

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
SPORTSMANSHIP & CONDUCT POLICY (Adopted– May 17, 2016; Updated December 12, 2022)

1. Preface

This Sportsmanship & Conduct Policy applies to the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) and all intercollegiate athletics events (“Events”) of its Member Institutions. PSAC Member Institutions value the principles of sportsmanship and the ideal of pursuing victory with honor in intercollegiate athletics. The Conference believes that athletics should be conducted in a way that reflects positively on the individual participants and institutions. The standards of sportsmanship below establish the basic expectations of the Conference, provide guidance to Member Institutions to implement the standards and provide the PSAC Commissioner with broad authority to enforce the standards consistently with these principles.

2. Principles of Sportsmanship

The essential elements of sportsmanship and ethics in athletics are embodied in the concept of character building and seven core principles: respect, responsibility, fairness, honesty, integrity, caring and civility. The highest potential of athletics is achieved when competition reflects these seven principles.

3. General Statements of Responsibility

All those associated with Conference Events, including University personnel as well as fans have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the principles of sportsmanship. The Conference adopts the following minimum standards of responsibility:

a. Institutional Responsibility. Member Institutions have the responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure that all University employees, students, and others in attendance at Events conduct themselves in a professional manner and exhibit good sportsmanship towards Event officials, opposing institutions and their employees, students (including student-athletes) and fans.

b. Athletics Department Responsibility. Each Member Institution’s Director of Athletics shall have the responsibility to effectively communicate to all athletics department staff, coaches and student-athletes the basic principles of sportsmanship and standards for conduct under this policy. It must be made clear that concerns about Conference Events, such as officiating, and about other Member Institutions must be addressed within the Conference’s governance structure.

c. Event Management Responsibility. Each Member Institution’s Director of Athletics is encouraged to take reasonable steps to create an environment that is fair and safe for visiting teams and officials at Events under this Policy. The Director of Athletics, or his/her designee, should greet the visiting coach after his/her arrival at the event facility to address any issues of concern and identify the Event manager who can respond to concerns during the Event and the location of this individual during the Event. Each institution must arrange its seating Events so as to emphasize sportsmanship and minimize harassment of the visiting teams. Member Institutions shall also have a protocol that seeks to ensure the protection of all participants and related personnel, including safely escorting teams, coaches, officials and administrative staffs off the playing surface, particularly in the event of a post-Event celebration (e.g., court or field storming). Member Institutions should have protocols addressing the ingress and egress of officials at Event venues.

d. Coach Responsibility. Coaches are expected to exhibit professional behavior at all times. Coaches are encouraged and expected to model proper behavior for their student-athletes and staff members to ensure they are demonstrating respect for their opponents, the Event officials and the Event itself. Coaches shall remain in their designated areas during an Event and refrain from behavior that would incite those present toward negative conduct.

e. Conference Responsibility. The Commissioner shall have responsibility to promote and enforce these principles and standards of conduct under this Policy in connection with all Events involving a Member Institution, including competition against non-Conference institutions. The Commissioner shall have broad authority to interpret the standards, review disciplinary action taken by Member Institutions and further penalize those deemed to have violated the standards

