

Good morning!

The topic today is the LAST topic that I hope I never have in my game or you in yours...a spectator confrontation on the court during the game. We have all seen the videos of AAU situations with fans and the resulting chaos. Well, it *can* happen in games other than AAU and rec league games.

Take a look at the spectator confrontation [HERE](#).

So, in this clip, on the throw-in by red from the baseline, the pass is received in the corner and appears that an inadvertent poke in the eye/face happens. Play continues and eventually a whistle comes from T table side. Apparently, a spectator in the front row was making quite questionable comments and pointed out by the L after his partner's whistle. The spectator immediately comes onto the court and physically confronts the official. The T is a fantastic partner and goes to his partner with a great sense of urgency. Fortunately no punches were thrown, but the spectator did use physicality by pushing the L.

The crew did a fantastic job of not being the aggressor and actually backing away and letting game management get to the spectator and restrain him from anything further. These two guys did a great job in deescalating the situation as much as they possible could. Fortunately game management was paying attention and reacted quickly and the crew did their best also!

What can we learn here?

- 1) If able to, let game management know of potential issues prior to the 'final blow'. Sometimes a spectator is a 'volcano' and not a 'toothache' where we have time to identify him/her.
- 2) At many lower level games (7/8/9) there may not be 'official' game management in the gym. In this case, the home head coach is designated as the contact person to address security issues. This was a JV game and there was game management there and fortunately reacted quickly to the situation.
- 3) Be a great partner like the T was here, get to the situation and get your partner(s) away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- 4) IF SUCH A SITUATION EVER HAPPENS, we **MUST** make sure to get law enforcement involved. Pennsylvania has a law protecting officials and we **MUST** invoke it in such cases (charges *have* been filed for this incident).

THANK YOU to the officials on this game for sharing this game and situation with the PIAA office and for continuing to officiate even after an assault of a sports official in a game they were officiating. Your dedication and caring is much appreciated, as with all officials who don the stripes night after night!

Monday extra: In a spinner, many times it is hard to stay focused. Sometimes those games need our utmost attention. Marty Mauer gave me this great 'extra' in regards to advice he suggests...'In a Mercy Rule Games, divide the remaining time up into quarters and work on something different in each quarter. True, time moves fast, but it can help keep our mind in the game, as compared to "clock watching" and simply not doing anything.'

Have a great game tonight!

Tim