

**IN THE MATTER OF A COMPLAINT BROUGHT UNDER
THE RINGETTE ALBERTA CODE OF CONDUCT and COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

BETWEEN:

RINGETTE ALBERTA

(the Complainant)

-and-

VINCE NIRO

(the Respondent)

(collectively, the Parties)

Complainant represented by:

Michelle Kropp
Sport Law and Strategy Group Inc., Toronto

Respondent represented by:

Robert Wood and Arif Chowdhury
Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP, Calgary

Panel:

Ann Peel

Decision Date:

February 16, 2023

Decision and Reasons

I Overview

1. Ringette Alberta ("RAB" or the "Complainant") received an anonymous complaint ("Complaint One") signed 'Ringette Parents', dated November 2, 2022, alleging "significant concerns with Vince's actions and behaviours". "Vince" is the Respondent, Vince Niro, who is the head coach of U14AA Team White ("Team White"), a team of Calgary AA Ringette (hereinafter referred to as "Niro" or the "Respondent"). Complaint One was also submitted to Calgary AA Ringette and Ringette Calgary. Both are Members in good standing of RAB, according to the latter's website. The President of Calgary AA Ringette forwarded the Complaint to RAB.
2. On or about November 11, 2022 RAB accepted the Complaint pursuant to section 20.4.1.2 of its Complaints and Discipline Policy (2017) (the "Discipline Policy").
3. On November 18, 2022 RAB informed Niro that a Case Manager would be appointed to manage the Complaint, which was attached to their communication. RAB also informed Niro that, due to the nature of the allegations against him, he was suspended from all RAB activities until further notice, in accordance with RAB's authority under section 20.4.6 of the Discipline Policy, (the "Interim Suspension"). AA Ringette Calgary was also notified of Niro's Interim Suspension.
4. The Interim Suspension provided that, "[w]hile the suspension is in effect, you will have no contact of any kind, either in person, or by any other means, with any registered athlete or team staff member (your family excepted) and are prohibited from attempting to direct or influence any team activities or decisions".
5. On November 18, 2022 Niro emailed Team White to inform them of the Interim Suspension.
6. In an email dated November 24, 2022, Jeffrey Raphael, the Case Manager appointed by RAB, determined that: (i) RAB had sole discretion to accept Complaint One with no reasons required, (ii) as Complaint One contained multiple allegations, there was potential for the complaint to qualify as a Major Infraction under section 20.4.8.1 of the Discipline Policy, (iii) the Parties are Members and Participants under the Discipline Policy and subject to RAB jurisdiction, (iv) Raphael would seek independent advice, as authorized under section 20.4.10.2 of the Discipline Policy, and would appoint an independent investigator to investigate the allegations in Complaint One, and (v) I was appointed the Panel to hear the matter.
7. On November 24, Niro emailed Team White, with Complaint One attached. He informed Team White that the Case Manager was assigning an investigator who would be contacting parents and players. He asked that they make themselves available when contacted.
8. On November 24, revised December 1, 2022, counsel for Niro appealed both (i) RAB's authority and jurisdiction over Complaint One, and (ii) RAB's authority and jurisdiction to issue the Interim Suspension to RAB (the "Appeal"). RAB appointed an Appeals Officer to consider the Appeal, pursuant to section 16.0 of the RAB Appeal Policy. The Appeals Officer found the Appeal to fall within the jurisdiction of the Appeal Policy, and that it satisfied procedural grounds. Further to sub-section 16.4.8 of the RAB Appeal Policy, the Appeals Officer referred the Appeal to a Tribunal. Michelle Simpson, an

Arbitrator under the authority of the Arbitration Act Alberta, RSA 3000, c A-43 then heard the Appeal.

9. In a decision dated December 19, 2022 Michelle Simpson, Arbitrator, dismissed both grounds of the Appeal, upholding RAB's jurisdiction over Complaint One and the Interim Suspension. This decision is a matter of public record.¹
10. On November 25, 2022 the Case Manager appointed Veritas Solutions to investigate Complaint One. Judy Resnak was the assigned investigator, who began the investigation on November 26, 2022 (the "Investigation"). The Investigation Report was released on December 7, 2022 (the "Investigation Report").
11. On December 21, 2022 RAB received a second anonymous complaint alleging behaviours by the Respondent that included conditioning as punishment. This complaint is not for my consideration.

