



SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

RESOLUTION NO. 22-055

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL RECOGNIZES THE URGENT NEED FOR
YOUTH SPORTS OFFICIALS AND CALLS ALL PARENTS, COACHES, AND
ATHLETES TO DISPLAY SPORTSMANSHIP**

WHEREAS, sports officials fill the critical role of making sure sports are fairly played, well-managed and safe environments for all participants and spectators; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical shortage of youth sports referees both locally and nationally; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of State High School Associations says roughly 50,000 high school referees — 20 percent of all prep officials — quit between 2018 and 2021, and Washington Officials Association (WOA) says its down 800 sports officials; and

WHEREAS, WOA officiating numbers have been on the decline for many years, reasons include: an aging workforce, COVID, and most notably the toxic nature of the climate of today's youth sports; and

WHEREAS, the average officials age is 54.18, new officials take 2-5 years to mature to a varsity level official and 70% of new officials won't last for a second year due to the unsporting environment, and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 survey conducted by the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO), the vast majority began officiating for the love of the game, but 87 percent of the roughly 17,000 officials who were surveyed said they suffered verbal abuse in their role as officials. Thirteen percent said they had been physically assaulted before, during, or after a game; and

WHEREAS, the survey also reported 40% of officials believe that parents cause the most problems with sportsmanship, and over half of all officials argue that coaches are responsible for improving sportsmanship; and

WHEREAS, the NASO survey revealed that 47.94% of men and 44.74% of women have felt unsafe because of administrator, coach, player or spectator behavior; and

WHEREAS, according to the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA), over the last year, there have been 508 player and coach ejections from games, nearly double the amount of the previous two years, though 2020-21 was a shortened season, due to the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, currently there are 22 states, including Oregon, where there are specific charges for touching an official but not in Washington; and

WHEREAS, there are active recruiting efforts for officials and WIAA is offering high school athletes free training to try to recruit young officials; and

WHEREAS, Snohomish County Council encourages all coaches, athletes, and parents to first and foremost display good sportsmanship, respect referees, and recognize it is more important for kids to leave the playing field learning important life lessons about integrity, dedication, and teamwork, than enjoying a win;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Snohomish County Council recognizes the urgent need for youth sports officials and calls upon parents, coaches and athletes in youth sports to demonstrate a proper perspective on youth sports and to display respect for those doing the difficult job of officiating.

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2022.

Megan Dunn
Council Chair

Jared Mead
Council Vice-Chair

Sam Low
Councilmember

Nate Nehring
Councilmember

ATTEST: _____
Debbie Eco, CMC
Clerk of the Council