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Pursuing Victory with Honor

Seattle Public School System
# MIAA SPORTSMANSHIP MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

The American Heritage Dictionary defines sportsmanship as “the conduct and attitude of participants in sports, especially when considered commendable as in fair play, courtesy, and grace in losing.”

Sportsmanship needs to be a primary role of interscholastic athletics in an educational prospective. Athletic competition is an extension of the classroom and an educational activity which provides lessons difficult to teach in another environment. The need for improvements of sportsmanship in society is evident and will require a maximum effort by everyone involved in athletics.

The responsibility for developing sportsmanship involves many different people. The complexity of this subject extends beyond the definition. Unlike most areas of education, athletics are played before spectators, and young people put their self-esteem on the line with every play. And they look, not only to their coaches and teammates but to the people in the stands – their parents, fellow students and citizens of the community – for positive reinforcement that they have made the right choice in wanting to compete for their school.

Mission Statement

The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and integrity should encompass all interscholastic athletics in our community. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as qualities of behavior characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Our athletic fields should be the laboratories to produce good sports who reflect "fair play" in every area of life.

Purpose

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is committed to encouraging and promoting the high ideals of sportsmanship, integrity and ethics at all levels of interscholastic competition. MIAA also is committed to developing a positive environment for athletic events throughout the Commonwealth.

In an effort to achieve this goal of establishing a healthy and positive environment for athletic competition, the MIAA has put together this Sportsmanship Manual. Included in this manual are materials that can be used as a resource to promote sportsmanship in your school. Following the guidelines in this packet will help your school achieve the highest level of sportsmanship through a cooperative approach of understanding and committing to sportsmanship.

We encourage you to distribute the appropriate letters and guidelines to school administrators, coaches, student-athletes, cheerleaders and student groups, parents, spectators, game officials, and media. This will ensure that everyone is aware of the standards and expectations of good sportsmanship at your school’s athletic contests.
# MIAA’s Support for Enforcing Sportsmanship

## School and Athletic Administrators

It is incumbent upon high school administrators to do everything in their power to create a positive environment for interscholastic events. They must adopt the attitude that the treatment of visiting teams and spectators will be in the same manner that they would want their own teams and spectators treated. Athletic Directors must ensure that those representing the host school treat opponents with fairness and respect. This includes student-athletes, cheerleaders, bands, and public address announcers. School administrators and athletic directors should review periodically with all groups involved what constitutes acceptable conduct, as set forth in this statement.

## Coaches

Coaches have the greatest influence over whether student-athletes are taught to recognize and follow the principles of sportsmanship, integrity and ethics. Good coaches have risked losing by removing from a contest a student-athlete who has demonstrated disrespect for his or her opponent. This disciplinary measure teaches the importance of sportsmanship over participation or winning in athletic events. While everyone wants to win, winning at the expense of good sportsmanship is not acceptable. This type of attitude and courage must be adopted by all coaches throughout the MIAA, and staunchly supported by administrators. Administrators and coaches must pay special attention to the behavior of their student-athletes and continually emphasize the need for sportsmanship and respect. Such attention and education is needed to counteract the constant messages received by our young people from many professional athletes and others who demonstrate a total lack of respect for others. The MIAA is committed to sending a strong message to our student-athletes that encourages sportsmanship and good ethics. Coaches also have the ability to influence the behavior of their fans. MIAA coaches must take every opportunity to express their desire for spectators to support their own teams, and not to abuse visiting teams and their fans.

## Student-Athletes

Respect for the sport in which the student-athlete participates also demands respect for the opponent. Student-athletes participating in MIAA sponsored events are expected to treat opponents with respect. There can be absolutely no tolerance for trash-talking, taunting or baiting of opponents. MIAA student-athletes must appreciate and understand that they are perhaps the most visible representatives of their schools. In addition, their behavior is observed and emulated by younger students. MIAA student-athletes must honor the responsibility that accompanies the privilege of representing their school by behaving with dignity and class on and off the field.

## Spirit Groups

These groups are visible representatives of their schools. High expectations are placed on them for appropriate behavior. Cheerleaders, bands and other spirit groups are admitted to contests at the pleasure of our institutions to support their teams and assist in creating a positive atmosphere. They are not admitted to disrupt or confront the opponent. Such behavior must not be tolerated. Their focus must be toward encouraging their own team while demonstrating respect for the opposing team.
Officials

Officials who are assigned to MIAA contests must enforce the rules regarding sportsmanship without tolerance for abuse. The only warning to participants and coaches regarding sportsmanship should come at the beginning of the contest. Once the contest begins, penalties (consequences), not warnings, must be assessed for unsportsmanlike conduct. Similar to the baseball policy of ejecting coaches for arguing balls and strikes, the MIAA expects that officials will eject any coach who protests unsportsmanlike conduct calls provided by the rules of that sport. Each official at an MIAA sponsored event will be provided with a card of the following statement, which must be read to the captains and coaches before every contest:

"Welcome to this Educational Athletic Event. Today’s contest is an opportunity for all participants to demonstrate a commitment to good sportsmanship and fair play. Any unsportsmanlike conduct will be penalized. At the conclusion of the game, Players, Coaches and Game Officials will meet for the ceremonial handshake."

MIAA’s Support

The MIAA will firmly support enforcement of unsportsmanlike conduct rules at all MIAA sanctioned events. Furthermore, the MIAA may assess penalties for improper behavior which is not detected or properly addressed during the contest. Member schools and their personnel are expected to fully cooperate with the MIAA’s effort to investigate inappropriate behavior. In the unfortunate event that an altercation occurs during a contest, all individuals who are on the bench are expected to remain there. It is incumbent upon the head coach to ensure that this occurs. The MIAA may suspend the head coach of a team whose bench personnel enter the playing area during an altercation, regardless of whether those individuals become involved in the altercation.
### Ethical Behavior

- Ethics is the discipline of dealing with what is good and bad. Ethics deals with moral duty and obligation.
- Ethical behavior is being honest, truthful and doing the right thing even at the expense of self interest.
- A person who demonstrates ethical behavior contributes to the enjoyment and growth of all rather than the rise of a few at the expense of many.
- Ethical behavior enables the strong to help the weak.
- People who practice ethical behavior realize that it is hard work.
- Being ethical ensures an equal opportunity for fair participation competition. Ethical participants place fair play above personal gain or victory.
- Ethical behavior promotes equal opportunity to participate regardless of race, gender, or cultural affiliation.
- Ethical people understand that unethical actions undermine success they experience as a participant, coach or administrator.
- A person who behaves ethically calls upon every participant to treat others with the respect he or she would want from them.

### Integrity

- A person of integrity is unified - not divided. This person does not say one thing and do another. A person of integrity is at peace within and displays serenity outright.
- A person of integrity is whole - not lacking any ingredient. This person has a boldness to try and the compassion to comfort, the patience to wait, the persistence to endure, and the poise to give in.
- The person of integrity knows that honor is more than honesty. This person realizes that honor means doing not only what the person is legally obligated to do, but also what the person is morally required to do.
- The person of integrity has a highly developed conscience and listens to it, having the courage to act on his/her own convictions.
Fundamentals of Sportsmanship

The following steps will help athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators to understand their responsibilities at an athletic contest.

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

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 behaving in a way that represents a sound value base.

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. **Show Respect for the Officials.**
The officials of any contest are trained impartial arbitrators who perform to the best of their ability. Mistakes by those involved in the contest are part of the game. We should not rationalize our own poor performance or behavior by blaming the officials.

5. **Display Respect for the Opponent at All Times.**
Opponents are guests and should be treated cordially and with thoughtfulness.

6. **Display Pride in Your Actions at Every Opportunity.**
Never allow your ego to interfere with good judgment. Regardless of whether you are a student, player, coach, or official, this value is paramount since it suggests that you care about yourself and how others perceive you.

The Keys to SPORTSMANSHIP

- Know the rules of the game.
- Recognize good play by both teams.
- Respect your opponent and its spectators.
- View the game with your head instead of your heart.
- Practice the Golden Rule.
Responsibilities of the School Committee, School Administrators, and Directors of Athletics

School Committee
Good sportsmanship starts with the local school committee. The committee should develop a sportsmanship policy and philosophy and direct the school administrators to carry it out. Sportsmanship should be taught in all activity programs. The school committee should approve guidelines for good conduct at all school-sponsored programs directing staff to build a sportsmanship program. Following these guidelines will help promote sportsmanship in your school:

1. Develop and adopt sportsmanship policies outlining expectations from participants and spectators.
2. Make the community aware of its sportsmanship responsibilities and involve the community in the linkage between athletics and academics.
3. Ensure that athletic personnel are knowledgeable about MIAA Rules and Regulations and the MIAA Sportsmanship Program.
4. Insist that the behavior of coaches and athletes will be positive and sportsmanlike.
5. Serve as a positive role model and expect the same from parents, fans, participants, coaches, and other school personnel.
6. Support and reward participants, coaches, school administrators, and fans that display good sportsmanship.
7. Attend and enjoy school activities with a positive attitude!

