

## **Year-End Report: Risk Manager**

As the Risk Manager of the Coquitlam Minor Hockey Association (CMHA), I am pleased to present the year-end report for the 2023-24 season. This report highlights the accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations for future improvements that can be made to the Association.

### *Accomplishments*

The season showcased a strong dedication by the Association towards improved safety on the ice, which overall resulted in lower numbers of reported injuries. Various initiatives aimed at on-ice safety and player welfare were successfully implemented, including the adoption by numerous teams of baseline concussion testing and an augmented presence of Hockey Canada Safety Program Supervisors (HCSPs) throughout the Association.

Furthermore, substantial strides were made in fostering Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Bullying, and Harassment initiatives. Interactive workshops spanning several divisions were conducted, alongside specialized training sessions for select Coaches focusing on effectively engaging individuals with mental health challenges and cultivating inclusive team environments.

### *Challenges*

The 2023-24 season presented significant challenges, notably an increase in escalated incidents and complaints necessitating Board and Risk Manager intervention through Formal Complaint and Incident Reporting protocols. Three key observations emerged from navigating these challenges:

1. Initial avenues for resolution at the team, division, or interpersonal levels were not consistently pursued.
2. Reported incidents related to alleged bullying and harassment have increased.
3. Instances of inappropriate conduct directed towards Association volunteers were regrettably witnessed.

Despite facing the challenges listed above for the year, the CMHA community came together to navigate through these challenges, ensuring the successful continuation of our hockey programs. As I resume my role as Risk Manager for the forthcoming 2024-25 season, outlined below are proposed actions to overcome these challenges.

### *Actions for Improvement*

In an ongoing effort to continue to improve the Association, the following are recommendations which the Risk Manager makes for the 2024-25 season and beyond, as well as accompanying actions which will be taken:

- All Members of CMHA are welcome, and strongly encouraged, to leverage the Formal Complaint procedure when appropriate. Members should, however, seek resolution through direct discussions or voluntary mediation and the exercise of common sense before resorting to the Formal Complaint and Appeal procedures laid out in the CMHA By-Laws and Constitution. This includes escalating issues to Team Officials, Division Coordinators, Division Vice-Presidents and/or the CMHA President for resolution as a matter of first action and only using the formal reporting procedures if a resolution is not attained.
  - **Action:** The Risk Manager will provide communications to all CMHA members at the commencement of the 2024-25 season outlining the process for escalation of issues, including contact information for appropriate parties and copies of all procedures.
- Throughout the 2023-24 season, there were several initiatives undertaken in response to reported issues of bullying and harassment including inclusion and diversity workshops for players/teams, and mental health awareness training for Coaches. These initiatives should continue and be expanded for the 2024-25 season and beyond. There is zero-tolerance for any bullying or harassment within the organization and all types of this behavior should be reported immediately through the appropriate channels stipulated above for action.
  - **Action:** The CMHA Board of Directors has attempted to implement a Diversity and Inclusion Committee numerous times in the past, however there were not sufficient volunteers from the membership to establish the Committee. The Risk Manager will, at the commencement of the 2024-25 season, place a call out to the Membership to seek volunteers to establish the Committee for the 2024-25 season.
- All Members are reminded that CMHA is a volunteer based and run organization. Members are volunteering their time to enable CMHA to offer hockey programming for youth. There is zero-tolerance for any harassment, bullying or threats made by a Member towards a volunteer of the Association and CMHA will take immediate action on all reported behaviors moving forward.
  - **Action:** The Risk Manager will provide communications to all CMHA members at the commencement of the 2024-25 season reminding all members of the zero-tolerance for these types of behaviors.

- Being a Coach entails a substantial investment of one's time and energy, undertaken for the betterment of the children under their guidance and for the collective benefit of the Association. This dedication and selflessness are deeply admired and appreciated, particularly for Coaches operating within our U9 and below or C level programs, who generously volunteer their services without any form of compensation. However, alongside this commitment, there arises a significant level of responsibility. It is the firm expectation of CMHA that Coaches adhere unwaveringly to the Coach Code of Conduct, thereby ensuring that every player within the Association is afforded equitable opportunities to derive enjoyment from the sport of hockey in an environment that prioritizes safety, inclusivity, and respect. While the overwhelming majority of our Coaches have not been subject to any reported issues brought before the Board, regrettably, the past season witnessed instances of alleged Coach misconduct which required action.
  - **Action:** The Risk Manager will furnish the incoming CMHA Coach Committee with pertinent information regarding coaches implicated in founded misconduct allegations for deliberation during the Coach Selection and Nomination process.
- Throughout the course of the season, CMHA unfortunately witnessed a number of players experiencing concussions. These injuries, marked by their seriousness and impactful nature, have underscored the importance of prioritizing player safety and implementing stringent measures to mitigate such risks. Concussions not only pose immediate health concerns but can also have enduring effects on players' physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being. As an Association deeply committed to the welfare of our athletes, it is imperative that we continue to educate our members on concussion awareness, enforce protocols for proper diagnosis and management, and advocate for preventive measures to safeguard the health and longevity of our players' hockey careers.
  - **Action:** Two actions on this topic:
    - i. The Risk Manager will once again bring forth a proposal mandating the implementation of baseline concussion testing for players to the incoming Board for consideration to bring CMHA in line with neighboring Associations.
    - ii. The Risk Manager will provide comprehensive communication to all members regarding concussions at the commencement of the 2024-25 season, and will provide additional information on mitigation, procedures and support for Team Officials.

I would like to extend my thanks to the CMHA membership for their diligence and support of safety and risk management throughout the season. As we look ahead to the future, I look forward to continuing to work together in fostering a safe, inclusive, and thriving hockey community.

Sincerely,

Amanda Dishaw  
Risk Manager  
Coquitlam Minor Hockey Association