



NEWS RELEASE



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NHL ANNOUNCES INITIATIVES TO COMBAT RACISM AND ACCELERATE ITS INCLUSION EFFORTS

Will Work with NHLPA and Clubs to Adopt Additional Measures

NEW YORK/TORONTO (Sept. 3, 2020) – At this moment, which calls on all of us not only to be clear about our engagement on social issues, but to take action, the National Hockey League announced a series of significant initiatives focused on the fight against racism and the mandate to make our sport and our League more welcoming and inclusive. In addition, the League and its Member Clubs, along with the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA) have committed to a number of other specific initiatives.

"We applaud NHL Players for recognizing the importance of this moment and for coming together as part of a genuine movement for change," NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said. "We look forward to working with all voices of change to fight for equality and broaden access to the game we all love.

"Under the leadership of NHL Senior Executive Vice President of Social Impact, Growth Initiatives & Legislative Affairs Kim Davis, the League's longstanding work in these areas has been refocused over the last three years and accelerated over the last six months. The initiatives we are announcing today are the result of that recommitment to making the NHL more inclusive and welcoming – and to using the privilege of our platform to fight racism.

"For nearly three decades, the NHL has funded organizations and instituted programs designed to make our game more diverse. We are proud of those efforts – particularly the work done by the legendary Willie O'Ree, who has used the values of hockey to positively impact the lives of thousands of girls and boys – but we know we can and must do more. And we will."

"Everyone should be able to live and work in an environment that is inclusive, and one that is free from racism and discrimination in any form. In our sport, from the NHL to youth programs, we must take actions to achieve that goal, and to make our sport available and accessible to all," said Don Fehr, NHLPA Executive Director.

JOINT NHLPA/NHL ANTI-RACISM EFFORTS

- The NHL and NHLPA will work jointly with the **Hockey Diversity Alliance (HDA)** to establish and administer a first-of-its-kind grassroots hockey development program to provide mentorship and skill development for BIPOC boys and girls in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Additionally, the parties have agreed to pursue a similar pilot program based in the U.S. that will be announced at a later date. These pilot programs will represent a unique opportunity to partner with the HDA to use the power of their representation to inspire the next generation.

- The NHL and the NHLPA are planning mandatory inclusion and diversity training for all NHL Players, to be conducted during training camp and the first part of the 2020-21 season. NHLPA staff members will receive the same inclusion and diversity training as the Players.

NHL ANTI-RACISM EFFORTS

- All League employees will participate in an inclusion learning experience, conducted by Bill Proudman from **White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP)**. Their education will be focused on anti-racism, unconscious bias, dimensions of identity, micro-aggressions and cultural competency. The pilot for this work will begin with executive-level leadership immediately. WMFDP is an innovative global learning and development firm that pioneered a provocative approach to engaging white, male business leaders in inclusion efforts. For over 35 years, WMFDP has counselled countless organizations and executives around the globe on issues surrounding race, leadership, team effectiveness and inclusion.
- The League will work with its long-standing partners at the **Thurgood Marshall College Fund** to empower the next generation of racial justice leaders through a relationship with the **Center for Justice Research at Texas Southern University**. In solidarity with the Center for Justice Research's mission to create a "procedurally just criminal justice system," the NHL has pledged financial support to the Center for Justice Research's student research projects specifically related to improving the criminal justice system.
- At the Club level, the League will continue to host a series of "Courageous Conversations" related to race, equity, diversity and inclusion. Courageous Conversations provide a forum where Club personnel can delve into subject matter such as privilege, embracing difference, becoming even more of an ally and unconscious bias. At their core, Courageous Conversations are the beginning of the process of self-reflection, and they can help Club personnel navigate situations when interacting with others along different dimensions of diversity. These 1-hour sessions are being led by Kim Davis and Brian Blake, NHL Senior Director of Diversity & Inclusion. The League will be initiating a similar program for our Coaches and General Managers.
- The League will also continue to educate our fans and stakeholders about the importance of anti-racism work through extensions of our "Committing to Change" resource guide and amplification of NHL Players, prospects, and alumni who use their voice to call for change.
- Additionally, the League has initiated conversations directly with Mellody Hobson and John Rogers of **Ariel Investments** in regard to building a more diverse business pipeline and identifying strategies to engage more minority-owned organizations with the League office and the Clubs. As the NHL explores a collaboration with Ariel Investments' regarding its capabilities as a fund manager, we will continue seeking their expert counsel and work to expand our network of Diversity and Inclusion specialists through their established connections.

