

April Reimer, wife of Maple Leaf James Reimer, attacked on Twitter

thestar.com/sports/hockey/april-reimer-wife-of-maple-leaf-james-reimer-attacked-on-twitter/article_588216d7-50c1-538d-8a70-f46bdfc344df.html

Curtis Rush

March 24, 2014



In this file shot from 2011, James and April Reimer are pictured hanging out at April's parent's house in Maple Ridge, B.C.
JEFF VINNICK PHOTO

April Reimer, the wife of beleaguered Maple Leaf goalie James Reimer, spent the weekend fending off Twitter attacks over her husband's play.

Many offensive comments have been pulled, but here's a sampling of a few of the tweets that caused a social media backlash in the last 48 hours — and then an uprising in support of both April and her husband.

@BlueLineG27 tweeted: “tell ur husband thanks for costing the leafs another game and maybe the playoffs. He’s garbage. He must be cut.”

@MLFHROOZ tweeted to April: “you should seriously tell your husband to get psychiatric help because he has become an absolute joke.”

Due to offensive language, many of them cannot be printed in this paper. One of the more offensive tweets suggested that April Reimer should stab her husband in the heart while he sleeps.

“That’s tough when they go after your family,” goalie Jonathan Bernier said. “It is sad to see it, that’s for sure.”

Maple Leaf forward Tyler Bozak called the tweets to April Reimer “pretty low and pretty sad.”

One person called @Game_Blouses suggested his tweet about divorcing Reimer was meant as a joke.

“My tweet about the situation didn’t actually ‘tag’ her so it wasn’t meant to offend her or to even be seen by her, and I did so intentionally,” the Twitter user said in a direct message exchange.

“I have nothing against her,” he said. “It was just an offhand joke to my followers. Of course I’m not actually insinuating that she should divorce him.”

It’s rare for the wife of an athlete to be subjected to such abuse on social media. It also happened to Gisele Bundchen, the supermodel who is married to New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady. She touched off an uproar when she suggested after the 2012 Super Bowl that her husband couldn’t throw and catch the ball at the same time.

As in her case, Reimer’s wife April did not stay quiet.

After fans piled on Reimer after a 4-3 loss to the Montreal Canadiens on Saturday night, his wife tweeted: “Don’t mistake my silence for ignorance, my calmness for acceptance or my kindness as weakness #goaliewifeproblems.

That comment generated more than 1,000 retweets and was favoured more than 1,400 times.

But it only fed more angry tweets after Reimer was pulled in a 3-2 loss to New Jersey Sunday night as the team’s playoff hopes turned even more grim.

A flood of Twitter users rushed to April Reimer's defence, scolding the abusers. Among them was Julia @LeafsBeauty, who remarked: "we love you April! Ignore the haters! I Will always support Reimer no matter what!"

Jeff Veillette, who writes for the LeafsNation.com, [posted a piece](#) reminding people of the rules of etiquette with the heading: "It's a game and these are people."

He said that tweets against family members can be more "demoralizing" than to the athletes who "have been trained to block out that kind of reaction."

Brian Burke, president of hockey operations for the Calgary Flames, last year sued 18 anonymous people on Twitter who made false allegations and spread online comments suggesting he had an extramarital affair with Sportsnet anchor Hazel Mae and that he fathered her child.

Mae did not pursue legal action after discussions with her lawyer, Iain MacKinnon, even though "she was really upset," he told the Star in an interview on Monday.

In the case of some people who are subjected to attacks, MacKinnon wonders if the better course of action is not to engage at all.

"She (April Reimer) has to be careful because when she's wading into it, she's obviously going to make herself a target," he said, stressing that it's still not okay to defame someone.

Sportsnet hockey reporter Christine Simpson, who is on Twitter, knows first-hand how insulting a family member can cut close to the bone. Her brother is former NHLer Craig Simpson.

Simpson said that she accepts the fact that athletes should be open to criticism "but to attack a family member, in my opinion, is offside."

April Reimer could not be reached for comment, but she responded on Twitter to those who came to her defence.

"Thankfully the voices of many drown out the voices of a few. Thank you if you wrote me a kind tweet," she said.

Clarification – March 25, 2014: This article was edited from a previous version that said a person on Twitter suggested the attacks on James Reimer are justified and referred to a tweet by @Hope_Smoke. Upon seeing the article @Hope_Smoke contacted the Star to clarify that his tweet was meant to say that criticism of Reimer as an athlete was fair but that he was not

condoning personal attacks on Reimer or his wife April. The article also did not make clear that the tweet was quoting what TSN reporter Darren Dreger had said on a broadcast.

With files from Kevin McGran