

Ice hockey – Elite League crack down on comments

The Elite League has introduced increased financial penalties for players, coaches and club officials who make improper comments regarding referees, linesmen or the Department of Player Safety.

This season has seen a significant increase in club officials using social media and post match interviews to make unacceptable comments and insinuations about referees and linesmen.

Any club, coach, player or club employee found to be bringing the league into disrepute with comments about officials in the media or on social media, this includes retweeting things posted by others, will face action from the Elite League.

In the first instance the person will be fined £100, the second £1000 and a three time offender will face a fine of £5000. This will be carried over from season to season and there will never leave that person's individual record.

In light of the above ruling the following individual officials and clubs have been fined for incidents in October and November, Fife £100, Cardiff £200, Sheffield £300 and Nottingham £200.

Elite League chairman Tony Smith said: "Enough is enough this has to stop. Right now as a league we are tearing each other, our officials and our league to pieces, our DOPS system which we as a league set up is being ridiculed by the very group who set it up. How ludicrous is it that we are trying to destroy everything we have worked so hard to create?

"We as a board cannot stand by and allow this to happen. The Elite League has come a long way in the last five years and we are asking our officials to keep up with the ever increasing standards. Mistakes will happen, we have to accept that, but we also have understand as a sport, that without the referees

and linesmen then we don't have a game and so we have to treat them with more respect.

"There are some very good officials in our league who are working hard and we have to keep training our officials and keep working with them to make sure they have the best chance of success every night. We have to remember that we have part-time officials in this league and we have to look at what the next step is. If it is a case of looking at where we are and giving them more training then that is what we should do."

"If you want to put yourself out there it is going to cost you money. A hundred pounds is nothing these days and people will think about it and push the button and say so what. But believe me do it again you get £1000 pound fine and if you do it again after that you will face a £5000 fine, which is serious money.

"We can't accept the behaviour that has gone over the last six weeks and we will stamp it out. My message to everyone is cut it out and let's get on with the hockey."