

IT'S NOT OK!!!

I'm a USAH-Certified Level IV (Tenured) official and I've been involved in ice hockey for nearly fifty years. Over that period, I've been a player, coach, fan, linesman, and referee. I currently live in Southern Vermont and I travel thousands of miles to officiate over 350 games throughout the Northeast each year.

The way things are now in this sport IS NOT OK. Starting with myself and a select group of similar-minded colleagues, we are committing to take a leadership role in educating and proactively interacting with players, coaches, parents, families and fans. We aren't interested in complaining or assigning blame, but genuinely want to find solutions that everyone can accept and implement. We will develop a set of tools to facilitate an alignment between on-ice officials and those for whom we officiate.

When I first began officiating in 2015, I earned my USAH Level I Certification, then quickly learned just how different the game really is when you're wearing the striped sweater. As I gained experience, I developed an entirely new level of understanding of the game, as well as respect for the level of dedication and investment that's required of players, coaches, administrators, and fellow officials.

Refereeing significantly impacted my overall outlook. Every time that I stepped on the ice, everything else in my life took a backseat for the next 1 - 2 hours. The confidence, poise, and pure enjoyment that I experienced on the ice started to make its way into other areas of my life.

Coaches, players, and parents consistently commented upon how it was obvious that I clearly enjoyed being on the ice as an official. My response was always the same, "the day that I'm not smiling, laughing and enjoying myself on the ice is the day that it's time for me to stop refereeing hockey." Today I'm not smiling.

In the past couple of years, I've witnessed countless times when officials, including myself and my partners, have been treated with such disrespect that it angers and disgusts me. I have given a great deal of myself to officiating over the past ten years, and I have unquestionably received just as much in return. I just can't passively watch what is happening any longer. I really don't want to give up and hang up my skates just yet, so I am taking steps to address this from a new direction.

Will you meet with me to learn more about this program and help me to move this much needed Intervention forward?

Respectfully,
Scott Piegza
USAH Level IV - Tenured Official