II Nature of the Allegations

A Coaching Behaviour

1. The Complainant alleges that the Respondent engaged in conduct and behaved in a manner contrary to the RAB Code of Conduct (2019) (the "Code") and the Discipline Policy. In particular, the Complainant asks me to consider:
 - (i) Whether Vince's coaching style is appropriate for children aged 12 and 13 years, who are in the early Train to Train stage of development; and
 - (ii) Whether Vince's conduct and approach including his intensity and competitiveness towards players and officials violates the Code of Conduct.
2. The Complainant alleges, more particularly, that the Respondent breached section 14.4.8.15 of the Code, which provides that Team Staff (defined as including coaches) are to "[a]ct in the best interest of the athlete's development as a whole person".
3. The Complainant also asks me to consider section 20.4.8 of the Discipline Policy that defines Major Infractions as "instances of failing to achieve the expected standards of conduct that result, or have the potential to result in harm to other persons, to Ringette Alberta or to the sport of Ringette". More specifically, the Complaint referred me to sub-section 20.4.8.1 that provides examples of Major Infractions, including "(a) Repeated Minor Infractions"; or "(e) Disregard for the by-laws, policies, rules, regulations and directives of Ringette Alberta".
4. In support of the allegations, the Complainant provided me with substantial written submissions, and called one witness at the hearing. The Complainant submitted that my deliberations should not be limited to the specific dates and times referred to in Complaint One, but should include what the Complainant characterized as a pattern of behaviour by the Respondent that allegedly demonstrates a "pattern of conduct that is inconsistent with the behaviours expected in the Code".

¹ Niro and RAB, Alberta Arbitration Act, (2022)

5. The Respondent denied that any of his conduct amounted to a breach of the Code or of the Discipline Policy. Counsel for the Respondent submitted that I was to consider only:
 - (i) The specific allegations in Complaint One,
 - (ii) Whether there is evidence to support those specific allegations,
 - (iii) Whether, if proven on a balance of probabilities, the specific allegations constitute a breach of the Code or Discipline Policy.

B Breach of Confidentiality

6. The Complainant alleges that the Respondent breached the confidentiality provisions of the Discipline Policy, found at section 20.4.13, when he notified Team White of the Interim Suspension on November 18, 2022, and then sent them Complaint One on November 24, 2022, with information about the impending investigation.
7. The Respondent admitted that he breached confidentiality by emailing Team White twice about the Interim Suspension. He submitted that these breaches were “inconsequential”.

C Breach of Interim Suspension

8. The Complainant alleges that the Respondent breached the terms of the Interim Suspension on at least two occasions when he attended a Team White practice on November 20, 2022, and when he attended a tournament in LeDuc on December 3, 2022, at which he posed for a team photograph.
9. The Respondent denied that he breached the Interim Suspension, as any games or practices he attended were in Niro’s capacity as a parent. The Respondent submitted that “family” is an exception to the no contact provision of the Interim Suspension.

III The Evidence

Credibility and Weight

10. Over the course of two days of hearings, I heard evidence from three witnesses and the Respondent. In addition, I received and reviewed lengthy and detailed submissions from the Parties.
11. The Complainant’s written submissions included: (i) the Code and the Discipline Policy, (ii) Complaint One, (iii) the Investigation and the Investigation Report, (iv) three Officials Feedback forms from Team White games in September, 2022, (v) a second anonymous complaint, and (vi) communication between South Calgary Ringette and the Respondent. As (iv)(v) and (vi) were not entered as evidence during the hearing, and were objected to by the Respondent as comprising inadmissible similar fact or bad character evidence, I gave weight only to the Code and Discipline Policy, Complaint One, and the Investigation and Investigation Report. The Parties agreed that these

were permissible and relevant evidence. The Respondent, in particular, urged me to give great weight to the Investigation Report.

12. As is set out in more detail below, for the most part I found the witnesses credible, in that they appeared to sincerely believe the evidence they were providing. The issue before me, however, was not simply whether the Complainant's evidence was credible, but whether the conduct complained of amounted to a particular Code and/or Discipline Policy violation.
13. Below, I have summarized the evidence of each of the Complainant and the Respondent.

