Spectator Policy

The Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA) is committed to providing a safe, positive, and sportsmanlike environment for all participants. Interscholastic events are extensions of the classroom, where student-athletes learn responsibility, teamwork, integrity, and perseverance. Spectators play a key role in shaping this atmosphere. This policy outlines expectations for spectator conduct, the rationale behind these standards, and establishes procedures for addressing misconduct.

Guiding Principles

- Student-athletes are students first; events support their growth and well-being
- Respectful behavior maintains the integrity of competition and ensures safety for all
- Officials, coaches, and event staff must be allowed to perform their duties without interference
- Positive support reinforces the values of education-based athletics

General Expectations for Spectator Conduct

All spectators attending NIAA-sanctioned events are expected to:

- **Demonstrate Respect and Sportsmanship**
    - Support student-athletes in a positive manner
    - Show respect toward players, coaches, officials, opponents, and other spectators
    - Applaud effort and good play by all teams, not just one's own

- **Refrain from Abusive or Disruptive Behavior**
    - No profanity, derogatory remarks, taunting, or verbal harassment
    - No personal attacks or comments related to race, gender, ability, religion, or personal identity
    - No incitement of conflict or attempts to intimidate participants or officials

- **Follow Instructions from Event Staff**
    - Comply with directions given by administrators, security personnel, and public address announcements
    - Respect designated seating and restricted/field access areas

- **Maintain a Safe Environment**
    - No throwing objects, entering the playing area, or interfering with the contest
    - Follow facility rules, including those regarding outside food, prohibited items, and smoking/vaping
    - Possession or use of alcohol, illegal substances, or weapons is strictly prohibited

- **Be a Role Model for Students**

- Recognize that behavior sets an example for young athletes and students
- Keep the focus on learning, growth, and enjoyment of high school athletics

- **Examples of Acceptable Conduct**
  - Cheer loudly for your team
  - Bring signs that show support for your team
  - Applaud outstanding play by all participants

Examples of Unacceptable Conduct

The following behaviors may result in a warning, removal, suspension, or other disciplinary action:

- Use of vulgar or profane language
- Confronting, berating, or approaching officials, coaches, or student-athletes
- Entering the competition area without authorization
- Physical or verbal threats toward anyone present
- Use of discriminatory or hate speech
- Inciting fights, attempting to provoke opposing spectators or teams
- Refusing to follow administrative directives
- Any conduct deemed by school administrators or NIAA officials to compromise safety or the spirit of sportsmanship

Rationale for Enforcement

This policy supports the mission of education-based athletics by:

- Protecting student-athletes' physical and emotional safety
- Ensuring contests are fair and free from intimidation or interference
- Reducing conflict and disorderly conduct that disrupts events
- Upholding the values of respect, responsibility, and sportsmanship
- Allowing officials and coaches to perform their roles without hostility

Procedures for Addressing Misconduct

- **Initial Warning**
  - When appropriate, spectators may receive a verbal warning for minor or first-time misconduct.
  - A warning may be issued by a game administrator, athletic director, school official, or security.
  - Continued misconduct after a warning may result in removal from the event.

- **Immediate Removal from Venue**

- Spectators may be removed **without warning** if behavior is severe, threatening, or disruptive. Removal may occur if:
  - Conduct compromises safety or sportsmanship
  - Behavior continues after a warning
  - The individual refuses to comply with staff instructions
  - Alcohol, drugs, weapons, violence, or harassment are involved

Failure to comply with removal instructions may result in law enforcement involvement.

- **Suspension from Future NIAA Events**
  - Depending on the severity of the incident, removal may also result in suspension from one or more future contests.
  - The host school, district, or NIAA may issue suspension decisions.
  - Restoration of attendance privileges may require:
    - A meeting with the school or NIAA administration
    - A written plan for improved behavior
    - Completion of sportsmanship or behavior-related course/training when appropriate

- **Law Enforcement Intervention**
  - If a spectator engages in unlawful behavior, threatens safety, or refuses to be removed, law enforcement may be contacted. Criminal charges may be pursued in accordance with local statutes.

- **Re-Entry Conditions**
  - Individuals removed from a contest may not re-enter the event unless granted permission by the event administrator
  - Future attendance may be contingent on demonstrating compliance with expectations outlined in this policy.

Participation in high school athletics is a privilege that brings communities together. The NIAA asks all parents, families, and fans to uphold these standards so that every event remains safe, respectful, and enjoyable for student-athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators alike.

Your support, sportsmanship, and positive energy matter. Help us keep education-based athletics a place where students can thrive.