

Bettman Speaks on Campbell Conflict of Interest Accusations

Written by Matthew Collier

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This week in the NHL was dominated over talk of e-mails sent by NHL head disciplinarian Colin Campbell that revealed apparent conflicts of interest including judgments made on players including his son Gregory. The e-mails, which were discovered by www.mc79hockey.com's Tyler Dellow, included Campbell calling for a referee to be fired after a call against his son, and calling Bruins' forward Marc Savard a "little fake artist."

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said via NHL.com that he gives Campbell his support and sees no wrongdoing. He said:

"I want to talk about the matter of Colie Campbell and the e-mails and the assertion by some people on the Internet and in the media that some internal e-mails that he wrote three years ago somehow suggest his decisions on supplemental discipline have been in some way biased. "There are a variety of unfortunate aspects to these assertions, and perhaps the most unfortunate of all is that the people making them have not had the opportunity to observe Colie's professionalism and integrity. He brings that to every one of his many duties with the NHL day in and day out, year after year. He takes his job extremely seriously, and it is a very difficult job. He takes his service to the game, the teams and the players as seriously as any human being can and he is somebody of the utmost integrity, and that's the way people around the League view him."

I know that we owe it to our fans and our fans should expect that there is going to be integrity in our game in everything we do, and we believe we do that. People will disagree with decisions -- reasonable people can always differ, especially when you deal with supplemental discipline. Obviously when you're dealing with supplemental discipline, no two acts are the same, the context is different, the situation's different, the players' histories are different. I've said it repeatedly -- supplemental disciplines are like snowflakes, no two are the same. And to do it, and to do it well, that is administer supplemental discipline, you must know the game, you must know all aspects of the game, you must be able to distinguish between an intentional act and an accident resulting from a hockey play.

"Colie can do that. He has 40 years in this game, he's levied 363 regular-season suspensions, including two today, and people have disagreed with him -- but our clubs have never challenged his integrity or fairness. As a fan, I hope you take comfort in the fact the teams you root for would never accept anything less than fair, unbiased treatment -- in short, integrity. The support for Colie from our clubs, unsolicited, has been overwhelming, and I think everybody can take comfort in that fact because our clubs and the people who are involved in this process intimately and see what's going on and know what's going on and are the recipients of the treatment under this, all believe in Colie and the job that he does. And so he has our full support, as do all the members of our Hockey Operations Department."

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Matthew Coller is a staff member of the Business of Sports Network, and is a freelance writer. He can be [followed on Twitter](#)

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