

## SECTION VIII SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

*Approved September 2024*

The NYSPHSAA and Section VIII recognizes and appreciates that the influence and responsibility of the school administration with regard to good sportsmanship extends to all levels of competition. However, it must also be seen that the NYSPHSAA and Section VIII has been vested with the responsibility to ensure that all contests under its jurisdiction are conducted satisfactorily. This standard applies to all regular season and post season play.

As of July 1, 2013, the Dignity for All Students Act (Dignity Act-Section 52.2, Part 80 and 57-4) is to provide all public school students with an environment free from harassment, bullying (including cyber bullying) and discrimination, as well as to foster civility in public schools. The Dignity Act focuses on the prevention of discrimination behaviors, including harassment/bullying through the promotion of educational measures meant to positively impact school culture and climate, which includes the interscholastic programs.

The High School Athletic Association of Section VIII established the Sportsmanship Committee as a sub-committee of the Athletic Council to address incidents of unsportsmanlike conduct and flagrant misconduct. The purpose of the Sportsmanship Committee is to take proactive measures in an effort to minimize inappropriate behavior at all Section VIII events and to promote positive sporting behavior throughout the county.

### A. What is to be reported:

1. A Player who is ejected from a contest for flagrant misconduct and/or unsportsmanlike conduct.
2. A Spectator who acts in a disruptive abusive or inappropriate manner.
3. A Coach who conducts himself/herself in an inappropriate or unsportsmanlike manner.
4. An Official who demonstrates unsportsmanlike conduct or inappropriate behavior unbecoming of a sport official.  
A School that permits spectators to conduct themselves in an abusive, disruptive or harassing manner. This also includes schools that do not provide adequate supervision at home or away contests to control their spectators.

### B. Responsibility for reporting:

1. Coaches must report all incidents to their respective athletic directors, even if only one player/team was cited for misconduct.
2. Athletic Directors must file reports with the Office of the Executive Director within 24 hours of any disqualification, ejection or incident of unsportsmanlike behavior.
3. Officials must file reports with the Office of the Executive Director within 24 hours of any disqualification, ejection or incident of unsportsmanlike behavior.

### C. Reporting Procedure:

1. All unsportsmanlike incidents are to be reported by the coach (or by both coaches) to their respective athletic directors immediately following the contest.
2. The Athletic Directors of both schools involved are to file reports with the office of the Executive Director as soon as possible, but no later than the morning following the contest/incident (or the next school day).
3. The Officials assigned to the contest are to file a report with the Office of the Executive Director as soon as possible, but no later than the morning following the contest/incident (or the next school day).
4. The Office of the Executive Director will forward copies of all reports to the Sportsmanship Committee Chairperson, Sport Coordinator, and the appropriate VP of Male/Female Sports.

D. Committee Actions:

1. All member schools including individuals representing member schools who are involved in unsportsmanlike conduct are subject to consequences deemed appropriate by the Sportsmanship Committee.
  - a. The Sportsmanship Committee may recommend action in instances of unsportsmanlike conduct and is authorized to recommend consequences which may include, but are not limited to: Censure, Reprimand, Suspension, Loss of Eligibility, or any other actions that are deemed appropriate by the Sportsmanship Committee.
  - b. All recommendations of the Sportsmanship Committee will be filed with the Office of the Executive Director and forwarded to the Athletic Director(s) of the school(s) involved.
  - c. All actions of the Sportsmanship Committee are subject to review by the respective Athletic Director(s). Schools may impose additional consequences.
  - d. Copies of all reports of the Sportsmanship Committee shall be kept on file with the Sportsmanship Chairperson, the Executive Director and the Sports Coordinator.

E. Penalties:

1. Player Expulsion:

Any player who commits a serious violation of game rules or takes part in flagrant misconduct during play shall be subject to ejection from the contest and disciplinary action. Ejection from a contest results in mandatory two (2) game suspension from the next regularly scheduled contests, including post-season play. Disqualifications from one season will carry over to the player's next season of participation. Any player suspended from participation may not be on site or involved in any capacity (spectator, timekeeper, scorekeeper, etc.) on the day of suspension. Failure to comply will result in additional sanctions being levied against the individual, coach and/or team.

2. Second Occurrence of Misconduct:

In the same sport – (Section VIII Athletics requires a full season suspension for the 2nd ejection). Any person (coach, player, spectator, school official, etc.) who is ejected from a second contest in the same sport for unsportsmanlike conduct shall require the Sportsmanship Committee to

review the matter. This may lead to more severe disciplinary action including suspension for the remainder of the season. Such disciplinary action could carry over into subsequent sports seasons. Additional consequences may also be recommended by the Sportsmanship Committee.

