

**REPORT OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON**

**VIOLENCE IN HIGH  
SCHOOL SPORTS**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



**SENATE DOCUMENT NO. 29**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
1995**



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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January 16, 1995

The Honorable George Allen  
Governor of Virginia, and  
The General Assembly of Virginia  
Third Floor, State Capitol  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

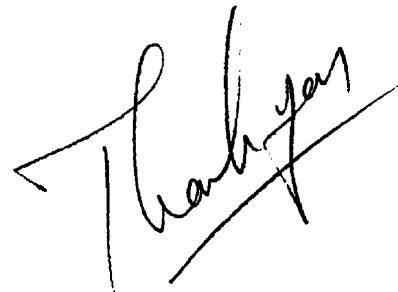
Dear Governor Allen and Members of the General Assembly:

The report transmitted herewith is pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution No. 200 of the 1993 General Assembly of Virginia. This resolution requested the Department of Education to study the issue of violence in high school sports and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and 1994 Session of the General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

  
William C. Bosher, Jr.

WCBJr:jct  
Attachment



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## PREFACE

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Senate Joint Resolution 200, approved by the 1993 General Assembly, directed the Department of Education to study violence in high school sports among participants and towards officials and to recommend possible solutions to this problem.

The study was conducted by a core and a stakeholder team that included representatives of agencies, organizations, and constituencies affected by the study, but also had the expertise necessary to design, conduct, and interpret the study and recommend solutions to the problem.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### **Core Team:**

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Vanessa L. Crozier, Specialist, Secondary Instruction, Virginia Department of Education

Larry Johnson, Programs Supervisor, Virginia High School League

Dr. John A. McLaughlin, Director, Research, Planning, and Evaluation, Virginia Department of Education

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### **Stakeholder Team:**

Dr. Carol R. Chory, Athletic Director, Kempsville High School

Edward G. Clymore, Superintendent, Augusta County Public Schools

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Robert A. Patterson, Principal, William Byrd High School, Roanoke County Public Schools

Ken Tilley, Executive Director, Virginia High School League

The Virginia Department of Education gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the teachers, administrators, coaches, athletic directors, officials, players, commissioners of officials, and state directors of high school athletics who responded to violence in sports study surveys. Their input and expertise was critical to the development of this document.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Kill the ump!** While there is no reported occurrence of violence of this magnitude in high school sports, there is ample evidence that violence has been on the increase nationally. Sports violence has been defined as behavior that causes harm, occurs outside the rules of sport, and is unrelated to the competitive objectives of the sport. Violence is most commonly associated with team contact sports such as football, rugby, ice hockey, and soccer. There are reported incidents, however, of violent behavior in most sports. The safety and well-being of students in Virginia's public schools have become issues of widespread concern that have carried over into similar worries about violence in sports.

An increase in both the frequency and seriousness of acts of violence has been well documented in studies across the nation. Responding to the charge that sports violence has been escalating, Senators Charles Waddell, Hunter Andrews, Charles Colgan, Joseph Gartlan, Benjamin Lambert, Louise Lucas, Henry Marsh, Henry Maxwell, Kevin Miller, Yvonne Miller, Frederick Quayle, Robert Russell and Delegate Kenneth Plum introduced Senate Joint Resolution 200 in the 1993 Virginia General Assembly. The resolution called for a study by the State Department of Education of violence in high school sports, both among participants and towards officials, and recommendations for possible solutions to the problem.

The study was conducted by a core and stakeholder team that reflected the relevant agencies, organizations, and constituencies, affected by the study. The team created an information base by conducting a review of literature, contacting other state athletic associations to determine what was occurring on the national scene, and by surveying the stakeholders involved in VHSL sports activities.

The initial phase of the study was a review of literature. The review used the combined library resources of the State Department of Education, the Virginia High School League, and Virginia Tech. In addition, the ERIC and INFOTRAC electronic data bases were searched.

The review revealed that very few references were available on the subject. In the citations found, it is the conclusion of the team that the incidence of event-related violence in high school sports is rare. The low incident rate is coupled with a perceived potential for violence to occur at high school sporting events - just as the potential exists in our society as a whole.

The second phase of the study was to determine how other states were addressing the issue of violence in high school sports. Surveys were mailed to 50 state athletic associations, and 43 responded to the survey.

