



MDOC/WDOC SPORTSMANSHIP CARD

(in collaboration with the Youth Council)

Honoring the Game and Game Termination Procedures for Youth Lacrosse

Honoring the Game

The sport of lacrosse has recently seen a rise in the number of incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior occurring at both men's and women's youth lacrosse games. Unfortunately, this pattern of abuse mirrors the type of unacceptable behavior that other youth sports have experienced when parents mistakenly project that the athletic accomplishments of their adolescent children will be connected to their adult potential to compete for college scholarships and other achievement related accolades and honors. In response to these challenges and as a strategy of the US Lacrosse Campaign for Excellence, the US Lacrosse Youth Council and the men's and women's division officials councils have taken pro-active steps to help insure a positive culture for the sport at the youth lacrosse level.

The MDOC/WDOC Sportsmanship Card

The Sportsmanship Card is designed to be a preventative tool, not a punitive device. It is a warning given to an individual coach, athlete, fan, or group of fans. Most often, the Sportsmanship Card program, if administered in a non-threatening fashion, will correct the unacceptable, unsportsmanlike behavior that threatens to ruin the game. However, it is possible that the first instance of an unacceptable unsportsmanlike act could be the catalyst for game termination without issuing a Sportsmanship Card. The MDOC/WDOC Sportsmanship Card is also designed to help clarify the NFHS Boys' High School Rules and the Official Rules for Girls' & Women's Lacrosse.

For example, in the boys' game there are only two references in the NFHS rules (Rule 2, Section 3, Para 2 & 3 and Rule 2, Section 6, Article 2) to controlling teams and spectators. There are no references in these rules that cover the termination of a contest for reasons of unsportsmanlike behavior(s). In the girls' game, the references are located in the Official Rules for Girl's & Women's Lacrosse, Rule 18E and Rule 19B-2, which state that "team followers' misconduct may result in a penalty assessed to the coach." These carding procedures culminate in the suspension of the coach or team follower and ultimately could result in a forfeit. This may pose a challenge to novice officials who are not yet confident in their knowledge of the rules nor sufficiently experienced to command a difficult situation without a clear set of guidelines and procedures to follow. Interpreting these rules may be difficult for the novice official; experience on the field is critical for understanding the potential impact of abusive behavior on the game.

The Sportsmanship Card is a resource for men's and women's officials working youth games. When used in conjunction with NFHS Rules and the Official Rules for Girl's & Women's Lacrosse, the Sportsmanship Card procedures serve as an effective deterrent to abusive behaviors and create a set of constraints that should: 1) eradicate the "unsportsmanlike behavior" that is creeping into sport, 2) strengthen sportsmanship, 3) contribute to the retention of US Lacrosse officials, and 4) honor the game.

HONOR THE GAME OF LACROSSE!

Respect the ROOTS of Positive Play

Rules: We refuse to bend the rules to win

Opponents: A worthy opponent is a gift that brings out our best

Officials: Show respect even when we disagree

Teammates: Never do anything to embarrass our team

Self: We live up to our own standards even when others don't

"Honor the Game."

Please rethink your actions.

Your current behavior is contrary to the high level of sportsmanship expected of fans and participants at all events sponsored by US Lacrosse.

THIS EVENT MAY BE TERMINATED IF YOUR CONDUCT DOES NOT IMPROVE.

Sportsmanship Card Procedures and Sample Game Termination Criteria Boys' Youth Rules

Pre-game Coordination

- ✓ Each team will provide one Sideline Manager for each youth lacrosse game. Sideline Managers should be familiar with the US Lacrosse-Positive Coaching Alliance materials that recommend strategies to diffuse unruly fan behavior, and outline Sideline Manager responsibilities.
- ✓ Sideline Managers should be identified by sportsmanship buttons, and will have a small supply of Sportsmanship cards.
- ✓ Sideline Managers should introduce themselves to the crew, *immediately after* the coaching certification.
- ✓ Sideline Managers will only issue Sportsmanship cards when all other attempts at admonishment have failed.
- ✓ When a Sportsmanship card has been administered, Sideline Managers will immediately notify the table to immediately sound the horn (two blasts at next dead ball) and alert the crew on the field.
- ✓ Upon hearing the horn sound, officials will stop the game at the earliest possible convenience and confer.
- ✓ When Officials and Sideline Managers concur, coaches will be informed of the nature of the problem, and the affiliation of the fan(s). The game will then be placed under a "Sportsmanship Card" warning. The next instance of an unsportsmanlike act by the parties in question will lead to a termination of the contest by the game officials.
- ✓ If Sideline Managers are not available, officials should see procedures on Page 3, Columns 'C' and 'D.'

Example Criteria for Unacceptable Fan Behavior (Immediate termination)

- ✓ Entering the field of play to argue with officials.
- ✓ Throwing objects at officials or onto the field.
- ✓ The use of obscene or highly abusive language directed at officials.
- ✓ Fighting with other fans, or throwing objects at other fans.
- ✓ Entering the bench area and striking a coach or athlete.
- ✓ Verbal threats of bodily harm, injury or death toward officials, coaches, athletes or fans on either team.

