

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Preamble

The Queensland Softball Association Inc (QSA) recognises the importance of providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all those who participate in softball in Queensland.

The QSA does not tolerate abuse in any of its forms, and has developed this policy to clearly outline the processes and penalties to be applied.

This policy is to be read and applied, where applicable, in conjunction with the QSA/ASF Codes of Conduct/Ethics, Member Protection Policy, QSA Constitution Rules 12, 13, 14 and By-Law 14.

This policy is adopted by all member District and Affiliated Associations within QSA to ensure a common acceptable standard of behaviour, processes and penalties are applied.

The penalties associated with this policy are outlined and should be followed as a component of this policy. Penalties may change and/or categories added at the discretion of the Board of QSA.

Objective

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Remove personal abuse and unsportsmanlike behaviour from all aspects surrounding the game of softball in Queensland
- Protect all participants from exposure to such behaviour.
- Provide a consistent application of processes and penalties for breaches to the Codes of Conduct/Ethics

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to:

- (a) Administrators of softball in Queensland at State, District Association and Club level, be they employed or volunteer
- (b) Players in activities and events held by or under the auspices of QSA and member District Associations
- (c) Coaches of teams and players in activities and events held by or under the auspices of QSA and member District Associations
- (d) Umpires of games in activities and events held by or under the auspices of QSA and member District Associations
- (e) Managers of teams participating in activities and events held by or under the auspices of QSA and member District Associations
- (f) Scorers of games in activities and events held by or under the auspices of QSA and member District Associations
- (g) Registered participants when involved as a spectator of games in activities and events held by or under the auspices of QSA and member District Associations
- (h) Spectators of games in activities and events held by or under the auspices of QSA and member District Associations.

Definitions

“Match”	A match is defined as an officially organised softball game that is part of a schedule, roster or draw regardless of competition level that the player would normally or had normally participated in.
“QSA Commissioner”	Refer QSA By-Law 14.3
“Member District Association”	Refer to QSA Constitution Rule 6.1.1
“Affiliated Association”	Refer to QSA Constitution Rule 6.1.3
“Category”	Is the Category of Violation as listed in this Policy.
“Penalty”	Is the punishment imposed as stated in this Policy or imposed by the QSA Commissioner or Judiciary Committee
“Official”	Is any person appointed to an official position of QSA, it’s Affiliated or Member District Associations or their Registered Clubs.
“Registered Participant”	Is any person registered with QSA through their club, District Association or QSA.
“Spectator.”	A person observing a game of softball or its associated activities including training, from a position in the immediate vicinity (defined as within ear shot) of those activities.

Policy

A registered participant in organised softball within Queensland or any spectator will not indulge in any unsportsmanlike behaviour towards another participant or spectator involved in a recognised softball activity including organised training and will adhere to the relevant Code of Conduct/Ethics and Member Protection Policy.

Unsportsmanlike behaviour will include, but not be limited to:

- Verbal abuse and threats
- Physical abuse and/or assault
- Discrimination (as described in Part 6 of the Member Protection Policy)
- Harassment (as set out in Part 5 of the Member Protection Policy)
- Making derogatory statements or gestures
- Cheating
- Visible dissention of a decision of an umpire or official in an unsportsmanlike manner
- Equipment Abuse

(NOTE: Unsportsmanlike behaviour applies to both the instigation of and response to any incident.)

Categories of Offence & Penalty

Unsportsmanlike behaviour has been broken up into a number of categories of violation to determine the most appropriate penalty to be applied for breaches to this policy. These penalties may change from time to time. Applicable penalties (match suspensions) for each category of offence are also shown.

