

Resolving Parent Concerns

Legitimate concerns and disagreements inevitably come up over the course of a season within any minor hockey association. OCMHA encourages parents to voice concerns, and our experience and expectation is that most disputes and conflicts can be resolved quickly and happily, with a bit of goodwill and common sense on all sides.

The following are some policies we have in place to deal with issues when they arise:

- Escalation Path

Wherever possible, disputes should be first addressed at the level where they arise. If your dispute involves a team issue, then the place to start is with the head coach. The next step is the division convener; and after that the OCMHA Executive.

If an issue gets escalated prematurely, it is OCMHA policy generally to refer the dispute back to the appropriate level for an effort to resolve it there, prior to dealing with it at a higher level.

If you feel a matter should be brought to the attention of another Association or to higher authorities (ie. the ODMHA), it is the Executive's role to do so. An email or call to another Association will be referred by that Association back to our Executive for handling; likewise, the ODMHA will typically ignore communications from parents or refer them back to our Executive in all but the most serious of cases. Escalating to another Association or to the ODMHA just creates extra work for everybody, and will lead you back to where you should have started in the first place: the OCMHA Executive.

- Form of Communications

Your team may have a preferred form of communication - often many coaches and managers would rather deal with an issue face-to-face. Similarly, if you need to speak to a convener, find out his/her preferences and follow along.

If a matter has to be escalated to the Executive, email is the preferred form of communication; if you raise an issue orally, you will be asked to put it in writing, prior to getting a substantive response.

Hockey is an emotional sport, and arouses passions which are all the stronger when our kids are involved. To help cool the emotional temperature of discussions, and to ensure that we address issues in the most constructive way possible, we have some suggestions for parents:

- 24 Hour Rule

Passions never run higher than right when an issue arises. Waiting outside the locker room to speak to a coach, or sitting down at your computer after a game to write a strong email can often lead to communications that everybody regrets later.

Unless there is an immediate threat to health and safety, or other circumstances that require urgent intervention, wait 24 hours before raising an issue with team officials. Give yourself and the team official some time to cool off and to get a better perspective on what happened.

- Keep it Private

Disputes can get out of hand when they are conducted in public. Confronting a coach in front of other parents or copying an unhappy email to others, may result in a much stronger response

from the intended recipient if he or she feels embarrassed in front of the wider audience - leading perhaps in turn to a stronger response from you, and so on.

Air your concern discreetly (whether in person or electronically), and don't involve anybody who is not absolutely critical to a resolution.