

Roger Allen Park Association

ZERO Tolerance Policy

Harassment or Abuse of Sports Officials

*Supporting NH Senate Bill 327 - Providing penalties for the assault or harassment of sports officials.
Signed into law by Governor Chris Sununu effective January 1, 2025.*

1. PURPOSE

To protect sports officials from harassment and assault, ensuring a safe environment for all participants in sports.

2. DEFINITIONS

Assault: Any intentional act that causes physical harm or the threat of physical harm to an official. Any physical contact or contact by an object initiated by a person towards another with the intent to cause injury.

Harassment: Unwanted and aggressive behavior towards officials, including verbal abuse, threats, and intimidation. This would also include vulgar/inappropriate language or chants towards the officials or coaches of the game(s).

League Officer: Any league official with the title of President, Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer of the individual sporting leagues – Roger N. Allen Baseball, Rochester Girls Softball League, Rochester Youth Soccer Association, Rochester Youth Football League.

Event Organizer: Person(s) listed as main contacts or individual(s) “running” the specific event.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all participants in the sport, including league officials, players, coaches, team staff, and spectators.

4. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Immediate Reporting: Any incident of assault or harassment must be reported immediately to a league officer/ event organizer. The incident must then be reported within 24hrs to the Roger Allen Board of Directors. All reported events should include time and date stamps and include as much detailed information as possible should there need to be further investigation.

Formal Complaints: Formal complaints may be made to any league official at any time. The league official shall document as many details as possible including names, phone numbers, descriptions, vehicle info and license plates (if applicable) of any and all parties involved including potential witnesses. The reporting league official should then try to recap the reported incident with any witnesses who will be willing to make a statement and provide their contact info for further investigation. The complaint should include a detailed summary of exactly what transpired from beginning to end as to help provide a clear perspective to the investigators.

5. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

All reported incidents of harassment and/or assault will be reviewed in full by the investigation committee who remain independent of the individual leagues. The investigation committee shall consist of the President of Roger Allen Park Association or the Vice President if the President cannot attend, and the President of each of the four leagues or their named delegate as indicated on the annual agreement consisting of (5) total representatives on the committee. Shall a conflict of interest become apparent between an investigating officer and that of any accused, witness, or league, that investigating officer shall be excused from the investigation. The investigation committee may also appoint additional individuals to be part of the investigation committee as necessary, including involving law enforcement when necessary.

The investigation shall include the initial statements from those involved along with all witnesses. Any physical evidence, video, photographs, and site visit (if applicable) should be reviewed. Interviews of each party and witnesses should be conducted where appropriate prior to the committee convening for a determination of penalties.

Confidentiality will be maintained to protect the identities of those involved.

6. PENALTIES

For Assault: (anything involving physical contact or contact by an object of any kind)

Roger Allen Park Association prides itself in being a safe environment where all kids play and has always maintained a ZERO Tolerance policy around any violence.

Shall an incident that includes physical assault occur, all parties involved will be immediately ejected from the premises pending a final investigation. When appropriate, law enforcement may and should be called to stop the violence and assist in ejecting the parties involved. Any parties found to be guilty of physical assault will be banned from the park for an amount of time decided by the investigating committee, which may be permanent depending on the severity of the incident. Police reports will be filed and no trespassing documentation orders issued by the Police Department when appropriate. If the guilty parties have children in sporting programs at Roger Allen Park, they must find other means of transportation to and from the park and events as entrance for drop off and pick up will be forbidden during the suspension period.

There is always the potential for possible criminal charges to be filed by either party and/or Roger Allen Park Association depending on the severity of the assault.

For Harassment (otherwise not considered physical in nature):

Offenders shall be given (1) one, verbal FINAL warning which should include what the additional consequences would be shall it continue.

If the harassment continues past the (1) warning, the offender(s) shall be ejected from the premises for the remainder of the day and a formal complaint filed with the organizing league officers and reported within 24hrs to Roger Allen Park Board of Directors. At that time, it may be decided, upon review of the severity of the harassment, the ejection may be extended.

Repeated offenders:

- If they have been warned in the past, the incident can move to immediate ejection from the premises
- If they have been ejected in the past, they should be immediately ejected and immediate action taken to report the incident to the Roger Allen Board of Directors where it would be determined and extended ejection for the remainder of the season and/or possible lifetime ban may be the consequence at which time the Police Department would be involved as similar to the assault procedures.

For Coaches and Staff:

It is the duty of the coach/volunteer upon agreeing to take on that role, to ensure the safety and security of the players, parents, officials, by-standers, and facility be the number one priority and enforcement of the ZERO tolerance policy for harassment and assault is expected.

If a coach/volunteer is involved in any kind of harassment or assault the penalty will be immediate ejection from the facility, dismissal from their position, and a lifetime ban from the park which will be enforced by the Police Department.

All instances of coach/volunteer involvement should be immediately reported to the Roger Allen Park Board of Directors.

7. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Whenever possible, Roger Allen Park Association and each individual sports league should try to provide education and training for coaches, players, parents, and spectators around good sportsmanship and the importance of respecting officials and the consequences of harassment and assault.

8. REVIEW AND APPEAL PROCESS

The process for appeal and review shall be made with the Roger Allen Park Board of Directors who as a board will review the investigation process and materials independently from the investigation committee. The Board may investigate further, which may include additional interviews if necessary. Upon conclusion of the appeal review the Roger Allen Park Association Board of Directors will issue a final decision. This decision will be approved by Board vote with a minimum approval of 2/3 (two thirds) of the entire board. After the Board concludes the investigation and issues the decision, it may not be appealed any further. At any point the Roger Allen Board of Directors may also decide the incident was so severe in nature, an appeal process would not change the decision and approve by unanimous vote of the entire board to uphold the initial decision made by the investigation committee.

9. COMMUNICATION

Communication of this policy, the penalties, and proceedings should occur annually to all leagues, league officers, parents, players, officials, and if possible independent spectators. It will be required that all league presidents sign an acknowledgement annually at the time lease agreements are executed that they have read, understand, and intend to comply and fully execute this agreement. They will make every effort to communicate this to their own boards, coaches, volunteers, players, and parents. They will also agree to fully comply with and work with the investigation committee and Roger Allen Board of Director through any complaint or investigation process and support any decisions and/or outcomes from that process.

10. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Adjustments will be made based on feedback from officials, league officers, or the Roger Allen Board of Directors.

CONCLUSION

Ensuring the safety of sports officials is critical for the integrity of sports. By implementing and enforcing this policy, the Roger Allen Park Association and each sports league will create a respectful and safe environment for everyone involved.

This policy was adopted by the Roger Allen Park Association
Board of Directors on February 4, 2025.

Derek Peters, President