

## Boycott NHL Sponsors Until Team Owners Ban Head Shots

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, April 01, 2011

<https://politicsrespun.org/2011/04/boycott-nhl-sponsors-until-team-owners-ban-head-shots/>

OK, April Fools is over in Nova Scotia now, so I'm putting on my Cape Breton hat for this post to avoid having to post it in 4 hours.

We need to boycott NHL's sponsors until the NHL owners figure out that not banning head shots is morally negligent. I say this despite my excitement at the Canucks clinching the Western Conference and the President's Trophy this week for the first time in their 40 year history and an exciting playoffs coming up.

Here's the context:

1. The owners [voted 24-6 against](#) a proposal banning headshots.
2. Mario Lemieux and Geoff Molson [Penguins' and Habs' owners] are [considering establishing a premium league](#) with the 4 other sane owners, a league without headshots and with respect for the human dignity of hockey players so they are not degraded to Rollerball players. This premium league may be just a threat/bluff/wake-up call for the other owners, but I don't care. Someone needs to step up and the NHL Players' Association doesn't seem to be able to fully solve the problem of protecting its members health despite [some positive developments](#).
3. [Lemieux is not interested in Matt Cooke playing on his team anymore](#). I've appreciated Cooke's feistiness as a player, but he seems to be out of control now. While he will likely be fired from the Penguins, I suspect 24 other teams will consider hiring him.
4. I loved the original [Rollerball](#) [Norman Jewison directed it!] and I haven't seen the remake. The movie helps us understand a number of things: the psychology of fame, sport, team ownership, violence as entertainment, slavery, dignity, humanity, individuality. The NHL is becoming a parody of itself. It is approaching Rollerball through ownership negligence.
5. [Air Canada and VIA Rail have already expressed concern](#) over their own financial support of a league that is becoming degrading.
6. Other corporate sponsors have the capacity to influence the NHL owners' love of money.
7. If we boycott the corporations who sponsor the NHL, and tell them why, they may let the owners know that it is time to improve. We know unfortunate public figures like Don Cherry will not stand up for player safety.

It is a new era of activism when corporations, themselves often morality sleazebags, want to protect the perceived legitimacy of their brand by not associating it with depravity like NHL owner-sanctioned headshots.

There may be little response from the NHL from a modest corporate backlash, but there's always a chance we can make a difference.

I have a hard time condoning children watching the NHL if I have to attempt to justify things like

headshots, especially the gratuitous hit on Canuck Chris Tanev in last night's game, of which even the LA coach said, "In the environment that we have today it's a play where you've got to let up. There's no question the Vancouver defenseman saw him from the top of the hash mark in ... but you do have to let up. That's just the way the environment is."

It's time to take a stand for dignity, sanity and a game that won't sink to Rollerball's level.