School Administrators
The administration, which includes all executive personnel of the school, must take the leadership role in establishing and communicating the importance of good sportsmanship. The quality of sportsmanship at athletic contests reflects the leadership of the administrative staff. This does not mean that they will avoid all problems. It is how they attempt to solve those problems that indicate the leadership and the philosophy of the school administration. Following these guidelines will help to create a tradition of good sportsmanship in your school:

1. Develop a strategy for implementing and monitoring the sportsmanship policies adopted by the school committee.
2. Explain sportsmanship requirements and expectations to athletic staff, students and faculty. The principal is ultimately responsible for the sportsmanship effort.
3. Develop hiring procedures for coaches that will foster the educational values of athletics, including sportsmanship. Hire coaches who will demonstrate positive behavior and sportsmanship.
4. Plan and conduct workshops that stress athletic philosophy with an emphasis on sportsmanship.
5. Be sure that athletic personnel are knowledgeable about MIAA Rules and Regulations.
6. Provide appropriate supervisory personnel for each interscholastic athletic event. Take swift and appropriate action when behavior falls short of expectations. Unsportsmanlike behavior by any group must not be tolerated.
7. Recognize exemplary behavior and actively discourage undesirable conduct by participants, coaches and fans.
8. Support participants, coaches and fans that teach and display good sportsmanship.
9. Attend events whenever possible and function as a model of good sportsmanship.
Directors of Athletics

The administrator is directly responsible for implementation of the comprehensive sportsmanship effort and the Athletic Director serves as the leader and catalyst. All details essential to the purposeful educational contest require the efforts of individuals committed to the ideals of sportsmanship. The policies and procedures must reflect the goals established by the administration. All coaches’ and spectators’ conduct is directly under his/her supervision. Following these guidelines will help build a tradition of good sportsmanship at your school:

1. Be aware that you are the leader at all athletic contests and that the behavior of coaches, players, and spectators is your direct responsibility.
2. Develop a monitoring process of coaching behavior.
3. Meet regularly with athletic personnel to discuss principles of sportsmanship, expectations of the coaches’ behavior and MIAA Rules and Regulations. Conduct meetings with coaches, student-athletes, and parents to explain the expectations of sportsmanship.
4. Develop a positive atmosphere that allows students, spectators, and support groups to demonstrate a high level of sportsmanship. Provide sufficient staff and security supervision for spectator control.
5. Assign faculty members to oversee conduct of fans, cheerleaders, pep squads, bands, etc., for both home and away games.
6. Ensure that coaches and players are aware of MIAA penalties and procedures. Use public address announcers who will promote the fundamentals of sportsmanship.
7. Have someone greet and escort visiting teams and officials to their dressing rooms and extend every courtesy to make them enjoy their visit to your school.
8. Provide awards for teams or individuals as a use of positive reinforcement.
9. Closely monitor any potential troublemakers.
NOTE:
These letters should be sent along with the list of responsibilities for each group, as well as any other appropriate resources from the Sportsmanship Workbook.

Letter from Principal/Athletic Director to Coaches

Dear Coach,

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

A coach who is a good sportsman believes and teaches that athletic competition is an ethical pursuit, one which builds character and shapes lifetime attitudes.

As a coach at (Name of School), your sportsmanship goals should include:

1. Helping your athletes develop a positive self-image.
2. Promoting respect for the rules, officials and their decisions, and opponents.
3. Encouraging a constructive attitude toward competition.
4. Providing an equal opportunity for all to learn skills.
5. Encouraging these individuals to continue their participation in a variety of athletic activities to enhance their overall education.

These and other expectations are included in the attached guidelines, which we expect you to take some time to review. They give us a road map to follow a journey toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

You are one of the most influential people in a youngster’s life. Your job is not only to teach the skills of the game, but also to teach how to win and lose graciously. You must also remind them that the sport is meant to be fun. The athletic skills these young people learn from you may only be used for a few years. The attitudes they develop toward themselves and others will last a lifetime.

We hope the upcoming season will be a rewarding one for you…and your athletes.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
Coaches’ Responsibilities

Coaches are privileged with the opportunity to coach student-athletes. It is essential to understand the importance of teaching good sportsmanship. The coach must accept primary responsibility for the behavior and actions of her/his players, and realize that a good example to players and spectators alike is a serious responsibility. If a coach’s actions become the center of attention in a negative way, he/she has failed as a role model.

The coach plays a crucial role for athletes and often times are substitutes for a parent. There is no doubt that the coach in part molds the athlete’s general attitude. How he/she measures success is reflected in how the athlete views it. Success should be measured not only in terms of winning, but also in terms of moral values and good sportsmanship.

A coach must view his/her role as an educator and never lose perspective of what interscholastic athletics are all about - to work with young people and impart sound values through example and coaching. Follow these guidelines to promote good sportsmanship on your teams:

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Accept and understand the seriousness of your responsibility, and the privilege of representing your school, community, parents, and athletes.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Respect the integrity and personality of the individual athlete.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Describe and define respectful and disrespectful behavior. Stress that disrespectful behavior, such as taunting, trash talking, and intimidation, will not be tolerated.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Abide by the rules of the game in letter and in spirit.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Exemplify professional behavior and leadership with strong ethical standards.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Treating them with respect will enhance a positive impression of you and your team in the eyes of the people at the event.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Set a good example for players and spectators to follow. Do not use profanity, obscene language, or improper actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Treat your opponent with respect and honor. Shake hands with the officials and the opposing coaches before and after the contest in full view of the public. Demand the same of your players.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Develop a program that rewards participants and spectators for displaying proper sportsmanship and enforces penalties on those who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.</td>
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How to Be a Supportive Coach

- Know your players as individuals. Be sensitive to their needs in sports and their personal lives.
- Be free with praise and give constructive criticism. Players get frustrated, too. A tense atmosphere is not conducive to learning.
- Be fair. Players depend on a coach to make fair decisions.
- Be consistent. Do not give preferential treatment to the superstar. Discipline and team rules apply equally to all team members.
- Never use a player to further your own interests. Looking at a player as your “ticket” is not coaching. There is no place for a self-serving coach in any sport.
- Never break a player's self-confidence. Always give specifics when making changes or giving constructive criticism.
- Know how to motivate your players. Each individual has a unique motivating factor. Find out what it is.
- Set realistic goals for your players as individuals and for the team as a whole. Help athletes progress from potential to reality. Use short-term and long-term goal setting.
- Vary practice routines and make the workouts fun. Most athletes consider fun the top motivating factor for participating in sports.
- Keep the team functioning as a Team. This should happen as a result of good coaching. Being aware of players’ individual differences will help prevent personality conflicts. Demonstrating qualities such as fairness, patience, consistency and leadership will lead to good morale. The team is a direct reflection of the coach.

The Real Score

A coach can never make a great player of a youngster who isn’t potentially great. But a coach can make a great competitor out of any child. And miraculously, coaches can make adults out of children. For a coach, the final score doesn’t read so many points for my team; so many points for theirs. Instead it reads: So many men and women out of so many boys and girls. And this is a score that is never published. And this is a score that coaches read to themselves, and in which they find real joy . . . When the last game is over.
Golden Rule of Coaching

If athletes are coached with criticism, they learn low self esteem.

If athletes are coached with hostility, they learn to fight.

If athletes are coached with ridicule, they learn to withdraw.

If athletes are coached with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If athletes are coached with patience, they learn to improve.

If athletes are coached with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If athletes are coached with praise, they learn to have faith.

If athletes are coached with fairness, they learn justice.

If athletes are coached with approval, they learn positive self esteem.

If athletes are coached with honesty, they learn to trust.

If athletes are coached with modesty, they learn teamwork.

If athletes are coached with acceptance and friendship, they learn to find love in sport.
1. Lead "Fair Play" Scenarios.
Using authentic sports scenarios, make discussions of ethical behavior a part of your daily training routine.

2. Establish a Code of Ethics.
Your code should include both acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.
It should be decided by consensus of the coach and athletes.

3. Set a System of Positive Reinforcement.
Rewarding positive behavior and penalizing inappropriate behavior reinforces the idea that those performance goals apply more than sports skills.

Coaches should lead by example, consciously modeling the team's code of ethics in all competitions and practices.
Dear Student-Athlete,

Student-athletes who are good sports are positive role models within our schools and in the community at-large. A good sport knows that athletic competition builds character and shapes lifetime attitudes. He/she experiences additional educational and leadership benefits that come from participation in sports.

Integrity, fairness, and respect are inherent principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of the results.

As an athlete of your school, your sportsmanship goals should include:

1. Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances.
2. Respecting the rules of the game and the officials.
3. Respecting your opponents as fellow athletes and acknowledging that they are striving to do their best, while you do the same.
4. Refraining from disrespectful behavior, specifically taunting, trash talking, and other forms of intimidation.
5. Looking at athletic competition as a potentially beneficial learning experience, win or lose.
6. Educating other students and fans about rules of the game and values of sportsmanship.

You are the spokesperson for your school. Your actions are viewed by family and friends, opposing fans, the local community, and the media. Your display of good sportsmanship will show the most positive qualities about you and your school, and remind us all that in the end, sports are meant to be fun.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
Student-Athlete Responsibilities

Respect, commitment, dedication, and hard work - these are the qualities that describe a student-athlete, and these are the attributes that the opponent brings to the competition. The opponent is exactly that, an opponent, and not the enemy. By treating the opponent with courtesy and respect, student-athletes demonstrate respect for themselves, their family, community and school.

As a student-athlete, you bring to every competition an attitude that you will do your best and strive to achieve and excel. Competition is designed to meet the highest standards of your play, and to fall within the rules of the game.

Student-athletes have an essential role in the development and maintenance of sportsmanship. Because participants are admired and respected, their behavior significantly influences the actions and behavior of spectators of all ages. Student-athletes are the role models of younger athletes and are a facet to the development of sportsmanship.

