

## Rule 4

# **SPORTSMANSHIP**

**4.1 Conference Statement on Sportsmanship.** All aspects of intercollegiate athletics contests shall be conducted in a sporting manner. It is the responsibility of each member institution in the Mountain West to ensure that all individuals associated with its athletics program conduct themselves in an appropriate fashion. All members of the Conference shall exhibit ethical behavior at all NCAA and Conference competition. Conference members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of the NCAA and Conference and the playing rules of the respective sports. Each member institution shall create a healthy environment for competition. Administrators, coaches, student-athletes and spectators, as well as others involved in intercollegiate athletics in the Conference, share this responsibility. *(Revised October 2004, October 2006)*

**4.1.1 Annual Institutional Meeting.** Annually, each institution shall conduct a meeting at the beginning of the academic year to discuss ethics and sportsmanship. The meeting shall include all athletics administrators and staff, all coaches, all spirit group advisors, the band director and other appropriate individuals. The institution's president shall deliver a message outlining the Conference and institutional philosophy on ethics and sportsmanship. *(Revised October 2006)*

**4.2 Acts in Violation of Sportsmanship Policy.** Conduct by athletes, coaches and other institutional athletics personnel who act in an unsporting manner is subject to sanction. Violations of the Conference sportsmanship policy shall include, but are not limited to, the following: *(Revised October 2006, August 2021)*

- a. Striking, attempting to strike or otherwise physically abusing an official, coach, spectator or student-athlete;
- b. Intentionally inciting participants or spectators to inappropriate action;
- c. Using obscene gestures or unduly provocative language or action toward a game official, Conference personnel, another institution, a student-athlete or personnel of another institution, coach or spectator;
- d. Ejection from a contest; and
- e. Publicly criticizing or disparaging a game official, the Conference or its personnel, another institution, a student-athlete or personnel of another institution.
- f. A student-athlete feigning injury in a football contest.

**4.3 Processing Alleged Violations.** Allegations of misconduct generally shall be reported to the Commissioner (or designee) within 24 hours of the incident. Within 72 hours of learning of an alleged violation of this section, the Commissioner (or designee), in consultation with the institution, shall establish a timetable and investigate the alleged violation. Within the same 72-hour period, unless extenuating circumstances exist and/or the involved parties agree to an adjusted timeframe, the Commissioner (or designee) shall determine an appropriate penalty, which may be the acceptance of the institution's action. *(Revised October 2006)*

The institution may appeal the Commissioner's (or designee)'s findings and decision to the Joint Council Executive Committee (JCEC). All decisions to appeal must have the written approval of the institution's president. The decision to appeal shall be made immediately and in no case shall the time to make such decision exceed 24 hours. The JCEC then shall hear the appeal as expeditiously as possible. Telephone conference calls are an acceptable means for the parties involved to process the alleged violations. The decision of the JCEC may be appealed to the full Joint Council. The decision of the full Joint Council may be appealed to the Board of Directors, which shall be the final authority on all such matters. All such appeals shall be processed as expeditiously as possible, and the enforcement of any penalties shall be held in abeyance until a final resolution to the case is achieved. (*Revised October 2006, May 2009*)

**4.4 Penalties.** Below are the penalties for acts in violation of the Mountain West sportsmanship policy. The Commissioner or their designee, at their discretion, may impose alternatives to the sanctions listed below if he deems it warranted. (*Revised October 2004, October 2006, April 2007*)

**4.4.1 Physical Abuse.** An individual who strikes, attempts to strike or otherwise physically abuses an official, coach, spectator or student-athlete shall be subject to the following penalties:

**4.4.1.1 First Offense.** Suspension for at least one contest and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.

**4.4.1.2 Subsequent Offenses.** Suspension for at least two contests and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.

**4.4.1.3 Statute of Limitations.** An individual penalized for physical abuse shall have that offense retained on the permanent record for the duration of their time in the Mountain West, thus subjecting that individual to cumulative penalties for future offenses.

**4.4.2 Incitement to Inappropriate Action.** An individual who intentionally incites participants or spectators to inappropriate action shall be subject to the following penalties:

**4.4.2.1 First Offense.** Suspension for at least one contest and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.

**4.4.2.2 Subsequent Offenses.** Suspension for one season of competition and public announcement through standard Conference channels.

**4.4.2.3 Statute of Limitations.** An individual penalized for incitement to inappropriate action shall have that offense retained on the permanent record for the duration of their time in the Mountain West, thus subjecting that individual to cumulative penalties for future offenses.

**4.4.3 Obscene Gestures and Language.** An individual who uses obscene gestures or unduly provocative language or action toward a game official, Conference personnel, another institution, a student-athlete or personnel of another institution, coach or spectator shall be subject to the following penalties:

**4.4.3.1 First Offense.** Public reprimand.

**4.4.3.2 Subsequent Offenses.** Suspension for at least two contests and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.

