

Physical & Verbal Abuse Policy

The St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks Department strives to promote the ideals of teamwork, physical conditioning, sportsmanship and acceptable social behavior at all sporting related events. It is imperative that participants and spectators alike ensure an environment that will provide these ideals. Therefore, any unsportsmanlike conduct, including, but not limited to, fighting, verbal abuse or racial and gender epithets involving fans, coaches, players will not be tolerated.

A LEADER is a coach, parent volunteer, staff or any person the control and care of children

A PARTICIPANT includes athletes, parents and spectators

FIGHTING

A hostile encounter with another party or parties, resulting in a physical struggle or contact, will be defined as a "fight". Fighting will not be tolerated on the part of any participant or spectator associated with the St. Mary's County Recreation Division sporting activity or sporting related event.

Leaders

It is the goal of the St. Mary's County Recreation Division to provide an environment where our participants can grow, not only physically, but also mentally & emotionally. It is the responsibility of our leaders to provide an example of self-control and integrity in the hopes that others follow their example. A leader is an individual who holds any supervisory position, including but not limited to, program coaches, assistant coaches, program officials and program supervisors. Any leader who disrupts a game or challenges an official or supervisor after a game will be subject to the following measures. Any "leader" involved in a fight will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- A. **First Offense:** A minimum of 2 years suspension as a leader or participant in St. Mary's County Recreation Division sporting activities and sports-related events from the date of incident.
Note: Sporting activities and sports-related events sponsored by the department include, but not limited to, Basketball, Soccer, Indoor Sports and adult leagues. (i.e., if one is suspended from basketball, they are also suspended from any other sport).
- B. **Second Offense:** Lifetime suspension

Participants

A participant is an individual, other than a leader or a fan/spectator, who takes an active part in the sporting activity or sporting related event that the department sponsors. Any participant involved in a fight will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- A. **First Offense – (Adult: 18 & Over)**
A minimum of 2 years suspension, from the date of offense, as a leader or participant in the department's sporting activities and sporting related events.
- B. **First Offense – (Youth: 17 & Under)**
A 1-year suspension from the date of the offense, as a leader from the department's sporting activities and sporting related event from the date of incident.
- C. **Second Offense – (Youth: 17 & Under)**
A 2 years minimum suspension, from the date of the offense, as a leader participant from all St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks sporting activities and sporting related events until the suspension has ended.

FANS & SPECTATORS

A fan/spectator is an individual who participates in a sporting activity or sporting related event by demonstrating support without taking a leadership or participant role in that particular event. Any spectator who is involved in a fight with an official, supervisor or fan after a game will be subject to the following measures:

- A. First Offense: A minimum of 2 years suspension as a fan/spectator and participant from the St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks sporting activities and sporting related events from the date of the incident. A 2 years suspension from a leadership role in the department's sporting activities and sporting related events.
- B. Second Offense – Lifetime suspension as a fan/sponsor, participant and leader from all related department sporting activities and sporting related events from the date of incident.

Verbal Abuse

The St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks Department strives to create an environment that teaches individuals the art of good sportsmanship. Verbal abuse is defined as the intentional act of insulting another individual through oral measures with the aim of offending. If any abusive language or behavior including, but not limited to the use of the phrase "you (that, etc.) suck(s)" in any form is directed at others, those confrontational parties will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- A. Leaders and/or Participants – (Adults: 18 & Over)
 - a. First Offense: A 4-game suspension as a leader, participant or fan/spectator from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events from the date of the incident.
 - b. Second Offense: A minimum of 2 years suspension as a leader and/or participant for the department's sporting activities and related sporting events. A minimum of 2 years suspension as a fan of the department's sporting activities and related sporting events from date of incident.
- B. Leaders and/or Participants – (Youth: 17 & Under)
 - a. First Offense: An immediate ejection and suspension for the next 4 games as a leader, participant and /or fan/spectator.
 - b. Second Offense: One (1) year suspension as a leader, participant and/or spectator from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events from the date of incident.
 - c. Third Offense: Two (2) years suspension as a leader and/or participant from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events. One (1) year suspension as a fan in the St. Mary's County Recreation & Park's sporting activities and sporting related events from date of incident.

