See the Green: What the Green Armband Means This 2026-27 Season (https://www.hockeymanitoba.ca/news/see-the-green-what-the-green-armband-means-this-2026-27-season/)

by Trevor Buhnai | September 18, 2026 2:10 pm



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Hockey Manitoba is proud to introduce the Green Armband Initiative province-wide for the 2026–2027 hockey season.

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The initiative is designed to recognize, support and protect young hockey officials while reminding everyone in the hockey community that young officials deserve the same respect we expect for every participant in the game.

The green armband is an age-based identifier. It does not indicate an official's experience, certification level, ability or the level of hockey they are working.

Who wears the green armband?

Beginning in the 2026–2027 season, all registered Hockey Manitoba officials aged 16 and under are required to wear a green armband while officiating.

This applies regardless of:

- Certification or officiating level
- Experience
- Position, referee or linesperson
- Age category of the game
- Level of hockey being officiated

The requirement ends when an official turns 17 years old.

Young does not mean inexperienced.

A young official may have several seasons of experience and may be working a high-level game. The green armband simply identifies that the official is a minor and reinforces the expectation that they are treated with respect and given the opportunity to continue developing.

What does the green armband mean?

When you see a green armband, let it be a reminder:

Respect the Official.
Support the Official.
Let Them Develop.

Officials are learning and developing just like players.

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Mistakes are part of sport and part of development. Young officials should be given the opportunity to learn, improve and gain confidence without being subjected to yelling, intimidation, personal criticism, threats or abuse.

Everyone has a role

When a young official is working your game, everyone in the rink has a responsibility to help create a positive hockey environment.

Players

Players are expected to:

- Respect officials and their decisions.
- Communicate appropriately with officials.
- Avoid personal criticism, intimidation or inappropriate comments.
- Remember that officials are participants in the game too.

Coaches and team officials

Coaches and team officials are expected to:

- Set the standard for their bench.
- Model respectful communication.
- Address inappropriate behaviour from players or team staff.
- Prevent officials from becoming the target of the bench or team.
- Communicate concerns professionally and appropriately.

Respect starts at the bench.

Parents and spectators

Parents and spectators are encouraged to:

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- Support the players rather than criticize officials.

- Avoid yelling at or confronting officials.
- Avoid personal or negative comments.
- Model appropriate behaviour for young players.
- Remember that the official on the ice may also be a young person.

The green armband does not change officiating standards

The Green Armband Initiative does not mean young officials are treated differently when applying the rules.

Young officials are still expected to:

- Apply the rules appropriately.
- Communicate professionally.
- Manage the game.
- Make decisions.
- Receive coaching and feedback.
- Continue developing through the established officiating pathway.

The green armband identifies their age, not their ability.

What happens if there is abuse or harassment?

Hockey Manitoba already has rules and disciplinary processes addressing abuse and maltreatment of officials.

For the 2026–2027 season, Hockey Manitoba will reinforce these expectations when incidents involve young officials. Where applicable under Hockey Canada and Hockey Manitoba rules, incidents involving Rule 11 – Maltreatment will be subject to enhanced disciplinary consideration when a green armband official is targeted or involved.

There is no place for abuse of officials in hockey.

Yelling, threatening, intimidating, discriminatory or abusive behaviour toward officials is not acceptable.

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All incidents remain subject to the applicable rules, reporting requirements, investigation and disciplinary processes.

A message to our hockey community

The Green Armband is more than something worn on an official's arm.

It is a visible reminder that the person wearing it is a young person who has chosen to contribute to hockey.

They are learning.
They are developing.
They are gaining confidence.

And they deserve the opportunity to do that in a positive environment.

The same standards we expect from young players must also apply to young officials.

For leagues and associations

We ask all leagues and associations to share this information with your teams, coaches, parents, officials, and membership, and to help promote the initiative through your regular communications, websites, social media, and rink messaging.

Questions about the Green Armband Initiative?
Tyler Wiwchar, Sr Coordinator, Officials Development, Hockey Manitoba

TWEET (HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/INTENT/TWEET?URL=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FWWW.HOCKEYMANITOBA.CA%2FNEWS%2FSEE-AT-THE-GREEN-ARMBAND-MEANS-THIS-2026-27-&TEXT=SEE%20THE%20GREEN%3A%20WHAT%20THE%20GREEN%20ARMBAND%20MEANS%20THIS%202026-)
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