State surveys revealed the following findings:

- \* Sixty-three percent (63%) of the state athletic associations believe that violence is perceived to be a problem in their state.
- \* Seventy-six percent (76%) of the state athletic associations have developed interventions aimed at reducing or preventing violence in high school sports.
- \* Seventy-four percent (74%) of the state athletic associations have recommended strategies for reducing or preventing violence in high school sports.
- \* Four (4) states (Arkansas, Delaware, North Carolina, and Oklahoma) have legislation that considers the first incident of violence toward a sports official a misdemeanor, and Montana has legislation that considers violence toward a sports official a felony.

The third phase of the study involved surveying individuals who are involved in athletic contests in Virginia - school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, commissioners of officials, game officials, and players. The following findings were revealed by the surveys:

#### **School administrators**

Twenty-four principals participated in a roundtable dialogue sponsored by the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals on June 29, 1993. Participants unanimously believed that violence in sports, or associated with sports, is on the rise. At this time, however, the actual level of violent events is low.

#### **Athletic directors and coaches**

Of the seventy-one (71) attendees at The Virginia High School Coaches Association Clinic who responded:

- \* Ninety percent (90%) have never or seldom observed violence by an athlete or coach directed towards a Virginia high school league official.
- \* Seventy-six percent (76%) have never or seldom observed spectator violence directed towards a Virginia high school league official.

### **Commissioners of officials**

Of the fifty-one (51) commissioners who responded:

- \* Seventy-four percent (74%) believe that the chance of an official being physically assaulted has increased in the last five years.

### **Game officials**

Of the thirty-nine (39) game officials who responded:

- \* Two percent (2%) have been physically assaulted in the last five years.
- \* Thirty percent (30%) have had the perception that they were in physical danger in connection with a high school contest.
- \* Fifty-two percent (52%) believe that there is not adequate security for officials during and after athletic contests. The most frequently heard comment was that the officials were in control during the contest; getting from the field or court to the dressing room or when leaving the premises presented the greatest concern.
- \* Ninety-eight percent (98%) have the perception that the chance of being physically assaulted is greater today than it was five years ago. They believe that the greatest danger is from spectators (61%).

### **Players**

Of the eighty-nine (89) players who responded:

- \* Ninety-two percent (92%) have never or seldom observed violence directed towards a Virginia High School League official by an athlete or coach.
- \* Eighty-seven percent (87%) have never or seldom observed spectator violence directed towards a Virginia High School League official.



## **Virginia High School League Incident reports**

The Virginia High School League office prepared a summary of incident reports involving violent acts over the past two years for the final phase of the study.

- \* During the past two school years (1991-1993), twelve incidents involving violent acts have been reported to the Virginia High School League. These incidents occurred in four sports: soccer (4), basketball (3), football (3), and cross country (1).
- \* During the same time period, one violent act toward an official was reported.

Perhaps it is important to consider the above incidents within the context of the total number of games at which incidents could occur. Only 13 violent acts were reported to the Virginia High School League over this two-year period. Viewed from the perspective that more than 20,000 games were played during this time frame, the number of violent incidents is minuscule.

The core team members conducted two meetings (September 29, 1993 and October 28, 1993) with representatives of the stakeholders involved in this study. Consistent with the findings and the dialogue of core team meetings, the stakeholders' team believes that a paradox exists in regards to high schools sports violence: The vast majority of involved parties believe that violence is on the rise, however, there is very little evidence to support this belief.

## **Recommendations**

The results from the three phases of the study and the dialogue from the two stakeholders' meetings led the team to conclude that the following options should be considered:

- \* A fair and consistent definition of violence needs to be established by the Virginia High School League in concert with the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals.
- \* Written guidelines governing violence in sports should be developed by the Virginia High School League. The guidelines should include procedures to insure that the game officials are safely escorted from the premises.
- \* Annual workshops to review established procedures concerning violence should be conducted by the Virginia High School League. All school administrators, coaches, contest officials, players, and spectators should have the opportunity to attend the workshops.

