

Ethics Policy

GOOD SPORTS ARE WINNERS! CAMPAIGN WHAT IS SPORTSMANSHIP?

sports'man ship' (n.) the practice of playing fair, of taking loss or defeat without complaint or victory without gloating, and treating opponents with fairness, generosity, courtesy, etc

Sportsmanship is a demonstration of generosity and genuine concern for others. It is a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

Sportsmanship is a blending of cheers for "your team" and applause for the "opponents," observing the letter and spirit of the rules, and showing consideration for others.

Sportsmanship is the "golden rule" of athletics - treating others as you wish to be treated.

Sportsmanship is respect. Respect for others and for one's self.

Sportsmanship is all this and much more.

For a coach, sportsmanship may be accepting a "questionable" call without protest.

For an athlete, it may be lending a helping hand to an opponent who is down.

For a general spectator, it may be cheering for his team when it loses, and applauding the opponent when it wins.

For an official, it may be showing restraint when verbally assaulted by coaches, athletes and spectators.

For parents, it may be avoiding living their lives through their children's sporting activities.

Sportsmanship encompasses all that which is good in human nature.

Sportsmanship is citizenship in action.

Sportsmanship is a way of life.

GOOD SPORTS ARE WINNERS! CAMPAIGN FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTSMANSHIP

Every year the MHSAA has been emphasizing the importance of good sportsmanship. Many people have not had good sportsmanship explained to them. The following six steps will help those people to understand their responsibilities at an athletic contest.

1. Gain an Understanding and Appreciation for the Rules of the Contest.

The necessity to be well informed is essential. Know the rules. If you are uninformed, refrain from expressing opinions on the officials, coaches, players, or administrative decisions. The spirit of good sportsmanship depends on conformance to a rule's intent as well as to the letter of a given rule.

2. Exercise Representative Behavior at All Times.

Good sportsmanship requires one to understand his/her own prejudices that may become a factor in his/her behavior. The true value of interscholastic competition relies on everyone exhibiting behavior which is representative of a sound value base. A proper perspective must be maintained if the educational values are to be realized. Your behavior influences others whether you are aware of it or not.

3. Recognize and Appreciate Skilled Performance Regardless of Affiliation.

Applause for an opponent's good performance displays generosity and is a courtesy that should be regularly practiced. This not only represents good sportsmanship, but reflects a true awareness of the game by recognizing and acknowledging quality.

4. Exhibit Respect for the Officials.

The officials of any contest are impartial arbitrators who are trained and who perform to the best of their ability. Mistakes by all those involved in the contest are a part of the game. We should not rationalize our own poor or unsuccessful performance or behavior by placing responsibility on the officials. The rule of good sportsmanship is to accept and abide by the decision made. This value is critical for students to learn for later application in life.

5. Display Openly a Respect for Opponents.

Opponents are guests and should be treated cordially, with thoughtfulness, be provided with the best accommodations, and accorded tolerance at all times. Be a positive representative for your school, team and family. This fundamental is the Golden Rule in action.

6. Display Pride in your Actions at Every Opportunity.

Never allow your ego to interfere with good judgment and your responsibility as a school representative. Regardless of whether you are an adult: student, player, coach, or official, this value is paramount since it suggests that you care about yourself and how others perceive you.

DEFINING GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP & POOR SPORTSMANSHIP

Simply, bad sportsmanship is the opposite of sportsmanship, which is defined as "playing fair and losing without complaint or winning without gloating." To expand on that definition, we believe sportsmanship can be further defined as "playing by the established rules of the contest, competing and losing without complaint, winning without gloating, and cheering in only a positive manner that does not disrespect, taunt, ridicule or attempt to intimidate anyone."

