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UPDATE: New UW fan behavior policy announced after Obama costume controversy

By Jacki Witkowski | [CONNECT](#)
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UPDATE (WKOW) – UW-Madison athletics says every sports fan will be held to new standards and community members say it's a step in the right direction to improving the campus climate.

The university has revised its fan behavior policy, following community outrage sparked by a fan who wore an Obama mask with a noose around his neck to a Badgers football game a few weeks ago. Since then, UW officials have been meeting with community members and students to draft a new fan policy released Wednesday.

"There's going to be images of certain things not allowed in the stadium and also some strong language around what won't be tolerated and so I think it's a step in the right direction," says Michael Johnson, president of Boys & Girls Club of Dane County.

The policy specifically bans nooses and ropes and anyone bringing a prohibited item can be turned away. Also, anyone who is violent or threatening can be kicked out. The policy clearly states racist and other offensive behavior is not appropriate.

"It's a seismic step, but it has to be part of a bigger conversation that speaks to how we address the needs in our community for everybody and what we're going to do to create a safe space for everybody," says Tutankhamun "Coach" Assad, who also was part of the conversation.

Assad works with kids in the Madison area through the Mellowood Foundation, which he founded.

Both community leaders say they hope UW can continue to find ways to make campus a safe space for everyone.

UPDATE (WKOW) – The University of Wisconsin Department of Athletics has adjusted policies related to the expectations placed upon attendees of its home athletic events.

The changes were made following meetings between UW Athletics staff and several community leaders.

Items prohibited in athletics facilities will now include nooses and ropes, which will be treated as weapons that constitute a threat to safety. In addition, policies will be revised to read:

"Any person who engages in violent, threatening, abusive or otherwise disorderly conduct which tends to provoke a disturbance or incite violence will be ejected from our events. Threats include statements, actions and behaviors that could reasonably be foreseen as having a purpose to inflict physical harm, even if the person making the threat doesn't have the ability to carry out the threat. Disorderly conduct does not require that a disruption actually occur. Any spectator carrying a prohibited item may be refused admittance or may be ejected from the venue."

In a press release Wednesday, UW Athletics says they want to further reiterate they promote a welcoming atmosphere in their venues. They say racist and other offensive behavior is not appropriate for their venues.

Official changes to UW Athletics policies are listed below:

CHANGES TO FAN BEHAVIOR, CARRY-IN AND TICKET POLICIES

Effective immediately, the following changes are made to existing policies:

1. Items prohibited from our facilities include nooses and ropes because they are weapons and they constitute a threat to safety, as do replicas of weapons.
2. Any person who engages in violent, threatening, abusive or otherwise disorderly conduct which tends to provoke a disturbance or incite violence will be ejected from our events. Threats include statements, actions and behaviors that could reasonably be foreseen as having a purpose to inflict physical harm, even if the person making the threat doesn't have the ability to carry out the threat. Disorderly conduct does not require that a disruption actually occur.
3. The University of Wisconsin and the Big Ten Conference promotes good sportsmanship, appropriate fan behavior and a welcoming atmosphere for all fans at all athletic events sponsored by the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. Racist and other offensive behavior is not appropriate for our venues.
4. Any spectator carrying a prohibited item may be refused admittance or may be ejected from the venue.

MADISON (WKOW) — A new UW fan behavior policy will be announced Thursday, according to Boys and Girls Club of Dane County CEO Michael Johnson.

Johnson and a group of students and local leaders met with UW Athletic Director Barry Alvarez and other staff on Wednesday to write the policy.

Johnson says the policy will be on the back of every ticket, emailed to season ticket holders, and signs will be installed on the doors of every entrance to the stadium.



Michael Johnson
last Wednesday



am proud to announce that UW Athletics has a new fan behavior policy effective immediately. his new policy was a collaborative effort with community leaders, students of color at UW

Madison including white students, Barry Alvarez and his team.

We will release the policy tonight and will add the policy to the back of every ticket that is sold at all games. Season ticket holders will also get a mass email of the new policy and new signs will be installed on all the doors of every entrance of the stadium.

Finally, we will announce the policy change at the beginning of the game on Saturday in front of 80,000 Badger fans. I am proud we worked together to address this issue and proud that Dr. Asmune Zapata worked with us to draft the original statement.

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