



Harassment 1: How have you experienced harassment?

Pre-Amble

Harassment of officials is known to be an issue when non-officials degrade, demean, and attack officials during games. Therefore, this survey seeks to confirm the experience of officials in receiving harassment from non-officials in Hockey Winnipeg.

However, this survey also seeks to explore officials experiencing harassment from other officials. This is an important question because hockey has struggled with a culture of abuse, hazing, and toxic masculinity that has come to light in various events including the 2018 Canadian Junior National Team.

This survey is not going to prove any one theory true or false beyond a doubt. However, it will open thoughts about the officials' experience of harassment.

Methods: The Survey

The survey was posted on wpgrefs.com between September and December 2022. It was advertised using email blasts to the wpgrefs.com email list during this same period. The items on the survey included experience and age questions.

Survey participants were asked to respond to items related to whether an official was harassed by a fellow official or a non-official. Officials were asked to rate each item as "Yes", "No", or "Maybe". For example, the official would see "I have been harassed by a fellow official outside of the arena" then respond by selecting "Yes", "No", or "Maybe".

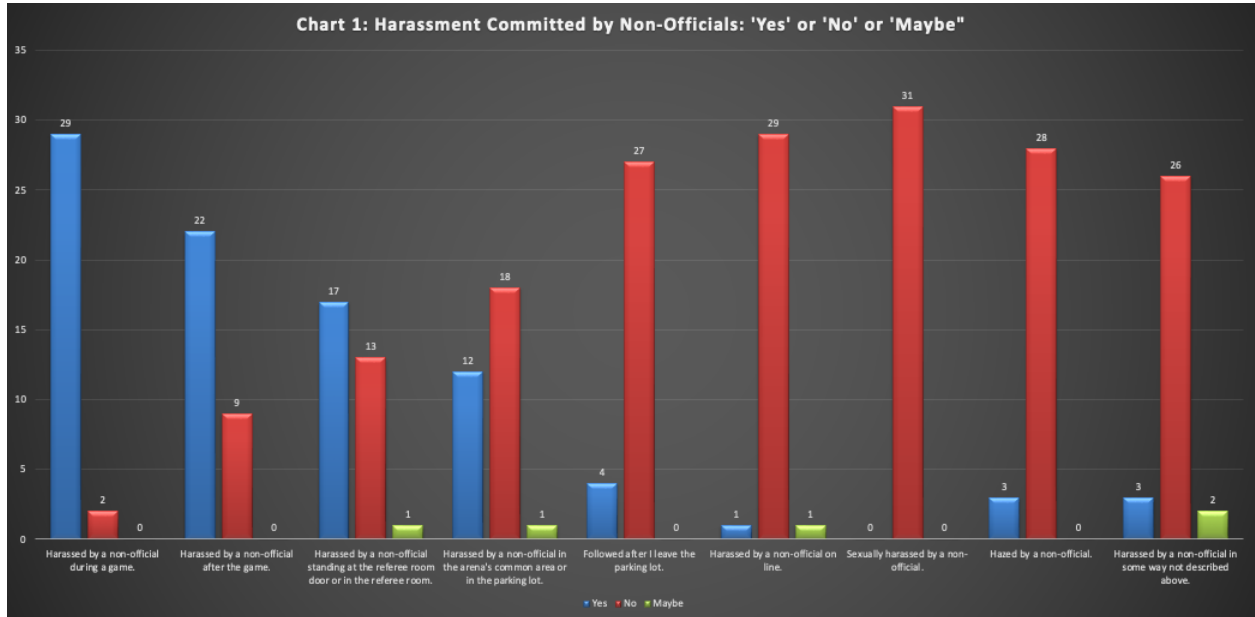
Results

There were 31 respondents: 2 first years, 4 with 1 to 3 years of experience, 8 with 4 to 6 years, and 17 with 7+ years. The ages of these respondents were: 12-14 years (4), 15-17 years (0), 18-20 years (2), 21-23 years (3) and 24 years (22). Four (4) respondents identified as female and 27 as male.

The results can be divided into whether an official has been harassed by a fellow official or a non-official.

