

SPORTSMANSHIP

“THE ONLY MISSING PIECE IS YOU”

What is SPORTSMANSHIP?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines sportsmanship as “one who abides by the rules of a Contest and accepts victory or defeat graciously. The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (PIAA) defines sportsmanship as “those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Further, an awareness is expected of the impact of an individual’s influence on others behavior.”

The ideal of sportsmanship permeates virtually every aspect of our culture. The ethic of fair play may be witnessed in all facets of life. However, its origin has been firmly established in sports, as conceptually and pragmatically a training ground for good citizenship and high behavioral standards. Sportsmanship is viewed by PIAA as a concrete measure of each school’s and individual’s understanding of their commitment to the educational nature of interscholastic athletics.

The responsibility for developing sportsmanship involves many different people. The complexity of this subject, in implementation, extends far beyond the boundaries of our definition. PIAA is philosophically and practically committed to the attainment and maintenance of all codes of behavior addressed in the manual. While enforcement of these codes has priority status, the recognition of exemplary behavior is a major goal of this effort.

In recent years, the ideal of sportsmanship has often been relegated to a secondary role. A need exists to again make this role primary and to restore placement of interscholastic athletics in an educational perspective. The problems are quite evident and will require a maximum effort by everyone involved to achieve the desired outcomes. The modes of behavior contained in the manual explicitly define what is expected. Willful compliance by all concerned is necessary to achieve the goals of sportsmanship.

Athletics and their companion, competition, may be the last stronghold of discipline in our society. Athletics in particular are called upon to absorb more of their responsibility for teaching basic social values. Any contribution of this magnitude requires the development of positive, definitive programs. The behavior expected of any participant (direct or indirect) must be explicitly spelled out; to that end comes the purpose of this manual.

The manual provides the PIAA member schools with a comprehensive perspective on the rules of sportsmanship. It serves as a behavior guide for all groups involved with interscholastic activity, as well as a source of preventative information. The following material offer direction and guidance, along with expectations that correspond to the goals indicated.

GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR

OF THE COACH...

- Exemplify the highest moral character, behavior, and leadership; adhering to strong ethical and integrity standards. Practicing good sportsmanship is practicing good citizenship!
- Respect the integrity and personality of the individual athlete.
- Abide by and teach the rules of the Contest in letter and in spirit.
- Set a good example for players and spectators to follow: please refrain from arguments in front of players and spectators; no gestures which indicate officials or opposing coaches do not know what they are doing or talking about; no throwing of any object in disgust. Shake hands with the officials and the opposing coaches before and after the Contest in full view of the public.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of Contest officials. The officials are doing their best to help promote athletics and the student/athlete. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will only make a positive impression of you and your team in the eyes of all people at the event.
- Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat in public and in meeting/talking with the media. Please confine your remarks to Contest statistics and to the performance of your team.
- Instruct participants and spectators in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship the No. 1 priority.
- Develop a program that rewards participants and spectators for displaying proper sportsmanship and enforces penalties on those who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.
- Be no party to the use of profanity or obscene language, or improper actions.

OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETE...

- Accept and understand the seriousness of responsibility, and the privilege of representing your school and your community.
- Live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school administration and the coaching staff.
- Learn the rules of the Contest thoroughly and discuss them with parents, fans, fellow students and elementary students. This will assist both them and you in the achievement of a better understanding and appreciation of the sport.
- Treat opponents the way you would like to be treated, as a guest or friend. Who better than yourselves can understand all the hard work and team effort that is required of your sport!
- Wish opponents good luck before the Contest and congratulate them in a sincere manner that you would like to be greeted following either victory or defeat.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of Contest officials. The officials are doing their best to help promote you and your sport. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will only make a positive impression of you and your team in the eyes of the officials and all people at the event.

OF THE CHEERLEADERS...

- Understand the seriousness and responsibility of your role, and the privilege of representing your school and your community.
- Learn the rules of the Contest thoroughly and discuss them with parents, fans fellow students and elementary students. This will assist both them and you in the achievement of a better understanding and appreciation of the sport.
- Treat opposing cheerleaders the way you would like to be treated, as a guest or friend. Who better than you can understand all the hard work, training, and team effort that goes into a cheering squad?
- Wish opposing cheerleaders good luck before the Contest and congratulate them in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.

OF THE MEDIA...

- Promote ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship.
- Report acts of good sportsmanlike without giving undue publicity to unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Refrain from making negative comments towards participants, coaches, or officials. After all, the interscholastic athletic arena is a classroom. Would you make negative comments about teachers teaching students and students trying to learn?
- Recognize the effort of all who participate in the Contest.
- Report facts without demonstrating partiality to either team.

OF CONTEST OFFICIALS...

- Accept your role in an unassuming manner. Showboating and over-officiating are not acceptable.
- Maintain confidence and poise, controlling the Contest from start to finish.
- Know the rules of the Contest thoroughly and abide by the established PIAA Code of Ethics.
- Publicly shake hands with coaches of both teams before the Contest.
- Never exhibit emotions or argue with participants and coaches when enforcing rules.
- When watching a Contest as a spectator, give the Contest officials the same respect you expect to receive when working a Contest.

OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS...

- Develop a program for teaching and promoting the ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship within the school, the conference/league and PIAA.
- Provide appropriate supervisory personnel for each interscholastic athletic event.
- Support participants, coaches and fans whose team displays good sportsmanship.
- Recognize exemplary behavior and actively discourage undesirable conduct by participants, coaches and fans.
- Attend events whenever possible and function as a role model – show good sportsmanship. This includes communicating with spectators during an event as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE BOARD...

