



## Complaints, Appeals and Feedback 2022/2023 Hockey Season

As we all know any sport with a live official will have some controversy along the way. While human error sometimes plays a factor, other factors also may be at play.

**Perspective:** The only person who knows exactly what the official saw is the official themselves. Their angle will show them something completely different than what the coach or parent in the stands witnessed. This could be the difference between a call that was made, a major that was called, or something missed all together. Understanding why an official may have missed a call, or saw something more severe than you thought, might come down to where they were on the ice.

**Training:** Just like why some officials don't understand why coaches do certain things with their teams, some coaches also are not fully caught up on new rules or procedures that officials follow. There are always rule changes or clarifications every year, sometimes on rules that have been untouched for ages. Ensuring you are caught up on the new guidelines each year is important.

**Emotions:** Officials are human too. While we try to encourage our officials to come to the rink with a positive mindset, sometimes they had a bad day just like yourself. They are expected to act in a professional manner at all times, but sometimes may get caught up in the heat of the moment just like many coaches do.

In a perfect world, no penalties would happen at any time, and everyone would be happy. I know we can speak for most officials when saying calling penalties is not fun. We would much rather a back and forth game with as few whistles as possible, and some great hockey action. Hockey will never be perfect in those standards. And as mentioned and why you are still reading, sometimes it is very justified to file a complaint, request a review, appeal a call or provide positive/constructive feedback. The following items will describe the steps to take for each.

**Feedback Submission** - New this year, we want to try to encourage talk between officials and coaches. One mechanism we are implementing is a feedback form. This can be done anonymously or with details to keep the conversation going, but will use our group as the in between so feedback both positive or constructive could be given to BOTH coaches and officials. Yes, this tool will also be available for officials to send feedback to coaches. The goal of this form is to have that primary level of feedback where you might want to get something off your chest, but don't want to file an official complaint. Or, you may have something great to say and want to also let them know of the job they did. Those are always great to hear and get.



You can access the link to the Feedback form [HERE](#). Any feedback will be provided anonymously to the districts or the officials directly.

**Complaints** - There will be a time where something will happen on the ice, and you would like to file a complaint. I want to make it clear, this is perfectly acceptable. As mentioned, we are all learning, and sometimes this action will help. And if not, we can at least provide an explanation which will hopefully help clear up any animosity one may have.

To file a complaint, we first ask you take 24 hours to clear your mind as you are likely quite unhappy at this very moment. Once 24 hours passes, write down in an email all the details you have of the complaint including game time, date and arena. You will then send this to your association president. From there, the two of you will have a discussion about whether this should be escalated any further, or just put on file internally. If you both decide escalation is required, the president will send it to the League president and convenor who will then forward it to the Referee-In-Chief for a full investigation. The RIC will then respond with their findings and any follow up that will occur.

**Request Review/Appeals** - If you know me well, I will be the first to say that referee's don't always get it right. Hockey is such a fast game that sometimes calls are either too harsh, the wrong player is given the penalty, or something strange has happened. There is a process in place for this to have items investigated and reviewed. First thing you need to decide with your league president is if you are looking for an HEO appeal or just a league review. HEO has timelines and application fees for their appeal process. Do not miss the timelines or it will not be heard. Your fee can be refunded if you decide to pull the appeal ahead of the meeting. Once you decide this with your president, then build up your case and submit all details to the league convenor and president. The league RIC will then receive the information, conduct a quick investigation, and provide feedback on whether the call will stand or be reduced.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

- Mike Ostrom AAA RIC