A Coaching Behaviour

Evidence of the Complainant

14. In section 14.1 the Purpose of the Code is stated, in part: "Ringette Alberta seeks to ensure that all members, participants and employees are treated with respect..." In addition, "Ringette Alberta has adopted the True Sport principles to guide its activities, and inform this policy." The True Sport principles include "Play Fair: play honestly – obey both the letter and spirit of the rules. Winning is only meaningful when competition is fair."
15. Section 14.2 states that the Code applies to all RAB members, participants and employees, and includes all interactions and discourse between members and participants, and also includes member and participant interactions with Ringette Alberta employees.
16. Complaint One alleges that:
 - (i) At a game on October 16, 2022 against Team Red, Niro was 'yelling, swearing and getting into the facemasks of individual players',
 - (ii) Niro told players to 'expect to puke' at dryland training the next day,
 - (iii) Niro was 'intimidating, bullying and scolding his players', and
 - (iv) The complaint asked, "where are the Respect in Sport Leadership behaviours?"
 - (v) At a game on October 21, Niro benched players 'due to performance', and
 - (vi) The complaint stated, "We are not building these players up in a positive manner to develop confidence and cohesion. It is becoming further evident that this team is being coached to win at all costs and is having the reverse effects mentally on many players',
 - (vii) In the week of November 1, in preparation for an upcoming tournament in Saskatoon, the Respondent told the players they were not to miss any practices or they would be benched,
 - (viii) The anonymous signatories fear that the impact of the alleged behaviours is that players will shut down or quit (I paraphrase).

17. Counsel for the Complainant accepted in closing that there is no evidence that Niro was yelling, swearing or getting into players' facemasks. It also became clear at the hearing that it is unlikely Niro benched players inappropriately, or required them to miss games due to missed practices. Complainant counsel agrees that there is no evidence that dryland training was inappropriate. However, with regard to the "puking comment" that Niro testified was a joke started by a player, Complainant counsel raised concerns that the comment might have been regarded as a serious statement by a young girl aged 11-13 from a new coach whose inclination to joke she may not have known. In testimony, Niro agreed that could be possible and stated that he would not have made the comment if he had known that perspective.
18. When interviewed in the Investigation and found to be credible, parent Erin Seaman stated that, "Niro told the girls that if they miss a practice, they would miss a (one) game at the tourney [in Saskatoon]. I think Niro verbally told the girls". Nevertheless, the investigator found allegation (vii) unfounded.
19. Kristi Puskzar testified at the hearing and in the Investigation regarding Niro's alleged behaviour in support of allegations (iv) and (vi) in Complaint One. Puskzar is a level 4C Official who officiates in the National Ringette League. Her testimony was highly credible, dispassionate, and included specific recollections with great detail, presenting as a comprehensive and direct witness. She officiated at the Team White v U16A Matrix 5 NW game on October 21, 2022. Puskzar stated that 'his girls really fed off his tone to me and his abuse', and "his tone can come off as quite aggressive'. She said he (Niro) will comment, "hey, you're making the wrong call", and that he also makes comments to players, including "why did you miss that pass?". Puskzar stated that the impact of this is that Niro's players then argue with officials' calls. She asked if girls will stay in sport, and wondered about their long term athlete development when experiencing an aggressive coach. When cross-examined by Respondent's counsel as to whether she could really hear Niro in a noisy arena, Puskzar stood by her testimony that she can hear Niro clearly, and that *it is her job to do so* (my emphasis). Respondent counsel also raised the matter of a complaint Niro had made against her that Puskzar characterized as Niro thinking she had a personal vendetta against him. Niro's complaint led to a meeting among Niro, the President of Calgary AA Ringette and Robert Curran (Referee in Chief). Puskzar had no further interactions regarding Niro's complaint. As there was no evidence offered of such a vendetta, and as Puskzar is clearly a highly qualified and competent official, I disregarded this matter.
20. In Puskzar's interview that formed part of the Investigation, she stated that "Niro gets passionate about the game. He is flamboyant in that his arms are in the air and he gestures when he is not in agreement with a call. Niro was not bad that game [October 21]". Puskzar was found credible by the investigator.
21. Dave Sorkilmo and Shauna Wood officiated the October 16 game. In their interviews that formed part of the Investigation Report, Wood stated, "Niro can be very aggressive. He yells." In the transcript of Wood's Investigation interview, she stated, 'He's very, he's very aggressive and he's very demeaning to those girls on the bench, very demeaning.

Like he, I, I haven't heard him specifically say anything that I would be like, oh my God. Like, you can't say that. But he, he is very aggressive in the sense of like, if he doesn't like how they're playing, he will yell at them and tell them that they're disappointing their parents. And I don't think that there was anything that night specifically. Okay. But I have had incidents where he has said stuff." Sorkilomo's statement captured in the Investigation Report corroborated Wood's observations: "about 5 or 10 minutes into the game I went to both benches and told them to settle down. It was the first time I told the fans in the stands to settle down". Both were also found credible by the investigator.

