



SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

Preface

The Appalachian Athletic Conference, in partnership with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, fully supports the Champions of Character program which is designed to instill an understanding of character values in sport and provide practical tools for student-athletes, coaches and parents to use in modeling exemplary character traits.

Coaches, parents, administrators and community partners all have a role in developing students of character. The NAIA Champions of Character program brings them training, guidelines and behavior models to create positive environments that promote personal growth and fun sport activity.

The Conference was founded by institutions with a like mission and a commitment to sportsmanlike conduct, ethical behavior and collegiality. Therefore we affirm our commitment to establishing and maintaining sportsmanlike environments for institutional competitions. We believe that the role of education through sports serves to teach youth and communities sportsmanship and respect for opponents. Thus, the Conference seeks to promote a competitive environment of hospitality.

The goal of the Conference is that through an emphasis on character, we teach the values of respect, responsibility, fairness, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship. In an effort to achieve this goal, the Appalachian Athletic Conference has developed this statement that outlines the expectations of the various groups and individuals associated with these intercollegiate athletic programs.

Athletic Administrators

It is incumbent upon institutional athletic administrators to create an environment of respect and hospitality for visiting teams. An attitude must be developed whereby all institutions treat guests as they wish to be treated when visiting other campuses.

The Director of Athletics or his/her designee at the host institution should welcome the opposing coach at the event, provide an opportunity for the coach to address any concerns, indicate the location of game management personnel, and identify any security personnel present for the contest. The Director of Athletics should confer with security to ensure that the visiting team is protected from abuse from the home crowd and that personnel are placed in close proximity to the visiting team's bench. Seating at spectator events must be arranged to emphasize sportsmanship and prevent the harassment of the visiting team and its fans.

The Director of Athletics should ensure that those who are employed by the institution treat opponents with fairness and respect (e.g., public address announcers must be required to announce the contest in an even-handed manner). The institution's chief executive officer and Director of Athletics should periodically review the standards of acceptable conduct, as set forth in this document, with staff members, coaches, student-athletes, and spirit groups (cheerleaders and bands).

To assist the Director of Athletics or his/her designees as home game administrators, the Conference has developed an **Event Management Policies and Procedures** document (*attached*). The intent is to present a consistent approach to event management and spectator conduct across the Conference. The document details the expectations for procedures in hosting athletic events and shall serve as a guide for all our institutions.

Coaches

Coaches have the greatest influence upon the athletes in their programs and have the responsibility to ensure that high principles of sportsmanship are taught and followed. The Appalachian Athletic Conference benefits from coaches who risk losing a contest by removing student-athletes who have demonstrated disrespect for opponents. This disciplinary measure educates individuals about the importance of sportsmanship over participation and winning. This attitude should be adopted by all AAC coaches. Administrators and coaches shall pay special attention to athletes' behavior and continually emphasize the need for sportsmanship and respect. Such education is needed to counteract the constant messages received by young people from many professional athletes and others who demonstrate a lack of respect for opponents. This Conference is committed to teaching appropriate messages concerning sportsmanship.

Coaches also have the ability to influence the behavior of fans. When addressing the media, boosters clubs, constituents, fans, etc., Conference coaches must take every opportunity to encourage support at athletic contests, but not at the expense of abusing the visiting team. It should be stressed that the participants in these contests are young people who do not deserve to be mistreated by a hostile crowd.

A coach's personal approach determines acceptable behavior for student-athletes. Gamesmanship, profanity, arguing and disrespectful displays to officials, opponents and spectators shall not be a part of the modeling behavior of our AAC coaches. Coaches must "buy in" completely and demonstrate a serious attitude towards good sportsmanship by diligently and consistently educating their team and applying consistent consequences for student/athletes when standards are not met.

The following are the expectations of coaches relating to sportsmanship:

1. Be an advocate of education, sportsmanship, honor and good character.
2. Be cognizant of your verbal and non-verbal communication. Profanity is never appropriate!
3. Be a worthy role model. Be mindful of the great influence you have as a teacher/coach.
4. Be a positive ambassador for your sport and your institution.
5. Annually, review and sign the NAIA Coaches' Code.

