

# **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

## **1. SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

- a. Disciplinary Principles, Objectives & Procedures**
- b. Player Code of Conduct**
- c. Family/Caregiver Code of Conduct**

### **Preamble:**

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sport are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles:

1. Trustworthiness
2. Respect
3. Responsibility
4. Fairness
5. Caring
6. Good Citizenship

The highest potential of sports success are achieved when players, coaches & volunteers reflect these **“six pillars of character”**. In an effort to achieve this potential, SNAP Sports has developed and will enforce Codes of Conduct for every level of membership in the organization.

### **Guiding Principles**

- All players, families, coaches and volunteers have the right to a safe, fun and respectful sporting experience.
- Disciplinary actions seek to understand and respect each individual player’s special needs so that they can receive the support and guidance that will enable them to participate with SNAP Sports.
- Coaches and volunteers have the responsibility to be aware of, and understand the special needs of the athletes so that their actions do not contribute to the escalation of the potentially negative or unsafe situation.
- Coaches and volunteers should be vigilant in supporting one another, and the athlete in question, in the event of an escalating situation.

### **Objectives:**

- To ensure that the player is not compromising his or her safety or the safety of all other members of SNAP Sports and any team they are engaged with.
- To ensure the player recognizes her or his inappropriate behavior,
- To offer encouragement with concrete and specific support for improving their behavior and/or social skills
- To secure a commitment from the player and their parent/caregiver, to comply with the expectations of SNAP Sports.
- To ensure that members of SNAP Sports Staff and the Participating Athletes are being treated with dignity and respect.
- To ensure that coaches and volunteers have the training and support necessary to provide an appropriate environment

# **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

## **a. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Whenever possible, the disciplinary procedures and subsequent actions seek to support players with special needs in understanding the concerns and issues identified and provide positive strategies for improvement. It is intended to provide support so that all players can continue to play team sports in a fun and safe environment.

However, in those instances where behavior or misconduct is sufficiently serious to constitute ***gross misconduct*** (i.e. **constituting an immediate and significant threat to the safety of self or others**), the SNAP Sports player may be removed from athletic action without notice by the coaches. That instance will be reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee and until the SNAP Sports Board of Directors makes a ruling, that player will be temporarily suspended from playing ***any/all*** sports under the SNAP Sports banner.

### **Disciplinary Action:**

These disciplinary procedures strive to understand that players may have intellectual, behavioral or intellectual challenges and may not benefit from consequence based disciplinary action that increases in severity with the number of offenses. These procedures are meant to decrease the negative behavior and provide a guideline to assist the coaching staff. Understanding that each offense will be dealt with in the same manner starting with the informal verbal warning seeks to provide transparency and consistency.

### **Disciplinary Committee is made up of:**

- ***Rob Muir***, President SNAP Sports
- ***Mike Doggett***, Director of Coaching SNAP Sports
- A representative approved by the SNAP Sports Board of Directors

### **Informal Disciplinary Action**

Informal disciplinary action will be always be used in situations where the player's behavior or conduct can reasonably be defined as a **minor and an isolated instance**.

Such matters should be addressed promptly by coaches, and in non-game situations, volunteers and/or board members by way of an informal discussion (debriefing).

The use of the Informal Procedure is simply an aspect of normal day to day management of SNAP Sports and as such should be viewed as an opportunity for teaching and supporting players in being the best they can be.

Parents/caregivers know their players with special needs best, and hence are important partners in ensuring that any potential challenges are identified at the time of enrolment. They will be informed of and included in any informal disciplinary discussions with coaches.

# SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy

## Actions:

1. **Verbal warning- informal** – which may include sitting out until calm enough to resume play. This **“TIME OUT”** is at the coach’s discretion
2. The coaches will ensure that informal warnings are communicated to volunteers, the Executive Director and the Head Coach and documented as a means of ensuring a proactive approach and minimizing any further escalation of concerns regarding the special needs player.
3. May include an opportunity to debrief so the situation or event can be reviewed to facilitate an improved outcome the next time so that future events are managed better or avoided.

