



Preventing and Resolving Disputes in the Canadian Sport System

Dispute Prevention and Resolution: Officials

There are several situations that may arise during your career as an official that can lead to misunderstandings, disagreements, or disputes.

Disputes involving officials are not as frequent as those involving athletes, for example. However, it is prudent to educate yourself about your rights and obligations before finding yourself involved in a dispute that can put a damper on your officiating ambitions.

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) is a not-for-profit organization offering dispute prevention and resolution services to the sport community at the national level. This leaflet offers a quick overview of dispute prevention and resolution resources available to Canadian officials.

Dispute Prevention

The following are examples of situations that may be at the origin of disputes, as well as some ways in which the risks of such disputes may be reduced.

SELECTION: Process by which federations select or nominate officials to major competitions. Risks are reduced when:

- The selection policy provides for a fair process;
- The selection criteria and policies are clearly communicated in writing and respected;
- The officials know and understand the selection criteria and policies applicable to them.

ACCREDITATION: Process by which federations grant accreditation or certification to officials. Risk-reduction strategies for accreditation process are similar to those for selection, as outlined above.

FIELD OF PLAY PROTESTS: When a decision of the official is contested by a participant. Risks are reduced when:

- Officials avoid putting themselves in situations where their objectivity can be questioned (e.g. conflict of interests);
- Officials appointed to an event have the skills and competencies appropriate for the level of competition.

Resolution Facilitation

The Resolution Facilitation (RF) process can help resolve misunderstandings and disagreements before they turn into disputes. This service is offered **free of charge** by the SDRCC to help National Sport Organizations and their members work out their differences in a consensual manner.

The RF process is informal and confidential; and can help at any point of a dispute. It is an ideal avenue to help parties openly discuss all issues in an attempt to seek their resolution with the assistance of a neutral third party.

Dispute Resolution

In addition to Resolution Facilitation, the SDRCC currently offers three types of dispute resolution services:

- Mediation
- Med/Arb
- Arbitration

These services are described in more detail on the SDRCC's website.

When officials think they have been treated unfairly, it is important to find out quickly what avenues are available to them to appeal the decision. In order to access the SDRCC dispute resolution services, officials must have exhausted all internal appeal procedures provided by the rules of their sport organization. SDRCC procedures are governed by the Canadian Sport Dispute Resolution Code (available on the SDRCC's website).

SDRCC Resources for Officials

- For more dispute prevention information, visit SDRCC's website for resources free of charge;
- SDRCC is currently mandated to resolve disputes between National Sport Organizations and their members;
- SDRCC also offers a fee-for-service program in order to make its dispute resolution services available to other members of the sport community. Contact the SDRCC to find out if your dispute qualifies.

Contact Information

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