- \* School administrators should inform parents, staff, and students that interscholastic contests are an extension of the school program. Behavior that would not be condoned in school will not be condoned at a sporting event.
- \* A strategy to improve the reporting system of all violent acts, particularly those towards officials that occur during athletic contests, should be developed by the Virginia High School League.
- \* The findings of this study should be disseminated by the Virginia High School League in its publications, *League Notes* and *The Leaguer*.
- \* The General Assembly should consider introducing legislation to make it a misdemeanor to commit a violent act toward a Virginia High School League game official, or local government agencies should consider passing ordinances that would mitigate against violence at high school sporting events. Such ordinances would address crowd/fan violence before, during, and after the games.

It is the feeling of the core team that a demonstrable degree of vigilance should be maintained at Virginia High School League sporting events. This action may prevent the potential of violent acts toward a game official from becoming a reality.

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

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There can be no doubt of the important role sports have in American society. A large number of Americans either participate in or watch sports on a regular basis. That strong interest is evident at every level from youth activities through professional sports. Extensive coverage of athletic contests in the media have transformed "sports news" into simply, "news," so that events on and off the playing field become the topic of discussion in all segments of society.

It is often said that sports are a reflection of our society. Many believe that societal values can be observed in microcosm when one attends or participates in sporting events. To some degree that assumption is accurate; however, the safety and well-being of students in Virginia's public schools have become issues of widespread concern that are reflected in similar concerns about violence in sports. The perceived relationship between violence in society and violence in sports is enhanced by the media through periodic reports of violence at or near a sporting event. Recent examples include the "Texas Cheerleader Mom" story, and this summer's tragic incident in which a California Little Leaguer was accidentally killed after a game by an opposing player.

While most violence can be classified as player-to-player, there are many other forms of violence that can be anticipated. These include:

- player -- official
- fan -- fan
- fan -- official
- fan -- player
- coach -- player
- coach -- fan
- coach -- official

The causes of violence in sports are speculative, at best. Most researchers agree that aggressive behavior is learned through modeling, and is reinforced through rewards and punishments. Several researchers, however, hypothesize that aggression can be associated with psychological characteristics, as well as by consumption of drugs such as anabolic steroids.

While the causes of violence may be unclear, one fact is abundantly clear -- violence in high school sports is on the increase. Recognizing this concern, the Virginia legislature offered Senate Joint Resolution #200 on January 14, 1993. The resolution requested the Department to study violence in sports, and recommend possible solutions to this problem.

## Study Approach

1. An ERIC literature search was conducted
2. Telephone interviews were held with several organizations
  - American College of Sports Medicine
  - American Alliance of H.P.E.R & Dance
  - National Federation of State High School Associations
  - Athletic Health Systems
  - California Interscholastic Federation
3. Meetings were held with representatives of the Virginia High School League
4. Discussions were conducted with representatives of the Virginia Association of Secondary Principals.

A two-tier team approach was employed to accomplish the objectives set forth for the study: the CORE team and STAKEHOLDER team. This approach ensured that all the constituencies impacted by the process and results of the study would have the opportunity to be represented in all phases of the study, from design to the development of possible solutions and planned actions.

Methods employed in conducting this study included:

- an analysis of the literature on violence in high school sports
- an analysis of strategies/perspectives taken by other states concerning this issue
- an analysis of the extent of violence associated with high school sports in Virginia
- an analysis of review of literature, surveys, and presentations

## Organization of Report

This report is organized into five chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter II summarizes the review of literature on violence in high school sports. Chapter III reviews the strategies and perspectives of other states concerning this issue. Chapter IV summarizes responses from teachers, administrators, coaches, officials, players and Commissioners of Officials. The final chapter reflects data obtained by the Virginia High School League of instances of violence at member school athletic events that have occurred during the last two school years.

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## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

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This review of literature was conducted during the summer of 1993, using the combined library resources of the State Department of Education, Virginia High School League, and Virginia Tech. Two major electronic data bases were searched: ERIC and INFOTRAC. The latter source includes articles published since 1987 in both the popular media and academic journals. Issues of Referee magazine were also reviewed. The literature search initially focused on sports violence at all levels (youth, recreational, school, collegiate, and professional), but was narrowed to high school sports for the purpose of this study.

