

Referee Harassment: Situation Room #3: Hallway Confrontation  
Part 1: What happened



This is the game report filed by the referee, edited for privacy by removing names of teams, locations and individuals involved.

*"During the second and third period, we were having many issues with the Team black bench. Constant disagreement, and they weren't quiet about it. We had already ejected one coach when the incident with the second coach happened.*

*During the play, I noticed the second coach leaning over the bench and banging on the boards, red in the face and screaming at me. Since his team had the puck, I immediately stopped the play and told him he was out of the game. He did not leave, instead he started swearing (saying things like "this is \$%^& stupid", "you're a \$%^& idiot" and "I'm not \$%^& leaving") at me many times, and flipping me the middle finger at least 2-3 times as well. Finally he started to leave, amidst a final flurry of swears and more yelling.*

*After the game, I deliberately went to the ref room from the opposite side of that team's dressing room, since I feared that coach specifically (but also one of the other two coaches we ejected) would be waiting for me in the hallway. Sure enough that coach was waiting for me at the other entrance and he saw me at the far end of the hallway.*

*That coach started his swearing and yelling again, despite my repeated attempts to get him to stop and leave. He just kept stopping his tirade to yell at me and say "what can you do about it, you can't do anything about it!". All this time he was walking steadily towards me, and I was starting to feel quite threatened. At this point I threatened to call the cops, and he kept telling me he didn't care, and I couldn't do anything about it, all the while walking closer to me. Now I was feeling very threatened, and was getting ready to walk/run (in skates) back in the direction I came.*

*I am truly fortunate that the team for the next game happened to open their door at that moment, and I quickly jumped inside their room, asking if I could shelter in there for a couple minutes. They let me in and locked the door, and I gave them a brief description of why I was in there. After a minute or two, two of their coaches took a look down the hallway, and escorted me to the ref room. If it were not for the extremely fortunate timing of them opening their door, I feel this situation could've been much worse.*

*Eventually one of the coaches of the team who's dressing room I was hiding escorted me to the referee room where I stayed. My partner arrived safely back at the room a few minutes later, joined shortly by an Arena employee. He told us he would watch the situation with parents, and knock on the door when it was safe to leave, and we should stay in the room until he came back.*

*Roughly 25 minutes later, after medals had been presented and the ice had been flooded, the employee came back and told us while the abusive coach was still waiting at the far end of the hallway by his team's room, he would escort us onto the ice for the next game. As soon as the abusive coach saw us, his swearing and yelling started again until we were out of sight. I talked to the employee, and they said they would call the cops if he was still there when it was time to flood the ice after the first period."*

## Part 2: Analysis

### **The Good**

- The Referees asked for help from other teams and the rink staff. ASK FOR HELP...MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT ABUSIVE TO REFEREEES
- Get into the referee's room and stay there until you feel safe
- Write a full report with lots of details and report to the league president.
- Creativity: Jump into a safe place like the dressing room of the next game.

### **The Bad**

- The referee threatened to phone. This only serves to escalate the situation. You can phone the police once you are safe and without warning the person you will do so.
- The referees engaged the coach in the hallway. Never engage in the hallway, just put your head down and keep walking to a safe place even if the person is screaming at you. Ignore,

### **The Ugly**

- This coach's actions. This is highly inappropriate and makes no sense.
- This situation is at the extreme end of the behavior spectrum, however, not as uncommon as referees would like.