



## THE GAME PROSPERS WHEN ALL STAKEHOLDERS ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT

**TORONTO, November 4, 2022** – In a regular season game between CÉGEP de Valleyfield and CÉGEP de Saint-Hyacinthe in Quebec last Saturday, an incident involving the verbal and physical assault of an official by a spectator during halftime resulted in the game’s cancellation.

The official involved required medical attention and is facing months of rehabilitation. The incident is now a police matter.

“Violence has absolutely no place in a civil society,” says René Daigneault, President of APAFQ, Quebec’s football officials’ association. “Luckily our injured official will have a full recovery over time.”

Sports are fueled by passion. Often that emotion and excitement turn combative and drive the type of behaviour that would be unacceptable in any ordinary workplace. According to a recent survey in the US, verbal abuse is the leading reason why officials quit. Only two of 10 officials return for the third year.

“Recruitment and retention of officials have been one of the biggest challenges to the sustainability of amateur sports. The number of amateur football officials in Canada dropped by more than 20 percent last year. Our older officials are not being replaced by younger ones quickly enough,” explains Henry Chiu, President of the Canadian Football Officials Association (CFOA).

“If we want to continue to grow the game, collectively, we need to make sure officiating is a viable option and that a safe environment for all is possible,” Chiu said.

“The sport does not function without the participation and dedication of our officials,” Football Canada president Jim Mullin said.

“It has been a priority for Football Canada to invest additional resources in officials’ development in recent years. We are taking a holistic approach to ensure officiating is a gateway to be part of the game we love.” Mullin said.

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