#### Findings

1. There appears to be a great deal of attention given to the perceived theoretical causes of sports violence. Many articles describe an escalating trend of sports violence, and the purported causes. Factors that contribute to violent behavior in athletics include: a "win at all cost" attitude, irresponsible coaches, incompetent officiating, low skill level, and violence condoned in the media. Sport violence theorists provide little empirical data to support the existence, patterns, or regularity of sports-related violence. Like the general public, they apparently assume that such violence is a problem.
2. Much of the recovered literature came from the popular media, particularly major newspapers and weekly news magazines. However, considering the size of the popular media in this country and the periodic reports we found, one could conclude from so few articles that a pervasive problem does not exist. It might even be argued that the reports may have been sensationalized to earn more readers' attention.
3. Considerable literature describes several manifestations of sports violence; player-to-player, spectator to spectator, spectator-to-player or coach, spectator-to-official, and player or coach to official. That same literature also provides the sporting context of these types of violence: youth sports, recreation, school sports, collegiate sports, and professional sports. It appears that the most often cited violence occurs among players or among spectators, and mainly at the **professional** level. Two professional sports, soccer and football, tend to have the most reported occurrences of these types of violence. The most often-cited and feared manifestation of sports-related violence is that of "Soccer Hooligans" at Western European professional soccer matches.

4. High school sports seem to be the setting for extremely few incidents of violence. At this time, it is difficult to ascertain if this actually reflects actually low occurrence, or whether the mechanisms for more accurate reporting are not in place. For instance, in an article of gang violence at high school sports events, John Gillis of the National Federation makes only a single reference of player-to-player violence at a football game in Arizona. From this article, it would appear that gang violence that occurs at or near game sites was a much larger concern than participant-related violence.
5. There is currently a concern for the safety of game officials at all levels of sports. Too often, or so it seems, they become the targets of verbal abuse and physical violence from players, coaches, and spectators. Referee magazine published two articles on violence directed towards game officials in the past five years. Of the seven cases in which officials were assaulted, only one incident took place at a high school event. It is difficult to gain an accurate picture of the regularity and pattern of violence in high school sports when relying only on anecdotal reports.
6. The infrequency of reports describing violence towards high school officials is corroborated in a study by Goldsmith and Williams (1991). Surveying certified high school football and volleyball officials, they found "fear of physical harm" to be the lowest of five stressors among officials. The next lowest was "verbal abuse by players and coaches." "Fear of failure" (making mistakes) was the strongest stressor among those reported. The authors hypothesize that the risk of physical harm becomes a factor only after an official has had a direct experience. The authors stated that, "assault by a spectator does not contribute to an official's stress from officiating unless it happens, and it rarely does."

### Summary

This review of literature reveals that the incidence of event-related violence in high school sports is rare. The low incident rate is coupled with a perceived potential for violence to occur at high school sporting events--just as the potential exists in our society as a whole. Therefore, a demonstrable degree of vigilance should be implemented and maintained at high school sports events, so that the potential does not become a reality.

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**CHAPTER III**  
**VIOLENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**  
**PERSPECTIVES/STRATEGIES TAKEN BY OTHER STATES**

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A survey was conducted to determine how other states were addressing the issue of violence in high school sports. Surveys were mailed to 50 state athletic associations. The following questions were included on the survey:

- What is your definition of violence in high school sports?
- Do you perceive this as a problem in your state?
- Have you developed interventions aimed at reducing or preventing violence in high school sports?
- Do you have any recommended strategies for reducing or preventing violence in high school sports?
- Would you be interested in receiving the results of this study?

Thirteen state associations responded to the initial survey. A follow-up survey resulted in 28 (56%) additional state associations responding for a total response of 41 state associations (82%).

State surveys revealed the following findings:

- \* Sixty-three percent (63%) of the state athletic associations believe that violence is perceived to be a problem in their state.
- \* Seventy-six percent (76%) of the state athletic associations have developed interventions aimed at reducing or preventing violence in high school sports.
- \* Seventy-four percent (74%) of the state athletic associations have recommended strategies for reducing or preventing violence in high school sports.
- \* Four (4) states (Arkansas, Delaware, North Carolina, and Oklahoma) have legislation that considers the first instance of violence toward a sports official a misdemeanor and Montana has legislation that considers violence toward a sports official a felony.

