

How to enforce the code of conduct



Calm is Key

Enforcing a code of conduct at youth basketball tournaments works best when it is **clear, visible, and consistently applied** for everyone.

1. Prepare Before the Tournament

- Require all players, parents, and coaches to acknowledge the code of conduct during registration or team check-in (via an electronic waiver or a signed form).
- Post the code and key consequences on the website, schedules, and gym signage, so no one can say they “didn’t know.”
- Brief tournament staff and site directors on:
 - What behaviors trigger a warning vs. ejection?
 - Who has the authority to remove a coach, player, or spectator?
 - How to document incidents and who they report to (tournament director / MYAS / association).

2. Use a Clear, Progressive Discipline Path

Have a written, simple code of conduct and apply it consistently to everyone.

Typical progression:

- Minor issue → **Verbal reminder** (name the behavior and reference the code).
- Continued behavior → **Formal warning** and notice of next step (ejection/suspension).
- Serious or repeated behavior → **Immediate removal from the game/venue** (coach, player, or spectator).
- Severe cases (threats, violence, hate speech) → **suspension or ban from future events**, handled by the tournament or league administration.

Make sure the code itself explains this progression so consequences don't feel arbitrary.

3. Communicate Expectations Early and Often

- Have coaches review the code with their teams and parents at a pre-tournament meeting or email, and remind them that violations affect playing privileges.
- At coaches' meetings on site, restate:
 - "We will enforce the code consistently."
 - "We expect coaches to help manage their benches and parents."
- Consider a short pre-game announcement or posted script emphasizing sportsmanship and respect for officials and opponents.

4. Train Staff to Respond in the Moment

Give staff simple de-escalation steps tied to the code:

- Stay calm and neutral; don't argue calls or opinions.
- Reference the code, not personal judgment:
 - "Coach, our code requires respectful communication with officials. This behavior is a warning."
- If behavior continues, clearly state the consequence:
 - "If this continues, you will be removed from the game according to our code of conduct."

For abusive parents/fans, instruct staff to:

- Ask the coach to address their own parent first when possible.
- If that fails, a site director or security steps in with a clear warning or removal.

5. Apply Consequences Consistently

- Do **not** give extra leeway because someone is a star player, a "big" coach, or a key volunteer; inconsistent enforcement undermines trust and invites more problems.
- Use the same standard across sites and time slots so families see that expectations are real, not optional.

If a coach or parent challenges you:

- Calmly remind them they signed and/or agreed to the code and that staff are obligated to enforce it for the good of all kids.

6. Document and Follow Up

1. After any ejection or serious incident, write a brief report: who, what, when, where, and actions taken.
2. Send reports to the league/tournament director or MYAS-type body for review and possible further discipline (suspension or future-event bans).
3. Use patterns in reports (e.g., repeated issues with certain teams or sites) to adjust staffing, signage, and pre-event communication for future tournaments.

A code of conduct only works if staff are trained, supported, and backed by leadership when they **actually enforce it**, even in uncomfortable moments.

