



## UIL SOFTBALL DUGOUT PROTOCOL GUIDANCE

The head coach is responsible for the personal conduct and behavior of all team members and team personnel. It is important for coaches to be proactive by clearly communicating behavioral expectations to athletes, including dugout behavior. “Bench jockeying” or negative personal comments directed at opponents are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. This type of unsportsmanlike behavior can lead to bigger issues.

Coaches should communicate to athletes that it is how we respond or deal with success, failure, and adversity that will define us as a person or student-athlete. During times of crisis, we all sink to the level of our training, so how are we training our student-athletes to act daily and in times of crisis? We need to have a plan, and it’s important to practice that plan. Without practice, the plan will not be implemented, similar to an offense, defense, etc.

- It is a great idea to include responding to crisis situations in practice plans randomly on a regular basis.
- It must be clearly understood that failure to respond appropriately and immediately to a crisis such as a fight could result in consequences.
- Consequences should be clearly outlined for athletes, so they fully understand the expectations.

### IN THE EVENT THAT A FIGHT BREAKS OUT

#### Instructions For Players

##### **1. IF YOU ARE ON THE FIELD WHEN A FIGHT BREAKS OUT:**

- If the fight is nowhere near you, stay in your position and do not move toward the fight.
- If you happen to be right next to where one of our teammates is fighting, within a few feet of her, whether she is the one throwing punches or getting punched, get her **OUT OF THE FIGHT**. A good way to do this is to simply **grab them and pull them away in the opposite direction**. There will probably be a few teammates near you; the ones not fighting need to get the one fighting to stop fighting by **removing her from the situation**.
  - **DO NOT TOUCH ANY OPPONENT** to get your teammate out of there.
  - **ONLY TOUCH YOUR TEAMMATE!**
  - **DO NOT TALK TO ANY OPPONENT.**
  - **DO NOT LOOK AT ANY OPPONENT.**
  - **IGNORE YOUR OPPONENT!**

##### **2. IF YOU ARE IN THE DUGOUT WHEN A FIGHT BREAKS OUT: (players, managers, others)**

- **DO NOT LEAVE THE DUGOUT!**

## Instructions For Coaching Staff and Game Management

1. **THE ONLY COACH TO LEAVE THE DUGOUT AREA OR COACH'S BOX TO ENTER THE FIELD SHOULD BE THE HEAD COACH AND POSSIBLY A SPECIFIED ASSISTANT ASSIGNED FOR FIELD CONTROL.** The Head Coach and designated assistant will get to the site of the fight as soon as possible to remove our players from the situation.
  - **DO NOT TOUCH ANY OPPONENT** to get your players out of there.
  - **ONLY TOUCH YOUR PLAYERS!**
  - **DO NOT TALK TO ANY OPPONENT.**
  - **DO NOT LOOK AT ANY OPPONENT.**
  - **IGNORE YOUR OPPONENT!**
  
2. **ALL OTHER COACHES AND ALL GAME MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL MANAGE THE DUGOUT**
  - All coaches, managers, trainer, etc. need to get themselves between the dugout and the field as soon as possible to keep players from leaving the dugout. Position your EYES on OUR dugout, not the fight.
  - Instruct all players to stay right where they are, in the dugout. Ensure that nobody leaves.
  - Only the Head Coach or a designated assistant can dismiss the kids from the dugout or designated location. Remain with the players until that happens.
  
3. **IF A TEAM ONLY HAS ONE COACH, FOR EXAMPLE IN A SUBVARSITY GAME, IT IS EVEN MORE CRITICAL TO PRACTICE THE RESPONSE**
  - The coach should initially turn to face the dugout to ensure that no players or personnel leave the dugout area.
  - Once the dugout is secure, the coach may enter the field to assist by removing his/her players from the playing area.
  - In the event the coach is in the coach's box, a player on the bench should be designated to be responsible for keeping teammates in the dugout.