## Examples where the Informal Procedure may be appropriate include:

- Inappropriate language in the dressing room or on ice/field
- Verbal/written harassment of team mates, officials, coaches volunteers, spectators or opposing team – face to face or via social media

Depending on the situation, the coach/volunteer should make it clear that if the required improvement does **not** take place, consideration will be given to the use of the **Formal Procedure**.

## Formal Disciplinary Action

Formal disciplinary action will be always be used in situations where players behavior or conduct can **reasonably be said to be unsafe or injurious** to SNAP Sports participants. Such matters are addressed by the Disciplinary Committee by way of formal discussions.

In using the **Formal Disciplinary** process and determining whether the special needs player has committed a **“misconduct”** or **‘gross misconduct’**, the burden of proof requires a dispassionate and objective assessment of the facts and strong respectful understanding of the capacities and limitations of the special needs player.

## The Formal Procedure will be applied where a player:

- Does not respond appropriately or adequately to informal disciplinary action or in a timely manner.
- When the disciplinary committee believes that the breach of conduct that is believed to have occurred is too serious to be dealt with informally.
- Behaves in a manner that puts the player, coaches, volunteers or other teams at risk of injury.

# **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

## **Actions:**

1. May include sitting out until calm. The “Time Out”. The parent/guardian/ caregiver are informed by the coaches.
2. May include removal from the game by the coach with a written note outlining the offense or inappropriate behavior as well as written expectations for reducing risk of repeating the misconduct.
3. Will include an opportunity to debrief so the situation or event can be reviewed to facilitate an improved outcome the next time so that future events are managed better or avoided.
4. The President will convene the Disciplinary Committee to review the breach of the Code of Conduct.

## **Examples of behavior that may constitute misconduct resulting in disciplinary action are:**

- Inappropriate and/or repeated physical aggression
- Repeated swearing/verbal aggression
- Repeated name calling, making negative comments about peers or other SNAP Sports participants during SNAP Sports events or via Social Media.

## **Information Gathering Process**

Before formal disciplinary action can take place, a wholly impartial process must be undertaken to collect information relating to the allegations and to determine whether the situation should proceed to a disciplinary meeting. A representative from the Disciplinary Committee will be appointed by SNAP Sports Board of Directors to collect information and make recommendations. This individual must meet the following criteria:

- Be wholly independent and have no connection whatsoever to the matter under investigation;
- Have experience in relating to individuals with disabilities and be able to solicit information at a level that is consistent with the players abilities.
- Be able to undertake the investigation promptly and unless there is particular complexity or non-availability of key interviewees, complete enquiries and provide a recommendation within 10 working days, indicating what action, if any, should be considered.

# **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

As a result of the information gathering process the following actions may be taken:

1. No action required. The allegations were not in violation of the Code Of Conduct.
2. Recommend that the Disciplinary Committee meet to review the information gathered.
  - a. As a minimum requirement the Committee will always meet when the violation of the Code of Conduct may result in a short term or longer term withdrawal of sport privileges
  - b. When the special needs player has repeatedly violated the Code of Conduct and previous consequences and supports have not been successful.

## **The Disciplinary Meeting**

Before the meeting...

- The player and family members/guardians/caregivers if appropriate will be advised by the President/VP both verbally and in writing of the purpose of the meeting and the details of the complaint.
- The SNAP Sports Board of Directors will be notified in a timely manner that a disciplinary meeting is being convened.
- The special needs player will be given a minimum of 5 working days notice of the disciplinary meeting. If possible the player will be supported at the meeting by a family members/guardians/caregivers or community support person.
- The disciplinary committee will try to be flexible to ensure the special needs player can attend.

**Note:** This meeting will normally only be re-arranged once, except in exceptional circumstances.

Should either the disciplinary committee or the special needs player wish to call any witnesses to the disciplinary meeting they must let both parties know in advance.