### 3. Intentional Physical Contact by a Player:

Any member of the squad who strikes, shoves, kicks or makes other physical contact with the intent to annoy, harass or intimidate an official, another player, a spectator, coach, school district employee or supervisor, etc. shall be expelled from the game immediately and banned from further participation in all sports for a period of time to be determined by the Section not to exceed one year from the date of the offense. NOTE: Members of the squad include players, managers, score keepers, timers, and statisticians. The incident must be reported to the Office of the Executive Director who will in turn forward to the Sportsmanship Committee and respective Sports Coordinator. Consequences may include but are not limited to: Censure, Reprimand, Suspension, Loss of Eligibility, or another action that is deemed appropriate by the committee.

### 4. Team Members/Non Participant/Pre-or Post-Game Misconduct:

Any act of unsportsmanlike/flagrant misconduct by either a team member, non-participant before or after (pre and post-game) will be excluded from play in and/or subject to removal from the site of the contest. Any player, coach or spectator who commits a serious violation of the sportsmanship rules or takes part in flagrant misconduct as a non-participant after the contest has concluded (post-game) will be suspended from participation in or attendance at the next regularly scheduled contest including the post-season.

### 5. Spectators:

Any spectator who acts in a disruptive, abusive or unsportsmanlike manner may cause the game to be suspended or the spectator removed from the site. A letter from the Sportsmanship Committee may be sent to the appropriate Athletic Director(s), Building Principal(s) and Superintendent(s). Continued incidents of disruptive behavior may result in additional disciplinary action by the Sportsmanship Committee. This will result in a mandatory (3) three game suspension from the next scheduled contests.

### 6. Coaches:

Any coach excluded by a certified official from an interschool competition for unsportsmanlike conduct, including taunting, is ineligible to coach any interschool competition in that sport until after the next previously scheduled contest at the same level (e.g. junior varsity, varsity, etc.) has been completed. In individual sports a multi-day contest is considered to be a contest. Disqualification from one season carries over to the next season of participation. The coach may not be present at the game site nor communicate in any manner during the contest with any person present at the site.

NOTE: "Not being physically present at the site" means a disqualified coach is not to be present in the locker room, on the sidelines, in the stands or site

area before, during or after the game/meet. Any coach that does not serve the penalty for violating the Sportsmanship Standard will be ineligible to participate in the next two regularly scheduled contests. If the coach continues to not serve the penalty, the matter will be referred to the Section for further action. If the coach is involved in the NYSPHSAA play-offs, the matter will be referred to the Executive Director of the NYSPHSAA.

7. Intentional Physical Contact:

A coach who strikes, shoves, kick or makes other physical contact with the intent to annoy, harass or intimidate another person (e.g. official, another coach, player, fan) shall be expelled immediately and banned from further participation or coaching in all sports for a period of time to be determined by the section not to exceed one year from the date of the offense.

8. Officials:

An official who demonstrates inappropriate or unsportsmanlike conduct will be reported to the Sportsmanship Committee. The Sportsmanship Committee may recommend disciplinary action to be taken against the official by the official's organization.

9. Taunting:

Taunting includes, but is not limited to, any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean other players, coaches, or game officials. Included in this is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates, or threatens based on gender, ethnic origin or background and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family special needs, or personal matters. Examples of taunting that would lead to ejection include, but are not limited to, physical and verbal intimidation outside the spirit of the game ("trash talking"), reference to sexual orientation, "in-the-face confrontation" by one player to another, standing over, straddling a tackled or fallen player, etc.

10. Bench Clearing:

If an altercation occurs during a contest and members of either team leave their respective bench or sideline area or playing positions, and go onto the playing field/court participation area, they will be immediately ejected from the contest for unsportsmanlike behavior. This will result in a mandatory two (2) game suspension from the next scheduled contests.

F. Due Process:

Students, coaches and schools have the right to be heard by the Sportsmanship Committee. However, appeals will only be held in regard to a misapplication of the sport rules and/or an ejection of a misidentified player. This right must be claimed within 24 hours of the incident occurring and must be made to the Office of the Executive Director of Section VIII. All actions of the Sportsmanship Committee may be appealed by a member school. Any such appeal will be heard by the Section VIII Athletic Council. An appeal to the Sportsmanship Committee will result in a \$250.00 check to be made out to Section VIII Athletics. If the school appeals beyond that committee to the Athletic Council, a check for

\$500.00 is to be made out to Section VIII Athletics. If said school wins their appeal with the Athletic Council, they will be refunded \$250.00.

### **Addition to the Section 8 Sportsmanship Policy**

In the event a racial, ethnic, or gender slur is heard by an Administrator, Coach, Official, or Supervisor at any Section VIII competition the event will be stopped. Every effort must be made to identify the person(s) responsible for the slur. The person(s) must be immediately removed from the contest. In the event the person (s) responsible for the slur cannot be identified the responsible staff are expected to remove as many spectators as deemed necessary to ensure that the person(s) has/have been removed from the event. The ejection(s) and name(s) of the ejected must be reported to Section VIII and include carryover suspension from attendance at the next competition.