6. Prior to each season, review the expected behavior standards with your team and have each student-athlete sign the Champions of Character pledge agreeing to uphold the highest standards of good sportsmanship.
7. Assign team captains to speak periodically to the team about an aspect of good sportsmanship or character values.
8. Each head coach shall include in his/her team policy manual specific and detailed information regarding expected good sportsmanship behavior for their student-athletes. This shall include pre-game, game and post game expectations (*see attachment*).
9. During the hiring interview process for new staff, Athletic Directors shall place paramount importance upon sportsmanship issues with each candidate. This issue should also be discussed in reference checks.
10. Coaches have the ability to influence fan behavior. The coach shall take every opportunity when addressing media, boosters or other public forums to reinforce and promote good sportsmanship.
11. Public criticism or “off the record” criticism to players, media or others of officials or opponents by coaches will not be tolerated.
12. A coach shall not address or allow anyone on the bench or field of play to address uncomplimentary remarks or gestures to the officials, opponents or spectators at any time before, during or after competition.

Student-Athletes

Respect for the game in which the student-athlete competes also demands respect for the opponent. Student-athletes at Conference institutions are expected to treat opponents in a sportsmanlike manner. There can be no tolerance for taunting and baiting of opponents.

Student-athletes are perhaps the most visible representatives of their institutions. Their behavior is observed and emulated by many. Conference student-athletes must honor the responsibilities that accompany the privilege of representing their schools by acting with dignity and class both in and out of competition.

Athletic competition in the AAC should be fun and competitive and should also be a significant part of a sound educational program embodying high standards of ethics and sportsmanship while developing good character and other important life skills. AAC student-athletes are expected to adhere to the following standards:

1. Be respectful of coaches, teammates, opponents and officials.
2. Be gracious in victory and accept defeat with dignity.
3. Avoid disrespectful or offensive conduct of any sort including profanity, obscene gestures, sexual remarks, trash-talking or taunting, boastful celebrations or other actions that demean individuals or the sport.
4. Be a worthy role model.
5. Exhibit self-control. Channel anger and/or frustration into a positive mode.
6. Choose the right behavior.
7. Remain in the bench area during games unless leaving to enter the game through an official substitution.
8. Follow the Spectator Code of Conduct when a fan at an athletic event.

9. Annually, review and sign the NAIA Champions of Character Student-Athlete Pledge.

Spirit Groups

Like student-athletes, these groups are visible representatives of their institution. As such, high expectations are placed upon them for appropriate behavior. Cheerleaders, bands, and other spirit groups are admitted to contests at the pleasure of these institutions to support teams and assist in creating a festive atmosphere, not to confront or disrupt the opponents. Such behavior will not be tolerated. The focus of these groups must be toward encouragement of their team and respect for the opposing team.

Officials

The officials are expected to officiate contests and address misconduct in strict accordance with the rules of their sport. They should recognize that the Conference encourages and promotes good sportsmanship.

Commissioner

The Commissioner is expected to enforce the sportsmanship rules of the game and the Conference. The Commissioner is authorized to assess penalties for improper behavior that is not detected or properly addressed during the contest. Institutions and their personnel shall fully cooperate with the Commissioner's effort to investigate possible improprieties.

In the unfortunate event that an altercation occurs during a contest, all individuals who are on the bench are expected to remain there. It is incumbent upon the head coach to ensure that this is enforced. The Commissioner shall investigate any incident where players leave the bench. The report of such an investigation will be shared with the Director of Athletics at the institution(s) involved. Appropriate consequences shall be negotiated between the Commissioner and Director of Athletics.

The Commissioner's responsibilities are as follows:

1. Enforce the sportsmanship conduct rules of the game and Conference.
2. Assess penalties for improper behavior not detected or properly addressed during a contest.
3. Investigate incidents where players leave the bench and assess penalties as necessary.
4. Determine appropriate consequences for incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior.
5. Execute any sportsmanship initiative of the Conference.
6. Educate new coaches on the Conference sportsmanship expectations, as requested.
7. Stress sportsmanship across the Conference.

Fans

The Conference believes that the establishment of the principles outlined in this document will create a wholesome atmosphere that will attract more fans to athletic events. The fans must be reminded by the public address announcer of the expectation of sportsmanship and respect for

opponents. Fans should be encouraged to applaud the effort by both institutions, even while supporting their own. The NAIA Champions of Character Public Address announcement is to be read prior to all contests where a microphone is available and is to be printed in all game programs. Administrators are responsible for enforcing the AAC's **Spectator Code of Conduct**:

1. Cheer loudly and proudly for your team, *not* against the visitors
2. No profanity, vulgarity, racist or sexist remarks
3. No personal remarks towards players, coaches or officials
4. Show that you know the game
5. Stay away from the playing area and team bench areas
6. Zero tolerance for alcohol or drug use at all contests

Administrators are encouraged to prominently display the Spectator Code of Conduct where it is visible to fans entering the arena or field of play.