4. Standards of Conduct

- a. A Member Institution's student-athletes, coaches and staff shall conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in conjunction with all Events. They shall conduct themselves and represent their institutions in a manner that exhibits the principles of sportsmanship. They shall exhibit respect and courtesy towards all participants and comment about other institutions, coaches and student-athletes only in a professional manner.
- b. Behavior that is not considered professional, sportsmanlike or appropriate in connection with Events includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (i). Publicly criticizing or making derogatory statements (verbal, written or through all forms of social media) of an official, PSAC personnel or its policies, another member institution or any of its personnel, especially student-athletes by any member of the athletic department or associated representative of the Member Institution. This includes comments in regards to their conduct, character, competence, integrity, or appearance. Complaints about officials should be made to the respective coordinator of officials or commissioner. Complaints about conference office personnel should be made to the Chair of the Board of Directors.
 - (ii). Striking, attempting to strike or otherwise physically abusing an official, coach, staff member, student-athlete, cheerleader, mascot or other person in attendance at an Event. This includes throwing objects at an individual or onto the playing surface. Behavior need not reach criminal conduct to be prohibited.
 - (iii). Acting dangerously to others, unsafe behavior, inciting participants or spectators to violent or abusive action, obscene gestures, profanity or provocative language or abusive action toward an official, student-athlete, coach, spectator or bench or score-table personnel.
 - (iv). Defacing, destruction or theft of property associated with an Event or of a Member Institution, including property of the opposing team or a staff member or Event official.
 - (v). Harassment by spectators directed at opposing players, fans, officials, or coaches. Harassment includes disrespectful cheers or jeers focusing on an individual's race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law or physical characteristics, or any "cheer" that is vulgar or obscene.
 - (vi). Displaying signs or banners within the Event venue that contain offensive language, pictures, particular displays that may be vulgar, or obscene messages that incites others to engage in unsportsman-like behavior.
 - (vii). Cheating by coaches, staff, student-athletes or officials in connection with any Event. This includes the use of drugs or unauthorized substances, in addition to actions that violate PSAC or NCAA policies.
 - (viii). Any violation of local law, state or federal law or policies of the hosting institution or Event venue or generally recognized standards of good conduct

5. Member Institution Obligations

- a. Ensure that an administrative representative of the host institution is present (or readily accessible) at all PSAC Events and that he/she is charged with the enforcement of the Conference's Code of Conduct under this Policy. The representative will identify himself/herself to the visiting coach or administrator prior to the start of the Event.
- b. Provide for adequate security, police and other Event management measures to protect the safety of student-athletes, coaches and officials, and to maintain adequate crowd control during home athletic events.
- c. Announce a statement promoting good sportsmanship before each home Event where a public address system is utilized and/or print the announcement in the Event program. Public address

announcers will be directed to announce the Event in an appropriate manner and assist event management with the promotion of good sportsmanship behavior throughout the game.

d. Reserve or protect the seating or spectator areas immediately behind the visiting team bench for fans of the visiting team.

e. Ensure that members of the institution's band, cheerleading squad, mascot and other such spirit groups in attendance at Events adhere to the Conference's Code of Conduct. The home team's band is to be seated in areas on the home team's side or half of the Event venue. The cheerleaders and mascot must remain in the area designated for their team's spectators, and on the same side or half of the playing surface of their respective team bench, unless pre-approved by the Conference and host institution.

f. Report incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior or unethical conduct by student-athletes, coaches or institutional representatives to the institution's Director of Athletics within 48 hours of the incident.

g. Provide a written report of incidents that are a direct violation of the PSAC Standards defined above to the Commissioner within 48 hours of the incident. The report will include the identities of the individual(s) involved and the Director of Athletics' recommendation for a penalty and/or remedial action. The Commissioner is authorized to approve or alter the recommended penalty and/or remedial action.

h. Report in writing the removal or ejection of a student-athlete or institutional personnel from an Event by a game official to the Commissioner within 24 hours following the Event. The Director of Athletics will ensure that any NCAA-related penalties related to the specific sport are properly administered including game-related suspensions.

(i). Suspended Coaches and Student-Athletes will follow NCAA-related penalties for their specific sport regarding pre-, post- and in-game presence and participation.

(ii). Suspended Institutional personnel (those that are not coaches and student-athletes) may not be in attendance at the venue of the Event.

(iii). If warranted, the Commissioner may impose additional penalties for repeated suspensions by an individual within the same sporting season.

(iv). Ejections or Suspensions initiated by game officials may not be appealed other than what would be permissible under respective NCAA-related sports rules.

6. Recruiting

a. Institutional staff members shall maintain the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in their recruitment of prospective student-athletes.