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**CHAPTER IV**  
**EXTENT OF VIOLENCE ON HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS IN**  
**VIRGINIA SURVEY**

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Administrators, athletic directors, coaches, commissioners of officials, game officials, and players all have varied and significant roles in athletic contests. Information was obtained from representatives from each of these groups concerning their perceptions of violence in sports in the Commonwealth. This was accomplished with a presentation and dialogue among participants at the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals Conference, and through surveys distributed to athletic directors, coaches, commissioners of officials, game officials, and players.

The following findings were revealed by the presentation and surveys:

**School administrators**

Twenty-four principals participated in the roundtable dialogue. These persons represented both rural and urban schools, as well as large and small schools. In addition, a number of administrators had also served as coaches or athletic officials.

The purpose of this session was to provide an opportunity for open dialogue among high school principals in Virginia on the topic of violence in high school sports. The discussion began with a presentation of background information on the project, and was followed with an explanation of the General Assembly's request to study information. The methods employed by the VDOE research team were presented to demonstrate the multiple sources of information used in the data collection.

The main points raised by the discussants were:

1. No standard exists, either implicitly or explicitly, for a consistent definition of violence. The discussants recognized that some sports, particularly football and soccer, were violent because of their inherent contact characteristics.
2. Concern of "unsportsmanlike conduct" on the part of players, coaches, and fans.
3. Participants unanimously believed that violence in sports or associated with it is rising. At this time, however, they acknowledged that the actual level of violent events is low.



4. Much of the violence seems to be associated with inter-school rivalries. This concern was expressed consistently regardless of the size and location of the school.
5. Violence could be attributed to a number of factors. With violence in sports on TV as the primary contributor, they believe that this may legitimize violence in the eyes of the viewers who are also athletes, coaches, or fans.
6. The following are the administrator's suggested solutions to the violence problem:
  - a. In cooperation with the VHSL there needs to be a fair and consistent standard of conduct established for violence.
  - b. Coaches, principals, officials, and students (players and fans) need to be informed of the expectations for the standard of conduct and the implications for not meeting the standard.
  - c. Coaches must be trained to recognize and handle excessive violence.
  - d. Principals should inform parents, staff, and students that athletics are an extension of school. Behavior not condoned in school will not be condoned at athletic contests.
  - e. Supervision and control were key factors for alleviating violence. Coaches and officials have the responsibility to control the players, and the principal and/or law enforcement officer to control the crowds.
  - f. Penalties should be established by VHSL in concert with VASSP, and officials, and should be applied consistently for sports and districts.
  - g. Principals and officials should be responsible for collecting and reporting infractions to the VHSL.
  - h. Consideration should be given to the development of city or county ordinances that would mitigate against violence at high school sporting events. Such ordinances would address crowd/fan violence before, during, and after the games.
7. The discussants recognized the VHSL as having done a good job of handling this issue up to now. Given the potential rise in violence, however, it may be necessary to take more specific steps to stem the trend. It was also noted that some of the remedies mentioned could become burdensome in terms of increased fiscal responsibility to an already limited resource pool.

### **Athletic directors and coaches**

A survey was included in the 1993 VHSCA/VHSL Clinics and All-Star Games' registration packet. Of the seventy-one (71) attendees at The Virginia High School Coaches Association Clinic who responded:

- \* Ninety percent (90%) have never or seldom observed violence directed by a player or a coach towards a Virginia high school league official.
- \* Seventy-six percent (76%) have never or seldom observed spectator violence directed towards a Virginia high school league official.
- \* Seventy-nine percent (79%) have never or seldom observed player-to-player violence at Virginia High School League events.
- \* Eighty-nine percent (89%) have never or seldom observed spectator violence towards players and/or coaches of Virginia High School League events.

### **Commissioners of officials**

VHSL distributed a two-question survey to all commissioners of officials.

Of the fifty-one (51) commissioners who responded:

- \* Twenty-one percent (21%) of their officials have been physically assaulted in the last five years.
- \* Seventy-four percent (74%) believe that the chance of an official being physically assaulted has increased in the last five years.

### **Game officials**

A four-question survey was distributed at a VHSL coaching clinic. Of the thirty-nine (39) game officials who responded:

- \* Two percent (2%) have been physically assaulted in the last five years.
- \* Thirty percent (30%) have had the perception that they were in physical danger in connection with a high school contest.