Sanctions: Unsporting Behavior

1. Any unsporting behavior by a coach in any intercollegiate contest witnessed by an athletic administrator, opposing head coach, or other person shall be reported to that institution's Athletics Director within 24 hours of the incident.
2. Once reported to the Athletics Director, the following actions will occur:
 - a. The Athletics Director shall immediately meet with the coach to review the allegation.
 - b. If a violation of sportsmanship behavior is confirmed, the Athletics Director shall report the incident, including ejections from a contest, to the Commissioner within five days of the incident.
 - c. The Commissioner, through the AD, may apply the following sanctions.
 - 1) First Offense - a written warning issued by the Conference to the offending coach – copied to the head coach, where applicable, Athletics Director and the chief executive officer.
 - 2) Second Offense – a one game suspension, or 10 hours of community service, or a personal \$100 fine, depending upon the severity of the offense – copied to the head coach, where applicable, Athletics Director and the chief executive officer.
 - 3) Third Offense – a minimum suspension of multiple contests at the discretion of the Commissioner, or a personal fine not to exceed \$500 -- copied to the head coach, where applicable, Athletics Director and the chief executive officer.
3. The community service must begin within one week of awarding the sanction. Service to be determined by the Athletics Director in consultation with the Commissioner.
4. If a violation is deemed *major* on the first offense, as determined by the Commissioner or institutional Athletics Director, the Executive Committee of the Conference shall be notified and immediate suspension, short or long term, and a fine to the coach may be administered.

Ejection from Games (NAIA Bylaws Article VI, Section B, Item 7)

1. It is the responsibility of the offending institution and the official to provide written notification to the Commissioner of any incidents of misconduct during a contest, including ejections from a contest, within five days of the incident.

2. Any coach or student-athlete ejected on one or more occasions in competition shall be subject automatically to the following penalties:
 - a. Suspension for the next contest after the coach or student-athlete is ejected for the first time (in one sport) in a single season. A coach or student-athlete ejected for fighting for the first time, as reported by the game official, shall be automatically suspended for one additional contest.
 - b. Suspension for the next two contests if a coach or student-athlete accumulates two ejections (in one sport) in a single season. This includes post-season play and may carry over to the following year depending on when the ejection occurs. A coach or student-athlete ejected for fighting, as reported by the game official, shall be automatically suspended for one additional contest.
 - c. Ineligibility for the remainder of all regular-season and post-season participation if a coach or student-athlete accumulates three ejections (in one sport) in a single season. Should the third ejection occur in either of the last two contests of the year, the coach or returning student-athlete will be suspended for the first two contest of the following year.
 - d. Institutions and the Conference reserve the right to apply additional penalties if deemed appropriate.

Appeals Process

1. Ejections are not subject to appeal. Suspensions may be appealed for purposes of counting against accumulated ejections in a single season.
2. Decisions of the Commissioner may be appealed by the coach to the NAIA Conduct and Ethics Committee with a recommendation from the AAC Conduct in Competition Oversight Committee.
3. The Commissioner must be notified in writing of the intent to appeal within 48 hours of the receipt of the decision notice.
4. The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Commissioner within five business days.
5. The appeal must be signed by the coach, Athletics Director and chief executive officer of the institution.

Concluding Statement

Good sportsmanship must be an integral part of every sport sponsored under the aegis of a college or university because it is part of the educational process. The ethical environment of an institution of higher learning must assert and reflect the primacy of human dignity, must encourage growth and achievement, and must insist on respect in all interpersonal relations. The Conference believes that the effort to meet the expectations outlined in this document will enhance athletic events by creating a healthy environment for competition.

