

Conflict & Dispute Management

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GOALS

- Strategies for avoiding conflicts.
 - *How can we create an atmosphere that promotes collaboration and a sense of fair play?*
- Strategies for resolving conflicts.
 - *When conflicts arise, how can we handle them in a productive manner?*
- Being a good complainer.
 - *How can we raise issues in a manner that is most likely to lead to a better outcome?*



Where Conflicts Arise

- Conflicts during events
 - Between competitors.
 - Between an event official and competitor.
 - Between event officials.
- Conflicts during region meetings
 - Board member disagreements
 - Region member disagreements
 - Conflicts between neighboring regions
- Conflict in online forums, social media
 - Member conflicts aired out on social media
 - “Trolls” just stirring up trouble



Preventing Conflict

- **Events:** Clear rules and expectations understood by all ahead of time.
 - Rules should be fair and realistic.
 - Application should be consistent.
 - Provide a framework for dispute resolution.
- **Meetings:** Agendas and rules of order.
 - Establish a clear agenda and stick to it.
 - Agreed upon rules of order help keep discussions organized & ensure opportunity for all to be heard.



Resolving Conflicts - Events

- Preparing Yourself
 - Knowing the rules, taking the time to refresh on the rule at issue.
 - Knowing the process, including appeals, and sticking to them.
 - Right state of mind
 - Objectivity
 - Fairness
 - Integrity of event/competition/result



Resolving Conflicts - Events

- Dealing with conflicting competitors
 - **Separation** – deal with each party and their issues separately.
 - **Listening** – listen carefully and take notes, make sure the real issue is identified.
 - **Objectivity** – avoid loaded language (“illegal” vs “out of compliance”), emotional language.



Resolving Conflicts - Events

- Delivering Bad News – protests, penalties
 - **Timing** – consideration for impact on driver.
 - **Tone** – how you say it matters.
 - **Explanation** – of rule at issue, process to be followed or that was followed, outcome, right of appeal.



Resolving Conflicts - Meetings

- Board Meetings
 - Provide fair opportunity for comment and debate.
 - Focus on common goals and interests.
 - Take a break or table discussion to allow time for thought and consideration.
 - Bring in a third party facilitator.
 - Hold a special meeting on the topic.
 - Properly record outcome and reasons where appropriate.
 - Establish an opportunity to revisit decision where applicable. (“Let’s try this for 1 year and evaluate.”)



Resolving Conflicts - Meetings

- Member Conflicts
 - Similar to event conflict tips.
 - Separation, Listening, Objectivity, Tone, Explanation of Outcome
- Conflicts Between Regions
 - Focus on common interests and goals.
 - Communicate clearly and listen carefully.
 - Think creatively.
 - Seek third party assistance when needed.



Conflicts Online – Social Media

- Establish and publicize clear policies for online forums.
- Public forums may need to be moderated prior to posting.
- Private forums may be more open to unmoderated posting subject to review.
- Deal with “trolls”, “disruptors” consistently and fairly, in accordance with published policies.