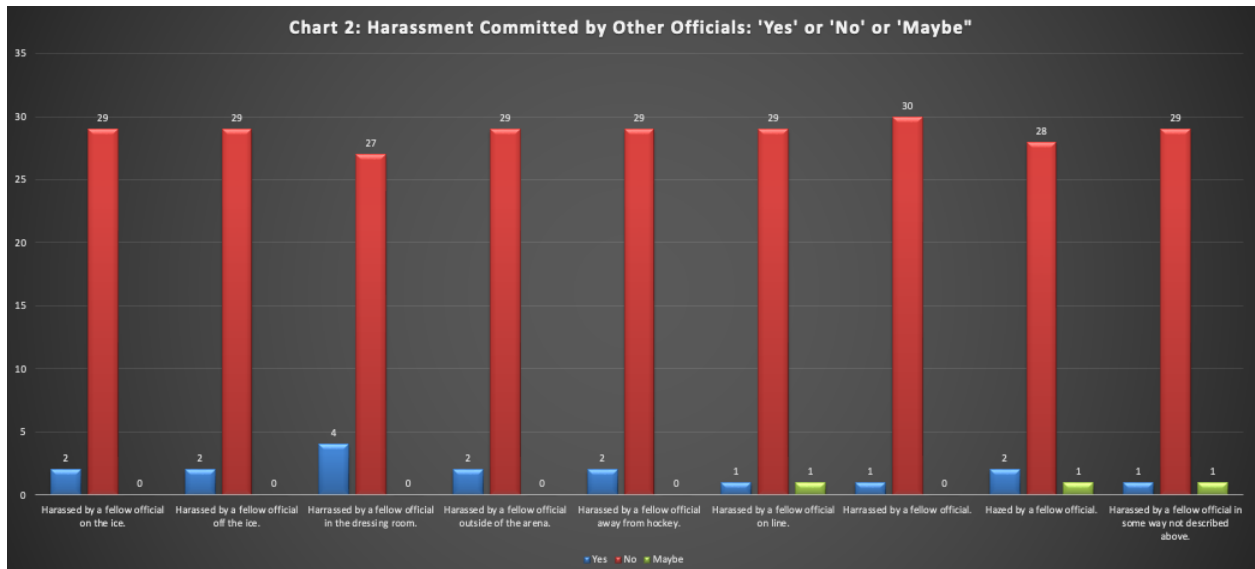
Harassment by Non-Officials

The following chart shows each of the 9 items and a tally representing the number of times “Yes” (blue), “No” (red), and “Maybe” (green) were selected.



Harassment by Other Officials

The following chart shows each of the 9 items and a tally representing the number of times “Yes” (blue), “No” (red), and “Maybe” (green) were selected.



Discussion

Main Outcomes

This research suggests two primary trends:

1. Harassment by non-officials appears concentrated inside arenas rather than after people have left the arena. This is demonstrated by the tall blue bars seen in [Chart 1: Harassment Committed by Non-Officials](#).
 - a. The items with more “yes’s” were: during the game (29 “yes’s”), after the game (22), at or in the referee room (17), or in the common area (12).
 - b. The items that had fewer “yes’s” were parking lot and online.
2. Harassment by non-officials appears to be uncommon with all items scoring “No’s” in the high twenties. This is demonstrated in [Chart 2: Harassment Committed by Other Officials](#). However, two points should be made:
 - a. There is always at least one “Yes” per item. Someone is always a victim of intra-personnel harassment.
 - b. “Harassed by a fellow official in the dressing room” has the highest number of “Yes’s” (4). This suggests that the dressing room is not a safe place for all. In fact, 4 out of 31 means that 13% of officials are being harassed by fellow officials in the dressing room.

Secondary Outcomes

1. The data in [chart 1](#) accurately portrays the anecdotal experience reflected in the media where it is common to read about people yelling at the referees but uncommon to hear about referees being harassed after everyone has gone home.
2. The data in [chart 2](#) portrays the referee community as a safe and supportive place overall. However, the existence of some harassment is cause for concern.
3. There are three tallies in [chart 1](#) for “Hazed by Non-Official”. What and where is this experience? It is unlikely to have occurred in the referee room since non-officials are rarely in that room or perhaps this refers to (but hopefully not) hazing by referee leaders that have access to the referee room.

Summary

This survey demonstrated that harassment by non-officials is a regular experience for referees as 94% said they had been harassed during a game. Harassment by other officials in the dressing room was a lower, but meaningful, proportion at 13% of officials. These numbers support the anecdotal evidence that referee harassment by fans is significant while also highlighting the need to create safe spaces for referees in dressing rooms just as hockey needs to create safe spaces for players in dressing rooms. Therefore, just as the hockey community needs to change its toxic culture, so too does the referee culture need to reflect on its culture within the dressing room.

Research Limitations

There are two main limitations to this research.

- The sample is skewed towards older and more experienced officials: 27 of 31 being older than 18 years and 17 identified as having 7+ years of experience.
- There were only 4 participants who identified as female. Understanding the harassment experience of people who identify in a minority is vital to our understanding of hockey culture as non-majority groups can experience harassment significantly differently than the majority. As such, we cannot fully understand without a larger sample of people who do not identify as male.