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

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR...

- Applause during introduction of players, coaches, and Contest officials.
- Players shaking hands with opponents who foul out while both sets of fans recognize player's performance with applause.
- Accept all decisions of Contest officials.
- Cheerleaders lead fans in cheers in a positive manner.
- Handshakes between participants and coaches at end of Contest, regardless of outcome.
- Treat competition as a Contest, not a war.
- Coaches/players search out opposing participants to recognize them for outstanding performance or coaching.

Sportsmanship from A to Z

A ccept and abide by the decisions of the contest officials.

B e a good host to opponents and treat them as guests.

C ooperate with the coach, players and cheerleaders in trying to promote good sportsmanship.

D o unto others as you would have them do unto you.

E ncourage your players to play hard and fair.

F ollow the rules of the contest at all times.

G ood sportsmanship is the “Golden Rule” in action.

H old assemblies before a contest to encourage students to display proper conduct.

I ntervene to let others know that ethnic, disability or sexist jokes, racial or religious slurs, taunting, trash talk and intimidating behavior will not be tolerated at events sponsored at your school.

J udgement calls on the part of the officials are not subject to question or discussion.

K now, understand and appreciate the rules of the contest.

L ose without excuses; win without boasting.

M odel language and behavior that is non-biased and is inclusive of individuals regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, sex or disability.

N ever criticize players or coaches for the loss of a game.

O pposing coaches, participants, cheerleaders and fans must be respected at all times.

P rovide opportunities for informing student and adult spectators of their responsibility to uphold the standards of sportsmanship.

Q uestioning an official’s call or making negative comments about an official is unacceptable behavior.

R ecognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play.

S hake hands with opponents prior to the contest and wish them good luck.

T each sportsmanship and demand that your players be good sports.

U se cheerleaders, pep groups, and other student leaders to help develop a sportsmanship program.

V ictory celebrations and unscheduled game rallies should not be permitted at events sponsored at your school.

W ork cooperatively with officials and other contest personnel for an efficient contest.

X ercise self-control and be a good example for players and spectators.

Y elling, booing or heckling an official’s decision is unacceptable behavior.

Z ero in on sportsmanship – it’s priority NUMBER ONE.

A Message From the PIAA Executive Director

Dear Parent / Guardian

Good sportsmanship is the attitude and behavior that exemplifies positive support for the interscholastic athletic programs of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (PIAA) member schools as well as for the individuals who participate. People involved in all facets of the interscholastic athletics are expected to demonstrate respect for others and display good sportsmanship.

It is essential that student-athletes, coaches, parents, student groups, and fans are constantly reminded that Good Sports Are Winners! People seriously believe sportsmanship to be an important issue of concern in interscholastic athletics. Positive experiences do not occur by chance, rather they are a result of the educational structure, the right perspective, the right leadership, and the true understanding of sportsmanship.

Good sportsmanship is not merely a campaign – it is the essence of what educational athletics is about. Let all of us who have the opportunity, promote the ideals of sportsmanship so that today's students and tomorrow's citizens may build a better society.

PIAA and its Sportsmanship Steering Committee trust that you will do your part in promoting good sportsmanship at home and in your community/ Remember, SPORTSMANSHIP: The Only Missing Piece Is You!

Sincerely,

Bradley R. Cashman, Executive Director

The Role of Parent...

The role of the parent in the education of a youngster is important. The support shown in the home is often manifested in the ability of the student to accept the opportunities presented at school in the classroom and through co-curricular activities.

There is a value system – established in the home, nurtured in the school – that young people are developing. Their involvement in classroom and other activities contributes to that development.

Integrity, fairness, and respect are lifetime values taught through athletics, and these are the principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of the competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of the results.

Working to that end, we are joining with PIAA in support of a program call “SPORTSMANSHIP: The Only Missing Piece Is You”. This is a program designed to positively change behavior in our schools and reinforce and reward the need for sportsmanship as one of the values taught through educational athletics. A good sport, whether a student or a parent, is a true leader within the school and our community. As a parent of a student, your sportsmanship goals should include:

- Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a Contest;
- Encouraging our students to perform their best, just as we would urge them on with their class work, knowing that others will always turn in better or lesser performances.
- Participating in positive cheers that encourage our athletes; and discouraging any cheer that would redirect that focus;
- Learning, understanding, and respecting the rules of the Contest, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- Respecting the task our coaches face as teachers; and supporting them as they strive to educate our youth;
- Respecting each official and realizing they are an essential part of every Contest;
- Respecting our opponents as students, and acknowledging them for striving to do their best;
- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances.
- Being a FAN...not a fanatic!

These are guidelines which we hope you will take a few moments to review with your son/daughter. They give us a roadmap to follow on a journey toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

You can have a major influence on your youngster's attitude about academics and athletics. The leadership role you take in sportsmanship will help influence your child, and your community, for years to come.

Top Ten Reasons To Be A Designated Good Sport

10. Because taunting, trash talk and intimidating behavior have no place in high school sports – or any level of sports.
9. Your admission is to watch the performances of highly impressionable 15 to 18 year old kids – not a license to abuse coaches, officials, players and other spectators.
8. You want others to treat you the way you want to be treated – and how many of us want to be treated with disrespect?
7. We need more positive role models for our kids.
6. People don't always remember the final score – but they always remember the fan in Section Three who made a fool out of him or herself.
5. Because coaches and officials are also teachers. Why would you harass them in their classroom?
4. A national survey indicates kids play high school sports to have fun – not to be number one!
3. It's how you play the game that counts.
2. It's simply the right thing to do.
1. Because sportsmanship begins with you!