



## Harassment 2: Have you witnessed harassment between referees?

### Pre-Amble

This survey 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 finalize any particular theory. However, it will open thoughts about the officials' experience of harassment from other officials.

### Methods: The Survey

The survey was posted on [wpgrefs.com](http://wpgrefs.com) between January 2023 and March 2023. It was advertised using email blasts to the [wpgrefs.com](http://wpgrefs.com) email list during this same period. The items on the survey included experience, gender and age questions.

Survey participants were asked to respond to items related to their experience of harassment by other officials in the referee room and away from the hockey arena. Officials were asked to rate each item as "Yes", "No", or "Maybe". For example, the official would see "While in the ref room...I have witnessed harassment between officials and I spoke up to make it stop." then respond by selecting "Yes", "No", or "Maybe".

### Results

There were 46 respondents: 17 first years, 4 with 1 to 3 years of experience, 7 with 4 to 6 years, and 18 with 7+ years. The ages of these respondents were: 12-14 years (8), 15-17 years (7), 18-20 years (5), 21-23 years (4), 24+ years (21) and prefer not to disclose (1). Eight (8) respondents identified as female and 38 as male.

The results can be divided into:

- 1) officials in the referee room with other officials
- 2) the experience of officials hanging out with other officials away from the arena
- 3) feelings of safety in the ref room or out in the community with other officials
- 4) miscellaneous questions.

### Harassment in the referee room

Here are the percentages of respondents who said “yes”, “no”, or “maybe” to each referee room item. There were 46 respondents.

<b>Table 1: “While in the referee room...”</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Maybe</b>
<i>...I have participated in activities that seemed fun at the time but, in hind sight, were inappropriate or potentially a form of harassment or hazing.</i>	4.26%	91.49%	4.44%
<i>...I have witnessed homophobic behavior (negative/hateful/fearful behaviors to words people who are gay) in the referee room.</i>	8.51%	89.36%	2.22%
<i>...I have witnessed harassment in the referee room and I spoke up to make it stop.</i>	12.77%	85.11%	2.22%
<i>...I have witnessed harassment in the referee room and I did not speak up in an effort to make it stop.</i>	6.38%	93.62%	0.00%

### Harassment outside the arena, in the community

Here are the percentages of respondents who said “yes”, “no”, or “maybe” to each referee room item. There were 17 respondents for these items as 17 out of 46 respondents selected yes for “Do you hang out with officials outside of hockey?”

<b>Table 2: “While with officials away from the arena...”</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Maybe</b>
<i>...I have participated in activities that seemed fun at the time but, in hind sight, were inappropriate or potentially a form of harassment or hazing.</i>	0.00%	94.12%	5.88%
<i>...I have witnessed homophobic behavior (negative/hateful/fearful behaviors to words people who are gay) in the referee room.</i>	11.76%	88.24%	0.00%
<i>...I have witnessed harassment between officials and I spoke up to make it stop.</i>	11.76%	88.24%	0.00%
<i>...I have witnessed harassment between officials and I did not speak up in an effort to make it stop.</i>	11.76%	88.24%	0.00%

### Feelings of safety in the referee room or in the referee community

Here are the percentages of respondents who said “yes”, “no”, or “maybe” to each “feeling of safety” item. There were 46 respondents.

<b>Table 3: Safety in the referee room</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Maybe</b>
<i>The referee room is a safe place for everyone regardless of gender.</i>	70.21%	12.77%	17.02%
<i>The referee room is a safe place for everyone regardless of sexuality.</i>	78.72%	6.38%	14.89%
<i>The referee room is a safe place for everyone regardless of age.</i>	80.85%	6.38%	12.77%

<b>Table 4: Safety in the community</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Maybe</b>
<i>The referee community is a safe place for everyone regardless or gender.</i>	70.59%	11.76%	17.65%
<i>The referee community is a safe place for everyone regardless of sexuality.</i>	64.71%	5.88%	29.41%
<i>The referee community is a safe place for everyone regardless of age.</i>	76.47%	5.88%	17.65%

## Miscellaneous questions about harassment

Here are the percentages of respondents who said “yes”, “no”, or “maybe” to each miscellaneous item. There were 46 respondents.

<b>Table 5: Miscellaneous Items</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Maybe</b>
<i>Other officials harassing me makes me want to quit officiating.</i>	6.38%	82.98%	10.64%
<i>Hockey's governing bodies need to do more about officials harassing other officials.</i>	14.89%	48.94%	36.17%
<i>As an official, I feel supported by the officiating community to be myself.</i>	78.72%	8.51%	10.64%
<i>As an official, I need to hide my true self to feel part of the officiating community.</i>	12.77%	87.23%	0.00%
<i>Hazing is part of the process for being accepted in the referee community.</i>	2.13%	85.11%	12.77%

## Discussion

### Main Outcomes

This research suggests two primary trends:

1. Officials appear to feel that negative behaviours between them are limited:
  - a. Table 1 shows that 85% of respondents responded “no, I have not witnessed ...” in the referee room.
  - b. Table 2 shows a similar outcome regarding being in the community with other officials.
  - c. Although results are less strong than tables 1 and 2, tables 3 and 4 show that a large majority see the ref room and ref community as being safe for a variety of person groups.
2. Officials are more confident that they have not witnessed harassment between refs than they are that the ref room or ref community are safe places. Here are the items that support this outcome:
  - a. Table 1 & 2: 88% to 94% responded “No” to items phrased as “I have not witnessed \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - b. Tables 3 & 4: 19% to 36% responded “No” or “Maybe” to items like “the referee room/ref community is a safe place for \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - c. Table 5 shows:
    - i. 17.02% say that other officials harassing them either makes them want to quit or may make them want to quit.
    - ii. 51.06% say that hockey’s governing bodies need to do more or may need to do more about officials harassing other officials.
    - iii. 19.15% say “No” or “Maybe” to feeling supported by the referee community.

## Summary

Overall, this survey demonstrated that the large majority of respondents do not witness harassment between officials either in the referee room or in the community. However, the

lack of seeing harassment does not mean they believe the referee room and community is a safe place for all.

### Research Limitations

The primary limitation to this research: There were only 8 respondents 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.