- \* Fifty-two percent (52%) believe that there is not adequate security for officials during and after athletic contests. The most frequently heard comment was that the officials were in control during the contest: getting from the field or court to the dressing room and/or when leaving the premises presents the greatest danger.
- \* Ninety-eight percent (98%) have the perception that the chance of being physically assaulted is greater today than it was five years ago. They believe that the greatest source of such assault is from spectators (61%).

### **Players**

A random sample of student-athletes in Virginia received a four-question survey. Of the eighty-nine (89) players who responded:

- \* Ninety-two percent (92%) have never or seldom observed violence directed by a player or coach towards a Virginia high school league official.
- \* Eighty-seven percent (87%) have never or seldom observed spectator violence directed towards a Virginia high school league official.
- \* Ninety-two percent (92%) have never or seldom observed player-to-player violence at VHSL events.
- \* Ninety-eight percent (98%) have never or seldom observed spectator violence towards players and/or coaches at VHSL events.

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## CHAPTER V

### VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE VIOLENCE INCIDENT REPORT

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The following data obtained by the Virginia High School League reflects instances of violence at member school athletic events that occurred during the last two school years (1991-1993).

#### Sportsmanship Violations of Violent Acts Involving Player(s) to Player(s)

Yorktown/JEB Stuart soccer match on 4-12-93 -- Altercation between Stuart goalie and Yorktown Player. Escalated to involve several players from Stuart and an additional players from Yorktown. One Stuart player came off the bench and attacked a Yorktown player. Yorktown also had players leave the bench area.

J.R. Tucker/Hermitage soccer match on 4-23-93 -- Hermitage player threw water on Tucker player. Later, the Tucker player struck the Hermitage player.

Council/Honaker basketball game on 9-8-92 -- Council player struck a Honaker player.

Petersburg/Varina football game on 9-18-92 -- Altercation developed between players of both teams on sideline after a Varina player pushed a Petersburg player after going out of bounds.

Galax/Floyd County football game on 10-23-92 -- Galax players initiated several altercations during the post-game handshakes.

Pulaski County/Cave Spring soccer match in spring, 1992 -- Pulaski County player struck Cave Spring player during post-game handshakes.

Kempsville/Woodbridge soccer match on 6-1-92 -- Several players on both teams were involved in pushing and striking incidents at the conclusion of their match.

Stonewall Jackson/North Stafford soccer match on 4-24-92 -- Opposing players exchanged pushes after a tackle. An uninvolved player from North Stafford later struck a Stonewall Jackson player who had been involved in the pushing.

Rappahannock County/Manassas Park basketball game on 2-18-92 -- Rappahannock player struck Manassas Park player during post-game handshakes.

George Washington/Morehead (NC) basketball game on 12-27-91 -- altercation between a player from each school. After those individuals were separated, two players from the George Washington bench came onto the floor and struck a Morehead player.

Lee-Davis/L.C. Bird football game on 11-16-91 -- Fight broke out on the field between several players from both teams. A Lee-Davis player left the bench and became involved in the fight.

#### **Sportsmanship Violations of Violent Acts Involving Coach to Player**

Western Branch cross country on 10-29-92 -- School's cross country coach pushed opposing runner, knocking him down.

#### **Sportsmanship Violations of Violent Acts Involving Spectator to Official**

Robinson/Stuart boys' soccer game on 5-20-92 -- Spectator assaulted official after the match.

Perhaps it is important to consider the above incidents within the context of the total number of games at which incidents could occur. Only 13 violent acts were reported to the Virginia High School League over this two-year period. Viewed from the perspective that more than 20,000 games were played over this time frame, the number of violent incidents is minuscule.

In conclusion, the objective of the Virginia High School League, Inc., shall be to foster, among the public high schools of Virginia, a broad program of supervised competitions and desirable school activities as an aid in the total education of students. One of the primary objectives of the League is -- and always will be -- to provide a safe, healthy environment in which students may experience wholesome, enriching athletic competition.

## APPENDICES

1993 SESSION

LD9016749

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 200

Offered January 14, 1993

Requesting the Department of Education to study the issue of violence in high school sports, both among participants and towards officials, and to recommend possible solutions to this problem.