22. The Investigator's Report found the allegations referred to in paragraph 16 as (i)(v) and (vii) unfounded. Allegation (ii) was also unfounded as the investigator accepted that the 'puke' comment was not made in a threatening or abusive manner. The investigator did not address allegations (iii)(iv)(vi) or (viii).

Evidence of the Respondent

23. Respondent's Counsel submitted that, of all the allegations in Complaint One, only the 'puking joke' is established by the proven facts, and that allegations (iii), (iv), (vi) and (viii) are matters of judgment. As the whole of this proceeding is one in which I am asked to exercise my judgment, I do not take that remark as excluding my authority to consider those allegations.
24. Vince Niro characterizes himself as a competitive coach. He stated in testimony that he wants to be the best teacher for the players. He spends a great deal of time researching, watching, and talking with people to ensure he keeps his skills current. He believes he treats his players fairly, equally and with respect, and always emphasizes the strength and coherence of the team. He does not yell, swear or get in the facemasks of players. He admits to making the 'puking joke', and seems to understand now that it might not be funny, as he stated that he would not now repeat the joke. Niro noted that during a game or practice, he does speak clearly and directly, and uses his whiteboard to direct play. Niro does not believe he criticizes the referees, and took issue with the testimony of Kristi Puszkas, in particular. He excused her observations by blaming them on 'their dynamic'. He did not seem aware that her observations were supported by officials Wood and Sorkilmo. Niro acknowledged that at the meeting with the President of Calgary AA Ringette and Robert Curran (Referee in Chief), he had agreed to send players to meet with officials during a game, rather than speaking with officials himself.
25. Respondent witness Kristin Mitchell (Archibald), Team Manager and parent, testified that Niro is a great coach and that they have never heard Niro yell or swear. Mitchell described Niro as "calm, zen". Mitchell acknowledged that she sits in the stands, so cannot hear what happens on the bench or the ice. She did not see Niro waving his arms, as Puszkas reported in the game of October 21, and as Niro admitted to doing. Mitchell stated that the players "want to win, they're competitive". It is clear that Mitchell and her daughter have no issues with Niro's coaching. I did not give great weight to her evidence as, although I believe she tells the truth as she perceives it, her

statements were very general, were contradicted by more credible witnesses, and revealed her uncritical assessment of Niro.

26. David Whitely, a parent and occasional official, also testified on Niro's behalf. Whitely is clearly impressed by Niro's coaching. Whitely characterizes Niro as direct and specific in his coaching style, and is very happy with the positive impact Niro has had on his daughter. Whitely testified that he heard and saw nothing untoward in Niro's behaviour at the October 16 or 21 games. I gave limited weight to Whitely's testimony, not because he led the parent defense of Niro, but because he did so before knowing what the allegations were that led to the Interim Suspension. In his determination to ensure RAB had 'the facts' about what he perceived to be the true parent view of Niro as a coach, Whitely demonstrated disinterest in the content of the complaint against Niro. He was more concerned that the anonymous complainants behind Complaint One purported to speak on his behalf as 'Ringette Parents', than that RAB might have acted to protect his daughter and other players. I find that Whitely's confidence in his own understanding of governance in sport, and in his own assessment of Niro as a coach, blinded him to the possibility that RAB had acted properly in response to Complaint One. I find that Niro's actions are interpreted by Whitely through this lens.
27. Respondent counsel argued that AA Ringette is competitive and intense. This assertion was restated by Niro as, "AA is not all rainbows and unicorns". The issue for my consideration, however, is not the competitiveness or intensity of AA Ringette, which I do not doubt, but whether that intensity disguises a win at all costs approach that does not respect fair play and is a breach of the Code.

B Breach of Confidentiality

28. The Respondent admitted that he breached the confidentiality provisions of sub-section 20.4.13.1 of the Discipline Policy twice. The first breach was his email to Team White of November 18, 2022, the second was his email to Team White of November 24, 2022. He justified these breaches as providing information to concerned parents when RAB was not providing information. I suggest that, rather than breach confidentiality, Niro could have asked RAB to address these concerns.
29. The admitted breaches of confidentiality are also in violation of the prohibition 'on contact of any kind with any registered athlete' contained in the November 18, 2022 letter from David Myers, Executive Director of RAB, to Niro informing him of the Interim Suspension. I accept the Complainant's submission that contact with the parents of Team White is contact with the athletes, as the athletes are minors.

