

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

A Quick Reference Guide for Officials



Your role as an official is unique. You may have limited contact with athletes and their coaches, but your role is integral to any game or competition. With some simple rules, you can help protect yourself and others from abuse and misconduct.

PROTECTING OTHERS

As an official, you're in an ideal position to notice things others may not. And during games, you may get reports of behavior that violates game rules, organizational policies, or even federal or state laws.

THINGS YOU MAY WITNESS

Coaches berating their athletes, team brawls, inappropriate behavior among officials in designated locker rooms or online (homophobic comments, unwanted sexual texts)

THINGS THAT MAY BE REPORTED TO YOU

Inappropriate athlete behavior during games (homophobic or racial slurs, grabbing opponents' genitals or "cup checks")

For all of these: Report to your organization and the U.S. Center for SafeSport at uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern. Even if the incident isn't within our authority to investigate, we can help you figure out next steps.

PROTECTING YOURSELF

It's no secret that officials are facing more verbal and physical abuse on the job. Here are some things you can do if you are heckled or confronted by players, coaches, or spectators.

- **Speak calmly but firmly** with athletes and coaches when discussing calls.
- **Don't confront hecklers.** This will only create more problems. Keep your focus on the game.
- **Play by the rules.** Most sports have rules about behavior for athletes and coaches. If the situation calls for it and it's within the rules, eject the person causing the problem. Some sports also have rules for spectators. Ask event staff to step in and handle problematic fans.
- **Report to your organization.** Record the date, time, location, any information about the individuals involved, and a summary of the incident. Report to the police if you were physically assaulted. You can also report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport for advice on what to do next.

PROMOTING CULTURE CHANGE

Abuse and misconduct are not part of the game. Just because something has been normalized or tolerated does not mean we should let it continue.

The SafeSport Code applies to all Participants in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, not just athletes. That means if you are officiating an in-Movement game, you are protected under the SafeSport Code. Be part of the solution. Report abuse and misconduct when you see it or experience it yourself.

Want to help?

We'd love to connect with officials as we create more materials just for you. Email us at education@safesport.org if you're interested in sharing your ideas or feedback.