**4.4.3.3 Statute of Limitations.** An individual penalized for obscene gestures or language shall have their record expunged one calendar year from the date of the latest offense, provided that individual has no further offenses during that time period.

**4.4.4 Ejection from a Contest.** An individual who is ejected from a contest shall be subject to the following penalties: *(Adopted October 2006; Revised April 2007, June 2007)*

**4.4.4.1 First Offense.** Private reprimand, unless aggravating circumstances require a more stringent penalty. *(Adopted October 2006)*

**4.4.4.2 Second Offense.** Suspension for at least one contest and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition. *(Revised June 2007)*

**4.4.4.3 Subsequent Offenses.** Suspension for at least two contests and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition. *(Adopted October 2006; Revised April 2007, June 2007)*

**4.4.4.4 Baseball and Softball Ejections.** In baseball and softball, the Commissioner, or designee, has the sole discretion in determining if an offense is a standard or unsporting ejection, and shall consider the umpire's report, box score, video evidence, coach submission, and any other relevant information available when making that determination. Once the determination is made, the individual is subjected to the following penalties: *(Adopted November 2019)*

**4.4.4.4.1 Standard Ejection.** In standard ejections, the ejection will be recorded, but will not trigger a private reprimand, nor will the ejection start the individual's statute of limitations clock (as defined in 4.4.4.5 below). *(Adopted November 2019)*

**4.4.4.4.2 Unsporting Ejection.** In unsporting ejections, the ejection will generate a private reprimand and start the individual's statute of limitations clock (as defined in 4.4.4.5 below). If the individual is subjected to another standard or unsporting ejection before the statute of limitations has completely run, the individual may be suspended. *(Adopted November 2019)*

**4.4.4.5 Statute of Limitations.** An individual penalized for an ejection from a contest shall have their record expunged one calendar year from the date of the latest offense, provided that individual has no further offenses during that time period. *(Adopted October 2006; Revised June 2007)*

**4.4.4.5.1 Exception – Baseball and Softball.** In baseball and softball, a head coach penalized for an ejection from a contest shall have their record expunged at the end of the playing season. *(Adopted December 2018)*

**4.4.4.5.2 Exception – Women’s Soccer.** In women’s soccer, an individual ejected from a contest for a non-violent denial of goal-scoring opportunity (per NCAA Soccer Rules 12.7.4.4, 12.7.4.5 and 12.7.4.6) penalty will not be subject to the one calendar year statute of limitations. Similarly, ejections due to a second caution in a match shall not be subject to the one calendar year statute of limitations. *(Adopted December 2013; Revised December 2014, June 2018)*

**4.4.5 Public Criticism.** An individual affiliated with (e.g., over whom the institution and/or Conference has jurisdiction) a member institution or the Mountain West who publicly criticizes or disparages a game official, the Conference or its personnel, another institution, student-athlete or personnel of another institution shall be subject to the following penalties:

**4.4.5.1 First Offense.** Private reprimand for student-athletes and public reprimand for all others. *(Revised June 2018)*

**4.4.5.2 Second Offense.** Suspension for at least one contest and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.

**4.4.5.3 Subsequent Offenses.** Suspension for at least two contests and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.

**4.4.5.4 Statute of Limitations.** An individual penalized for public criticism shall have their record expunged one calendar year from the date of the latest offense, provided that individual has no further offenses during that time period.

**4.4.6 Suspension from a Contest.** Suspension from a contest(s) shall be imposed beginning with the next regular or postseason contest(s), shall be served in consecutive contests, and may be carried over from one season to the next. The individual suspended may be banned from attending a contest(s) during the period of the suspension. In the case of a student-athlete or coach, if the individual is permitted to attend a contest, he or she shall not be permitted to travel with the team to the contest and must make (and pay for) their own transportation and admission arrangements. A suspended coach or player may not be in the team bench area, may not participate in pre-game warm-ups or other game-related on-court/on-field activities and must stay at least 100 feet away from the team locker room. A suspended coach may participate in practice activities at home or on a road trip while suspended. A suspended student-athlete may participate in practice activities with the team for a home contest and while the team is at home prior to its departure for an away-from-home contest, but may not participate in practice activities on a road trip. In cases involving a multiple-contest road trip that exceeds the length of the suspension, parameters for the suspended individual’s travel and activities shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, considering the unique circumstances involved and prior precedent (if applicable). *(Revised October 2006, February 2008)*

**4.4.7 Feigning Injuries in a Football Contest.** Following a review by the Conference office of all available evidence, should it be determined that an injury was feigned by a student-athlete during a football contest, the head football coach will be subject to the following penalties (Adopted August 2021):

**4.4.7.1 First Offense.** Public reprimand for the head football coach and football program.

**4.4.7.2 Second Offense.** Suspension for at least one contest and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.

**4.4.7.3 Subsequent Offenses.** Suspension for at least two contests and public announcement through standard Conference channels. The penalty shall not exceed one season of competition.