



BETTER ATHLETES
BETTER PEOPLE

How to Intervene When People Dishonor the Game

All schools and youth sports organizations are subject to adult misbehavior at games, such as yelling at officials or opponents. Here are guidelines for how to intervene.

Be Prepared and Use Handouts. You never know when someone will misbehave, so your organization's "Culture-Keeper" will do well to wear a "We Honor the Game Here" button to games and carry Honoring the Game cards and stickers. If adults misbehave, handing them a card or sticker is often just the low-key reminder of what your organization expects of adults at an educational-athletic game.

Ask Questions. If handouts don't do the job, ask the misbehaving adults, "Do you think you are Honoring the Game right now?" or tell them, "You seem pretty upset." Turning their attention to you may stop them from yelling at officials long enough for you to remind them, "You may be right about the official's call, but in this organization we Honor the Game and show respect to officials even if we disagree with their calls."

Make Assertive Statements. If none of the above work, clearly state how you feel about this misbehavior. Examples: "That's not the way we do things in this organization!" or "Yelling at the official is not Honoring the Game" or "That kind of behavior has no place here."

You might want to stand back during this phase of intervention to avoid invading personal space and any risk of escalating matters or incurring physical harm. If anyone becomes abusive to you or continues to act inappropriately, do not retaliate physically or verbally. Just withdraw and move on to the next step of intervention.

Official Warnings. If misbehavior does not cease, then official sanctions must take effect. If you are not an official of the organization (board member, administrator, etc.), contact one and ask that appropriate action be taken. If you are an official of the organization, you can keep this situation under control by consulting with game officials to warn the head coach of the team whose fans are misbehaving.

The coach should be warned that his or her fans must behave properly or the game will not continue. The coach should tell the misbehaving adults that their actions are unacceptable.

Physical Removal. If all steps above fail, officials should stop the game until those who are misbehaving leave the premises. If they refuse, then the police should be called to remove them.

Remember, people watch how organizations deal with misbehavior. They will improve their behavior if they see that your organization means business.

For more PCA Tools for Parents, visit: www.positivecoach.org/our-tools
www.positivecoach.org