

Wisdom of a Wednesday (on a Thursday)
November 11, 2021

All Referees AND Coaches:

I hope this email finds everyone well and excited for the finale to an extremely competitive season. As we are rapidly approaching Championship weekend, I want to reach out to further emphasize a few things with everyone. Nothing that follows should be seen as new, but rather a reminder of what has always been, and will continue to be expected.

At this point in the season, it is of utmost importance to be clear, consistent and correct. All referees must be knowledgeable of the NCAA playing rules and apply them correctly. All participants - coaches, players and referees - must be held accountable for their actions in the pool and on the deck.

As referees, we are asked to judge the action in front of us and apply the rules of water polo fairly and consistently. The offense and the defense must be held accountable for their actions and rewarded or punished according to the rules.

Let me be as clear as possible:

Referees - I am asking you to do your job. Nothing more and nothing less.

Coaches - I am asking you to be aware of the rules and the associated punishments so you will not be surprised when the referees do their job.

As a refresher, let's take a look at a some of our weightier rules:

MINOR ACT OF MISCONDUCT

An exclusion foul with a 20-second period of exclusion will be awarded for minor acts of misconduct (MAM) that are not sufficient to warrant exclusion for the remainder of the game.

- Minor comments to a referee, such as "Call the foul," or "Where is the push-off?" or "He's inside the two."
- Minor gestures to the referee.
- Minor comments (minor taunting) of a member of the opposing team.
- Minor gestures to a member of the opposing team.
- Minor shoving of a member of the opposing team.
 - If a player receives a second minor act of misconduct in the same game, the player will be excluded for the remainder of the game.

Key word here is MINOR. This is one of the tools referees have available to them to better control play and decorum.

MISCONDUCT

To be guilty of misconduct, including the use of obscene, abusive or threatening language or gestures, persistent foul play, or overaggressive fouls, or to refuse obedience to or show disrespect for a referee or official.

- Persistent foul play refers to play that is unacceptable within the spirit of the rules and that is likely to bring the game into disrepute.
 - Persistent foul play is entirely different from and unrelated to “persisting in an ordinary foul.”
- Overaggressive fouls are hard fouls unacceptable within the spirit of the rules.
 - Deliberate elbowing to the head, face or neck.
 - Head-butting an opponent.
- The use of profanity or obscene language - IN ANY LANGUAGE.
- Taunting, baiting or ridiculing an opponent.

This past weekend alone, we received a record number of incident reports that involved obscene or abusive language. REFEREES - thank you for doing your job and please continue to do so.

FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT

- Playing in a violent manner.
- Fighting.
- Biting.
- Kicking or striking.
 - Attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent against an opponent or official.
 - Attempting to punch or kick an opponent whether or not there is contact with the opponent.

RED CARD

A red card is issued for DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR to the head coach, assistant coaches, other team officials on the bench and to individual players on the bench.

- A red card may also be issued directly to a player on the bench or in the water who is disruptive
- A referee may award a red card at any time from 30 minutes before the game to five minutes after the conclusion of the game or until any protest procedure has been completed.
- If a coach or team official is disruptive after receiving a yellow card, a red card is issued.
 - If in the judgement of the referee, the infraction is severe, a red card may be issued immediately to a coach or team official without issuing a warning, a yellow card or a yellow/red card.

Referees - part of your job is to enforce the above rules just like all the other rules - please do so from first whistle to last.

Coaches - please be aware that these rules WILL BE enforced by the referees.

We must all work together to ensure that across all conferences and across all NCAA competitions, the athletes have a venue in which they can compete and their athletic talents are showcased - free of violence, obscenities and taunting.

As always, more to follow...

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