

The Case For Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity in High School Athletics

“Good sportsmanship is viewed by the National Federation of High School Associations as a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities that are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. The ideals of sportsmanship apply equally to all athletic disciplines.

Individuals, regardless of their role in athletics, are expected to be aware of their influence on the behavior of others and model good sportsmanship.”



Who Is Responsible?

Ten target groups have been identified within the high school communities that are responsible for conducting themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. Following are expectations of these groups:

Expectations of COACHES, DIRECTORS, AND SPONSORS

- Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow, exemplifying the highest moral and ethical behavior.
- Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics No. 1 priority.
- Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
- Treat opposing coaches, directors, participants and fans with respect. Shake hands with officials, opposing coach in public.
- Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

Expectations of STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

- Treat teammates with respect.
- Treat opponents with respect: shake hands prior to and after contests.
- Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
- Cooperate with officials, coaches, directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
- Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing school and community; display positive public action at all times.
- Live up to a high standard of sportsmanship established by coach or director.

Expectations of PARENTS, STUDENTS AND OTHER FANS

- Realize that a ticket is a privilege to observe a contest and support high school athletics, not a license to verbally assault others or to be generally obnoxious.
- Respect decisions made by contest officials.
- Be an exemplary role model by positively supporting teams in every manner possible, including content of cheers and signs.
- Respect fans, coaches, directors and participants
- BE A FAN ... NOT A FANATIC

Expectations of SPIRIT GROUPS

- Stimulate desired crowd response using only positive cheers, signs and praise without antagonizing or demeaning opponents.
- Treat opposing spirit groups and fans with respect.
- Recognize outstanding performances on either side of the playing field or court.
- Know rules and strategies of the contest in order to cheer at proper times.
- Maintain enthusiasm and composure, serving as a role model.

Expectations of MEDIA

- Promote ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship.
- Report acts of sportsmanlike behavior without giving undue publicity to unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Refrain from making negative comments toward participants, coaches, officials or judges.
- Recognize efforts of all who participate in the contest.
- Report facts without demonstrating partiality to any team or school.

Expectations of CONTEST OFFICIALS

- Accept role in an unassuming manner. Showboating and over-officiating are not acceptable.
- Maintain confidence and poise, controlling contest from start to finish.
- Know rules thoroughly and abide by established Code of Ethics.
- Publicly shake hands with coaches of both teams before a contest.
- Never exhibit emotions or argue with participants and coaches when enforcing rules.

Expectations of SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- Develop a program for teaching and promoting the ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship within the school, the league, conference and state.
- Provide appropriate supervisory personnel for each interscholastic event.
- Support participants, coaches and directors, and fans and spectators who teach and display good sportsmanship.

- Recognize exemplary behavior and actively discourage undesirable conduct by participants, coaches and fans.
- Attend events whenever possible.

Expectations of STATE ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE

- Provide leadership and information to member schools.
- Act as a liaison to other educational associations within the state.
- Use statewide visibility to actively promote good sportsmanship.
- Interact with leaders of non-school activity programs to enhance good sportsmanship.
- Acknowledge commendable displays of good sportsmanship.

Expectations of BOARDS

- Adopt policies that promote the ideals of good sportsmanship, ethics and integrity.
- Serve as a positive role model and expect the same for parents, fans, participants, coaches, and other school personnel.
- Support participants, coaches, directors, school administrators and fans who display good sportsmanship.
- Recognize the value of school athletics as a vital part of education.
- Attend and enjoy school athletic events.

Expectations of PUBLIC-ADDRESS ANNOUNCERS

- Treat visiting and home teams comparably.
- Consistently display neutrality during contest.
- Offer no personal comments or criticism of players, officials or coaches.

Suggestions for TICKET WINDOW-ADMISSION GATE DISPLAY

- In the game or in the stands, BE A GOOD SPORT.
- At today's contest, BE A FAN, NOT A FANATIC.
- Be a good audience member.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- Applause during introduction of players, coaches and officials.
- Players shaking hands with opponent who fouls out while both sets of fans recognize player's performance with applause.
- Accept all decisions of officials.
- Cheerleaders lead fans in positive school yells in positive manner.
- Handshakes between participants and coaches at end of contest, regardless of outcome.

- Treat competition as a game, not a war.
- Coaches, players search out opposing participants to recognize them for outstanding performance or coaching.
- Applause at end of contest for performances of all participants.
- Everyone showing concern for injured player, regardless of team.
- Encourage surrounding people to display only sportsmanlike conduct.
- During the National Anthem, students, participants and fans should remove any hats, face the flag, not talk, place right hand on the heart, and remain still until the end of the anthem.
- During the National Anthem, when singing, follow the music and lyrics precisely.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- Yelling or waving arms during opponent's free throw attempt.
- Disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs or gestures.
- Booming or heckling an official's decision.
- Criticizing officials in any way; displays of temper with an official's call.
- Yells that antagonize opponents.
- Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances.
- Blaming losses on contest officials, coaches or participants.
- Laughing or name-calling to distract opponent.
- Use of profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game or activity.
- Doing own yells instead of following lead of cheerleaders.

WAYS TO PROMOTE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

- Develop code of conduct and enforce it.
- Develop sportsmanship awards program and honor those individuals who exhibit outstanding sportsmanship, ethics and integrity.
- Hold preseason meeting and assemblies before contest to encourage students to exhibit proper conduct.
- Work with local radio and television stations to air public-service announcements on sportsmanship.
- Display message on good sportsmanship throughout school hallways and in gymnasium or on playing field.
- Have coaches, players and administrators speak to local clubs and organizations to stress need for good sportsmanship in the community.
- Conduct clinics for parents and others to discuss playing and contest rules, ethics and good sportsmanship.
- Formulate a committee to work toward improvement of conduct at contest.