



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 12, 2012

Stop National Anthem, Officials Tell Pa. High School Hockey Teams

The organization that oversees nearly 200 high-school hockey teams in Pennsylvania is advising that they stop playing the National Anthem at games, citing the high cost of ice time at ice arenas and the time it takes to get a game in the books. According to CBS News, Ed Sam, commissioner of the [Pennsylvania Interscholastic Hockey League](#) (PIHL), sent an e-mail to 183 state high-school teams saying that “the National Anthem should not be played only because of time constrain[t]s.”



Sam insisted that the suggestion had nothing to do with a lack of patriotism on the part of the organization. Instead, it’s all about economics. “Ice is very, very hard to get and it’s not cheap,” he explained. “We’re talking \$300 an hour sometimes or even higher than that.”

Hockey moms and die-hard traditionalists see it another way, however. “I go back to the 1960s with high school hockey, and it’s [the National Anthem] always been a part of it,” Bob Mock, the skating director at a Pennsylvania rink, told CBS News. “It’s a part of our history, and it should be a part of the game.”

“I don’t agree with it,” agreed Beth Spina. “There should be some other time that can be cut.”

Because of the expense of ice time, if a match runs over it may be called, with the score recorded at that point. For that reason, many teams have already yanked the Anthem, seeing the extra three or so minutes the song would take as valuable time that can be tacked on the end of a tight match. Nonetheless, Sam said dropping the patriotic tune is only a suggestion, not a demand.

Noting the importance of the National Anthem to the high school sports culture, some traditionalists are suggesting the compromise of offering a minute and a half pre-recorded version of the song that would be played at all games.

Sam said that the backlash his group has gotten over his recommendation has prompted more meetings on the issue to see if any workable solutions — such as the canned Anthem — can be agreed upon.



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