C Breach of Interim Suspension

30. The Complainant alleges that the Respondent breached the terms of the Interim Suspension at least twice. The first breach was his attendance at a Team White game on November 21, 2022, the second was his attendance at the LeDuc tournament on December 3, 2022 at which he was included in a team photograph. I note that there

may have been other breaches, as Whitely casually mentioned in his testimony that at one practice after the investigation was over, he saw Niro and asked him about the investigation results. Whitely said that this practice was about a week after the LeDuc tournament. When asked by Respondent's counsel, Whitely stated that Niro regularly attends practices, and says 'hi' to players as they go in and out. There are no allegations that Niro attempts explicitly to direct or influence any team activities or decisions.

31. The Respondent's position is that his attendance at the November 21 game and the LeDuc tournament, and, presumably at any other team activity he attended, was as a parent of his daughter who is a player on Team White. He submits that attending as a parent is in compliance with the 'your family excepted' exclusion from the no contact rule.

IV Findings and Discussion

A. Coaching Behaviour

32. I considered whether the permissible, relevant and proven evidence presented supported the Complainant's position that, on the balance of probabilities, Niro had demonstrated the behaviours described in the allegations made in Complaint One. I then considered whether, if he had demonstrated all or some of those behaviours, did that constitute a breach or breaches of the requirements imposed on all ringette participants by the Code and/or Discipline Policy?
33. The Respondent submitted that the allegations in Complaint One referred only to Niro's conduct with players, not with officials. I find that too narrow a reading of both the Code and Complaint One. Section 14.2 of the Code specifically provides that the Code applies to all interactions among ringette participants. Read together with section 14.1, it is clear that the Code is intended to support the pursuit of ringette in the context of inclusion, fair play, and respect, to ensure that all participants enjoy their commitment to the sport, in any and every part of their activity. Complaint One expresses clear concern about the overall development of players as people. Players hear what is said to other participants, witness disrespectful behaviour, and are affected directly by their sport environment. Coaches are role models. They hold immense power. This power must be used respectfully and responsibly in interactions with all participants, at all times, or risk harm to players. That is an absolute bottom line of the principles of True Sport.
34. I dismiss allegations (i), (iii), (v) and (vii) in Complaint One, for insufficient evidence.
35. I find that the Respondent breached sub-section 14.4.1.5 of the Code in his admitted comment about 'puking' at dryland training, per allegation (ii) in Complaint One. This comment demonstrates a failure to interact "with others in a way that enables all individuals to maintain their dignity and respect". I note that the Respondent both admitted the comment, and stated that he would not make such a comment again, now that he understands the potential negative impact on young players.

36. I find that, as enumerated in parts (iv) and (vi) of Complaint One, the Respondent's behaviour to officials breaches sub-section 14.4.1.3 of the Code, in that his criticisms and aggression do not demonstrate the "spirit of sportsmanship, leadership and ethical conduct and practices".
37. I find that in his behaviour to participants the Respondent breached his responsibilities under the Code., specifically with respect to (i) section 14.4.8.15 which provides that Team Staff (defined as including coaches) are to "[a]ct in the best interest of the athlete's development as a whole person", and (ii) the Purpose of the Code, as set out in section 14.1, that being to support the principles of respect and fair play. The observations of officials found to be credible by the investigator, regarding Niro's conduct at both the October 16 and the October 21 games, demonstrate, on a balance of probabilities, that Niro's behaviour while coaching is aggressive and argumentative. It is not possible that these behaviours do not have an impact on the players' attitude to the game, to officials, and to other players, particularly when Team White is comprised of impressionable young players aged 11 to 13. It is wonderful that the players want to win. What is sanctionable, is Niro's demonstrated behaviour that indicates a general disrespect for participants, and is a violation of the principles of True Sport. It comes too close to "win at all costs" to be acceptable under the standards of the Code.

B Breach of Confidentiality

38. I find that, in breaching confidentiality, the Respondent committed a Major Infraction as defined in the Discipline Policy sub-section 20.4.8.1(e): "[D]isregard for the bylaws, policies, rules, regulations and directives of Ringette Alberta".