At the meeting either party may present evidence including details of previous relevant warnings, witness statements, call witnesses and have the opportunity to ask questions.

## **Warnings and Penalties**

The outcome of the disciplinary meeting may include:-

- Written recommendations that may or may not include suspension(s)
- Expectation of acknowledge of responsibility
- Possible withdrawal of sports privileges with SNAP Sports. Where behavior or misconduct is sufficiently serious to constitute gross misconduct (i.e. compromised safety of self or others), the special needs player will be removed from playing sports with SNAP Sports without notice. In exceptional cases an alternative sanction will be applied.

## **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

The player, family members/guardians/caregivers, coaches and/or volunteers in question will be provided with written information – clearly indicating which violation of the Code of Conduct is being addressed. This information should also

- Clearly state the expectation for change
- Identify consequence(s) for not meeting the expectations
- Identify how special needs player will be supported by SNAP Sports to meet the expectations.

### **Action:**

Once the meeting is over the Disciplinary Committee will inform the player, family/guardian/caregiver, coach and/or volunteer in question, if appropriate, what the next steps are, who will contact them for further information or communication and indicate to them when they will be informed of the outcome of the disciplinary meeting. Family members/guardians/caregivers, coaches and volunteers will be informed that a recommendation will go to the SNAP Sports Board of Directors.

### **At the conclusion of the investigation the Disciplinary Committee will:**

- Provide the SNAP Sports Board of Directors with a written report. The written report will include a recommendation for the Board to consider.
- Upon receipt of the report, the SNAP Sports Board of Directors must decide what action should be taken.
- The recommended action will be put forward to SNAP Sports board of directors as a motion to vote on and to accept, reject or amend.

The player, family/guardian, coach and/or volunteer, if appropriate, will be advised in person/by phone and in writing of the outcome within 10 working days unless a longer period is specified and can be justified.

# **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

## ***b. Player Code of Conduct***

### **Attendance & Eligibility**

***In order to be eligible for Tournament & Travel teams you are REQUIRED to...***

- Attend **75%** of all scheduled practices of the enrolled sport.

***However...***

- If an athlete, due to illness or injury, or personal leave, has attended less than the required 75% of scheduled practices, the head coach & SNAP Sports BOD will make a determination on the athlete's status.
- If an athlete fails to complete the attendance requirement, he/she ***can continue*** to practice with the team until they are reinstated to the Travel/Tournament Team by the Head Coach.
- Terms of reinstatement to be determined on a case by case basis by Head Coach.

### **Practice and Competition**

***In order to remain a member of SNAP Sports you are REQUIRED to...***

- Learn and follow the rules of any sport you compete in.
- Keep sports equipment clean and in good condition.
- Not abuse or misuse my equipment.
- Listen to your coaches and the officials and ask questions when you do not understand.
- Always give your best effort.
- Not participate in fighting or rough play.

### **Sportsmanship**

***In order to remain a member of SNAP Sports you are REQUIRED to...***

- Always use good sportsmanship.
- Act like a teammate on and off the ice/field.
- Act in ways that bring respect to you, your coaches, your team and SNAP Sports.
- ***Not*** swear or insult other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.
- ***Not*** fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.
- ***Not*** use abusive language at any time.
- ***Not*** use verbal intimidation or physical threats at any time.

### **Personal Responsibility**

***In order to remain a member of SNAP Sports you are REQUIRED to...***

- Not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.
- Not drink ***alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs*** while representing SNAP Sports at training sessions, competitions or during games.
- Not take drugs for the purpose of improving your performance.

***VIOLATION OF ANY ITEM ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT WILL RESULT  
IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION OUTLINED IN THIS DOCUMENT***

# **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

## ***c. Family/Caregiver Code of Conduct***

SNAP Sports asks for your cooperation while attending our events here in Santa Clarita, and on the road as visitors at other facilities.

