don't know the exact number that did not return due to abuse, based on what we are seeing this year, we can deduce that a large percentage of them did not return due to the abuse we receive. This is not a sustainable model for the future of our Association and our sport.

We regret the series of unfortunate circumstances that have led to this point, but the prevalence of a culture that accepts and/or permits Officials to be abused needs to be stopped. The above-mentioned steps are an effort to curtail the abuse and bring the issues to light outside of Disciple and Board/Executive meetings. It brings the reality of the situation to the forefront of the game, for all participants to understand. At no point are we saying that Officials are perfect. We may make some mistakes and we may miss some calls. Every Official that steps on-floor strives to do their best to ensure that the players can play the game in a safe and respectable manner. When there is an experienced crew on-floor and the coaches & players focus on the game and not the Officiating, Officiating can look easy. The truth is that it is far from easy. It is a skill that can never be perfected as there are no two game situations that are exactly alike, which is why we as Officials get just as hyped up for a good game as the players do. As most of us have either lost our ability or desire to play, it is our way to still connect with the sport that we are all passionate about. Officials are going to make mistakes and that is how they are going to learn. Officials don't have the luxury of attending practice to improve on their skill sets. We are not able to simply go to a wall and work on mechanics or penalty calls. Just as we have no game to officiate if there are no players, there is no game for the players to play, or parents to watch, if there are no Officials. We need each other to coexist and survive. We serve the game, and the game is what we would like to have our focus on, not on the coaches that are trying to influence calls by yelling their opinions from the bench. The bench culture of a team that focuses on the Officials is far worse off than the bench culture that accepts calls and focuses on their game. It comes down to what the coach is supposed to do ... Coach your team ... not the Officials.

We look forward to hearing from you and what your timelines are to complete the requests above.

Thank you



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President
Alberta Lacrosse Referees Association.