

What can I do about harassment?

After many consultations with legal advisors that work in the specialty of sport law, a wealth of information has been learned by the Darts Alberta Executive that we believe can be of benefit to our members.

Although it's an unfortunate fact to admit, many participants in the sport of darts have been subjected to a great deal of poor sportsmanship over the years. In fact, recent survey results showed that dart players consider 'poor sportsmanship' to be the number one detriment of our sport.

Harassment comes in many forms but some examples that hit home in our sport include:

- Playing mind games by intentionally distracting an opponent;
- Taunting or ridiculing your opponent;
- Belittling your opponent's abilities when you've just lost a match;
- Intentionally hassling or provoking your opponent;
- Hassling or arguing with Tournament Officials; and so on.

Although the Darts Alberta Harassment Policy states that *"Darts Alberta is committed to providing a sport environment that is safe and free of violence, harassment or abuse"* the Executive cannot achieve this goal without the assistance of our members.

We've all heard the term "NO MEANS NO" and this statement could not be more applicable in the case of harassment. As a participant in the sport, it is your responsibility to advise someone if you feel you are intentionally being bothered or provoked, whether this occurs during a match, between matches or after the event. You can start by simply advising the other person that you don't appreciate their comments, you think their behaviour is unacceptable or by telling them to leave you alone. In many cases you might find that the other person's actions were not intentionally meant to upset you and they would stop what they had been doing, in which case would likely end the encounter. However, if the behaviour continues, that is the truest form of harassment! Rather than taking matters into your own hands, it's important that you get the help of outside assistance by seeking out a Darts Alberta Executive Member or going to the control desk for a Tournament Official.

If you are the person on the other side of the encounter, it's important that you remember...*"no means no"* and *"leave me alone means leave me alone"*. When someone tells you that they feel they are being harassed and you persist with the same behaviour or actions...that IS harassment! If this continued harassment results in a more serious incident, you will be held just as much at fault for contributing to the incident.

To provide a better understanding, here are some examples that would be defined as harassment.

- A player comes up to the control desk to complain about the format of play. The Tournament Organizer advises the player that the format is completely within the rules of the Darts Alberta Ranked Tournament Package and advises them that the matter is closed. If that player continues to argue with the Tournament Organizer in a confrontational manner, that is harassment and the Tournament Organizer is well within their right to issue a warning and submit an incident report to Darts Alberta.
- Two players are in the middle of a match. Each time the opponent gets up to shoot, friends of the other player continue to cheer on their buddy. Since these same spectators are quiet when their buddy is up shooting, it would seem to be a deliberate attempt to distract the opponent. If these spectators are advised by either a tournament organizer or the opponent that this is not appropriate and the behaviour continues, that is harassment.

Some examples that would not be considered harassment:

- A person notices that someone is extremely upset over something and goes over and places her hand on the person's shoulder in an attempt to calm them down. The upset person asks the other person to remove their hand and the hand is instantly removed. Although some people could construe that as unwanted physical contact, the individual obviously realized that the person had taken offense to the gesture and therefore, did not continue. This would not be considered harassment. It would only be considered harassing in nature if the person ignored the request and continued the unwanted physical contact.
- A ranked player goes up to the Control Desk to question the seeding formula, as he believes it is incorrect. After listening to the player and consulting with another organizer, the Tournament Director advises that although there was an error, no changes are going to be made. The ranked player points out the new NDFC Rule 16.14.06 stating *"When an error has occurred, resulting in an incorrect bye or incorrect match assignment, any affected match(es) shall be stopped and all results for incorrectly assigned match(es) shall be considered null and void. The error shall be corrected and the proper match(es) shall commence."* The Tournament Director stands by his decision and the seeding in the round robin is not corrected. Although the ranked player is obviously upset with the decision, he leaves the control desk area and proceeds with playing the event. This is not considered harassment. However, even

though the Tournament Director made the wrong call, it would be considered harassment if the Ranked Player continued to argue the matter in an aggressive manner.

In an effort to improve our sport environment, suspensions and periods of probation have been issued to some of our members over the past few years. The Darts Alberta Executive can't stress enough that any member that is on probation has just as much right to be treated with dignity and respect. Intentionally provoking or harassing a player that is on probation cannot be tolerated.

Although the Darts Alberta Executive realizes that we will never completely eliminate harassment or poor sportsmanship, with the help of our members, we can make the sports of darts something that all members and participants can be proud of.

- Darts Alberta Executive