

# **Texas Association of Sports Officials Code of Ethics**

## **SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

Member officials of the Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO) have a duty to act as impartial judges of interscholastic sports competitions. This duty carries with it an obligation to perform with accuracy, fairness and objectivity. Though member officials work contests played by amateur athletes, every official must approach each game assignment in a professional manner. Because of their role in athletic competition, member officials must have a high degree of commitment and expertise. It is because of this role that a high ethical standard is imposed on TASO members.

## **SECTION 2 - PURPOSE**

This Code of Ethics is designed to provide TASO members a set of guidelines and ethical standards to govern their behavior and conduct and to recognize the need to preserve and encourage confidence in the sports officiating profession.

## **SECTION 3 - CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT**

Each member of the TASO:

1. Shall be free of obligation to any interest other than the independent, impartial and fair judging of interscholastic sports competitions. Game decisions which are slanted by personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.
2. Shall recognize that anything which may give the appearance of or lead to a conflict of interest, either real or apparent, must be avoided. Gifts, favors, special treatment, privileges, employment, or a personal relationship with an individual, school, or team which may compromise the perceived impartiality of an official must be avoided.
3. Has an obligation to treat other officials with professional dignity and courtesy.
4. Shall never publicly criticize another official or the association, or express disagreement with another official when a spectator.
5. Has a responsibility to continuously seek self-improvement through study of the game rules, mechanics and techniques of game management.
6. Shall work to eliminate from the officiating profession all practices which are a discredit to the profession and the association.
7. Shall not be a party to any action designed to unfairly limit or restrain access to officiating, officiating assignments or membership in the association. This includes, but is not limited to actions based on race, creed, color, age, sex religion, physical handicap or national origin.

8. Shall be in good physical condition, be both mentally and physically prepared to officiate and be prompt for all officiating assignments.
9. Shall at all times display actions that are a credit to the officiating profession and the association.
10. Shall wear the proper uniform and patches (if applicable) as prescribed by the association.
11. Shall promptly pay all dues, assessments, fines, complete all testing and other membership requirements and file all required reports.
12. Shall not accept any officiating assignment unless they are in good standing with their local chapter.
13. Shall follow the association's prescribed mechanics and approved techniques in all officiating assignments.
14. Shall avoid the use of tobacco products at game sites.
15. Shall devote sufficient time and study to the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules so that each official is able to officiate in a fair, impartial and unbiased manner

#### **SECTION 4 - STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Each member of the TASO must avoid any action, whether or not specifically stated in this code, which might result in or create the appearance of a violation of these standards of conduct which include, but are not limited to:

1. Officiating any competition after having any alcoholic beverages on the day of the competition and consuming alcohol in public after officiating a game.
2. Soliciting or otherwise influencing or attempting to influence a coach, athletic director, school official or any other person for game assignments unless the official is working in an area without a chapter assignment secretary.
3. Obligating themselves to any person affiliated with any game they may be assigned to officiate.
4. Engaging with any contact, speech, activity or action which could prejudice, reflect adversely on or compromise the integrity of any member of the association.
5. Canceling an officiating assignment to accept another assignment unless such cancellation is pursuant to chapter policy regarding canceling officiating assignments.
6. Engage in scouting activities or conversations with a coach, athletic director or other school personnel regarding officiating assignments.
7. Failing to honor an officiating assignment.
8. Soliciting or accepting any gift, favor or anything of value from any person, entity, company or school serviced by, seeking affiliation with or otherwise associated with the TASO.

#### **SECTION 5 - CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

An official shall not:

1. Knowingly accept an officiating assignment if there is a TASO Chapter that makes assignments through an assignment secretary and the game was not assigned through an authorized chapter assignment procedure.
2. Knowingly accept an officiating assignment if any official assigned to the game is not a member in good standing of the appropriate TASO division.
3. Knowingly accept an officiating assignment if the official or the official's spouse is employed by a school involved in the game.
4. Knowingly accept an officiating assignment if the official is related by blood or marriage to a person affiliated with a team involved in the game.
5. Knowingly accept an officiating assignment if the official and and person affiliated with a team involved in the game are former or present teammates, roommates, classmates, business associates, clients, patients, customers or personal friends.
6. Knowingly accept an officiating assignment if the official or the official's spouse attended, is employed by or was employed by either school involved in the game within the previous five (5) years.
7. Knowingly accept an officiating assignment if the official's child attends one of the schools involved in the game or graduated from one of the schools in the previous five (5) years.

Prior to receiving games assignments for a season, each official shall notify his/her local assignment secretary in writing of all known conflicts of interest with any of the schools serviced by the local chapter. In the event a chapter assignment secretary is not aware of a conflict as set out above, the official shall promptly notify the chapter assignment secretary of any conflicts upon receipt of his/her schedule.

In the event of a conflict of interest arises following acceptance of a game assignment, the official shall notify the chapter assignment secretary as soon as possible, whereupon the official shall be removed from the game assignment without penalty. The assignment secretary shall then notify both coaches of the official's conflict and shall reassign the official to another game. With the exception of 5a and 5b above, the provisions of this Section may be waived by the mutual consent of both coaches.

Adopted: April 14, 1995

Revised: June 1, 1998