



PRESIDENT REPORT

January 2019

We are now past the half-way point in the season where thousands upon thousands of games and practices across the country have taken place since the early days in September. The vast majority of these exercises and competitive battles have been played following the rules of our game while respecting our opponents along the way. Most of our young athletes know the values of teamwork and working together in order to achieve their goals.

However, in a couple of rare instances we have witnessed a sense of frustration on the part of some combatants where racial, ethnic or gender slurs have been uttered as a means of intimidating opponents. It is no secret that slurs are intended to offend. Unfortunately these few instances have put a damper on the vast majority who play the game the right way and who understand these forms of slurs in our game are unacceptable, inappropriate and disruptive.

While this type of behavior is rare and is not a new issue, especially in our highly charged political climate, we do have specific rules and punishments to apply once this type of inappropriate conduct takes place (*Rule 601E*). However, all of us as coaches, referees, parents and administrators must condemn this ignorant behavior as reprehensible. We as leaders must make it abundantly clear to enforce our zero tolerance approach each and every time this deportment occurs. Zero tolerance still remains the best way to fight intolerance and USA Hockey will always take this approach.

But we all can work harder to stop these isolated incidences before they occur. We need to be proactive through education and awareness by communicating to all of our stakeholders the importance and understanding of a more equal and inclusive environment within our sport. We need to have more conversations within our leadership on issues of race, ethnicity and other biases to facilitate cultural change.

USA Hockey defines Diversity and Inclusion as follows: Diversity is about differences among people, whether they work for, are served by or otherwise have a stake in our organization itself. These differences among stakeholders include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, geographic location, national origin, religious beliefs, language, veteran status and physical abilities. Diversity is invaluable because it generates differing points of view, leads to innovation, fosters an understanding and acceptance of



individuals from different backgrounds, and recognizes the contributions to our sport that a variety of individuals and groups can make.

Inclusion is about creating and maintaining an environment in which people are not excluded or marginalized from USA Hockey because of their difference. It means promoting an environment in which contributions and strengths are recognized, optimized and valued in a way that generates opportunities for adaptability, problem solving, growth and ultimately increased success.

USA Hockey's recently appointed Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, chaired by Donna Guariglia and Dan Brennan, continues to work on ways to improve the cultural competency in our sport and this is a good start. If we continue to challenge ourselves to further educate our leadership, staff and members on these values then I believe the isolated incidences of racial slurs and taunts will no longer be part of our game.

I ask all of you to join in this effort to improve our sport's understanding of diversity and inclusion and continue to make the sport of ice hockey available to everyone.

As we move into the second half of the season with playoffs, championships, development camps, tryouts, etc., let's all re-commit ourselves to competing at our best while treating each other and our opponents with the dignity and respect we all deserve.

This is really what makes hockey the best sport ever invented.

Together, We Are USA Hockey!

Jim Smith
President