Patrons—Waddell, Andrews, Colgan, Gartlan, Lambert, Lucas, Marsh, Maxwell, Miller, K.G., Miller, Y.B., Quayle and Russell; Delegate: Plum

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, according to the National Association of Sports Officials' publication "Referee," sports violence has been escalating for the last several years; and

WHEREAS, violence in high school sports is causing parents to fear for the safety of their children and some officials to fear for their own safety; and

WHEREAS, six states, including Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Utah, West Virginia and South Carolina, have recently introduced legislation relating to assaults upon sports officials; and

WHEREAS, California has moved one step further and passed a law concerning assaults upon officials; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has no laws specifically dealing with assaults on sports officials or participants; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Education be requested to study the issue of violence in high school sports, both among participants and towards officials, and recommend possible solutions to this problem.

The Department shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1994 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Official Use By Clerks

		Agreed to By	
Agreed to By The Senate		The House of Delegates	
without amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	without amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>
with amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	with amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>
substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>
substitute w/amdt	<input type="checkbox"/>	substitute w/amdt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date: _____		Date: _____	
Clerk of the Senate		Clerk of the House of Delegates	

HOUSE BILL NO. 507

INTRODUCED BY SAYLES, VAN VALKENBURG, CLARK, GRINDE, STOVALL, BOHLINGER, GILBERT, SMITH, SQUIRES, WANZENRIED, REHBEIN, ELLIS, SCHWINDEN, QUILICI, L. NELSON, RANEY, KADAS, HARPER, TASH, GRIMES, BIRD

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT LIMITING THE LIABILITY OF SPORTS OFFICIALS; AND CREATING THE CRIMINAL OFFENSE OF ASSAULT UPON A SPORTS OFFICIAL."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Liability limit for sports officials. A person acting as an official at an athletic contest in any sport at any level of amateur or professional competition is not liable for any act or omission in the scope and course of the officiating THAT IS ABBBBD TO HAVE APPEARED THE OUTCOME OF THE CONTEST unless the act or omission is gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct. This section does not apply to an employee of the state or of a local government acting in the course and scope of employment.

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Assault upon sports official.

(1) A person commits the offense of assault upon a sports official if, while a sports official is acting as an official at an athletic contest in any sport at any level of

amateur or professional competition, the person:

(a) purposely or knowingly causes bodily injury to the sports official;

(b) negligently causes bodily injury to the sports official with a weapon;

(c) purposely or knowingly makes physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the sports official; or

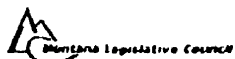
(d) purposely or knowingly causes reasonable apprehension of bodily injury in the sports official.

(2) A person convicted of assault upon a sports official shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for any term not to exceed 6 months, or both.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction. (1) (Section 1) is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 27, chapter 17, part 77 and the provisions of Title 27, chapter 17, part 77 apply to (section 1).

(2) (Section 2 1) is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 45, chapter 5, part 2, and the provisions of Title 45 apply to (section 2 1).

-End-





## 25. Fighting Rule

The head coach may leave the confines of the bench or box if a fight may break out or has broken out. Bench personnel other than the head coach who leave the confines of the bench during a fight are *disqualified* from the game and must go to the locker room or leave the field or arena. A squad member or team personnel who leaves the bench area during a fight or who participates in a fight during the season or tournament play, will be ejected from that game and suspended from the team's next regularly scheduled game at that level of play (varsity, j.v. etc.) and any intervening levels of play. (*Example: if ejected from a j.v. game, player can not play in the following varsity game or the next j.v. game. Player must wait until the following j.v. game.*) If that squad member participates in a second fight, he/she will be suspended for the remainder of the season including tournament competition.

Definition and guidelines of "fighting": In the opinion of the official, if any flagrant foul is deemed to be a fight, the fighting penalty is invoked. This could include, but is not limited to, attempting to strike an opponent with the arms, hands, legs, or feet or a combative action by one or more players.

