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CFL announces first policy on violence against women

by [Martin Dunphy](#) on August 7th, 2015 at 5:52 PM

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Canadian Football League commissioner Jeffrey Orridge announces new policy.

 CFL

The Canadian Football League's new commissioner announced Thursday (August 7) its first policy on violence against women.

In a news release, Jeffrey L. Orridge, appointed CFL commissioner at the end of April this year,

said: "In the face of a report of violence against a woman perpetrated by any CFL employee, we will always take it seriously. Doing nothing will never be an option."

According to the release, the CFL developed the new policy along with the Ending Violence Association (EVA) of Canada and by consulting with women who are antiviolence experts.

"The CFL condemns violence against women in all its forms: domestic violence, sexual assault, verbal abuse, and the disrespectful and damaging attitudes that can form the foundation for violence," Orridge said.

Orridge, who is a graduate of Harvard law school and the first African American commissioner of the CFL, previously headed up CBC Sports, from 2011 to 2015.

All CFL employees are covered by the policy, not just players and coaches, the release noted, and everyone will receive yearly training about violence against women and related issues.

Sanctions for behaviour that violates Canadian law—whether admitted by a perpetrator or determined by the courts—range from single- or multiple-game suspensions to lifetime banishments.

Tracy Porteous, chair of the Ending Violence Association of Canada, said "the CFL is changing history" with its policy. "Violence against women has long thrived in the shadows, so when organizations, especially those led by men, step forward to ask, 'What can we do to break the silence?' it shines an important light on a subject most people don't know what to do with."

The B.C. Lions instituted an anti-violence initiative in partnership with EVA B.C. in 2011. The program, dedicated to fostering awareness about violence-against-women issues and encouraging people to speak out about abuse, recently had its funding renewed by the provincial government.

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