THOSE LEADING THE CULTURE CHANGE

The League has formed the **Executive Inclusion Council (EIC)**, comprised of Owners, former Players and Club and League executives. The Council, co-chaired by Buffalo Sabres' Owner Kim Pegula and NHL Commissioner Bettman, will be committed to spearheading more inclusive thinking and more inclusive outcomes throughout the hockey ecosystem by candidly assessing its current state; identifying opportunities for positive change; and developing tangible action steps and benchmarks that will advance both the inclusion and diversity of the sport. This Council will focus on the importance of metrics and accountability.

Additionally, three committees – the **Player Inclusion Committee (PIC)**, co-chaired by P.K. Subban and Anson Carter and comprised of current and former NHL and Women's National Team Players, the **Fan Inclusion Committee (FIC)** and the **Youth Hockey Inclusion Committee (YHIC)** will each develop action-oriented solutions that positively impact the access, opportunity and experiences that underrepresented groups have in the game – and in the business – of hockey.

Assisting the EIC in its efforts is **Korn Ferry**, an esteemed consultancy with decades of expertise in the diversity and inclusion space. Korn Ferry is taking an impact-focused approach to our diversity and inclusion efforts, where they are examining the diversity, inclusion and cultural levers that impact action-oriented outcomes as well as the governance and structure of the EIC.

As part of its work, the EIC will develop strategies to provide more inclusive workplaces and environments while holding ourselves accountable. These include:

- Focusing on recruiting, hiring and development strategies to engage and support diverse talent for Club and League front-office and hockey operations positions and employment opportunities throughout hockey, such as an industry-wide internship and/or fellowship programs.
- Working to establish specific hiring targets/recommendations on a realistic timetable while commissioning an outside audit of these efforts. We are working with the **Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport** on a private assessment of our current employee pool. This customized demographic study will help us determine our targets over the next two years as we seek to hire, retain and grow even more employees of varying underrepresented groups – including women, minorities, and LGBTQ+ community members.
- Helping Clubs to better determine best practices in their market.

These efforts will operate in tandem with existing initiatives to uplift diverse talent throughout the sport, including the 2020 NHL Coaches' Association Global Coaches' Clinic, which worked to identify, engage and support developing coaches of color.

The FIC and YHIC will be comprised of top business minds, thought-leaders, advocates, community organizers and devotees of the game – representing the diversity the League seeks – to amplify the voice of the hockey ecosystem and to design solutions to break down barriers to change.

To ensure the committee process yields practical and measurable cultural change, the League has engaged with **The Ascendant Athlete**, an advisory group that works with athletes to advance impact on social justice issues. The Ascendant Athlete is currently conducting interviews with all members of the PIC and YHIC to form a basis for the committees' efforts. The Ascendant Athlete team will remain actively involved in these committees going forward by providing professional facilitation in each meeting.

Please see [the attachment](#) for a list of the members of all aforementioned Committees.

Over the past few months, many of our Players have taken the initiative to further conversations about race, inclusion and culture change. In addition to those Players who have embraced their individual platforms, the Hockey Diversity Alliance has been vocal about its commitment to making change on these issues. We appreciate the HDA's input and will remain attentive to all of our Players' concerns. As the League continues its efforts to make long-lasting structural and cultural change, we look forward to continuing the dialogue with the HDA and working together to bring about the change in our game we both strive to achieve.

JOINT NHLPA/NHL ACTION STEPS

To ensure a positive, respectful, and empowering culture for NHL Players of color as well as encouraging positive change at the grassroots level and throughout the broader hockey community, the League and NHLPA have taken several steps, including:

- Developing and launching the NHL Hotline. Operated by an independent third-party provider, this custom-built reporting platform solution will enable stakeholders across the NHL ecosystem to report unethical behavior and misconduct. (In December, Commissioner Bettman announced a zero-tolerance policy for failing to report any conduct involving NHL personnel, on or off the ice, that is clearly inappropriate, unlawful or abusive – including racial and homophobic language or discrimination. Consequences will be severe and appropriate, designed to remedy the situation and ensure the conduct does not occur again.)
- Through the NHL/NHLPA Industry Growth Fund, continuing to make significant financial investments to grow the sport of hockey at the youth level in communities of color. Several of our Clubs already are accessing the Industry Growth Fund to help support hockey diversity initiatives and others are planning to do so.
- The League also will provide funding, as needed, specifically devoted to supporting new initiatives that bring more people of color into our game. The goal is to encourage more participation for people of color at all levels of the game – including creating a pipeline for the development of elite hockey players.