Here are guidelines that student-athletes can adopt to ensure that the game is played well, and indicate a willingness to practice good sportsmanship:

1. Accept and understand the seriousness of your responsibility and the privilege of representing your school and community.
2. Live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school administration and the coaching staff.
3. Demonstrate self-control at all times.
4. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. The officials are doing their best to promote you and your sport. Respect will make a positive impression of you and your team in the eyes of the viewers. Never argue or make non-verbal gestures which indicate disagreement. This type of immature activity may incite undesirable behavior by teammates and/or spectators in the stands.
5. Treat opponents the way you would like to be treated, as a guest or friend. Many lasting relationships may be developed through competition.
6. Wish opponents good luck before the event and greet them graciously.
7. Avoid use of profanity to an opposing player or coach.
8. If you see a well-done play by an opponent, there is nothing wrong with positive acknowledgment.
9. Congratulate opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat. This is a true measure of character.
10. When leaving the playing site after a victory refrain from gloating. You should be happy that you won, but it is not necessary to show your enthusiasm at the expense of your opponent.
11. Promote sportsmanship and your athletic experience positively whenever and wherever the opportunity rises.
Letter to Cheerleaders

Dear Cheerleaders,

Your role as a cheerleader for our athletic teams is an important one. The support you provide can help shape the atmosphere of our contests.

As a student-leader, the benefits of athletic involvement are the same for you as for those participating on the playing surface. Integrity, fairness, respect and the principles of good sportsmanship are lifetime values. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of the results.

A cheerleader who is a good sport is a true leader within the school and the community. A good sport knows that athletic competition builds character and shapes lifetime attitudes.

As a cheerleader at our school your sportsmanship goals should include:

1. To realize that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game.
2. To lead our spectators in positive cheers that encourage our athletes, and to discourage any cheers that would redirect that focus—including those that taunt and intimidate opponents, their fans and officials.
3. To learn and understand the rules of the game, and to respect the officials who administer them.
4. To respect cheerleaders and athletes from opposing schools as fellow students, and to acknowledge their efforts.
5. To develop a sense of dignity under all circumstances.
6. To educate other students and fans about the rules of the game, and the value of sportsmanship.

These and other expectations are included in the attached guidelines, which we hope you will take a few moments to review. They provide a road map to follow on a journey toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

You are the spokesperson for your school when you represent us as a cheerleader. Your actions are viewed by family and friends, opposing fans, the local community, and the media. Your actions should remind us that sports are meant to be fun. Your display of good sportsmanship will demonstrate the most positive things about you and our school.

We hope the upcoming season is a rewarding one for you.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
Cheerleader, Student Group, and Spectator Responsibilities

All support organizations share the responsibility for promoting sportsmanship at games and events. Their intended purpose is to provide support, despite the outcome, in a positive manner. They have an enormous influence on behavior and are important parts of the educational process.

Cheerleaders and student groups, like athletes, represent the student body and are chosen to such positions based on their skills and general ability to lead. They serve as a support group for interscholastic activities. Cheerleaders must always represent their school and community in a positive way. By the nature of their position and the fact that fellow students respect them, cheerleaders and student groups have an excellent opportunity to promote good sportsmanship. Here are some guidelines on how to effectively create an environment of good sportsmanship:

1. Understand the seriousness and responsibility of your role and the privilege of representing the school and community.
2. Use discretion in selecting the times to cheer. Give the opposing school the same amount of time your squad would want in performing cheers. Treat opposing athletes as you would treat your own.
3. Select positive cheers which praise your team without antagonizing the opponents.
4. Develop a repertoire of desirable and timely cheers and use them at appropriate times.
5. Use gestures that are synchronized, pleasing to watch, and easy to follow.
6. Divert the crowd’s attention by starting a popular cheer when booing occurs.
7. Avoid cheers that elicit an answer from the other sides. This can start the pattern of fans competing with each other and relating to each other personally.
8. Establish standards of desirable behavior for the squad and attempt in a cheerful manner to transfer that to your spectators.
9. Maintain enthusiasm and composure, especially in trying circumstances. Remember your responsibility for leadership.
10. Encourage injured players and recognize outstanding performances, regardless of team affiliation.
11. Wish opposing cheerleaders good luck before the game and sincerely congratulate them after either victory or defeat.
12. Respect the integrity of the game officials.
13. Communicate with opposing cheerleaders before an event to discuss who will cheer first during time-outs and at quarters to eliminate confusion.

When to Cheer
1. As your team comes on the floor or field.
2. When the team or a player makes an exceptional play.
3. When substitutions are made on your team.
4. As encouragement and tribute to an injured player.
5. When an opponent who has played spectacularly well leaves the game. Such a cheer would recognize his/her fine play and good sportsmanship.
6. To encourage your own team in a drive for a score.
7. To encourage your own team in defense of a score.

When Not to Cheer
1. As team signals are called or during the huddle of either team.
2. When an opposing player makes a mistake or the opposing team is penalized.
3. When an opposing player is injured.
4. If the opposing section has started a cheer, or the opposing school band is playing.
5. During announcements.
Letter to Student Groups

Dear Student Group,

As a member of the (name of group) you have assumed a role of leadership, not only within our school, but within our community as well. Your organization is seen by other students as one which helps set the tone for a positive atmosphere in our building.

Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than when your group participates at athletic events. You benefit from your association with competition in much the same way as the athletes. You acquire skills and values that will last a lifetime. Integrity, fairness, and respect are the principles of good sportsmanship, and the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of the results.

As a member of the (name of group) and a school leader, your sportsmanship goals should be structured around:

1. Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game.
2. Participating in positive cheers that encourage our athletes; and discouraging any cheers that would redirect that focus—including those that taunt and intimidate opponents, their fans and officials.
3. Learning and understanding the rules of the game, and respecting the officials who administer them.
4. Respecting opponents as fellow students and acknowledging their efforts.
5. Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances.
6. Educating other students and fans about the rules of the game, and the value of sportsmanship.

These and other expectations are included in the attached guidelines, which we hope you will take a few moments to review. They provide a road map to follow on a journey toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

You are the spokesperson for your school when you represent us with your group. Your actions are viewed by family and friends, opposing fans, the local community and the media. Your display of good sportsmanship will demonstrate the most positive things about you and your school; and hopefully remind us that sports are meant to be fun.

We hope the upcoming season is a rewarding one for you.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
Band Members

Band members must recognize their important role in setting a positive, entertaining and energized atmosphere in support of the school’s teams. Performing at team competitions is a great time for band members to demonstrate musical talent, assist the cheerleaders by actively participating and following their direction, and by entertaining and leading the other spectators. As school leaders, band members will naturally set the tone for the entire crowd. Here are some guidelines on how to help promote good sportsmanship at your athletic events:

1. Establish yourselves as leaders in their conduct before, during and after contests or events. Always provide positive support.
2. Assist cheerleaders with yells, chants, etc., and be a working part of pep assemblies with preparation, organization and involvement.
3. Work within the guidelines established by the administration and cooperatively contribute to the coach’s efforts whenever possible.
4. Treat visiting spectators, participants, officials and support groups with respect and enthusiasm. Welcome them to your school with pride and openness.
5. Avoid the use of profanity or abusive language.
6. Do not play during a live ball, or when it’s otherwise inappropriate during a game/contest. The purpose is to support your side, not distract the opponent.

Guidelines for Other Student Groups

1. 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.
2. Assist cheerleaders with yells, chants, etc., and be a working part of pep assemblies, with preparation, organization, and involvement.
3. Treat opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups with respect and enthusiasm.
4. Conduct yourselves in an exemplary manner. Remember, you represent your school both home and away.
5. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Make a positive impression of your group, your team and the community.
6. Be an exemplary role model by positively supporting teams in every manner possible, including contest of cheers and signs.
7. Cooperate with faculty advisors and learn the guidelines herein.
Dear Student Body,

A new school year brings with it new opportunities. Opportunities to learn from the textbook and to learn about life. With the variety of activities available to you at your school, we hope you will become involved in those that interest you.

Athletic events are always among the most popular activities for the participants and spectators, and these games provide learning experiences. Integrity, fairness, and respect are the principles of good sportsmanship, and these are lifetime values taught through athletics. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of the results.

A good sport is a true leader within the school and community. As a member of our school, your sportsmanship goals should be structured around:

1. Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game.
2. Participating in positive cheers that encourage our athletes; and discouraging any cheers that would redirect that focus—including those that taunt and intimidate opponents, their fans and officials.
3. Learning and understanding the rules of the game, and respecting the officials who administer them.
4. Respecting opponents as fellow students and acknowledging their efforts.
5. Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances.

You are the spokesperson for your school when you attend an athletic event, or any co-curricular event. Your actions are viewed by family and friends, opposing fans, the local community and the media. Your display of good sportsmanship will demonstrate the most positive things about you and your school; and hopefully remind us that sports are meant to be fun.

We hope the upcoming season is a rewarding one for you.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
Dear Parents,

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.

A student’s involvement in the classroom and other activities contributes to the development of a value system which has been established in the home. Integrity, fairness and respect are lifetime values taught through athletics. These are the principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of results.

A good sport—student or parent—is a true leader in the community. As a parent of a student at our school, your sportsmanship goals should include:

1. To realize that athletics are part of the educational experience and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game.
2. To encourage our students to perform their best, just as you would urge them on with their class work.
3. To participate in positive cheers that encourage your student and to discourage any cheers that would redirect that focus—including those that taunt and intimidate opponents, their fans and officials.
4. To learn and understand the rules of the game, and to respect the officials who administer them.
5. To respect the task our coaches face as teachers, and to support them as they strive to educate our youth.
6. To respect our opponents and acknowledge their efforts.
7. To develop a sense of dignity under all circumstances.
8. To be a fan…not a fanatic!