State of Arkansas

76th General Assembly

Regular Session, 1987

By: Representatives Wynna and Todd

# A Bill

AS ENGROSSED 3/4/87

HOUSE BILL 1816

## For An Act To Be Entitled

1 "AN ACT TO ESTABLISH PENALTIES FOR ABUSE OF ATHLETIC CONTEST  
2 OFFICIALS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

3

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

5

6 SECTION 1. Any person with the purpose of causing physical injury to  
7 another person who shall strike or otherwise physically abuse an athletic  
8 contest official immediately prior to, during or immediately following an  
9 interscholastic, intercollegiate or any other organized amateur or pro-  
10 fessional athletic contest in which the athletic contest official is par-  
11 ticipating shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

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13 SECTION 2. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are  
14 hereby repealed.

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/s/ Robert Wynna et al

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DELAWARE STATE SENATE  
135TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JUN 27 1990 67 247

SENATE BILL NO. 115

AS AMENDED BY

SENATE AMENDMENT NOS. 1, 2, AND 3 AND H.A. NO. 1

AN ACT TO AMEND CHAPTER 5, PART I, TITLE 11 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO ASSAULT ON A SPORTS OFFICIAL.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Chapter 5, Part I, Title 11 of the Delaware Code by adding thereto a new section, designated as §614, which new section shall read as follows:

§614. Assault on a sports official

Any person who intentionally causes physical injury to a sports official, who is acting in the lawful performance of his duty, shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. Upon conviction for a second or subsequent offense under this section, such person shall be guilty of a Class G felony.

For purposes of this section, the words "sports official" shall mean any person who serves as a referee, umpire, linesman, or in any similar capacity in supervising or administering a sports event; and who is registered as a member of a local, state, regional, or national organization which provides training or educational opportunities for sports officials."

1 of 1

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
1993 SESSION  
RATIFIED BILL

CHAPTER 286  
SENATE BILL 30

AN ACT TO MAKE IT A GENERAL MISDEMEANOR TO COMMIT AN  
ASSAULT ON A SPORTS OFFICIAL.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 14-33(b) is rewritten to read:

"(b) Unless his conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, any person who commits any assault, assault and battery, or affray is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine, imprisonment for not more than two years, or both such fine and imprisonment if, in the course of the assault, assault and battery, or affray, he:

- (1) Inflicts, or attempts to inflict, serious injury upon another person or uses a deadly weapon; or
- (2) Assaults a female, he being a male person at least 18 years of age; or
- (3) Assaults a child under the age of 12 years; or
- (4) to (7). Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 525, s. 1.
- (8) Assaults an officer or employee of the State or of any political subdivision of the State, when the officer or employee is discharging or attempting to discharge his official duties.
- (9) Commits an assault and battery against a sports official when the sports official is discharging or attempting to discharge official duties at a sports event, or immediately after the sports event at which the sports official discharged official duties. A 'sports official' is a person at a sports event who enforces the rules of the event, such as an umpire or referee, or a person who supervises the participants, such as a coach. A 'sports event' includes any interscholastic or intramural athletic activity in a primary, middle, junior high, or high school, college, or university, any organized athletic activity sponsored by a community, business, or nonprofit organization, any athletic activity that is a professional or semiprofessional event, and any other organized athletic activity in the State."

Sec. 2. This act becomes effective December 1, 1993, and applies to offenses occurring on or after that date.  
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 6th day of July, 1993.

**DENNIS A. WICKER**

Dennis A. Wicker  
President of the Senate

**DANIEL BLUE JR**

Daniel Blue, Jr.  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Section 735. Assaults at Athletic Contests.

Every person who, without justifiable or excusable cause and with intent to do bodily harm, commits any assault, battery, assault and battery upon the person of a referee, umpire, timekeeper, coach, official, or any person having authority in connection with any amateur or professional athletic contest is guilty of a misdemeanor and is punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding one (1) year or by a fine not exceeding One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00), or by both such fine and imprisonment. (21-650.1)

## REFERENCES

- Gillis, J. (1993, May). High school athletic officials concerned about gang-related violence at events. National Federation News. 4-6.
- Goldsmith, P. & Williams, J. (1991). Perceived stressors for football and volleyball officials from three rating levels. Journal of Sport Behavior, 15(2). 106-118.
- Tapp, J. (1993, April). Picking up the pieces. Referee. 27-33.
- Unnamed. (1988, July). ...And justice for all. Referee. 52-53.