NHL-SPECIFIC ACTION STEPS

To help the hockey community exercise its right to vote, the League will assist our Clubs in exploring ways to encourage fans to be active civic participants and to use their venues as polling places – several Clubs have already committed to taking these steps in partnership with local election officials. The League will collaborate with two non-partisan organizations focused on voter education and increased participation in the U.S. which will connect with Clubs as appropriate.

“**When We All Vote**” (WWAV) is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization on a mission to increase participation in every election and to change the culture around voting through strategies including:

- Amplifying educational resources about voting via League-wide platforms and social media channels.
- Offering opportunities for League and Club employees to further educate themselves about the voting landscape via internal learning sessions.

In continuation of our multi-year partnership with “**RISE**,” a non-profit organization that uses sport to address racism and empowers the sports community to use its voice to effect real change, the NHL will:

- Host public-facing virtual panels to underscore the importance of voting and to inspire our fans to participate in the electoral process.
- Connect NHL Clubs to resources and information necessary to host voting activations tailored to each Club’s local market.

As these efforts get underway, the NHL will commit to designate 2020 U.S. Election Day and future general election days in both Canada and the U.S. as company-wide “off days” to make it easier for our staff to vote, while also emphasizing to our fans and stakeholders the importance of participating in the democratic process. Also, as appropriate, Clubs will be encouraged to offer their arenas to assist local election officials.

JOINT NHLPA/NHL WORK THAT WILL CONTINUE

- The NHL and NHLPA’s **Female Hockey Advisory Committee** – which was launched in 2019 – will continue to focus on the growth of women’s hockey and ensuring that all girls and young women can experience the opportunities and benefits that playing and officiating our sport provide. In addition to evaluating current female programming, devising outreach strategies and hosting an educational session for Canadian and American National Team players about racism, growth, and inclusion, it has partnered with the **NHL Coaches’ Association (NHLCA)** to increase the number of female coaches taking part in the NHLCA’s annual Coaches Mentorship Program – creating opportunities for female coaches from all 32 NHL markets. The Committee is currently working on an article series that examines the female experience in hockey and highlights role models at all levels of the sport.
- Through the NHL/NHLPA Industry Growth Fund (agreed to as part of the 2013 CBA and enhanced in the 2020 CBA), 20% of all [Learn to Play](#) and [First Shift](#) hockey equipment will be allocated to support diverse programs and communities beginning in the 2020-21 season.
- As part of the annual three-day NHLPA/NHL Rookie Orientation Program, NHL rookies are provided with diversity and inclusion training for the young and upcoming players entering the NHL.

LEAGUE-SPECIFIC WORK THAT WILL CONTINUE

- In early 2020, the League conducted the first-ever independent evaluation of the **Hockey is for Everyone** youth hockey programs and current network model. While the League is necessarily navigating the uncertainties of the youth hockey landscape in the current pandemic, it remains committed to exploring development of a broader coalition of independent youth and amateur hockey organizations that support marginalized and underrepresented groups.
- In the League's marketing and storytelling to hockey fans and stakeholders, it will demonstrate greater intentionality around underrepresented communities to help our audience grow more informed and ensure that multicultural fans feel more represented and affirmed. This includes the reporting done by William Douglas on NHL.com and through his well-regarded "Color of Hockey" blog and our recent addition of the [Soul on Ice podcast](#) to the NHL podcast family. Hosted by Kwame Damon Mason, with co-hosts Los Angeles Kings prospect Akil Thomas and Niagara IceDogs defenseman Elijah Roberts, *Soul on Ice* blends elements of culture and hockey, providing uncharted commentary and perspectives on the state of the game, defining moments in history and the future evolution of the sport. We will pursue similar culturally conscious projects across all our platforms.
- During the 2020 Stanley Cup Playoffs, the NHL began a relationship with **Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)** and **Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC)** by hosting a 50/50+ Sweepstakes for NHL fans, presented by Honda, to benefit the inspiring work being done by Boys & Girls Clubs across North America. As part of the Sweepstakes, the NHL raised more than \$100,000 to help build and support youth hockey and skating programming for communities that need it the most through local Boys & Girls Clubs. The NHL will continue this Boys & Girls Club partnership by hosting another 50/50+ Sweepstakes this weekend, September 4-6, with donations equally split between BGCA and BGCC.

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