These and other expectations are included in the attached guidelines, which we hope you will take a few moments to review. They provide a road map to follow on a journey toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

You can have a major influence on your student’s attitude about academics and athletics. The leadership role you assume in sportsmanship will influence your child for years to come. We look forward to serving you in the year ahead, and appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
A Letter to My Parents…

Dear Mom and Dad:

Thank you for spending so much of your time, love and money in your efforts to make a caring, responsible adult out of me. I really appreciate that. You have taught me so many things — love, responsibility, kindness, respect for others’ opinions, beliefs, property and feelings. You have taught me the value of good manners. And all through this you have been excellent role models — almost.

Why don’t the rules seem to apply when you come to watch me play sports? The same people who taught me all these wonderful things yell at the team for making mistakes, and worse yet, yell out the names or the numbers of the people who made them. They scream at the refs, pound on the bench, shriek at the coach, and crush me with remarks like, “Get your head in the game!”

My head is in the game, folks. I want to win more than you want me to. I want you to be proud of me and I want to be proud of you. Why can’t you encourage me with remarks like, “That’s okay! Good try! You’ll get ‘em next time!”

Better yet, why don’t you say nothing at all? Why don’t you sit quietly and clap and cheer when the team does something right? Why do you feel you must cup your hands and screech out orders so loudly that we can’t even hear what the coach has to say? Even when you yell praises, you bark them out so loudly it’s embarrassing. Do you realize that the other parents don’t even want to sit near you? You are not only an embarrassment to me, but to our team, our school and our fans.

Please remember, you are part of a cheering section — not a jeering section.

Love always,

Your Child
Spectator Responsibilities

The greatest peril to interscholastic athletics is overzealous fans. Past problems, including lack of trained coaches, officials, specialization, and over emphasis on winning, have seen drastic improvement. Improper spectator behavior is a far more difficult problem to curb. It is upsetting to see student-athletes and their athletic programs suffer from poor spectator decorum.

Spectators think little of harassing players, coaches and officials in their classroom, and the field of play. High school administrators often give the benefit of the doubt to a player's parent, or an interested citizen. The spectator should be informed that administrators can no longer tolerate immature behavior, whether from a recent graduate, parent, or community resident.

High school athletics were not developed as a sounding board for fans’ immaturity, to let off steam or to get rid of frustration. This may be accepted in professional sports where a premium price can be paid to vent emotions at athletes who are paid a premium salary to tolerate any antics. It is different in interscholastic athletics. A ticket entitles one thing: the privileges of watching the most talented students of two schools exhibit what they have learned on the athletic field, court, or diamond as an extension of the classroom.

For the school sports program to be an educational experience, spectators must understand the need for good sportsmanship. Many sports fans have lost perspective and have linked collegiate and professional sports with high school programs. Problems that should not be associated with the educational program have dampened what should be a positive experience for students. Lack of discipline is not entirely the spectators’ fault. Perhaps the individuals have never been exposed to proper spectator behavior. A few distinctive guidelines may protect students and enable fans to better enjoy the contest:

1. Show interest in the contest by enthusiastically cheering and applauding the performance of both teams.
2. Show proper respect for opening ceremonies by standing at attention and remaining silent when the National Anthem is played.
3. Understand that a ticket is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally attack others, or to be obnoxious. Maintain self-control.
4. Do not "boo," stamp feet or make disrespectful remarks toward players or officials.
5. Learn the rules of the game, so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
6. Know that noisemakers of any kind are not proper for indoor events.
7. Obey and respect officials and faculty supervisors who are responsible for keeping order. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
8. Stay off the playing area at all times.
9. Do not disturb others by throwing material onto the playing area.
10. Show respect for officials, coaches, cheerleaders and student-athletes.
11. Pay attention to the half-time program and do not disturb those who are watching.
12. Respect public property by not damaging the equipment or the facility.
13. Know that school officials reserve the right to refuse attendance of individuals whose conduct is not proper.
14. Refrain from the use of alcohol and drugs on the site of the contest.
### Acceptable Behavior

- Applaud during introduction of players, coaches and officials.
- Accept all decisions of the officials.
- Shake hands with other student-athletes and coaches after the contest, regardless of outcome.
- Treat the contest as a game, not a war.
- Search out opposing players to recognize them for outstanding performance or coaching.
- Applaud the performance of all participants after the contest.
- Show concern for injured players, regardless of team affiliation.
- Encourage surrounding people to display only sportsmanlike conduct.

### Unacceptable Behavior

- Yelling or chanting at opponents.
- Making derogatory yells, chants, songs, or gestures.
- Booing or heckling an official's decisions.
- Criticizing officials in any way; displaying temper with an official's call.
- Refusing to shake hands or to recognize a good performance.
- Blaming loss on game officials, coaches, or players.
- Laughing or name-calling to distract an opponent.
- Using profanity or displaying anger that draws attention away from the contest.
An Open Letter to the Frantic Fan

Dear Frantic:

If someone were to ask you what represents the greatest peril to the survival of high school sports, you might say specialization, overemphasis, officials, coaches, or administrators. You’d be wrong.

The greatest peril to interscholastic athletes is you, my friend. You, the frantic fan. Specialization and overemphasis can, and are, being curbed; officials trained, coaches and administrators are guided, but you, Mr. Fan, you answer to no one and no one, that is, until a program has been ruined, students penalized, young images shattered, all because you didn’t control yourself.

Perhaps it’s not your fault, perhaps you have never been exposed to proper spectator decorum. At any rate, a few definitive guidelines may serve to protect the program and, at the same time, enable you to better enjoy whatever contest you are viewing.

High school athletics were not developed as a sounding board for your immaturity, as a vehicle to “let off steam,” rid yourself of “frustrations,” etc. This may be all right in professional sports, where you pay a premium price to vent your emotions at athletes who are paid a premium salary to put up with your antics. It’s different in interscholastic contests. Your ticket, at a minimal cost compared to college or pro games, entitles you to one thing and the privilege of watching the more talented students of two schools exhibit what they’ve learned in the athletic classroom.

For the athletic field, court or diamond is merely an extension of the classroom; if it were anything else it would have little reason to survive. You would not think of entering a math, history or English classroom, flask on hip, and berate, often curse and physically abuse the teacher or students. Yet all too frequently you think nothing of harassing players and coaches in their classroom and the field of play. High school administrators have always given you the benefit of the doubt, Mr. Fan, sometimes because you were a player’s parent or an influential citizen. But you’re being put on notice that administrators can no longer tolerate your childish immature behavior, whether you’re a recent graduate, a parent, or merely a resident of the community.

If, indeed, you are sincerely interested in the continuation of interscholastic athletics, then keep a few basic points in mind:

1. There is no such thing as a “right” to participate in interscholastic athletics. Whereas most academics subjects are mandated by the proper authorities and each student has a “right” to be exposed to them, interscholastic athletics are considered a “privilege” and the player or spectator who avails themselves of it is expected to conduct himself or herself accordingly.

2. Your team does not belong to the community. It belongs to the school and that school as voluntarily agreed to abide by a certain set of rules, so that all
athletes may compete under the same standards. If these rules offend any special groups or individuals to the point where they cannot conduct themselves rationally, then, by all means, these persons should be encouraged to direct their energies elsewhere.

3. Accept the fact that all high school athletes make mistakes. They’re not perfect, and never will be. There is compensation, though, as these mistakes make high school athletics exciting and unpredictable.

4. Remember that your coach is a teacher first, and coach second, and anytime you join any misguided souls in trying to reverse this order, you are taking the first step in destroying your program. Remember, no coach, player or administrator wants to see a program fail. In most cases, failure can be attributed to the merciless pressure of you, the fan, who played little or no part in the building of the program. Small wonders that the high school coaching field has the highest turnover of any coaching level.

5. Make an attempt to learn the rules of the game and then leave the officials alone. Much time and effort is spent in the training of these officials. The spectator who constantly criticizes them is almost always ignorant of the rules.

6. Finally, keep in mind that you are a guest of the school, and that while winning is certainly an admirable goal, it is hollow if it comes at the expense of morals, ethics, and just plain common sense. A beloved president once said that the world would soon forget his words, but remember the actions of his soldiers. As the years pass, the score of a contest becomes relatively unimportant, sometimes forgotten. But your conduct remains ingrained forever in the minds of those who were most affect.

Will they be proud or ashamed? The choice is yours!

Principal/Athletic Director
Letter to Local Officials

Dear Officials,

The lessons for our youngsters don’t end with the final bell of the day if they’re involved in co-curricular activities. In fact, the learning experience that comes from participation in drama, music, speech, athletics and the like, promote lifetime values that cannot always be learned in the classroom.

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.

Your support of sportsmanship is essential as part of our educational mission. Your ability to be a good sport will put you in a leadership role in your home and community.

Like with any project undertaking in life, you should have goals for good sportsmanship. Those goals should include:

1. Realizing that athletics are part of the education experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a contest.
2. 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.
3. Learning and understanding the rules of the game, and respecting the officials who administer them and their decisions.
4. Respecting the task our coaches face as teachers; and supporting them as they strive to educate our youth.
5. Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances.

You are a part of a message that is sent through our community that interscholastic athletics potentially have lifetime experience impact. Unlike events on television at the collegiate and professional level where entertainment is the mission and sportsmanship is not a primary objective, our goal is to have an educational affect. This message must be communicated if we are to continue to have success in this area.

