MSCIAA MONTHLY MINUTE

November 2025

Athletic Directors' Best Practice Highlight

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is the responsibility of everyone including administrators, coaches, players, parents, and fans. Athletic Administrators should teach and model sportsmanship constantly to develop a school culture of sportsmanlike behavior that resonates with all stakeholders. Address behavior expectations with all parties before infractions occur, and reinforce program values consistently and repeatedly.

As we move through the current athletic season, it is important to reaffirm our collective commitment to the values that define educational athletics —sportsmanship, respect, and integrity. These principles are central to the mission of interscholastic sports and essential to fostering a positive and safe environment for all participants.

Unsportsmanlike behavior, including verbal altercations, ejections, and physical confrontations involving players, coaches, and spectators undermine the purpose of our programs and set a poor example for our student-athletes. We must all work together to model and enforce the highest standards of conduct at every level of competition. Those penalties include but are not limited to $250 fine (minimum), game suspensions, forfeits, and program probations.

Examples of Infractions:

Head coaches and assistant coaches ejected from contests with security escorts for derogatory language and unsportsmanlike behavior

Players leaving the bench area to join altercations happening on the floor

Players being ejected for unsportsmanlike behavior ex. fighting, derogatory language etc…

Spectators entering the court/field of play without prior approval from the game administrator

All staff, athletes, and fans understand that respect for officials, opponents, and one another is non-negotiable

Incidents of misconduct are addressed immediately and reported through the proper channels

Each school continues to promote positive sportsmanship as a central part of its athletic culture

Let us continue to provide our student-athletes with experiences that emphasize character, teamwork, and responsibility. Thank you for your leadership, attention to compliance, and commitment to maintaining the integrity of education-based athletics.

Rule Highlight

TSSAA Constitution and Bylaws Article III, Sections 7-9

Unsportsmanlike Conduct
The TSSAA and its member schools believe strongly that the major purpose of interscholastic athletics is to be a part of the total educational program. A major part of this purpose is to stress to coaches, players, officials, and fans the vital importance of sportsmanship. It is critical that all people in each of these categories understand the major role that they play and the role model that they

can be for others. Recognizing this principle, unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of any of these groups cannot be accepted. Penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct set forth in these Bylaws are minimum penalties. A member school is free to impose any additional penalties upon its student-athletes, coaches, or fans as it may see fit.

Section 7. Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Student Athletes

A. In contests in which registered TSSAA officials are involved, the officials will immediately notify the state office with a written report if players are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. In sports where registered TSSAA officials are not used, it will be the responsibility of the principal and/or coach of the player involved to report this incident to the state office.

B. On the ejection of the student-athlete, the school will be required to submit a report on the action of the player and any disciplinary action taken by the school. The minimum penalty will be as follows:

1. Football – 1 Game Suspension

2. Soccer – There is a 2 Game Suspension for serious foul play except for the following offenses which shall result in a 1 Game Suspension:

a. A player anywhere on the field (other than a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area) who deliberately handles a ball to prevent it from going into the goal.

b. A foul by a player against an opponent who is moving toward his/her offensive goal with an obvious opportunity to score.

c. A player who is disqualified from the contest for receiving his/her second yellow card.

3. All other sports – 2 Game Suspension

The student-athlete is also suspended from all levels of participation (varsity, junior varsity, freshman) the same number of contest(s) in the sport involved.

If the student-athlete is competing in their final year in the high school division or middle school division and cannot fulfill all of the disciplinary action due to the completion of the season, he/she will fulfill the action in the next sport in which they participate.

C. In addition to what is presently required when a player is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, a meeting shall be held with the player, coach, principal, and parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to the player's next competition. A Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form must be sent to the state office by the principal. Schools that have not submitted the required Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form by the end of the sports season in which the violation occurred shall be subject to a $100 fine.

D. If a player is ejected for a second time for unsportsmanlike conduct, a more severe punishment shall be imposed.

E. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on all the facts.

F. In all situations where ejections occur for unsportsmanlike conduct, the individual will be removed from the next contest(s) following the one in which the ejection occurred. If the individual plays in a subsequent contest after being ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct the minimum penalty shall be increased by an amount determined by the state office.

G. For substitutes leaving the bench area during an incident, the school will be fined a minimum of $250.00. The school will be required to submit a report and video if available. All schools are instructed to inform individuals taping to continue recording all incidents. In addition, other non-monetary disciplinary action may occur, including but not limited to probation and/or restrictive probation for the sport in which the incident occurred.

Section 8. Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Coaches

A. The school and coach will be required to submit a written report of the incident.

B. The school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contest(s) and pay a fine of $500.00 or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.

C. In addition to what is presently required when a coach is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, a meeting shall be held with the coach, principal, and superintendent, or his/her appointed representative prior to the coach returning to their coaching position. A Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form must be sent to the state office by the principal. Schools that have not submitted the required Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form by the end of the sports season in which the violation occurred shall be subject to a $100 fine.

D. On any subsequent ejection by the same coach, the school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contest(s) and pay a fine of $1,000.00 or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.

E. If the coach is ejected from the contest and an assistant coach or an employee of the school involved is not available to continue as coach, the event is terminated and forfeited to the opponent

F. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on all the facts.

G. In soccer, coaches who are ejected for receiving a red card, or a second (yellow card) followed by a red card, are subject to the penalties above.

Section 9. Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Fans

A. For fans coming onto the field or floor during an incident, the school will be fined a minimum of $250.00. In addition, other non-monetary disciplinary action may occur, including but not limited to probation and/or restrictive probation for the entire athletic program.

B. For fans ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct during a contest, the school will

be fined a minimum of $250.00. In addition, other non-monetary disciplinary action may occur, including but not limited to probation and/or restrictive probation for the entire athletic program.
Section 10. If a team is removed from competition, the school shall be fined $500.00, and the school shall face disciplinary action by TSSAA. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on the facts.

TSSAA Constitution and Bylaws

Video Resource Highlight

For more information about TSSAA sportsmanship rules and consequences for players, coaches, and fans watch the video linked below.

TSSAA Unsportsmanlike Conduct Video

Memphis Shelby County Interscholastic Athletic Association

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