7. Powers of the Conference Commissioner

It shall be the responsibility of the Commissioner to promote and to enforce these principles and standards of sportsmanship and conduct in connection with all Conference Events involving a Member Institution, including competition against non-Conference opponents. The Commissioner shall have broad authority to interpret the standards, review disciplinary action taken by Member Institutions and further penalize those deemed to have violated the standards.

8. Penalties

a. Specifically and without limitation, the Commissioner has the authority to take any one or more of the following actions:

(i) publicly or privately reprimand any participant;

(ii) forfeit any Events or competitions;

(iii) suspend or expel any person from attendance or participation in one or more Events; or

(iv) pay a fine to the Conference (not to exceed \$1,000) for each occurrence of unsportsmanlike or

- inappropriate conduct (fines will be directed to an institution and not individuals).
- b. NCAA in-game sports rules and policies will be enforced, adhered to and followed.
- c. Repeat violations by an individual, team or institution may be subjected to increasingly greater penalties.
- d. For incidents of fighting or flagrant misconduct, the Conference may impose more stringent penalties than prescribed by NCAA-related sports rules. Flagrant misconduct shall include, but not be limited to, striking or attempting to strike (e.g., kicking, hitting, throwing objects) an official, coach, player or spectator.

9. Procedure for Adjudicating a Violation of these Policies

- a. Incidents that may involve violations of these standards must be immediately reported to the Commissioner and the President and the Director of Athletics of the any involved Member Institution.
- b. The Director of Athletics must immediately review the incident to determine whether these standards have been violated.
- c. As soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours or prior to the next Event, the Director of Athletics must advise the Commissioner in writing of the finding and specific disciplinary action, if any, imposed by the institution. A copy must be provided to the Member Institution's President and Faculty Athletics Representative.
- d. The Commissioner must promptly review the incident and action taken, and make a determination regarding whether additional penalties should be imposed. The Commissioner will notify the institution of any directive with additional penalties accordingly.
- e. Penalties must be imposed prior to the next Event.
- f. Subject to the right of appeal established in Section 10 below, each Member Institution must comply with all written directives issued by the Commissioner.
- g. The Commissioner and Director of Athletics may designate another member of their respective staffs to act on their behalf, and the Commissioner shall have the authority to waive the timing requirements set forth above.

10. Right of Appeal of Conference Actions

(Conference actions are those penalties taken by the Commissioner under Section 8 above)

- a. Any Member Institution or individual disciplined under this policy shall have the right to appeal any directive of the Commissioner to the Infractions Committee of the Advisory Council. The Infractions Committee will also include the Chair of the Board of Directors, or his/her designee from the Presidents Executive Committee. The Infractions Committee consists of one each Vice President, Faculty Athletics Representative, Athletics Administrator, Coach, Student-Athlete Advisory Council representative and either a sports information director or certified athletic trainer. The presidential representative will only serve on the Infractions Committee during an appeal of this policy.
- b. To properly appeal a directive, the Member Institution or individual must submit a written statement to the Conference office within two (2) business days of receipt of the directive. The appeal should include the nature of the institution's or individual's objections to the proposed directive, supporting information and the actions, if any, that the institution or individual contends should have been taken or required by the Commissioner in the directive at issue.
- c. The Commissioner shall promptly notify the Infractions Committee and provide them with the appeal materials, a summary of the directive and supporting information. A conference call with the appealing institution or individual will be scheduled with the Infractions Committee. Appeals may be submitted via email or facsimile and must be submitted to the attention of the Commissioner.
- d. Once an appeal is received by the Commissioner, the directive will be stayed until the appeal is heard and decided upon by the Infractions Committee.
- e. The Infractions Committee may affirm, modify or set aside the directive with or without affording the

appealing institution or individual a formal or informal hearing. All decisions by the Infractions Committee shall be final.

f. If the Infractions Committee finds that the appeal was made without basis, and determines that it was done in an effort to gain competitive or other advantage, it shall refer the matter to the Commissioner for additional action or imposition of penalties.

g. An Infractions Committee member from the Member Institution making the appeal shall be recused from hearing the appeal.