**Sportsmanship best practices**

**Play Fair, Stay Safe: The Spirit of Sportsmanship**

Lacrosse is on the rise! With new players, parents and coaches there are more opportunities to play with integrity and respect from spectators and commentators to participants and regulators.

USA Lacrosse encourages safety and respect on and off the field. We envision integrity and honor at the forefront of all involvement with the game. This is regulated by a three-part system that includes upholding a code of conduct, reporting and handling actions of misconduct, and reintegration into the lacrosse community.

Sportsmanship Code of Conduct:

* **Create a code of conduct:** A code of conduct should be created to ensure that everyone involved in the lacrosse experience acts within the best interests of the community. Please reference usalacrosse.com/xxx for an example of a sportsmanship code of conduct.
* **Emphasize respect and inclusivity:** The code should emphasize respect and include all of those involved with the sport. There needs to be balance and trust for everyone to carry out their responsibilities regardless of their title.
* **Require document signatures:** This code should be required to be signed by all involvements within the sport, including but not limited to players, spectators, coaches, managers, officials, score operators, and more. This ensures that they are bound by their word and accept any disciplinary actions.

Reporting and Handling Misconduct:

* **Report Misconduct:** Encourage players, coaches, and spectators to report any observed violations of the code of conduct promptly. If possible, utilize a sideline manager or field manager that can work in tandem with officials and coaching staff to swiftly enforce disciplinary actions on site.
* **Establish Procedures:** Establish a clear and confidential process for reviewing and addressing incidents of misconduct with a timeline for the board. This can be utilized when issues occur and allows reports to understand how things progress, so they feel heard.
* **Implement Consequences**: Implement appropriate consequences for misconduct while ensuring fairness and consistency in disciplinary actions. If the conduct is dismissed, explain how the board came to that conclusion to provide transparency.

Reintegration into the Lacrosse Community:

* **Hear Each Other Out:** Foster open dialogue and create a supportive environment that promotes personal growth and accountability. Sports naturally bring about challenges and occasional unfair situations, which require effective problem-solving, communication, and resilience. Healthy communication channels help to address frustrations early, preventing them from escalating into burnout or unsportsmanlike behavior.
* **Provide Resources and New Outlooks:** Offer educational processes or resources to help individuals understand and correct their behavior. This may include shifting goals from just “winning” to what participants want to accomplish in a game, learning more about the misconduct that took place, or practicing emotional regulation.
* **Celebrate Your Impact:** The goal is to enjoy the game in a safe and fair manner. We appreciate all sides of those involved in sportsmanship from reporters to regulators, participants and more. Celebrate the progress and accomplishments for reintegration of members of the community that fosters safety and respect for the game above all else.