

To: IHOA Nominating Committee
From: Don Mrozik
RE: 2019 ELECTIONS

Dear IHOA Nominating Committee:

I accept the nomination to remain as an IHOA Board of Director.

I have served on the IHOA Board for the past three years. In that time I have served on the Performance, Education, and Development Committee, assumed the role of Registrar for several seminars this past season, and served IHOA as President.

During the 2018 seminar season, I attended a majority of seminars and taught five of them, in addition to acting as Pit Boss or Registrar. I officiated about 50 AHAI games, supervised about 20 AHAI games, and attended every Board meeting, while putting personal time in to prepare for Board meetings and communicate with officials, coaches, and parents.

My most proud success as President has been getting our officials fully registered. In 2016, 281 officials attended a seminar, however, did not complete registration, thus 281 officials never completed what they committed to! In 2017, I asked the Board to help in getting our officials to complete their registration. This resulted in e-mails out to officials by our Board. There were 251 officials who attended a seminar in 2017, but did not complete registration. This year, I sent officials who were incomplete mass emails with explicit information they needed to complete registration, I sent each official who was incomplete an individual email, and I leveraged the March 15th USAH deadline to move officials to complete status. I am proud to share that we had 150 officials who attended a seminar, but did not complete registration. This is approximately 100 more officials than in 2017 and 130 more officials than in 2016.

In addition to serving the hockey community as a referee, I am also a level 4 coach. Outside of hockey, I hold a doctorate degree in educational leadership. I serve the Woodridge Community as principal of John L. Siple School where I have served for the past ten years. I also served our country while a member of the United States Navy.

My officiating experience includes:

- Working in the Federal Hockey League as both referee and linesman. I was selected to work games 1 and 2 of the 2019 Finals as a referee.
- Worked in the United Hockey League as a linesman.

- Worked full-time in the Junior Development Program, as referee in the USHL, NAHL, AWHL, MNJHL, and CSDHL.
- Worked Junior B Nationals, ACHA D2 Nationals, Midget AAA Nationals, and Bantam AA Nationals. Selected to referee the finals at Midget AAA Nationals.
- Selected to USA Hockey's Regional and National Camps.
- Worked two High School Red Division Finals as a referee.

I am seeking the vote from our membership to continue to lead our organization. I take this election very seriously. You should be asking what our elected members want to achieve in their leadership. I provide you with a recent email that was sent to the IHOA Board of Directors and members of AHAI, which is a body of work done in collaboration with Scott Zelkin, former NHL Referee, Father of one of our IHOA officials, and current Manager of USA Hockey's Junior Officiating Development Program. Please read:

I email you attempting to bring resolution to a growing problem, parent abuse of officials. I appreciate AHAI's strong position this season in addressing incidents that were reported and related to abuse of officials. As we know, parents are still a growing problem in our ability to retain officials. I am a father of a 16 year old referee who sees the abuse first hand - adults yelling at a child. I officiate, and will continue to officiate in the Federal Hockey League, which is in the news related to abuse of officials, placing a "black eye" on the game. I am aware that abuse of officials is present at all levels and impacts everyone. We need to do all that we can to end the abuse of officials that impacts our game, particularly at the grass root levels, which we serve.

In my role as President of IHOA, I had opportunities to speak with teams, team managers, and coaches. I overwhelmingly hear the same concerns from coaches and team representatives regarding parent conduct that is detrimental to the game. They see it, they hear it, but don't get involved in stopping it. At high school games I see yellow jackets in the stands aimed at supervising fans and that doesn't work. In fact, in the games I have seen this year, a couple parents wearing a yellow jacket was the biggest issue in the stands. We have to work together to fix this problem.

Please take a moment to read a proposal I put together, with input from Scott Zelkin, parent of a 15 year old official who also witnessed the abuse from parents, impacting his child, our child, one of our referees. I am hoping that such a proposal becomes policy and could be launched at the start of the 19-20 hockey season. I welcome any questions, comments, or caustic remarks. Perhaps this can be a topic of discussion at the annual AHAI meeting.

*Your child's hockey experience will be influenced by many factors, but nothing will influence that **experience** more than you, the parent. As a parent, you are the most influential figure in your child's development, both as a hockey player and as a*

person. Managing your emotions and setting a good example teaches your child to do the same. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all its participants, your child will benefit. As a parent, you are expected to display good sportsmanship by respecting all players, coaches, and officials.

Like players and coaches, officials make mistakes. When mistakes are made, whether it is an errant pass by a player, having too many players on the ice as a coach, or an official who had a lapse in judgement, everyone learns from mistakes, a natural aspect of development.

Yelling at a player, coach, another fan, or an official is not tolerable.

The Illinois Hockey Officials Association (IHOA) and USA Hockey in general, loses officials each year to parents/fans who abuse them. Did you know that your club/team has the ability to schedule a parent meeting at the start of the year with an IHOA representative who can share rule changes for the upcoming season and who is available to answer questions that you have regarding officiating? Did you know that your team manager and coach have the ability to evaluate every official who works their game? Allow the coaches and team managers to go through their evaluation process to share input with their AHAI Assigner. If that doesn't work for you, you can go to the IHOA website and evaluate an official yourself. But, under no circumstances can you yell at, or otherwise abuse an official.

Moving forward, if an official submits an incident report regarding parent abuse, IHOA and/or AHAI will send a representative to the team's next game to evaluate parent/fan conduct, including video of parent behavior. If the representative determines that the behavior from the parents/fans is detrimental to the game, the representative will report his/her findings to the AHAI Rules and Ethics Chairperson with the recommendation that ALL parents associated with that club refrain from attending their child's next three games. The games will be played absent of that teams parents/fans. If that same team has another instance where any parent or fan associated with team is reported to have yelled at officials or otherwise abused officials, the parents or fans of that team will not be allowed to sit in the stands for all remaining games. The games will go on without parents/fans.

It takes everyone to make the game of hockey a fun experience. Let's work together to make sure that everyone treats all game participants with dignity and respect.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. I hope this only starts the conversation so that we solve an ongoing issue that is haunting our game.

Don Mrozik