

Michigan Water Polo Association Referee Code of Conduct

Introduction

Since USA Water Polo, Inc., has already established a Code of Ethics for its referees, this seems like an appropriate source for the guidelines that we would have our officials follow. What follows, therefore, is a recitation of this document as it applies to Michigan high school water polo.

Preamble

Water polo officials must be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people with whom they interact, including fellow officials, coaches, administrators, athletes, and the general public. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all officials. The Code does not exhaust the moral and ethical considerations of professional behavior and attitude. The effectiveness of this Code, both in letter and in spirit, depends on understanding and voluntary compliance by the officiating community; reinforcement by peer and public opinion; and, when necessary, enforcement through disciplinary measures.

Ethical Standards

1. Referees must be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of competitions. Without equivocation, game decisions that are influenced by personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.
2. Referees must recognize that any action that may lead to a conflict of interest, either real or imagined, must be avoided. Members of the Michigan water polo community are generally well known to one another, and personal and professional relationships periodically develop among athletes, coaches, and officials. It is imperative, however, that regardless of any such relationships, gifts, favors, special treatment and/or privileges that can in any way be perceived as jeopardizing impartiality must be avoided.
3. Referees have an obligation to treat other officials with professional dignity and courtesy, and to recognize that it is inappropriate to criticize other officials.
4. Referees have a perpetual obligation to seek self-improvement through study of the game, its rules and mechanics, and techniques for effective game management. They have an obligation to accurately represent their qualifications and abilities when requesting or accepting officiating assignments.
5. Referees shall at all times exhibit behavior that brings respect to the avocation of sports officiating, and shall endeavor to suppress all behavior that would discredit the profession.
6. Water polo officials shall not partake in or encourage any action to unfairly limit access to the officiating profession, assignments, association membership, or positions of leadership based on economic factors, race, creed, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap, country, or national origin.

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Referee Affirmation

1. I shall devote time, thought, and study to maintain the highest standards of our sport. I strive to perform in as professional a manner as possible:
 - a. By acting within the governing rules, current interpretations, and mechanics of competition;
 - b. By acting in a spirit of good sportsmanship;
 - c. By having a protective, rather than punitive, attitude to enforcement of the rules;
 - d. By being impartial;
 - e. By maintaining my focus on observation rather than expectation, anticipation, or preference;
 - f. By ensuring the conditions of competition are fair and equitable for all participants; and
 - g. By never forgetting that the game is all about the athletes, who will give their best efforts only when I give my own.
2. I shall strive to work with fellow officials in a spirit of harmony and cooperation. I shall be respectful and courteous to others, aware that differences of opinion and interpretation are to be expected. I shall critically evaluate my performance after each competitive session in an attempt to achieve continuous improvement of my skills and abilities.
3. I shall not use my position as an official to benefit myself, either by seeking or accepting gifts, special treatment, privileges, or other favors. I shall avoid promoting the special interests of any person or group of persons other than the community of athletes we serve. I recognize the importance of honoring contracts and other commitments, both written and oral, regardless of personal inconvenience or financial loss.
4. I shall do nothing prior to or during any competitive session that would impair my ability to carry out my assignment.
5. I have not engaged, nor will I ever engage, in any behavior that utilizes the influence of my position to encourage or partake in inappropriate sexual intimacy with any minor, athlete, coach, or faculty.
6. I agree to abide by the letter and spirit of this Code of Conduct, and to comply with all policies and procedures of the Michigan Water Polo Association.