Example Criteria for Unacceptable Coach Behavior (Immediate termination)

- ✓ Striking or pushing an official.
- ✓ Failure to leave the bench area, or arguing with officials after ejection from the game.
- ✓ Throwing objects at officials or onto the field.
- ✓ Fighting with officials, coaches, athletes or fans, or throwing objects at coaches, athletes or fans on either team.
- ✓ Verbal threats of bodily harm, injury or death toward officials, coaches, athletes or fans on either team.

Example Criteria for Unacceptable Athlete Behavior (Immediate termination)

- ✓ Striking or pushing an official; verbal threats of bodily harm, injury or death.
- ✓ Failure to go to and remain in the team's bench area, after ejection from the game.
- ✓ Throwing objects at officials or onto the field.
- ✓ Fighting with officials, coaches, athletes or fans, or throwing objects at coaches, athletes or fans on either team.
- ✓ Verbal threats of bodily harm, injury or death toward officials, coaches, athletes or fans on either team.



Special thanks to Bonnye Lang for the original use of the "Sportsmanship Card" concept.

**MDOC/Youth Officiating Committee
Sportsmanship Card and Game Termination Mechanics**

PROCEDURES FOR SIDELINE MANAGERS AND GAME OFFICIALS WORKING TOGETHER		PROCEDURE FOR GAME OFFICIALS WORKING WITHOUT SIDELINE MANAGERS		
	CRITERIA 'A' RESPONSIBILITIES OF SIDELINE MANAGERS MONITORING UNACCEPTABLE FAN BEHAVIOR	CRITERIA 'B' RESPONSIBILITIES OF GAME OFFICIALS WORKING WITH SIDELINE MANAGERS	CRITERIA 'C' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR OFF THE PLAYING FIELD	CRITERIA 'D' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UNACCEPTABLE ACTS ON THE PLAYING FIELD
Step 1	ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS THAT HONOR THE GAME OF LACROSSE	NO ACTION TAKEN UNLESS UNACCEPTABLE FAN BEHAVIOR IS OBSERVED. (See criteria 'c' if unacceptable fan behavior is observed)	WARNING TO COACHES TO CONTROL THEIR FANS (IF APPROPRIATE). <i>(IF THE OFFENSE WARRANTS IT, THEN PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO STEPS 2- 4)</i>	WARNING ISSUED DIRECTLY TO OFFENDING COACH OR PLAYER(S) (IF APPROPRIATE). <i>(IF THE OFFENSE WARRANTS IT, THEN PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO STEPS 2-4)</i>
Step 2	ISSUE WARNING THAT UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR COACH/PLAYER WILL NOT BE TOLERATED	NO ACTION TAKEN UNLESS UNACCEPTABLE FAN BEHAVIOR IS OBSERVED. (See criteria 'c' if unacceptable fan behavior is observed)	TECHNICAL FOUL (CONDUCT) ASSESSED TO TEAM OF THE UNSPORTSMANLIKE FAN. <i>(IF THE OFFENSE WARRANTS IT, THEN PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO STEPS 3- 4)</i>	TECHNICAL FOUL (CONDUCT) ASSESSED TO COACH OR PLAYER (S) (IF APPLICABLE). <i>(IF THE OFFENSE WARRANTS IT, THEN PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO STEPS 3- 4)</i>
Step 3	ISSUE SPORTSMANSHIP CARD AND IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY TABLE TO ALERT FIELD OFFICIALS	OFFICIALS NOTIFY COACHES: "THE GAME WILL PROCEED UNDER THE SPORTSMANSHIP CARD" (See criteria 'c' if unacceptable fan behavior is observed)	UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT FOUL. <u>IF JUSTIFIED</u> , INFORM COACHES "THE GAME WILL PROCEED UNDER THE SPORTSMANSHIP CARD RULE" <i>(IF THE OFFENSE WARRANTS IT, THEN PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO STEP 4)</i>	UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT FOUL. <u>IF JUSTIFIED</u> , INFORM COACHES "THE GAME WILL PROCEED UNDER THE SPORTSMANSHIP CARD RULE" <i>(IF THE OFFENSE WARRANTS IT, THEN PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO STEP 4)</i>
Step 4	ASSIST WITH ORDERLY EXIT FROM FACILITY AVOID UNSPORTSMANLIKE FAN(S)	TERMINATE GAME. LEAVE FIELD IMMEDIATELY.	TERMINATE GAME. LEAVE FIELD IMMEDIATELY.	TERMINATE GAME. LEAVE FIELD IMMEDIATELY.
Step 5	WORK WITH GAME OFFICIALS TO HELP FILE AN ACCURATE GAME TERMINATION REPORT	IMMEDIATELY PHONE A.A. FILE GAME TERMINATION REPORT WITHIN 24 HOURS	IMMEDIATELY PHONE A.A. FILE GAME TERMINATION REPORT WITHIN 24 HOURS	IMMEDIATELY PHONE A.A. FILE GAME TERMINATION REPORT WITHIN 24 HOURS

