

OSSAA Fighting and Profanity Rule

(Rule 4 – Conduct of Students, OSSAA Handbook)

The OSSAA fighting and profanity rule states that a student whose flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct consists of fighting, cursing or using foul language toward a game official will be automatically suspended from participating in the next two games or contests his/her team plays. Fighting is defined, but is not limited to any player or non-player (bench personnel) striking an opponent with arms(s), leg(s), foot (feet), or other object(s), regardless if there is contact with an opponent; or instigating a fight by committing an act(s), that causes an opponent to retaliate by fighting related to an OSSAA sponsored activity in which the players and non-players are participating. A player or non-player who retaliates by fighting is in violation of the fighting rule.

The OSSAA expects game officials to enforce the fighting and profanity rule when it applies. The rule provides for severe punishment against the offender. Since the rule has been in effect, it has helped reduce the number of incidents in relation to fighting and profanity. It is not the responsibility of game officials to decide if the punishment is too severe; it is their duty to apply the rule if it is warranted and to report ejections to the OSSAA.

In relation to applying the fighting part of the rule, officials should be sure that fighting is taking place. In the heat of battle, participants sometimes simply push each other with open hands or their fists. This action could constitute unsportsmanlike conduct but is not fighting. Officials can use and must use "common sense officiating" to prevent any further pushing between opponents. Simply step in between the participants and tell them to "knock it off." This gives them a chance to get control of their emotions and lets them know that the officials have had enough of this type conduct. Also, let the head coach know you have a potential problem with the player (s) by letting the wing official communicate this information to the coach. This gives the coach a chance to pull the player for a play or two until the player(s) is emotionally ready to participate again.

We at the OSSAA are not suggesting that officials overlook unsportsmanlike behavior, but suggest we can appeal to the rational side of the participants and coaches, at the same time, keep the game under control. If the participants and coaches do not respond to the official's request, then turn to the other options that are available.

If it is obvious that a participant(s) has made a fist and struck an opponent (violation of fighting), then the action of the official is to eject the participant(s) who are involved in fighting. Be sure to notify the head coach that the participant(s) is being ejected for fighting. Record the participant (s) jersey number and his first/last name on your card. After the game or no later than the next day, follow up with an e-mail report (the instructions for filing are on the website) concerning the incident to the OSSAA. We do not need a dissertation or thesis, just the who, what, when, and where.

If a participant uses profanity toward an official, the participant is to be ejected from the game. There simply is no place for this type behavior on the secondary school level of competition. Follow the same notification procedure to the head coach and an email to office. NOTE: Both of these ejections for fighting and use of profanity toward an official is unsportsmanlike conduct and carries a 15-yard penalty.