



## **STATEMENT ON ROGERS SPORTS & MEDIA'S RESPONSE TO SOAR INITIATIVE CANADA'S CBSC COMPLAINT**

**APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup> 2026**

As an organization that supports survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, and child abuse, we are deeply concerned by the lack of meaningful public accountability following the comments made during the nationally broadcast Hockey Night in Canada segment on February 28, 2026. These remarks were delivered publicly and broadcast across the country, reaching a wide audience that includes survivors. That level of reach requires a response that is equally public, transparent, and accountable.

We are also compelled to highlight that this response was received on Day 22 after the complaint was submitted to the broadcaster through the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC), despite the expectation of a response within 21 days. To then receive a reply that is clearly generic and mirrors those sent to others raises serious concerns. It reinforces the perception that media outlets default to routine public relations messaging rather than engaging meaningfully with the substance and urgency of the concerns raised, in the hope that public attention will shift.

We are deeply disappointed that our complaint, which reflected specific concerns grounded in the lived experiences of survivors, was met in this way. Survivors and those who advocate alongside them deserve more than standardized responses. They deserve to be heard, acknowledged, and engaged with in a way that reflects the gravity of what was raised. The disregard and dismissive tone conveyed through a templated reply is both insulting and disheartening to those who took the time to come forward.

We are also concerned by the selective interpretation of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Codes. The response relies on a narrow reading of whether the comments explicitly promoted or glamorized violence, while overlooking broader obligations within the same standards. The CAB Code of Ethics, including its human rights provisions, requires programming that does not perpetuate harmful or dismissive attitudes related to sex and gender. These standards are not limited to explicit references to violence. They are intended to address the wider cultural impact of language, including messaging that can trivialize or blur the understanding of consent.



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Framing persistence after rejection as something attractive is not a harmless analogy. In a context where consent education remains critical, this type of language reinforces harmful narratives that survivors and advocates work every day to challenge. The impact of these messages, particularly when amplified on a national platform, cannot be minimized.

In their response, we were informed that Sportsnet's President, Greg Sansone, released the following response to those who reached out to Sportsnet directly:

In trying to make his point, Elliotte used an analogy that he should not have used. We know that language matters. We are genuinely sorry for the inappropriate choice of words. We have spoken with Elliotte, and he is very regretful. He has also been responding individually to people who have contacted him. At Sportsnet we hold ourselves to a high standard, and we are committed to ensuring our on-air teams take great care to understand and avoid this kind of language moving forward.

We do acknowledge and appreciate Sansone's statement that language matters, as well as for the apology for the choice of analogy used by Friedman. While there is the indication that internal conversations have taken place, accountability must be visible and proportionate to the reach of the original comments. Private regret and internal steps are not sufficient when comments that may cause harm, even when unintentional, occurred in a public forum.

Survivors are not outside the audience. They are the audience. They are the fans, the communities, and the competitors that sports media exists to serve. They deserve media environments that actively build a culture of respect, consent, and dignity. They deserve broadcasters who take concerns seriously and uphold not just the minimum standards, but the full spirit of those standards.

We will continue to call on Sportsnet and all broadcasters to move beyond procedural responses and make a clear, public commitment to do better.