We look forward to working with you in the year ahead, and appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
Officials' Responsibilities

Well-managed athletic contests are planned and designed. Good officials are an integral part of the process. During a contest, officials are responsible for the safety of the players. Officials must know the technical rules of the contest, be physically capable of keeping pace, and be aware of contingencies. The good official is adept at the technical interpretation and enforcement of rules. A good official protects the welfare of the contest participants. Competent impartial officials recognize the place for interscholastic athletics in the educational program. Sportsmanship and fair play demand these practices:

1. Accept your role in an unassuming manner. Over-officiating and showboating are not acceptable.
2. Maintain confidence and poise, controlling the contest from start to finish.
3. Report for an assignment at the designated time as stated by the assigning agent.
4. Know the rules of the game and the MIAA thoroughly, and abide by the established Code of Ethics.
5. Publicly shake hands with coaches of both teams before the contest.
6. Never show emotions or argue with student-athletes and coaches when enforcing the rules.
7. Have neat attire and professional appearance.
8. Do not consume alcohol at the contest site.
9. Do not use tobacco products during a game assignment.
10. Respect fellow officials in making decisions and correcting mistakes.
11. Adhere to the right decisions despite disapproval of spectators.
12. Control yourself at all times. Warn crowds of inflicting penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct.
13. Make clear interpretation to both teams.
14. Do not discuss plays or players of other teams in the presence of opponents.

Media's Responsibilities

The media is an important tool to interscholastic athletic programs. We strongly encourage the media to increase their role in the area of sportsmanship. Recognition of good sportsmanship by the media is greatly appreciated by all involved. Here are a few ways you can help promote sportsmanship:

1. Promote ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship.
2. Report acts of good sportsmanlike without giving undue publicity to unsportsmanlike conduct.
3. Refrain from making negative comments towards participants, coaches or officials. After all, the interscholastic athletic arena is a classroom.
4. Recognize the efforts of all participants in the contest.
5. Report facts without demonstrating partiality to either team.
6. Limit reporting of unsportsmanlike behavior if it is not newsworthy.
Letter to the Media

Dear Media,

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.

We hope that you will be joining us in this effort to promote good sportsmanship, as it is an important component of the education of our youngsters. Sure, our teams will play to win, but not all of them can. We simply have to accept that. Wins and losses are soon forgotten. Integrity, fairness and respect are not.

As a member of the media, you have a role in promoting good sportsmanship at the interscholastic level which is different than reporting what happens at entertainment-oriented athletic events at the collegiate or professional level. Your list of goals should include:

1. Promoting the ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship.
2. Reporting acts of sportsmanlike behavior without giving undue publicity to unsportsmanlike conduct.
3. Refraining 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?
4. Reporting facts without demonstrating partiality to either team.

If you can find way to stress the need for high levels of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity at our events and in our daily lives, it would be deeply appreciated.

We look forward to serving you in the year ahead, and appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

Principal/Athletic Director
Crowd Control Policy

Crowd control guidelines need emphasis by administrators and event managers. Good crowd control consists of sound preventative planning and organization long before problems arise. While most interscholastic contests proceed without incident, it is necessary to plan for all contests in advance and explore every possible avenue.

1. Establish written behavioral standards and expectations for players, coaches, students, cheerleaders, spectators and personnel. Communicate these standards to the participants and spectators.
2. Establish and communicate policies and emergency procedures regarding:
   • Fire.
   • Drinking and possession of alcohol.
   • Possession, use or sale of drugs.
   • Medical emergencies.
   • Lost and found.
   • Presence of food, beverages, radios and music players in the gym or stadium.
   • Bomb threats.
   • Alternatives in case of failures with score clocks, lights, or other equipment.
   • Transportation problems.
3. Be sure the public address announcer clearly understands written emergency procedures.
4. Identify supervisors and ushers by use of jackets, arm bands, or badges. Require them to be active and visible to discourage problems.
5. Make sure personnel, supervisors and security are observant, active and consistent in applying rules and procedures, rather than becoming too involved in watching the event.
6. Be consistent in applying policies and rules; be supportive of your personnel.
7. Avoid seating your school’s band or spectators near the visiting team spectator seating area.
8. Have admission, ticket sales and parking lot personnel observe and screen people for alcohol or abnormal behavior. Alert crowd supervisors to observe behavior and whereabouts of potential problem people.
9. Supervise the rest rooms, concession stands, drinking faucets and first aid-facilities.
10. Establish precise job descriptions, expectations and authority of personnel and inform them of rules, regulations and emergency procedures.
11. Try eliminating all lines as this helps to deter crowd problems.
12. Have a policy against noisemakers, confetti, beverages or bottles in the facility. The policy should state that “Bands, horns, posters, banners, signs, confetti and artificial noisemakers” are not permitted. The director reserves the right to remove such items from the contest.
13. Special attention should be given to the last five minutes of the game. Do not allow fans to enter at a reduced rate or without a ticket. Practicing this policy eliminates loitering and problems. Police and ushers should move to a place where they can facilitate the orderly flow of traffic from the stands to the exits. About two minutes before the end of the contest, exits should be opened and attended.
Crowd Control Checklist

- Develop a pre-contest checklist of duties to perform prior to the event.
- Provide a well-ordered, carefully maintained facility.
- Notify opponents in writing of all necessary details such as time, location, dressing facilities, pre-contest procedures, and other information specific to the sport.
- Appoint a “greeting committee” to meet the opponents and serve as host throughout their stay at your school.
- Select supportive personnel (ticket takers/sellers, supervisors, etc.) carefully, and discuss their assignments thoroughly prior to the contest.
- Select qualified score keepers, timers and public address personnel, and see that they are properly informed.
- Provide security for officials, and see that they are equipped with a dressing room located away from spectator and player dressing areas.
- Officials should be paid before the contest.
- Hire off-duty police and/or seek the help of state or local police as contest conditions warrant in controlling the crowd during the contest and the flow of traffic to and from the contest.
- Start events on time.
- Ban artificial noisemakers, confetti, and similar distractions from the facility.
- Avoid overcrowding the stands. Where seating is at a premium, reserve in advance in adequate number of seats for the visiting school.
- Make sure cheerleaders and pep groups have adequate seating.
- Provide adequate space and organization of concession areas to prevent overcrowding and possible pushing and jostling.
- Prohibit free entry to contests.
- Limit re-entry and supervise gates throughout the contest.
- Pay special attention to people who do not come to a contest to watch it.
- Discourage the attendance of elementary students unless accompanied by an adult.
- Keep the playing area clear of spectators.
- Use ropes to set aside areas.
- Provide surveillance before, during and after the contest for spectators arriving by bus.
- Maintain continuous surveillance at all facilities pertaining to crowd convenience such as concession areas, drinking fountains, first-aid stations, rest rooms and aisles.
- Before leaving the facility, check with the police to determine whether any unforeseen incidents transpired.
- Establish good communications with all connected to the event.
MIAA SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES FOR FAN/SPECTATOR SUPPORT ITEMS

In the chart below, ONLY those items marked “Yes” will be allowed as fan/spectator support items at MIAA events.

The items indicated on this page are for use by member schools as policy guidelines for their fans. MIAA Rules and Regulations are subject to change. We suggest checking the MIAA Handbook for any updates.

Updated – 10/12/10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>ALLOWED</th>
<th>COMMENTS/RATIONALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fans storming the court/field of play</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Such actions create an unsafe environment. Spectators are encouraged to remain in their seats to observe the postgame handshake ceremony/trophy presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving team’s side of play/court</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Spectators must stay within the confines of their school’s student body section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banners on wall*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Exceptions – Welcome signs, corporate sponsors, school signs that are permanently fixed on walls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects thrown into crowd (confetti, miniature sports balls, candy, etc.)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Per MIAA Handbook Rule 97.10.5 “Horns, posters, noisemakers, confetti, pompoms, balloons, and banners are not to be permitted at any site. If the site manager feels that something not mentioned above is also creating a nuisance at a contest site, the site manager should have such items removed.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise Makers (horns, bells, buzzers, whistles, thunder sticks, rattles, shakers, music instruments not part of a band, air horns, sirens, megaphones, etc.)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Fans are not prohibited from painting their faces/bodies or coloring their hair in manners that appropriately demonstrate school spirit. However, out of respect to facilities that host MIAA tournament contests, student support groups should do their painting prior to entering the facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand-held signs (individually or more than one person)*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>See explanation for “Noise Makers”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balloons*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>See explanation for “Noise Makers”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face Paint/Body Paint/Hair Coloring</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking off shirt</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Shirts and shoes are required attire at every facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper banners for team to run through</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Spectators who participate in activities that intentionally attempt to distract participants, obstruct the vision of spectators, or affect the competition are subject to removal from the premises by the tournament site director or local authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions that distract participants, obstruct vision, affect play</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>See rationale for “Actions that distract participants” above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laser light/pointer</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Recorded music is permitted only with the approval of the tournament site director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded music over PA system*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Per MIAA Handbook Rules 97.10.5.1-97.10.5.3 with the following restrictions: 1. A maximum of 12 is permitted. An advisor must be in attendance and sit with the band. 2. Permission in advance must be granted by the Tournament Director and Site Director. 3. Pep bands are not permitted to play while the game is in play. A full compliment of high school bands is permitted at all Superbowl football contests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Pep bands</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannons/muskets/guns</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carried school flags</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressed school mascots/costumes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School mascots must stay within the confines of that school’s student body section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live animal mascots</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Allowed at the discretion of the host site administration.
Public Address Announcements for Home Events

Pre-Game Announcements

Pre-contest announcements serve to remind fans, cheerleaders, cheering sections, and players of their responsibility for creating a cooperative and sportsmanlike atmosphere for interscholastic athletic competitions. The following samples could be read prior to all athletic events.