It is difficult to attend an interscholastic athletic event without witnessing some acts of poor sportsmanship. And with any large group of people, there is a greater opportunity to have random and isolated instances of unfavorable behavior. However, peer pressure is a powerful thing among teen-aged students, and also with adults. Not supporting individuals who display poor sportsmanship and instructing them on good sportsmanship can also assist in sportsmanship efforts. Perhaps a definition of poor sportsmanship and examples displayed at numerous sporting events can help students, parents, competitors, coaches and support groups identify breaches in sportsmanship.

With this definition, here are just a few of the common problems with sportsmanship at interscholastic events.

Action

Booing at official's call or players action, or the cheers "Nuts and Bolts, Nuts and Bolts, We Got...;" Competitors, coaches, fans making negative expressions in reaction to an official's call

Cheering "Over-rated;" "Referee, Winning Team, Losing Team" (and pointing to the subjects); "Air Ball;" "You, You, You" (after a foul); "Sieve" (after a goal); "Nab, Nah, Nab, Nab, Heyyyy-eyyy, Good Bye"

Waving arms or screaming during a foul shot in order to distract the attention of opponents

Throwing of ANY object

Competitors not shaking hands after a contest; degrading an opponent, before or after a contest, in the media; trash talking during a contest; criticizing teammates and coaches

Damaging bleachers or facilities of host schools, hotels, restaurants

Competitors pointing to the crowd, doing dances after scoring or making a positive play in excessive celebration; Spectators using excessive body paint and acting out in manners unrelated to the game.

Posting untrue and inflammatory information on Internet bulletin boards and chat rooms; especially when the real name of the person posting the information is not displayed

Sportsmanship Infraction Interpretation

Disrespectful of official's judgments and/or the efforts of players competing. Both are doing their best to execute in a way they were trained. Everyone makes mistakes, we're all human. We need to accept that.

These cheers are directed at the opposition to blatantly ridicule and taunt the opposition and their fans.

This is not playing fair, if it were, wouldn't spectators do it when their own players are shooting?

Not only is this a more serious form of the losing or competing without complaint infraction, it is dangerous and could be considered a criminal act.

This is not winning or losing with dignity and it does not show respect for the opposition, teammates or coaches.

Disrespectful and criminal.

Disrespectful and draws attention to yourself and not crediting teammates and coaches. Fans drawing attention to themselves do a disservice to the game, showing they are more interested in their own selfish interests than the efforts of their team and school.

Possibly the worst kind of poor sportsmanship - hurling insults without any kind of accountability. Hiding behind a screen name, or no name, is worse than hiding in a crowd at a game.

THE CONCEPTS OF SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship is an oft-used word, yet no definitive explanation is readily available. We do know that it refers to some key concepts:

- Citizenship Values
- Competitive Integrity and Ethics
- Respect for Opponents and Officials
- Fair Play
- Understanding of the Rules
- Appreciation for all Performances
- Personal and Institutional Pride
- Gracious Acceptance of Results
- High Moral Character

All these concepts fall into the definition of sportsmanship. They all represent the standards which athletics, in the proper atmosphere, can teach our students.

Citizenship is a companion of sportsmanship, reaching out beyond the playing field and stadium into the community. Citizenship can be defined as:

"The quality of an individual's response to membership in the community as evidenced by respect for self and respect for others. Sports provide not only the opportunity to teach and learn respect for self and respect for others, but it also places participants in a unique context – competition – that can further instill and hone values necessary for the development of respect for self and respect for others."

Areas under the umbrella of citizenship include:

- Respect for Self
- Self-esteem
- Discipline
- Courage
- Responsibility
- Integrity and Honesty
- Ethics
- Pride
- Poise
- Respect for Others
- Teamwork
- Loyalty
- Compassion
- Tolerance
- Courtesy
- Fairness
- Integrity
- Humility

Good sportsmanship and citizenship are keys to the public's perception of interscholastic athletics and activities and their role in the educational system. Athletics and activities, which display good sportsmanship and citizenship, show a positive and productive part of the total educational program offered by a school, and exhibit the justification for the financial expenditures necessary to run these programs.