NOTES

1. Sideline Managers can not terminate games—they can only issue Sportsmanship cards. All Sideline Managers should review the Sideline Administrator materials that provide guidance in understanding their responsibilities and appropriate procedures. These can be found at www.uslacrosse.org or obtained by e-mailing programs@uslacrosse.org.
2. Only the designated umpires can terminate a game.
3. If warranted, the umpires can terminate a game without the use of a Sportsmanship card. The Sportsmanship card is only a warning to curtail unacceptable acts of sportsmanship.
4. All games terminated by a US Lacrosse Official, will result in a 1-0 victory for the team that is innocent of the terminal offense(s). It is recommended that the game will count in league statistics as a full game, and all goals, assists, saves, and team statistics will count toward team and league records, until the moment of termination.

This document does not cover every situation in which a sportsmanship card may be issued or a game terminated. Officials must exercise mature and careful judgment in issuing sportsmanship cards and terminating games. If the actions of irresponsible players, coaches or fans will cause harm to the reputation of the game, these procedures must be followed. *Document Updated 10/4/06.*

Game Termination Procedures Under the Sportsmanship Card

Game Termination

Step 1: Once you have determined that the game will end due to *unacceptable coach or athlete behavior*, you must blow your whistle and suspend play. Send both teams to their respective bench areas, watch your partner's back, and keep your eyes on the field. Resist making eye contact with, or engaging in dialogues with players, coaches, spectators or fans, whether they are supportive or antagonistic.

Step 2: Gather your gear, and announce the termination of the game. However, if you have determined that the game will end due to *unacceptable fan behavior*, follow the instructions above—yet before you leave the field, indicate to both coaches the identity of the fan(s) responsible for the game termination.

Step 3: Exit the field immediately using the most direct path to your car or conveyance that does not intersect with players, coaches or fans. Make certain that you record the score and situation in the penalty box, the number of game ejections or unsportsmanlike conduct calls that you have issued, time remaining in the game, and possession of the ball. Arrange to immediately meet 'off-site' with the crew in order to carefully reconstruct the chain of events leading to the termination and build a list potential witnesses. This is an essential step in preparing a game termination report (GTR), for details regarding the incident. Immediately call your assigner and review the incident. It is important for your assigner to receive a preliminary report from you prior to receiving calls from parents or coaches who will offer their side of the story.

Within 24 Hours

The men's crew chief should e-mail a GTR to the local assigner within 24 hours. The head of the women's umpire team should e-mail a GTR to the Ethics Committee of the Local Board within 24 hours.

The game termination report should contain the name of the site administrator(s), game conditions, fans, coaches or players involved, the unacceptable act(s), the procedures taken to diffuse or de-escalate the situation, the resulting penalties, and a list of potential witnesses. However, it is possible that an act could occur that is so unpredictable and unprecedented that no warnings, penalties or Sportsmanship Cards would be issued. The local assigner (men), or Chair of the Ethics Committee (women), will pass these reports to league officials and will include a list of all players and coaches who received unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, expulsion penalties, or red cards since these individuals may be ineligible to participate in the next league game(s).

If An Assault Occurs

Never Retaliate! If the assault occurred on the field, retreat to a safe position and ask coaches for assistance if needed. Terminate the game immediately. Make no threatening gestures or comments, regardless of provocation! Obtain the official score book from the scorer. Record details of the incident (who, what, where, when, and how); don't forget to get names and phone numbers of witnesses. Exit the field together, and avoid conversations with players, coaches, and spectators.

Never get into a "Parking Lot Debate!" An assault can occur anywhere! If anyone attempts to argue with you, be polite and conciliatory. Make no threatening gestures or comments, regardless of provocation! Do not retaliate. Leave the facility as soon as you have the names and phone numbers of witnesses.

Call the police and file assault charges! This is something that you should do in support of every official in this country. You will be asked to prepare a written report of the incident, including game conditions, individuals (participants and witnesses) involved, details of the incident, and the police response. An assault charge is normally filed in the municipality where the incident occurred. Assaults which take place on school property, or city property are especially worrisome to local courts. The police will contact the offended party, or take steps to identify the offending party if unknown to you. Your Sideline Managers can be of enormous help as they may serve as additional witnesses who can corroborate your story. Follow through with any league or criminal hearings. Officials have had success with prosecuting these cases under fourth degree felonious assault.

File a report with your local and national organizations! Follow the procedures in "Within 24 Hours" and below.

Incident Information Data Base

US Lacrosse is collecting information about the number of Sportsmanship card violations, game terminations, and assaults that occur nationwide. Not only is this information important to local lacrosse organizations, but it also helps the National Governing Body to track sportsmanship problems in the game. Incident information or a copy of the GTR should be forwarded to US Lacrosse by e-mailing a copy of the game termination report to *official@uslacrosse.org* (men), or *umpire@uslacrosse.org* (women). These reports will be forwarded to appropriate regional authorities.