************************************************************************

Good Evening. (name of school) welcomes you to (name of stadium/field/gymnasium) for tonight's game. We remind you that one of the goals of interscholastic athletics is learning lifetime values outside the classroom. Sportsmanship is one such value that makes high school competition an educational experience. Remember, Sport a Winning Attitude! Now let's meet the starting lineups!

We are pleased to welcome you this evening to (name of school). Good sportsmanship is one of the primary goals of interscholastic athletic programs. Our student-athletes recognize that judgment calls are made in good faith and that they must abide by the decisions of the officials. Spectators can support their interscholastic program by refraining from derogatory remarks or cheers. We hope that you will enjoy the game and that you will support all the participants in a positive sportsmanlike manner. Now let's meet the starting lineups!

The purpose of this activity is to provide positive learning experiences and opportunities for personal growth. We are pleased to host our guests from (Name) High School. This competition is being conducted according to the rules of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association. Cheerleaders, officials and spectators can, and are expected to, assist in the promoting and achieving good sportsmanship by taking personal responsibility for keeping this contest at a high level of fair, clean, wholesome competition. Good luck to both teams! And now for the starting lineups!

(Host), would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to help everyone enjoy tonight’s event with character. By displaying respect and good sportsmanship to all involved, you can help us create a positive environment for the teams and the fans.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to tonight’s match-up between (Host) and (Opponent). (Host) are committed to maintaining the true spirit of competition in athletics. Please do your part by showing respect to every spectator, athlete, coach, and official involved in today’s contest.

(Host) welcomes you to tonight’s game and asks that you join us in promoting character and sportsmanship in high school athletics. We encourage athletes and coaches to be positive role models and ask that you help us by respecting the efforts of the teams and officials in tonight’s game.
Sportsmanship is pride in your school, your team and yourself. Sportsmanship is respect for the game of (name of sport) and for those who play it. Sportsmanship means taking personal responsibility for keeping this game/match/event at a high level of fair play. Sportsmanship is appreciation of all performances and the graceful acceptance of results. We welcome you to (name of school) and ask that you remember: **Sportsmanship— The Only Piece Missing is You!** Good luck to both teams!

Your ticket to an interscholastic athletic event is a privilege; a privilege to watch a youngster learn on the playing field. One of the lessons taught to players is one spectators can follow as well --- that of good sportsmanship. Unruly behavior is unacceptable in the classroom, and the athletic field is a classroom. Now let’s meet the starting lineups!

Good sportsmanship is defined as the creation of an atmosphere of courtesy and fair play toward officials, contestants and spectators at all interscholastic activities. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has developed a statewide sportsmanship program designed to bring out the very best in high school sports. Your cooperation is appreciated. And now for the starting lineups!

Welcome to today’s competition. Your paid or complimentary admission to this event entitles you to enjoy an exhibition of skills developed by the students in an educational setting. Please give these students your positive encouragement and support. Booing, taunting or intimidating the officials or opponents is unfriendly and unacceptable.

This game is being played according to the rules of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association. These rules provide fair competition among players. Spectators can help promote good sportsmanship by observing the rules of fair play. Each one is requested to take personal responsibility for keeping this game at a high level of good sportsmanship.

**************************************************************************

**Introduction of Officials after Lineups**

The officials for tonight's game are (name of officials). These individuals are enrolled by the MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association). Their experience and integrity qualify them to administer the rules of the game. An attitude of good sportsmanship should be upheld by all spectators, players and coaches, no matter what their personal feelings or loyalties may be in this contest.
Sample Announcements During Breaks in Action

Admission to an interscholastic event is a privilege, and with that privilege comes responsibility - responsibility to conduct oneself in a manner where the game is enjoyable for other fans and participants. The MIAA reminds you that Sport Is A Winning Attitude! - on the court (field) and in the stands. The MIAA encourages you to support your local high school athletic teams throughout the school year.

Quality of competition and maximum student participation in each sport is goals of the MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association). Let us assume the responsibility of assuring that every high school athletic competition represents a positive educational experience for the participating students. Please lend your personal support to the effort of school leaders in your community. The MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association), on behalf of high school students across the Commonwealth, thanks you for your support of their educational programs.

Sample Public Service Announcements for Radio and TV Stations

The MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association) is committed to the welfare of the student-athletes throughout the Commonwealth and to the fairness of competition among its member schools. Many boys and girls enjoy additional educational experiences by qualifying for one or more of 250 post-season championships in 34 different sports sponsored by the MIAA. The (Game) you are listening to/watching is a culmination of these activities.

When (name of school) sponsors an athletic event, it considers what’s happening to be an extension of the classroom, with the lessons to be learned after as important as those from textbooks. Among those lessons is good sportsmanship, a course that will serve everyone in the game of life. Remember, Sport A Winning Attitude! - A public service message from the MIAA.

We are constantly exposed to examples of poor sportsmanship. That is why (name of school) has joined with the MIAA to promote good sportsmanship in our schools. Good sportsmanship stresses positive values which are so important to the development of the leaders of tomorrow. You can set a good example by displaying good sportsmanship the next time you attend an athletic event. A public service message from the MIAA.

Role models are more important than ever in today's society. You can serve as a role model for others the next time you display good sportsmanship at an athletic event. It's the kind of positive values portrayed by good sportsmanship that everyone appreciates. Sport A Winning Attitude! A public service message from the MIAA.
In our society today, winning has come to mean everything. However, if winning comes at the expense of good sportsmanship, everyone is a loser. Nothing is gained in the long run. Good sportsmanship is the result of a disciplined effort to respect yourself, your opponents and game officials. Remember, good sports are winners, regardless of the final score. Remember to be a sport and practice good sportsmanship. A public-service message from MIAA.

Winning—the No. 1 syndrome—is the No. 1 problem in interscholastic athletics. High school and athletic programs are truly educational in nature, and among the values learned are those associated with good sportsmanship. Being No. 1 in sportsmanship is educationally more important than being No. 1 on the playing field. Take pride in your team by displaying good sportsmanship. A public-service message from MIAA.

Your ticket to an interscholastic athletic event is a privilege; a privilege to watch a youngster learn on the playing field. One of the lessons taught to players is one spectators can follow as well --- that of good sportsmanship. Unruly behavior is unacceptable in the classroom, and the athletic field is a classroom. Remember to be a sport the next time you attend an athletic event. A public-service message from MIAA.

Ethics, integrity and respect are values important in our daily lives. All of these important values are learned through participation in interscholastic activity programs. During competition, they are translated into one word—sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is one of the strongest educational lessons and lifetime values taught by interscholastic activities. It makes sense to exhibit good sportsmanship. A public-service message from your Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

The dictionary defines good sportsmanship as playing fair and being a good winner or loser. We often forget that it’s more important to be gracious in victory. Good sportsmanship gives us a standard to follow at all times. Good sports act courteously and maintain self-control in all circumstances. Remember to be a fan and not a fanatic when watching interscholastic activities and activity programs. A public-service message from your Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and (Name of school).

Coaches should set a good example for contestants and fans, always exemplifying the highest moral and ethical behavior. Participants should treat opponents with respect and shake hands prior to and after contests. Fans should be fans, not fanatics. Sportsmanship. It is vital to the success and further existence of interscholastic activity programs. Remember to be a good sport. A public-service message from your Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and (name of school).

Good sportsmanship is learned, practiced and executed. Respect for the opponents, spectators, coaches and officials are a must at all levels of athletics and activity programs. At interscholastic athletic contests, behavior on the part of everyone should be characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Display good sportsmanship the next time you attend a high school event. A public-service message from your Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and (name of school).
A coach once wrote, “When we lose without excuses and when we acknowledge the better team, we place winning and losing in their proper perspective. That’s when we find out if we can be good sports.” Sportsmanship is a goal to strive for at all times, in activities and in our daily lives. Remember to act in a proper manner the next time you attend a high school event. A public-service message from your Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and (name of school).

A positive educational environment is essential to the success of high school athletics and activity programs. An important part of that environment is planning for good sportsmanship. Without good sportsmanship, the lessons learned lose their value. Remember the next time you attend an interscholastic contest that you are really inside a classroom where good sports receive the highest grade. A public service message from your Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and (name of school).
Promoting Sportsmanship

Ten Commandments

Do unto others as you would have others to unto you.
Enjoy yourself and promote enjoyment for others.
Be responsible for your actions.
Have an open mind to others weaknesses and have a forgiving attitude.
Take pride in one’s performance and one’s school.
Be a friend, not an enemy, and create a positive environment.
Encourage others to do or be their best.
Sportsmanship should be contagious.
Remember it is a privilege to participate.
Practice sportsmanship in all situations at all costs.

Characteristics of Sportsmanship

- Have Pride
- Teamwork
- Patience
- Spirit
- Applaud When Injured Players get up.
- No Negative Reactions
- Motivation
- Compromise
- Respect
- Enthusiasm
- Winning isn’t Everything
- Help Opponent After a Fall
- Positive Mental Attitude
- Controlled Temper
- Friendship
- Play by the Rules
- Respect the Officials
- Congratulate Opposing Team – Win or Lose
- Tolerance
- Do Your Best
- Have Fun
MIAA Sportsmanship Initiatives

You can get involved in the MIAA’s goal of creating healthy and positive environments for athletic competition beyond your home school by participating in any of our Sportsmanship Initiatives.

