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News

Columbia hockey club to leave penalty box early

October 5, 2006, 3:14 PM EDT

NEW YORK -- The men's hockey club at Columbia University, suspended for a semester over a flyer featuring a double-entendre, received a reduced penalty Thursday of just two games after a meeting with school officials.

Under an agreement between the club and the university, the hockey team will make a written apology to the Columbia community, the school said. In return, the club will be suspended for two preseason, non-league exhibition games; initially, the team was suspended through January 2007.



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The decision to reduce the disciplinary action followed a meeting Monday between university officials and the school's director of club sports. The hockey team had received support from Freedom for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), an educational free speech advocacy group.

The club will also remain on probation for one year, rather than two, and members of the team will participate in leadership training sessions.

The team had distributed fliers reading, "Don't be a pussy, play Columbia hockey."

The club's apology will acknowledge the fliers were posted without approval from the school's club sports administrators, and will concede that the recruiting fliers were potentially offensive to some on campus.

FIRE vice president Robert Shibley supported the lesser penalty.

"Not only was Columbia's decision to suspend the club ... an absurd overreaction, it showed a stunning lack of respect for freedom of speech," he said.

The hockey team is a club sport, rather than a varsity sport, and competes outside the university's formal athletic team program in the Metropolitan Collegiate Hockey Conference. The conference includes clubs from Yale, Hofstra and other universities.

On The Net: <http://www.cuhockey.com>

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