



SOAR INITIATIVE CANADA AND ONTARIO SAYS NO MORE CALL FOR GREATER AWARENESS OF THE USE OF CONSENT LANGUAGE AS METAPHORS IN SPORTS MEDIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hearing Elliotte Friedman compare the potential trade of player Ryan O'Reilly to dating, and say that “the more somebody tells you ‘no’ the more attractive they get,” during February 28th’s *Saturday Headlines* segment on Sportsnet, was both disappointing and angering.

When comments like that are made on a platform like Hockey Night in Canada, they carry weight. Framing rejection as something to push past may sound harmless in a sports analogy, but in real life it reinforces a message many people, especially women, have spent years pushing back against. The idea that “no” is negotiable is not harmless.

We know sports conversations are often fast, unscripted, and full of metaphors. But words matter. Casual comments can echo harmful ideas about persistence and consent, even when that is not the intent.

We are asking fellow sports journalists, producers, and commentators to reflect on this moment and speak up. Our sports culture can be competitive and passionate without leaning on narratives that normalize ignoring boundaries. Fans deserve smart analysis and a media environment that treats respect as non negotiable.