Committees

- **Sportsmanship, Integrity, and Ethics Committee** – Membership of the Sportsmanship, Integrity, and Ethics Committee elected by the Assembly consists of one principal and one athletic director from each of the eight athletic districts except District E which has two principals and two athletic directors; two coaches, and two enrolled game officials representing boys’ and girls’ activities, in addition to one school committee member and one superintendent elected or appointed by their respective associations. Duties and responsibilities of the Sportsmanship, Integrity, and Ethics Committee include “prepare and promote strategies designed to improve the attitudinal postures of all constituencies” and “warn, censure, place on probation, or suspend up to one calendar year any player, team, coach, game or school official, or school determined to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of good sportsmanship.”

- **Sportsmanship Alliance of Massachusetts (SAM)** – This collaboration of leaders represents the professional and scholastic sports community, health and education experts, state and local law enforcement, and others committed to the promotion of sportsmanship in Massachusetts with the mission to “promote a culture of fairness, respect, responsibility, and civility in sports and to foster initiatives which encourage positive attitudes and behavior in athletes, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators of all ages in Massachusetts.” The MIAA is a founding member of SAM and is currently represented as co-chair.

- **Student Advisory Committee** – This committee is comprised of students who attended the New England Student Leadership Conference. Student Advisory Committee members attend seasonal meetings with the Wellness Advisory Committee and help facilitate student and captains’ leadership workshops throughout the school year. In addition, these students are asked to participate in various association activities and provide continual feedback from the perspective of students on how to improve the Student Services offerings of the MIAA.

- **MIAA Student Ambassador Program** – This initiative seeks to provide student-athletes from each MIAA member school with the opportunity to become involved and educated in the Association structure. MIAA member schools are asked to appoint or elect one junior and one senior student to serve as their school’s ambassadors. Regular communication regarding Association news, policies, and events is sent to the ambassadors. In addition, these students are asked for their feedback to help the Association improve the services that it offers. To register a student ambassador for your school, please click [here](#).
Programs

- **Leadership Training Institute** – The purpose of this one-week residential training workshop is to train participants to take advantage of opportunities within athletics and other school activities to promote positive sportsmanship, wellness and leadership. Workshop participants learn practical strategies for involving school activity staff members, health educators, student activity participants and their parents in these efforts. For more information about the Leadership Training Institute, including registration material, please click [here](#).

- **MIAA/Anti-Defamation League’s “A World of Difference” Respect Workshop**
  The training focuses on the implication of respect, bias, racial diversity and integrity on athletic competition. Through case studies, the workshop explores specific strategies to improve the quality of the school and athletic climate. For more information about the Anti-Defamation League’s “A World of Difference” Respect Workshop, including registration material, please click [here](#).

- **Sportsmanship Summit** – This annual MIAA event features a captain’s panel, district sportsmanship awards, and workshops on such topics as fan control, sportsmanship strategies, and how students can make a difference. For more information about the Sportsmanship Summit, including registration material, please click [here](#).

- **Massachusetts Student-Athlete Citizenship Day Program** – This annual event is sponsored by the MIAA and Northeastern University’s Center for the Study of Sport in Society to honor and congratulate student-athletes from across the state for their achievements on the playing field, in the classroom and for their commitment to the school or community. Events of the day include panel discussions, keynote speeches, and award presentations. Two separate events are held at Northeastern University and the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. For more information about the Massachusetts Student-Athlete Citizenship Day Program, including nomination and registration materials, please click [here](#).

- **Captain’s Leadership Workshops** – This one-day workshop involves students interacting with adult Leadership Training participants to learn ways that they can make a significant difference in their schools. Through small group activities, students discuss strategies for influencing their peers and handling difficult situations. Workshops are conducted regularly at the request of leagues or schools. For more information about Captains’ Leadership Workshops, including registration materials, please click [here](#).

- **Citizenship Through Sports/Leadership Training Institute** – This workshop gives the athletic director and coach theoretical and practical instruction on how to create, modify, implement and maintain a character-based athletic program. The program is presented in a manner that provides clear, understandable explanations of terms, concepts and practical methods that athletic directors and coaches can capture, reflect and act upon.

- **New England Student Leadership Conference** – The inaugural New England Student Leadership Conference took place at Stonehill College in July 2011. Over
250 student-leaders from across New England took part in large and small group sessions involving a citizenship-based curriculum. Components of the curriculum involve respect, positive values, perspective, sportsmanship, teamwork, healthy lifestyles, community service and self-evaluation. The MIAA looks forward to hosting a new group of student-leaders at this summer’s event. For more information about the New England Student Leadership Conference, including registration materials, please click here.

- **District Sportsmanship Awards** – These awards are presented at the MIAA Sportsmanship Summit for each of the eight athletic districts within the MIAA structure. District sportsmanship awards are chosen by the athletic directors within each district.

- **James F. Mulloy Annual Sportsmanship Awards** – These annual awards are presented to the high school hockey program in each division, both boys and girls, that exemplifies the sportsmanship qualities of the late James F. Mulloy, former MIAA Ice Hockey Chair and high school hockey coach.

- **MIAA “Outstanding Sportsmanship Award” Certificate Program** – These certificates are available to MIAA member schools upon request to present to student-athletes who exemplify the true spirit of interscholastic athletic competition through the demonstration of outstanding sportsmanship.

- **NFHS/MIAA Sportsmanship Certificate Program** – This joint program of the National Federation/MIAA provides to student-athletes who exemplify the true spirit of interscholastic athletic competition through the demonstration of outstanding performance.

- **Sportsmanship “The Only Way to Win” Program** – Through this program, coaches, athletic directors, game officials or school administrators can fill out a form that notifies the MIAA about outstanding acts of sportsmanship. Both teams and individuals may be recognized. Recipients will receive a letter and a certificate praising their accomplishment. Press releases are provided to the local media, and the awards will also be published on the MIAA web site and in the Association’s newsletter. Nomination forms are available on the MIAA website, and on page 43.

- **Sportsmanship Essay/Multimedia Contest** – This contest is held annually to promote various themes of sportsmanship. Students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to share their ideas in an essay of 500 words or less or a multimedia presentation of 3 minutes or less. The creators of the top entries present their work at the Annual MIAA Sportsmanship Summit and are recognized for their achievements. Winning and honorable mention essay entries are published in an anthology entitled “Sportsmanship: A Game Plan for Life” and distributed at various MIAA functions.

- **Team Sportsmanship Awards** – These awards are presented annually at the state championship final to a worthy team in each division of competition. The awards are presented to those teams who have demonstrated a sincere commitment to the highest ideals and objectives of sportsmanship during their season of play. Teams can be nominated for this award by coaches, administrators, or officials.

- **Sportsmanship Alliance Of Massachusetts (SAM) Awards Program** – These seasonal awards are presented by the professional sports teams in Massachusetts to deserving teams in their respective sport. The award recipients are honored at a home
event of the professional team. Participating professional teams include: the New England Patriots, Boston Bruins, Boston Celtics, and Boston Red Sox.

- **Sportsmanship Preseason Meetings** – These meetings are conducted seasonally at the local level with administrators, coaches, representatives of athletic teams, and parents focusing on the educational mission and desired outcomes of each athletic program. MIAA speakers and resources are available upon request.

- **Sportsmanship Public Address Program (local level)** – Public service announcements are offered to member schools to welcome and introduce all interscholastic games as well as remind spectators and participants of their expected behavior.

- **Tournament Sportsmanship PSA requirements (statewide)** – These contractual commitments are required of radio/television mediums who cover MIAA Tournament events.

### Resources

- **“Building the Future” Student Services Newsletter** – This newsletter is printed seasonally and forwarded to MIAA Principals, athletic directors, wellness coordinators, school committees, superintendents, and state legislators. “Building the Future” highlights Wellness, Sportsmanship, Coaches’ Education, Leadership, and Community Service initiatives. Current and past editions are available on the MIAA website.

- **MIAA Sportsmanship Manual** – This resource for school administrators provides a comprehensive guide to sportsmanship initiatives. The manual includes the fundamentals of sportsmanship, roles and guidelines for behavior, MIAA rules and procedures, crowd control policies, and many other sportsmanship related materials. This publication is available for school administrators and is distributed at various MIAA functions.

- **“Sportsmanship: A Game Plan for Life”** – This anthology represents the top entries in the annual MIAA Sportsmanship Essay Contest. The top three essays are presented at the annual MIAA Sportsmanship Summit and are included in this publication along with other honorable mention entries. This publication is distributed at various MIAA functions and can be found on the MIAA website.

- **MIAA Video Library** – A wide variety of resource videos are available for lending purposes to member schools. Video topics include alcohol, drugs, tobacco, sportsmanship, leadership, safety, values, steroids, depression, and stress.

### Policies

*Note: MIAA policies are subject to change. Member schools should see the MIAA Handbook for the up to date policies, rules, and regulations.*

- **MIAA Taunting Policy** – adopted by the Board of Directors in November of 1994. Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players or spectators that are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others. Examples include “trash talk” and “in the face” confrontations. Officials are to consider taunting a flagrant
unsportsmanlike foul that disqualifies the offending contestant or bench personnel from the contest. The offender may also be subject to existing MIAA expulsion rules. Spectators may be given one warning for taunting. Thereafter, spectators who taunt players, game officials or other spectators are subject to ejection. (Brochure and taunting interpretation guide available upon request).

