

## **BRIMFIELD RECREATION ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

This Zero Tolerance Policy is an effort to decrease the abuse of Officials (Referee, Assistant Referee, Linespeople, Umps, etc). We must all work together to deter and eliminate all levels of verbal abuse or negative criticism of Officials. We would not tolerate such behavior towards our children, we must not tolerate the same towards our Officials.

This Zero Tolerance Policy is not intended to label Officials as always right and spectators and/or coaches are always wrong. Just as players make mistakes during play and coaches may err in strategy or methodology, Officials will make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to officiate.

The current state of affairs regarding chronic shortages of qualified Officials will likely be with us for some time. We simply cannot afford to experience the high levels of attrition of Officials that have occurred in the past. One consequence of this shortage is the need from time to time for an Official to be assigned to officiate a higher level game than they otherwise might be comfortable officiating. In all cases, our Officials must receive only positive support from coaches and spectators to continue to grow as an official.

**This Zero Tolerance Policy applies to all coaches, players, parents, spectators, and other supporters and Officials participating in Brimfield Recreation Sports and Activities.**

The coach is responsible for ensuring all players and spectators associated with their team follow this Zero Tolerance Policy relating to communications with an Official. A coach, player or spectator may not express any disagreement or dissatisfaction whatsoever with the officiating to any Official, directly or indirectly. A coach, player or spectator may not, before, during, or after a game, discuss with, or voice within earshot of, an Official any critique of the Official's performance, other than to thank and positively compliment the Official. Any other

critiques may only be voiced or communicated through the appropriate channels (reaching out to the town coordinator for the particular sport or the recreation committee directly).

Abusive and obscene language, violent play or conduct, fighting, and other negative or derogatory behavior (such as sarcasm or taunting) directed to or about Officials or otherwise deemed detrimental to the game will not be tolerated. The ultimate responsibility for the actions of coaches, players and spectators resides with the member organization (Brimfield Recreation Committee).

It is the responsibility of the coaches to provide all Officials support and spectator control, and it is the responsibility of the recreation committee and the town coordinators to provide instructions to their coaches on how they are expected to carry this out. This policy applies before, during, and after the game and its immediate surrounding areas.

### **Parents, Guardians & Spectators**

No parent, guardian or spectator shall address the Officials at any time. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Parents, guardians and spectators shall not dispute calls during or after the game.
2. Parents, guardians and spectators shall not make remarks to the Official(s) or advise the Officials(s) to watch certain players or attend to rough play.
3. Parents, guardians and spectators shall never yell at the Official(s), including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation or feedback of any kind before, during or after the game.

The only allowable exceptions to the above are:

1. Parents, guardians and spectators may only respond to an Official who has initiated a conversation, until such time as the Official terminates the conversation.

2. Parents, guardians and spectators may point out an emergency or safety issues, such as a player apparently injured on the field or observed fighting.
3. Parents, guardians and spectators may compliment the Official after the game.

Additionally, parents, guardians and spectators shall not make derogatory comments to coaches, players, or spectators of either team.

### **Consequences (for Parents, Guardians & Spectators)**

In the opinion of the lead Official, depending on the severity of the offense, the lead Official may take any of the following actions:

1. Issue a verbal warning to the coach of the offending party's team and have the coach address the parent, guardian or spectator to cease their actions.
2. Stop the game and instruct the coaches to direct the parent, guardian or spectator to leave the field area.
3. Abandon the game if the parent, guardian or spectator does not leave the field area.

### **Players**

The conduct of the players and substitutes is governed by the Laws of the Game and the league or charter they are part of. The Laws themselves describe the consequences associated with violating the Laws of the Game. Additional consequences for players who engage in misconduct may be established by the recreation committee, but may in no case be less severe than the consequences established by the associated the charter or league they are associated with (ie: USA Softball, Little League, MASS Youth Soccer, etc)

### **Coaches, Assistant Coaches, & Bench Personnel**

It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and supporters in all games. Failure to do so undermines the Official's authority and the integrity of the game resulting in a hostile environment for players, the Official(s), coaches, assistant coaches, bench personnel, and spectators.

As role models for all of the participants and spectators, coaches participating in a Brimfield Recreation activity are expected to be supportive of, and to acknowledge the effort, good play, and sportsmanship on the part of ALL players from both teams. For example, coaches, assistant coaches and bench personnel are expected to show that although they are competing in a game, they have respect for their opponent, Officials, and spectators at all times. Brimfield Recreation will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures, or by ill-intentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the Officials or members of an opposing team. Coaches exhibiting hostile, negative, sarcastic, or otherwise ill-intended behavior toward Officials, opposing players, or opponent's coaches will be subject to sanction by the game Official. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the league or charter that the game is being played under, or by the recreation committee after a review of the game and feedback from present parties.

- Coaches shall not interact directly or indirectly with the coaches or players of the opposing team during the game in any manner that may be construed as negative, hostile, or sarcastic either by way of demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill-intentioned remarks.
- Coaches shall not offer dissent to any call made by the Officials at any time.
- Coaches are not to address the Officials during the game except to:
  - Respond to an Official who has initiated a conversation.
  - Point out emergency or safety issues.
  - Make substitutions.
  - Ask the Officials, "What is the type of restart ?"

- Ask for the time remaining.
- Coaches are allowed to ask an Official after a game or during the halftime interval, in a polite and constructive way, to explain a law or foul, but not judgment calls made.
  - Polite and friendly concern can be exchanged with the referee. If the polite tone of the conversation changes, the Official may abandon the exchange at any time and the coach will cease further discussion or interaction.
  - Absolutely no sarcasm, harassment, or intimidation is allowed.

**NOTE:** It is recommended that coaches or other team members do not engage in any conversation with the game Officials once the game has concluded.

### **Consequences for Coaches, Assistant Coaches, & Bench Personnel**

In the opinion of the lead Official, depending on the severity of the offense, the lead Official may take any of the following actions:

1. Issue a verbal warning to the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel.
2. Caution the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel.
3. Eject the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel. Once ejected, the individual will be required to leave the field area immediately.
4. Abandon the game, if the coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel do not leave the field area after having been instructed to do so.

Additional consequences associated with the ejection of a coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel may be assessed by the league/charter which sanctioned the game in accordance with their documented policy and/or with the recreation committee. These

consequences may be no less stringent than sanctions as may be imposed by the league/charter following their review, if conducted, of the incident.

All cases of alleged abuse or assault of a referee shall be reported to the league/charter of that sport and to the recreation committee within 48 hours of conclusion of the game. The recreation committee will then conduct a verification of the complaint and subsequent actions as required.

**Examples of Referee Abuse may include but are not limited to:**

- A. Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.
- B. Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee's physical property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.

**Examples of Referee Assault may include but are not limited to:**

- A. Referee Assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
- B. For purposes of this Policy, "intentional act" shall mean an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interests of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.
- C. Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee's uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.

### Revision History

Revisions must be reviewed and approved by the voting members of the recreation committee during a scheduled and posted meeting. Prior to voting, input and review from all recreation committee members and attendees will be requested, encouraged and welcomed. Date of approval will be noted in the table below along with the new revision number and a brief note on why it was revised. Policy will be reviewed no less than one (1) time per calendar year.

Revision	Note (reason for revision)	Approved	Chair Initials
1.0	Initial Release	4/26/2023	BF