

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); “Nah, Nah, Nah, Nah, 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 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 drawing 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.

OF OTHER STUDENT GROUPS (PEP CLUBS, BAND, ETC.)...

- Establish themselves as leaders in their conduct before, during and after contests and events. Always provide positive support for your team, rather than intimidating or ridiculing the other team.
- Assist cheerleaders with yells, chants, etc., and be a working part of pep assemblies, with preparation, organization, and involvement.
- Treat opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups with respect and enthusiasm.
- Refrain from taunting or making any kind of derogatory remarks to your opponents during the game, especially comments of ethnic, racial or sexual nature.
- Conduct themselves in an exemplary manner. Remember, you represent your school both home and away.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will only make a positive impression of your group, your team and community, in the eyes of all people at the event.
- Be an exemplary role model by positively supporting teams in every manner possible, including content of cheers and signs.

OF SPECTATORS IN GENERAL...

- Remember that you are at a contest to support and yell for your team and to enjoy the skill and competition; not to intimidate or ridicule the other team and its fans.
- Remember that school athletics are learning experiences for students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes and as people as you would praise a student working in the classroom.
- Remember that a ticket to a school athletic event is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others and be generally obnoxious.
- Learn the rules of the game, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups. Treat them as you would treat a guest in your own home.
- Refrain from taunting or making any kind of derogatory remarks to your opponents during the game, especially comments of ethnic, racial or sexual nature.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student-athlete, and admire their **willingness to participate in full view of the public.**
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before and during games, and afterwards on or near the site of the event (i.e. tailgating).
- Use only those cheers that support and uplift the teams involved.
- Recognize and compliment the efforts of school and league administrators for their efforts in emphasizing the benefits of educational athletics and the role of good sportsmanship to that end.
- Be a positive behavior role model through your own actions and by censuring those around you at events whose behavior is unbecoming.