These categories are:

Category of Violation	Incident	Penalties		
		1 st Offence	2 nd Offence	3 rd Offence
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of audible* foul language Disputing judgment or decision of an umpire Minor Equipment Abuse Frivolous complaints (first incident) 	Warning	1 match	2 match
P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rough play, barging, pushing etc Displays of inappropriate aggressive behaviour Disparaging or insulting remarks and/or the use of foul language directed toward another player/official/umpire. Answering back an umpire Failing to carry out a lawful direction of an umpire 	1 match	2 match	4 match
P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answering back an umpire on multiple occasions Abusing an umpire or official Deliberately barging with force Displays of excessive aggressive behaviour Frivolous complaint (second and further incidents) Major Equipment abuse where there is potential to injure participants and/or spectators 	2 match	4 match	8 match
P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fighting after being provoked Provoking a fight but no further involvement 	3 match	6 match	12 match
P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provocation and/or involvement in physical violence Threatening an umpire, official or player 	6 match	Full year	Refer Judiciary
P6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically attacking an umpire, official or player 	1 year	Refer Judiciary	Refer Judiciary
P7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melee* 	\$500 fine per club involved and game forfeited	Refer Judiciary	Refer Judiciary
P9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other as determined by the QSA Commissioner 			

Note 1: Melee involves multiple players per team involved in the incident

Note 2: Items P2-P6 shall invoke an automatic ejection from the match involved

Note 3: Any suspension applies to the next match/s which the offender would otherwise normally have participated in (ie grade registered in) regardless of level of competition including representation.

Note 4: Note special provisions apply in relation to offences involving trainee and club appointed (non-accredited) umpires and junior and /or trainee officials (eg coaches, scorers).

Note 5: 'Audible' means able to be clearly heard by spectators.

Process and Handling:

1. On Field (The Game) Incidents

Team Members (Players & Officials): The incident is to be reported to the QSA Commissioner and processed as per QSA By-Law 14.3.

Other Official or Umpire: The incident is to be reported to the QSA Commissioner and processed as per QSA By-Law 14.3.

Special Circumstances – Trainee/Club Appointed (non-accredited) Umpires and Trainee and Junior Officials (Coaches, Scorers etc)

QSA does not tolerate abuse of trainee and club appointed (non-accredited) umpires, nor junior and/or trainee officials participating in softball in any capacity. For incidents of abuse involving junior, trainee and club umpires and officials, the penalties prescribed above are doubled and the first offence for P1 is one *subsequent* match.

Teams will be advised at the pre-game meeting or consultation that a trainee or club umpire is officiating at that match.

2. Off Field (Non-Game) Incidents

Registered Participant: Any person witnessing or aggrieved by any unsportsmanlike acts or alleged breaches of codes of conduct/ethics by any registered participant shall report the incident to:

- (a) The District Association Secretary for incidents at the local level and/or
- (b) QSA General Manager (including incidents relating to QSA personnel including representative team/squad members) and/or
- (c) QSA Representative for incidents at a State Championship or QSA conducted events.

Such report should be lodged immediately in person or in writing to the relevant authority. On receipt of the report, an enquiry will be undertaken by a person appointed by the District Association, QSA General Manager or at a QSA Event, undertaken personally by the QSA Representative. A report is to be provided to the relevant authority and the offending party together with any recommendations and/or penalties to be applied.

Parents and Spectators: Any person witnessing or aggrieved by any unsportsmanlike acts or alleged breaches to the codes of conduct/ethics, by any spectator may report the incident to the QSA or District Association official on duty immediately upon witnessing the incident.

The QSA or DA official will investigate the complaint immediately following the procedures as set out in the Spectator/Parent Policy.

3. Harassment/Discrimination Incidents

A person who is aggrieved by the actions of another person in terms of harassment or discrimination shall lodge a complaint as per the procedures set out in the QSA Member Protection Policy.

Disputing An Umpire's Decision

Disputing an umpire's decision is not permitted in any circumstance. Questions on interpretation should be quickly resolved or a protest entered. Protracted haggling about interpretation is also not permitted.

Special Penalty – Trainee and Club Appointed (non-accredited) Umpires

If a team member disputes the decision of a Trainee or Club Appointed Umpire, a Category P2 penalty is applied.

