



Bath Parks & Recreation Youth Sports Officials Guide for Negative Sideline Behavior

Could our youth sports leagues function without officials? Definitely Not!

Being a youth sports official is not an easy task; it is something that requires concentration, patience, excellent communication skills, fitness, and most of all judgement based on the rules of the sport.

Youth leagues lose referees, especially young referees, every year due to harassment and intimidation from spectators and coaches.

Bath Parks & Recreation will not tolerate harassment of youth sports officials in any form.

Remember, if there is a mishap, it is not the end of the world! We are human and humans will make mistakes - no one deserves to be harassed or intimidated. We all have a responsibility to teach children the importance of being respectful to a person in authority, and in a youth sports game, the official or referee is that person; regardless of whether it is teenager or a more senior person.

How to manage behavior on the sidelines if things get heated:

Referees should stay calm, do not engage in arguments, and enlist the coach to address the issue. If a spectator persists after the coach intervenes, the referee should request the spectator be asked to leave the area. Afterward, the referee should report the incident to the Recreation Department to ensure accountability and prevent future occurrences.

Immediate Actions

1. **Stay Calm:** Remain composed and do not respond to emotional outbursts from the sidelines.
2. **Do Not Engage:** Avoid discussions or arguments with parents, as this can escalate the situation and damage your credibility.
3. **Address the Coach:** Calmly inform the coach that their spectators are disruptive and that the situation needs to be handled.

Escalation Steps

1. **Coach Intervention:** Ask the coach to speak to the disruptive spectators to calm them down.
2. **Removal:** If the spectator continues to be problematic after the coach speaks with them, ask the coach to have them leave the area.

Follow-Up Actions

1. **Report the Incident:** Report the incident to the Recreation Department to ensure accountability.
2. **Prevent Future Issues:** This reporting helps the league take appropriate action and potentially assign more experienced referees for future games where such behavior may occur.

These young athletes aren't mini-adults. While winning is nice, it's not supposed to be about winning: It's supposed to be about joy, development, improvement, and working together.