

BYLAWS

[Note: For ease of reference, changes in the Bylaws for 2016-17 have been underlined.]

ARTICLE I. SPORTSMANSHIP PRINCIPLE

It shall be the responsibility of each member institution to ensure that all individuals associated with the athletics program of that institution conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner when representing their university. For purposes of this Article, an individual associated with the athletics program includes, but is not limited to, coaches, administrators, student-athletes, team attendants, band members, cheerleaders, and mascots. Coaches and administrators have the responsibility to set the tone for responsible behavior on the part of their teams and followers. It is an infraction of the rules for an individual associated with the institution's athletics program to conduct themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner. *(Revised: May 2015)*

Unsportsmanlike conduct, when demonstrated by any individual associated with the athletics program, will not be tolerated and may subject the institution and/or individual to disciplinary action. The duties with regard to sportsmanship of member institutions, any individual associated with the institution's athletics program, and the Commissioner are elaborated below. *(Revised: May 2015)*

Section I-1. Duties of Member Institutions.

An institution is responsible for the actions of any individual associated with its athletics program and other individuals over whom it has authority and may be held accountable for their actions. Every reasonable effort shall be made by competing institutions to emphasize the importance of good sportsmanship at all athletics events and when an action violates the sportsmanship principle, the institution is encouraged to take any action it deems appropriate to demonstrate this emphasis.

Further, in the event crowd control procedures must be initiated, this responsibility rests with each host institution, or with the tournament or meet director at off-campus championship events. The athletics directors or their designated representatives shall be available at the site of the competition to assist in controlling the crowd. Only participants, coaches, officials, and authorized personnel shall be allowed in the competition area before, during and at the conclusion of competition.

Section I-2. Duties of the Commissioner.

Whenever the Commissioner concludes after a reasonable investigation that there has been a violation of the sportsmanship principle, the Commissioner shall impose such penalty deemed appropriate by first giving notice to the individual and the institution.

- a. **Process.** The Commissioner will provide the institution with the time and opportunity that the Commissioner considers reasonable to take action and may adopt that action as Conference action if he or she deems appropriate. An institution or individual at risk of penalty will be provided an opportunity, which may be waived, to offer its position on whether the conduct occurred as alleged. After considering all information the Commissioner deems necessary, he or she shall determine whether a penalty should be imposed and what penalty is appropriate. In the event the individual or institution believes the Commissioner's penalty is inappropriate or excessive in nature, an appeal may be initiated with the Executive Committee by filing a notice with the Conference President. The appeal must be filed within 48 hours of receipt of notification of the penalty imposed by the Commissioner. *(Revised: May 2015)*

- b. Considerations.** In deciding whether to assess a penalty for a violation of the sportsmanship principle, the factors to be considered by the Commissioner include, but are not limited to, the following: *(Adopted: May 2015)*
1. The general nature or severity of and the circumstances surrounding the act;
 2. Any injury or damage that is a direct result of the act;
 3. The manner in which the rules of the game, if any, address the act and whether those rules were appropriately applied by those with authority (e.g., officials);
 4. The response and any action taken by the involved institution; and
 5. Any prior acts by the involved institution or individual that were subject to this process.
- c. Penalties.**
- After investigating the alleged act, concluding that the act is a violation of the sportsmanship principle, and considering the factors in Section I-2-b above, the Commissioner may assess against the involved institution and/or individual any, or all, of the penalties below. The Commissioner may also determine that no additional conference action is necessary. *(Adopted: May 2015)*
1. Reprimand (public or private); *(Adopted: May 2015)*
 2. At the discretion of the Commissioner, fines can be issued to the institution and/or individual up to \$25,000 per occurrence, with such fines being put into the Weaver-James-Corrigan Postgraduate Scholarship account *(Adopted: January 2010)*; and
 3. Suspension from contests.
 - (a) Carrying Penalty Over to Next Season. Whenever a penalty or suspension is imposed, such penalty to the individual may be carried over into the next season of competition at the discretion of the Commissioner.
 - (b) Definition of Suspension. As used in this regulation, "suspension" in the case of a player, means that the player cannot participate in the designated number of contests but may practice; in the case of a coach, "suspension" means that the coach cannot be present in the playing area for the designated number of contests but may conduct practice sessions; in the case of a band member, cheerleader or mascot, "suspension" means that the individual cannot be present in the playing area for the designated number of contests.

Section I-3. Punishable Acts of the Sportsmanship Principle.

- a. Punishable Acts.** Acts violating the sportsmanship principle shall include, but not be limited to, the following and may subject violators to the process in Section I-2:
1. Any person who physically or verbally abuses an official, opposing coach, student-athlete, or spectator;
 2. Any person who intentionally incites participants or spectators to violent or abusive (physical or verbal) action;
 3. Any person who makes obscene gestures;
 4. Any person who publicly criticizes any contest official, conference personnel, member institution or institutional personnel;
 5. Any person who engages in negative recruiting by making statements which are unduly derogatory of another institution or its personnel to a prospective student-athlete, parents, high school coach, or other person associated with the prospective student-athlete;
 6. Any person who enters the competition area for an unsportsmanlike purpose;
 7. Any other act of unsportsmanlike conduct not specifically prescribed.
- b. Public Criticism of Officials.** Public criticism of officials or public comments evaluating the officiating of particular contests is not in the best interest of intercollegiate athletics. Individuals associated with the athletics program are prohibited, therefore, from commenting while acting in an official capacity on officiating other than directly to the

Conference office. Head coaches are responsible for the comments of assistant coaches and other athletics staff members associated with their teams. *(Revised: May 2015)*

Section I-4. Distribution of Policy.

A copy of Article I (Sportsmanship Principle) is to be given by the athletics director at each member institution to each head coach, assistant coach, band director, and cheerleading and mascot coordinator at the beginning of each academic year. A copy shall also be given to each student-athlete, band member, cheerleader and mascot at the squad meeting held at the beginning of each year. Acceptance of this document, pursuant to NCAA rules governing the student-athlete statement, will constitute agreement to conform to its requirements.

Section I-5. Annual Review.

Any case for which the Commissioner has enacted the process outlined in Section I-2-a will be reviewed annually by the Infractions and Sportsmanship Review Committee, regardless of whether any penalties were assessed. The purpose of the review is to provide each member institution with information on the treatment of possible violations of the sportsmanship principle so the members may use it when considering possible institutional actions in the future. *(Adopted: May 2015)*