Harassing Fans/Spectators

Harassment is defined as, but not limited to, abusive language, tormenting of participants, and the baiting of individuals. The following set of actions will be implemented against harassing fans/spectators:

- A. First Offense: Immediate ejection and next 4 games suspension.
- B. Second Offense: One (1) year suspension as a participant and/or spectator from date of incident from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events. Lifetime prohibition from a leadership role in the department's sporting activities and sporting related events.
- C. Third Offense: A 2-year suspension as a leader, participant, and/or fan/spectator.

Use of Racial and/or Gender Epithets

The St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks department has zero-tolerance for any use of racial and/or gender epithets used in reference to an individual's race, color, gender, or sexual orientation. Any person(s) found to have used such epithets will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- A. Leaders
 - a. First Offense: A 1- year suspension as a leader and/or participant from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events. One (1) year suspension as a fan/spectator in the department's sporting activities and sporting related events from date of incident.
- B. Participants
 - a. First Offense – (Adults: 18 & Over): A 4 games suspension as a leader, participant and/or spectator from date of incident from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events.
 - b. Second Offense – (Adult: 18 & Over): Lifetime suspension as a leader and/or participant from all related department sporting activities and sporting related events. One (1) year suspension as a fan in the department's sporting activities and sporting related events from date of incident.
 - c. First Offense – (Youth: 17 & Under): A Two (2) games suspension, from date of incident from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events.
 - d. Second Offense – (Youth: 17 & Under): A 4 games suspension as a leader, participant and/or fan/spectator from date of incident from the department's sporting related activities and events.
 - e. Third Offense – (Youth: 17 & Under): A one (1) year suspension as a leader, participant and/or fan/spectator from the department's sporting activities and related sporting events until the age of eighteen (18) or for one (1) year, whichever is greater.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Sportsmanship is defined as conduct becoming to a sportsman, such as fairness, courteous relations and acceptance of results. The St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks department is promoting these ideals in its sporting activities, programs and sports-related events. The items listed in the above sections constitute conduct, justifying the noted penalty and representing unsportsmanlike conduct. Should any unsportsmanlike conduct occur, not specifically addressed in its discretion, may institute penalties for such behavior consistent with this policy. In determining whether an incident or unsportsmanlike conduct has occurred, the rules of that particular sport may be considered.

Procedures Following Incident

When a person engages in unsportsmanlike behavior within the St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks department sporting activities and related sports events, recreation supervisors, recreation leaders, league supervisors and/or league officials will have the individuals involved in the disruption, will be removed from the park or facility at which the event is occurring. During such time, the sporting event or program will be stopped until those involved have left the park or facility property.

- If a person(s) refused to leave the premises, the law enforcement will be contacted and asked to enforce the ruling of the officials. Individuals removed from the park or facility will be sent a notification letter by e-mail or phone call stating their violation of the altercation policy. The individual will then have seven (7) days from the receipt date of the registered mail or phone call to respond with a written statement, explaining or defending their involvement and setting out their perception of the altercation as it occurred.
- The response must be received by the office of the Director of Recreation & Parks on or before the seventh day from the receipt date of the email or phone call. NO written statement will be considered in the investigation after the seven (7) days.
- After the statements are received an investigation will be conducted and the St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks department will render judgment of the altercation within ten (10) working days from the statement deadline. A panel consisting of the Gym Supervisor, Sports Coordinator, Game Official, Recreation Division Manager of that particular program in which the altercation occurred; will conduct the investigation. During this investigation, the individual(s) accused will be suspended from all sporting activities and/or sports related events. Those found in violation of this policy, or who are not content with the panel's decision may file an appeal with the Athletic Coordinator as noted above. In filing an appeal, an individual(s) will have five (5) business days to respond in writing from notification of the decision and said appeal shall be received in the director's office, on or before the fifth day after notification of the decision.
- Individuals may be asked to appear before the appeal review committee. All appeal decisions are final and are not subject to review.
- If the St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks department deems a physical or verbal altercation as a flagrant and deliberate act of violence, the division reserves the right to enforce a more severe punishment within this established disciplinary code.