- **Game Officials’ Partnership** – The MIAA Taunting Policy is read prior to every MIAA interscholastic athletic contest by Game Officials to participating captains

- **Sportsmanship Compliance Rule** – As of Fall 1999, any coach who is suspended from an MIAA athletic contest or had 3 or more athletes suspended during the season will be required to attend a Sportsmanship Compliance workshop before being eligible to coach the next year. Compliance sessions are scheduled seasonally.

- **Coach/Media Relations Rule** – “Coaches will not publicly criticize any game official; will not permit anyone under their supervision to criticize game officials; will cooperate with the media in the interpretation and clarification of rules and/or other aspects of the game, but will not make comments about specific decisions of game officials; and will make an effort in their communication with the media, to stress the positive displays of sportsmanship demonstrated by the student-athletes, coaches, fans spectators, and schools involved in the contest.”

- **Hockey/Soccer Sportsmanship** – All leagues must conduct a pre-season meeting for head coaches to review sportsmanship goals and objectives.

- **Hockey/Soccer Sportsmanship standards for tournament eligibility** – Any team who receives a combination of (specified number) misconducts, game misconducts and/or game penalties during regular season shall not qualify for the MIAA Tournament.

- **Hockey/Sportsmanship Compliance requirements** – As part of MIAA’s continuing effort to promote the concepts of sportsmanship and to promote an appropriate on-site atmosphere, an additional requirement for state tournament qualification states that all member schools who enter the MIAA Ice Hockey Tournament, will provide the presence of school personnel that will assist the efforts of on-site management in maintaining control and conduct of their student spectators at all games in the tournament during which their team is a participant.
Sportsmanship: *The Only Way to Win*

This form is to be filled out by coaches, athletic directors, game officials, or school administrators to report outstanding acts/incidents of good sportsmanship. The reporting and acknowledgment of good sportsmanship will help promote and encourage others to replicate such behavior. The form is to be signed by the person reporting the instance of good sportsmanship. A copy should be forwarded to the principal, MIAA office, and the submitting party should retain a copy.

**Please type or print clearly. Include school name when reporting on an individual.**

Report on: Individual ___________________________ School ___________________________

Contest Date: ___________ Sport: ___________________________ Boys / Girls

Contest between ___________________________ and ___________________________

Home School Visiting School

Specific incident being reported:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Date: ___________ Print Name: ___________________________ Position: ________________

(Attach additional sheet if necessary)

Return to MIAA, 33 Forge Parkway, Franklin, MA 02038
MIAA Sportsmanship Essay Contest

The following essay was honored during the 2011 Statewide Sportsmanship Summit.

Student Athletes and the Community

By: Remy Pontes
Arlington High School

As a student athlete on the Varsity Hockey and Baseball teams in my junior year at Arlington High School, I have received tremendous support from my family, school, coaches, and town to achieve my goals in athletics and academics. I have always appreciated the compelling opportunities to succeed and to reveal the potential within each student that my community offers. Yet these opportunities are not just something one should expect from those around you, but also something one should return. It is a privilege to play for your school, and must be treated as such. Wearing the name on the front of a jersey means accepting a certain level of responsibility, acquiring leadership skills, and using those skills with integrity, particularly when challenges arise.

As an athlete, you are considered a role model, by younger children looking for inspiration in their own sport, or by anyone who needs to see that good values and virtues still exist and a healthy balance between athletics and academics can be achieved. Sometimes athletes are perceived as so self-absorbed in their pursuit of a competitive edge that they are oblivious to the need to give back to the community, even though so much is given to them. But athletes can contribute not only by scoring the winning goal in sudden-death overtime, but by considering their status as a role model seriously, by persuading even one student to reject the use of drugs and alcohol and pursue good grades. The poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote, “I slept and dreamed that life was a joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.” In serving as an example, a student athlete can have a positive effect on their community.

This past hockey season, our team visited the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital. We stopped by dozens of rooms, the cafeteria, and lounges and handed out holiday gifts while taking time to listen to and learn from these heroes who had served our country and made opportunities available for others. It was enlightening and inspiring to see the pleasure that these few hours of interaction brought them. Even the facility staff seemed energized by our visit. That same week, we also visited the Park Avenue nursing home, giving out candy and singing carols to the residents. The choices one individual makes may alter a community entirely. There are no specific boundaries of a community; it can be defined as “groups of associated individuals leading a common life”, whether on a global scale, specific to a neighborhood, or anything in between. Our role in that week is just a small example of how even a few hours of service can affect others in a positive way. A goal to strive for is that those contributions made by student athletes will create a ripple effect reaching out to those most in need. In considering the future, these positive influences will hopefully extend beyond our high school years.
The following essay was honored during the 2010 Statewide Sportsmanship Summit.

The Role of Athletics in Deterring Bullying and Encouraging Respect

By: Nicholas LeBlanc
Clinton High School

To be an athlete means not only respecting your opponent but also your teammates. As a sophomore and a member of the Clinton High School football team I learned about respect and confidence first hand as a freshman.

In middle school I was bullied. Bullying does not always represent being beaten up or teased. Bullying is hurt feelings and taunting, it leads to low self-esteem; you feel as if you don’t fit in. When I entered Clinton High School I worried that the bullying would continue. Would I be ignored and how would I be treated especially as an insecure freshman playing football? I was fortunate enough to be part of a team in which I was not just a new freshman, or the kid that was picked on, but a member of the team. The seniors of that team were special; I began to feel self-assurance about myself, something that I never experienced. I finally felt that I fit in. I was no longer being teased or bullied. If anyone tried or said anything, these seniors stood up for me. They respected my hard work and taught me to respect myself. I no longer questioned who I was or where I fit in, I was a member of a team. That acceptance caused others to see me differently and allowed me to see myself differently.

I feel a responsibility to help others feel that they matter, because I experienced and understand the pain of being bullied. I hope to instill that same confidence to someone else, as it was instilled in me. When I was bullied I walked around with my head down, like no one cared. I felt very alone, but in high school it changed. It began when the captains of the team had everyone meet for conditioning, they and the other seniors made sure they knew who you were. To have upper classman give you high fives in the hall and say hello meant so much. Being part of a team makes you part of a family. I went from being alone to suddenly having “brothers” and it felt good.

Playing team sports gives a person a chance to grow and learn things you never thought possible, especially when you were the one being bullied. Being a team member teaches you to work with others, self-respect, and most of all teaches you to trust again. Playing sports allowed others to get to know me and I got to know them. The senior members and captains of that team, during my freshman year, made me feel that I belonged. I will always be grateful to them and honored that I was able to share a great season, a super bowl championship and a continued friendship. I thank them for the confidence and self-esteem they helped me find. Today I walk through the halls with my head held high and feeling good about who I am.
The following essay was honored during the 2009 Statewide Sportsmanship Summit.

The Day I Was Proud To Finish Last
By: Molly Grace Gorman
Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)

It was a beautiful late September day in New England when we lined up for our 1.8 mile race on NDA’s home cross country course in Hingham’s Town Forest. The leaves were beginning to explode in their seasonal colors, and the sky was crisp and clear. Unlike other forms of running, cross country races are generally not run in front of spectators. For the most part, coaches and fans only see their teams at the beginning and at the end of the event. During the competition, participants are on their own. On this day, I felt really strong, and while I am sure that both teams were anxiously anticipating the meet, I was ready to win.

At the starting gun, I bolted into the lead; I had been training hard all Fall and it was finally paying off. The course varies throughout its length and after a mass start, the trail narrows over unpredictable terrain, making it difficult to overtake runners in front of you. As I ran toward the “loop” (the mid-point where runners turn for the trek back to the finish line), I realized that this was one of the few times that I was actually leading a race at the turn. I guessed that my lead was 100 yards (20 seconds over my nearest challenger). I felt a rush of adrenaline as I began passing other harriers who had not yet reached the loop, and made my rush toward the finish line and my first win ever!

Prior to the race, I noticed a blonde-girl from Winchester in warm-ups. I could tell she was fast, and I figured that she would be the runner to beat today. Now, as I stretched my lead, I saw her again, sitting by the side of the path, crying and suffering from an asthma attack. Athletes on both teams ran by her without a glance, intent on getting to the loop and winning the race. At first, I too ran by her, focused on victory, however, after a few steps, I stopped racing and returned to her side to give her assistance. As I kneeled next to her, encouraging her to get her breathing under control, and reassuring her that everything would be alright, every other racer on both teams, strode by us on their way to the finish. After a while her breathing trouble subsided, and my fellow competitor and I walked the mile or so back along the trail where we crossed the finish line together.

To this day, I don’t know the name of the girl that I stopped to help. I don’t regret giving up a chance to win my first race because stepping up and helping her was the right thing to do. There will be other races, and I hope that if I am ever in a similar situation, that someone would do the same thing for me.

On a day when Mother Nature’s spectacular color palette of autumn foliage was on display for all to enjoy, I started a cross country race wanting to be the winner. An hour later, I walked across the finish line last, knowing that I was.
The MIAA believes that the efforts to meet the expectations outlined in this statement will encourage and promote the high ideals of sportsmanship at all levels of play. The MIAA seeks to create a positive atmosphere for athletic competition at interscholastic events throughout the Commonwealth. It is clear that policy without positive programming will fail. MIAA constituents are encouraged to complement this sportsmanship initiative with preseason meetings, coaches’ workshops, and captains/leadership workshops.