Appalachian Athletic Conference **Protocol for Conference Contests**

Pre-Game

- NAIA Champions of Character Announcement made by PA Announcer
- PA Announcement that profanity is unacceptable in all NAIA competition must be made right before the invocation, national anthem, or player introduction
- Pregame prayer/invocation, if desired and at the discretion of the home team
- Set a specific time for participants to get to assigned areas for the National Anthem
Example: In basketball, the horn goes off five minutes before game time for players to go to their benches for the anthem and line-ups to be announced
- Teams should come together and shake hands at mid-court, mid-field, etc. after the Anthem
- Starting line-ups are introduced

Game

- Help an opposing player up when they fall.
- No “trash talking” (officials should keep this in check)
- No profanity; PA announcement must be made to give a warning for profanity when necessary
- No arguing with officials
- Personal attacks regarding physical characteristics of a player, coach or official are unacceptable and must be addressed by the crowd control manager

Post Game

- Teams line-up and shake hands at the end of the game
- No team huddles at mid-court after the game except for prayer circle, if desired and at the discretion of the home team
- No excessive celebrations in the locker room.

Appalachian Athletic Conference
Event Management Policies and Procedures

1. All athletic contests will be staffed by an on-site supervisor who must be an employee of the institution with immediate access to a senior member of the athletics administration or the authority to act in such capacity. The responsibilities of the supervisor are as follows:
 - a. Introduce themselves to the officials and visiting coaches as the on-site supervisor.
 - b. Greet the visiting team and officials and show them to their locker rooms.
 - c. Wearing a shirt or jacket that easily identifies them as such is recommended.
 - d. Notify officials, visiting coaches and security personnel of their location during the contest should problems arise.
 - e. Assure safe passage of officials and the visiting team before, during and after the contest.
 - f. Uphold all Conference rules of conduct and sportsmanship.
 - g. Report any problems to the respective athletic director (host or visiting).
 - h. Know institutional procedures for contacting emergency personnel or campus security.
2. The host institution must designate a site supervisor, separate from the coaching staff of the home team, for the following AAC sponsored contests: soccer (m/w), volleyball, basketball (m/w), baseball and softball.
3. The head coach of the host team may serve as the site supervisor for the following events: tennis (m/w), golf and cross country (m/w).
4. An institution's athletic schedule and staff limitations may require a site supervisor to cover multiple events at one time. When this occurs the site supervisor must make sure he/she can be reached via cell phone or two-way radio when moving from site to site.
5. The coach must not secure, assign or pay officials.
6. The host institution must assign a person who is solely responsible for crowd control at contests in the sports of basketball and soccer.
7. Institutional response to violations of fan sportsmanship can range from warning to ejection from the competition site to banishment from attendance at future events:
 - a. 1st offense – Warning
 - b. 2nd offense – Move fan to another place in the arena
 - c. 3rd offense – Removal or banishment from the game.
8. Failure to assert appropriate institutional control, either for a single, serious incident or a pattern of lesser incidents, can be grounds for disciplinary action by the AAC Executive Committee, in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws, Article XVI Violations of Sportsmanlike Conduct or Ethical Behavior.
9. The host institution shall strive to provide requisite private dressing facilities for visiting teams.
10. It is the host institution's responsibility to schedule and train ample security staff for its events.
11. The host institution must designate seating areas that do not place fans behind an opponent's bench area. Support groups (bands, cheerleaders, etc.) must be placed as far away from the opponent's bench as possible.
12. Rivalry games should be identified. The home and visiting team Athletics Directors are encouraged to confer beforehand and plan accordingly if a security issue is anticipated. In the case of rivalry games, an administrator from the visiting institution should be on site at any major contest and identify him or herself to the host game administrator.

13. In the case of rivalry games, the host and visiting team administrator should review current institutional policies (signage, seating locations, pass-outs, security arrangements, etc), and discuss any potential problems and preparations for preventative measures (to include talking with visiting students at the time of arrival at the arena and seating areas, if necessary).
14. In the case of unsporting conduct on the part of visiting spectators, the host and visiting team administrators should meet to discuss any actions deemed appropriate by the host institution.
15. In the event any security related action is taken by the host institution relating to visiting students, the visiting institution administrator will be provided relevant materials so the matter can be reviewed and addressed as a student behavior issue upon returning to campus.
16. Facilities should be in “contest ready” 60 minutes prior to game time. Properly trained support staff (e.g., lines people, clock operators) should be on site a minimum of 15 minutes prior to game time.

Approved by the AAC Council of Presidents on June 8, 2009 and effective August 1, 2009.

Also, see the **Conduct in Competition Procedures for all NAIA Athletic Contests**