



MOUNTAIN PACIFIC SPORTS FEDERATION

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SPORTSMANSHIP ISSUES IN MPSF MEN'S WATER POLO

MPSF Men's Water Polo Administrators and Head Coaches:

After last weekend's NorCal Tournament it is apparent additional attention needs to be focused on sportsmanship issues involving MPSF men's water polo student-athletes and coaches. It seems there is a rising incidence of unsporting behavior which has recently resulted in a number injuries, ejections and general disrespect among participants. This behavior will not be tolerated by the conference and must be curtailed immediately.

In order to effectively resolve these issues and allow the sport to be played in a safe, respectful environment, a conscientious commitment and effort must be made by all involved including coaches, administrators, student-athletes, referees and the conference. It is in this spirit of cooperation that I ask your full compliance in the implementation of the directives below. Please also refer back to my email memo on game management protocol of September 25.

In order to immediately halt this trend, I am asking all MPSF men's water polo administrators and coaches to review the following directives and immediately implement those which are not currently being utilized at your institution.

Below you will also find a number of ideas the conference will implement in order to provide a more safe, respectful and sporting environment.

COACHES

1. Meet with your student-athletes to review the importance of sportsmanship for the continued success of your athletes and team throughout the season.
2. Coaches shall take responsibility for ensuring there is no contact during crossovers.
3. Videotape may be submitted for post-game review of brutality/fighting incidents missed by game officials by Executive Director Beard and MSPF Coordinator of Officials Vellekamp. Conclusive videotaped evidence of intentional brutality and/or fighting missed by the officials may result in potential disciplinary action for those involved. Both teams involved in a particular incident have the opportunity to submit tape of the same incident.

GAME MANAGEMENT

1. All MPSF water polo member institutions shall have a game manager on deck for the duration of all home water polo games, including all tournament games. The game manager shall introduce themselves to the referees and head coaches prior to the start of each game and the game manager shall work proactively to avoid foreseeable problems such as abuse of referees by fans, inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior, use of abusive and/or profane language, consumption and/or possession of alcohol and/or drugs, proper and appropriate facility setup, security, etc. Game managers will act in concert with referees to determine the

need for the home team to fulfill its crossover by going around the pool and avoiding any possible contact with the visiting team.

2. The National Anthem shall be played prior to each MPSF water polo game or any game involving an MPSF water polo team. During the anthem players and coaches shall stand on deck at attention. Exceptions to playing the anthem for each game may be made for tournaments which shall have other specific protocol.

3. Immediately after the Anthem is played, student-athletes and coaches from opposing teams shall shake hands in a greeting of sportsmanship, negating the obligation to do so after the game.

4. The MPSF Sportsmanship Announcement (see attachment) shall be read prior to the announcing of teams.

5. Teams will then be announced just prior to game start.

6. Each MPSF water polo member institution shall ensure its scorer's table is appropriately staffed with knowledgeable and responsible personnel including at least one non-student-athlete/non-coach adult representative of the home institution's athletic department.

MPSF REFEREES

1. Shall be instructed to call a tighter game at two-meters and away from the ball (see Points of Emphasis #13 and #15 of rule book). Note - calling a tighter game will not constitute any rules changes or new interpretations, rather tighter enforcement of existing rules will result in increased safety of the players and serve to maintain the integrity of the sport.

2. Shall issue warnings, yellow cards and/or red cards for disruptive behavior by coaches. Note that this order of priority is not necessary - the referee may issue the warning, caution or ejection as appropriate in response to the offending action; i.e., a warning does not have to be issued prior to yellow card, just as a yellow card need not be issued prior to the issuance of a red card.

3. Shall apply appropriate penalties for fouls of misconduct, brutality and fighting (Rule 21, sections 8-11 and Rule 22, section 3) including the reporting of all brutality and fighting incidents and red cards to MSPF Executive Director Beard within 24 hours of the incident. Note - calling a tighter game will not constitute any rules changes or new interpretations, rather tighter enforcement of existing rules will result in increased safety of the players and serve to maintain the integrity of the sport.

4. Shall enforce Point of Emphasis #1 and Rule 5-5 which states that after the start of the game only the team captain may address the referee. Note - Point of Emphasis #1 states that coaches may not continually comment on calls to referees during the game.

5. Shall position themselves at the crossover point to monitor the exchange and assess applicable penalties as required by NCAA rules.

THE CONFERENCE

1. Shall immediately and automatically impose a second full-game suspension, in addition to all other applicable penalties, for receipt of a brutality or fighting ejection that is imposed either during the game or as a result of videotape review or other investigation. Therefore, a student-athlete who receives a brutality ejection during a game will sit out the remainder of that game and the next two scheduled games including traditional season, tournament, championship and NCAA post-season competition. If ejected as a result of fighting, the offending individual may not sit on the team bench while under suspension per Rule 21-11. Note that the definition of BRUTALITY "includes kicking or striking or ATTEMPTING to kick or strike with malicious intent..." (Rule 21-9).

2. Shall develop a video education program for referees so they can review game tape for self-analysis and improvement and for teaching use during officiating clinics. This program will serve to enhance play calling at the collegiate level while decreasing violence at two-meters as well as away from the ball.

3. May consider putting the sport of men's water polo on probation and/or suspending member programs from conference participation as warranted.

The MPSF Administrative Committee (governing board) will continue to monitor and review the progress of sportsmanship in the sport of men's water polo and take necessary action to ensure a proper safe and respectful competitive environment for your student-athletes.

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