C Breach of Interim Suspension

39. I find the Respondent's interpretation of the family exclusion from the no contact provision of the Interim Suspension to be overly broad, and in stark contrast to his position that I interpret all of Complaint One, the Code and the Discipline Policy through a focused, technical and narrow lens.
40. On a plain reading of the Interim Suspension, it is clear to me that the family exclusion from the no contact rule refers only to contact with one's family. A correct reading of the Interim Suspension permits Niro to have contact with his daughter on Team White (and with his daughters on other teams). Niro's presence at a game or tournament is contact with everyone in the arena to whom he is visible. In addition, even if I were to accept a broader interpretation of the family exemption, a coach does not become only a parent because the coach characterizes himself that way. That the players of Team White continued to perceive Niro as their coach, and not only a parent, is clear from Niro's statement that the 'girls' skated to where he was at the LeDuc tournament arena that day because, "the girls wanted to celebrate it with me". No other parent is present in that photograph. In fact, according to Niro, the other dads moved to the side. One can only conclude that they, and the players, perceived Niro as coach. Not parent.

41. In addition, Niro seems not to consider that RAB's suspension and right to suspend him was upheld by the arbitrator on appeal. If he was unclear on the exact terms of the Interim Suspension, he could have contacted RAB for clarification and, perhaps, for an exemption to allow him to attend team practices. It does not seem to have occurred to him that the nature of the allegations in Complaint One are of possible harm to participants and to the sport of ringette, and that his presence might be perceived by others to be harmful.
42. I find that Niro breached the terms of the Interim Suspension by attending Team White activities while the Interim Suspension was in effect. In so doing, the Respondent committed a Major Infraction as defined in the Discipline Policy sub-section 20.4.8.1(e): "[D]isregard for the bylaws, policies, rules, regulations and directives of Ringette Alberta".

V Sanction

43. The stated purpose of the Discipline Policy, per section 20.2, includes that "Members and Participants are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities and obligations, including, but not limited to, complying with Ringette Alberta's policies, bylaws, rules and regulations, including the Code of Conduct. Irresponsible behaviour by Members can result in severe damage to the integrity of Ringette Alberta. Conduct that violates these values may be subject to discipline pursuant to this Policy..."
44. Respondent's counsel argued that if I made findings, I ought not to impose any ban or any significant sanction, given that he has already been subject to a 26 game, 3 month suspension. If I were to impose conditions on his reinstatement, those should be started contemporaneously, rather than be a prior condition.
45. Complainant's counsel originally submitted that Niro should be suspended for 1 to 2 years, and be prohibited from coaching minors on a permanent basis.
46. In determining the sanction to be imposed on the Respondent I am mindful of both proportionality and precedent, as submitted by the Respondent's counsel. Niro contravened both the Code and the Discipline Policy. His multiple breaches of the Code and of the Discipline Policy are defined therein as Major Infractions (sub-sections 20.4.8.1 (a) and (e)). On the other hand, Niro demonstrated his willingness to acknowledge the inappropriate nature of the 'puking' comment, and to change his behaviour, in his testimony to Complainant's counsel.
47. Considering my findings and the parties' submission regarding sanction, I conclude that a suitable sanction in this case must send a clear message to both Niro and to the ringette community as a whole. Aggressive behaviour, together with disrespect for RAB directives (specifically, the Interim Suspension), is a violation of the standards and obligations spelled out in both the Code and the Discipline Policy.

48. In the circumstances and pursuant to section 20.4.11 of the Discipline Policy I make the following Order with respect to sanction:
- a. Because he failed to comply with the Interim Suspension, the Respondent is suspended from participating in all Ringette Alberta activities for an additional period of 3 months, commencing immediately and ending May 17, 2023. There shall be no family exclusion from this suspension, except specifically with regard to any of his daughters registered to play ringette whom he may drive to, but not accompany at, any ringette activities. He is explicitly prohibited from entering any venue at which ringette activities are taking place. In addition, he may not participate in any Team White communications, including the team chat channels.
 - b. Prior to his reinstatement at the conclusion of 3 months, the Respondent shall demonstrate, to the satisfaction of RAB, that he has completed Keeping Girls in Sport.
49. Further to section 20.4.10.2 of the Discipline Policy, this decision shall be available to the public.
50. I am satisfied that the sanction imposed will act as a deterrent for both the Respondent and the ringette community as a whole. The remittance of the suspension offers the Respondent an opportunity to learn from his wrongdoing and minimizes the risk that he will engage in similar behaviour again.
51. This Decision may be appealed further to section 20.4.14.1 of the Discipline Policy.

I thank the Parties for their submissions.

Ann Peel
Panel
February 16, 2023