Querying An Application of the Rules

If a team coach or captain believes a decision regarding an application of a rule is incorrect, he/she may lodge an 'Intent to Protest' in accordance with Rule 11 of the ASF Rule Book and/or the District Association or QSA State Championship Ground Rules.

If an umpire is of the opinion that he/she may have made an error, they may seek assistance from the other umpire/s on the game and if necessary, reverse their previous decision.

The process to lodge an 'Intent to Protest' is as follows:

The Coach/Team Captain must **request** "time" and approach the Plate Umpire for formal notification. The Plate Umpire must grant 'time' at an appropriate time in play and follow the procedures as set out in Rule 11. Another umpire and/or opposition team official must be in attendance to witness the notification of 'Intent to Protest'.

Trainee Umpire - Mentoring

A trainee umpire must have an accredited umpire or DA official (mentor), in attendance at a match either on or off the field to provide the necessary support to enable them to learn and develop without the pressure of being 'left alone' to deal with situations out of their level of experience.

The 'mentor' umpire/official may enter the field of play to assist and/or apply a correct rule/process in the best interests of the game and trainee umpire. This should only be done in circumstances where the trainee umpire is 'out of their depth' and in danger of being overwhelmed by the situation. The trainee umpire may seek advice from the 'mentor' at any time during a match.

Acknowledge and Acceptance

Where a person is reported for an offence under the parameters contained within this document, he/she may desire to accept the automatic penalty (as prescribed within penalties) without a hearing or appeal. The person must acknowledge written acceptance of the incident and the resulting penalty. The QSA Commissioner must receive this notification no later than 24 hours following advice of the Commissioner's decision regarding the offence and accompanying penalty.

In these cases the penalty will be halved with the exception of Category P6 which remains unchanged, P2 which remains at 1 game and P4 the penalty will be reduced to 2 games.

Appeal

Appeals against penalties must be lodged and handled in accordance of QSA Rule 14. A person will remain suspended until the appeal against such finding has been adjudicated upon.

Serving of Penalties

Penalties apply to the next match/s which the offender would otherwise normally have participated in regardless of level of competition. This includes when a person is dual registered within one association, plays in more than one association (home association and permit association/s) and includes QSA/District Association representation.

Penalties not completed by the end of the current playing season shall carry over to the next and if necessary, to a subsequent playing season.

Transfer of Penalties

Any penalty invoked by QSA or a member District Association is transferable to another. Where a player clears, transfers or permits to another State or District Association, a check must be completed on existing penalties during the clearance/transfer/permit process to ascertain any outstanding penalties/suspensions. Any portion of a penalty NOT served at one association will be deemed to apply to the next association and the person under suspension must not be permitted to participate until the full suspension has been served. ***Penalty: An additional eight (8) match suspension, \$500 fine on the District Association and \$500 fine on the club, plus forfeiture of the game/s points, which knowingly permits a person to participate whilst under suspension.***

Register of Suspensions/Penalties

The QSA Commissioner, QSA Database Manager and each District Association must maintain a register of penalties or suspensions which is to detail the persons full name and address, the category of offence, penalty invoked, the date invoked and the date penalty will be served out.

A persons record will be cleared after the following time has been served:

1. Suspension from 0 – 4 matches 1 year from completion of last penalty served
2. Suspension from 6 – 12 matches 2 years from completion of last penalty served
3. Suspension for 1 year 5 years from completion of last penalty served

If a person re-offends after his/her record has been cleared, it will be reactivated from the time the new penalty is applied.

Note: A persons file on the register will remain active for all time.

Unfair Action

Where an official or umpire has, in the opinion of the coach, team or club official, not adjudicated or administered fairly then a complaint may be lodged with QSA for investigation and, if necessary, further action. The QSA General Manager will appoint an independent person to conduct the investigation.

Frivolous or Malicious Complaints

Upon investigation of a complaint, should the person conducting the complaint find that it is frivolous, a warning will be given in the first instance. If a complaint is deemed to be malicious the person making the complaint shall be brought to appear before the QSA Judiciary Committee.