As a guest of SNAP Sports, you are **REQUIRED** to refrain from:

- Any abusive, obscene or racial language directed at any official, player, coach, parent or other fans.
- Any disruptive or unruly behavior during a practice or game.
- Any behavior deemed inappropriate, in a private facility, or as defined by SNAP Sports or the American Special Hockey Association (ASHA).

**NOTE:** Penalties may be imposed by SNAP Sports and are the responsibility of the offender.

## **SNAP Sports Zero Tolerance Policy**

In an effort to keep all sports a more desirable and rewarding experience for all participants, SNAP Sports has instructed the Officials to adhere to certain points of emphasis relating to sportsmanship. This program requires all players, coaches, officials, team officials, administrators and parents/spectators to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during and after SNAP Sports sanctioned games.

The following points of emphasis will be implemented by all **TEAM & SPORT OFFICIALS**.

### **Players**

A disciplinary action for ***unsportsmanlike conduct*** (*Zero Tolerance*) **MAY** be assessed whenever a player:

1. Openly disputes or argues any decision by an official.
2. Uses obscene or vulgar language at any time, including any swearing, even if it is not directed at a particular person.
3. Visually demonstrates any sign of dissatisfaction with an official's decision. Any time that a player persists in any of these actions, they shall be assessed a misconduct penalty. A game misconduct shall result if the player continues such action.

### **Parents / Spectators**

The game **MAY** be stopped by officials when the parents/spectators displaying inappropriate and disruptive behavior interfere with other spectators or the game.

## **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

The officials will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of removing parents/spectators from the spectators viewing and game area. SNAP Sports management **MAY** ban disruptive spectators and/or parents from future games and practices, for any violation of the Zero Tolerance rules articulated here.

Once removed, play will resume. Lost time will not be replaced and violators **MAY** be subject to further disciplinary action by the local governing body. This inappropriate and disruptive behavior shall include:

Use of obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to anyone at anytime. Taunting of players, coaches, officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threatening or engaging in physical violence.

Throwing of any object in the spectators viewing area, player's bench, penalty box or on ice surface, directed in any manner as to create a safety hazard.

### **Parent – Coach 24 Hour Rule**

Parents **may not** approach coaches to voice complaints or displeasure with coaching decisions immediately following a game or practice. Parents must arrange a meeting through the team manager to meet with the coach. At the meeting, all questions and concerns will be addressed by the coach, in an effort to move towards a resolution.

Individuals in violation of this policy will be contacted by the operations committee, may face sanctions that may lead to suspension.

SNAP Sports shall be informed of all controversies, with the express goal of acting as a mediator, in order to reach a common understanding, resolve an issue, or refer the matter to SNAP Sports committee for resolution.

It is recommended that any displeasure with coaching decisions be handled by the adults in a mature manner and not involve players. This will help maintain the positive atmosphere we want to encourage, without jeopardizing the coach – player relationship.

***VIOLETION OF ANY ITEM ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT WILL RESULT  
IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION OUTLINED IN THIS DOCUMENT***

# **SNAP Sports Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy**

## **Debriefing**

**By Definition:** A process to review a key event, to examine what occurred and to facilitate an improved outcome the next time so that future events are managed better or avoided.

### **Debriefing Questions**

- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- What did we learn?

The most important aspect of debriefing is that it really provides an opportunity to learn from the special needs player(s) who went through the event and involve them in the solutions.

The first goal we must recognize is that there is an emotional impact after an event and our goal is to support our players and the coaches and volunteers that support them.

The second goal is to prevent the future negative events and assist the player and coaches/volunteers in identifying what led to the incident and what could have been done differently.

Depending on the event it is important to recognize that our special needs players experience strong emotions during these situations. Emotions are often high and range from:

- Anxiety
- Anger
- Fear
- Irrational thinking/confusion
- Shame/embarrassment
- Denial

For many of our special needs players – the debriefing process may be effective soon after the event, but for some and in some situations – the debriefing will not be effective until they are calm and can participate in the discussion.