

DE-ESCALATION BEST PRACTICES

Use and reflect on these De-Escalation Best Practices to help maintain a positive, safe, and supportive environment on the sidelines.

This document should be frequently reviewed to keep best practices top-of-mind.

Calm & Composed Keep a calm demeanor and avoid escalating the situation with emotional reactions.
Use a steady and reassuring tone when communicating.

Active Listening Listen attentively to the concerns or complaints of the hostile spectator.
Show empathy and acknowledge their feelings.

Non-Confrontational Communication Use non-confrontational language and avoid aggressive or accusatory statements.
Choose words carefully to prevent misunderstandings.

Change Environment Walk away from the situation with the spectator & change the environment.
Attempt to move hostile spectators away from main crowds.

Establish Boundaries Clearly communicate the facility or club rules and expectations for sideline behavior.
Politely remind spectators of these rules if their behavior becomes disruptive.

Seek Assistance If the situation escalates, walk away and seek help from others such as staff, referees, volunteers, event organizers, or law enforcement.
Avoid managing the situation alone if it poses a risk to your safety.

Provide Alternatives Offer alternative solutions to address the concerns of hostile spectators such as reporting referee, coach, or player through appropriate channels.

Visual Cues Use hand signals or other visual cues to communicate with hostile spectators without escalating the situation verbally. Be conscious of hand signals to ensure they don't create a non-verbal signal that inadvertently escalates.

Involve Authorities In extreme cases such as threats of physical violence, the likely presence of alcohol, or if any reference to firearms is made - involve law enforcement immediately.

Post-Game Keep a record of incidents, including details such as date, time, and a description of the situation that may be helpful if further action is needed. After the game, discuss and report any incidents and identify preventive measures for the future.

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