

Be the Sixth Player

COURTSIDE

3

Responding to In-Game Harassment

COURTSIDE HARASSMENT

Any sports fan that loves being at the game has been there—you're watching the Sky battle it out in the fourth quarter when, out of nowhere, someone in the stands takes their trash talk from fair play to another level. The comments might sound something like, "My son would beat you 1 on 1," "She's not good enough to be here," "She's too pretty to be playing ball," or "Women shouldn't be refs." It might sound like a joke, but the harassment and pain are real.

Moments like these provide fans with a choice. They can stay benched while hateful comments are hurled at the players and officials. Or, they can speak up and be a sixth teammate to the players and all the fans.

HOW TO BE A GOOD COURTSIDE TEAMMATE

You hear comments that women are too pretty to play basketball or don't make good refs. You know the comments are wrong, but you aren't sure how to box out those insults.

First, redirect the conversation by shouting support for the player/official being heckled. Second, don't engage directly with the person causing harm. They want an "adoring" audience—don't give them that satisfaction.

If the situation is escalating from a personal foul to a flagrant foul, get a staff member. Fans are expected to be respectful toward players, officials, and other fans. Staff members can help settle the situation. Do not necessarily try to engage the person causing harm directly, if you think it might escalate toward a physical altercation.

Be the Sixth Player

COURTSIDE · THE GAME PLAN

3

The Game Plan

DON'T

- ✗ Don't engage directly with the person causing harm
- ✗ Don't give the person causing harm an audience
- ✗ Don't escalate toward a physical altercation

DO

- ✓ Do redirect the conversation by focusing on the game being played
- ✓ Do mention to someone next to you that those comments "aren't cool"
- ✓ Do shout support to the targeted player(s) or official(s)
- ✓ Do talk to an usher or staff if things are getting out of hand

If you need an easy playbook to remember in the heat of the moment, use the [5 Ds of Bystander Intervention](#): Direct, Distract, Delay, Delegate, and Document.

RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS

Want to know more about calling foul on hate and harassment? Click on the resources below to learn more:

- ▶ [PERIL. Not Just a Joke: Understanding & Preventing Gender- & Sexuality-based Bigotry \[Report\].](#)
- ▶ [PERIL. Building Resilience & Confronting Risk: A Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization \[Report\].](#)
- ▶ [University of Illinois. Bystander Intervention Strategies.](#)