

OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION SPORTSMANSHIP RESOURCE GUIDE

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Good sportsmanship is the attitude and behavior that exemplifies positive support for the interscholastic athletic programs of OHSAA member schools, as well as for the individuals who participate. People involved in all facets of the interscholastic athletic program are expected to demonstrate respect for others and display good sportsmanship.

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

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

The Ohio High School Athletic Association and the Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Committee trust that this second edition of the resource guide will assist you in your efforts to promote sportsmanship within your school and community.

As an additional note, many schools are requiring **preseason meetings** for their teams, coaching staffs and parents. This is the perfect opportunity to share the expectations for the upcoming season, i.e.: eligibility requirements, training/conditioning/practice regulations, the coaching staffs' philosophy, *and the schools' expectations of proper conduct by the student-athletes, coaches and parents.* This meeting can be invaluable toward understanding the purposes and values of interscholastic/educational athletics. **The OHSAA strongly suggests that all schools consider having preseason meetings if you are not already doing so.**

Yea Ohio!!



Duane Warns
Assistant Commissioner
Chairman
Sportsmanship, Ethics and
Integrity Committee

OHSAA Bylaws Pertaining to Sportsmanship

Section 5. Conduct, Character, Discipline

- 4-5-1 In matters pertaining to personal conduct in which athletics are not involved, the school itself is to be the sole judge as to whether the student may participate in athletics.
- 4-5-2 In matters pertaining to personal conduct in which athletics are involved, the principal or the official designee of the involved schools or game officials may file a report and the Association shall have jurisdiction to determine the penalties involved and whether or not the student may participate in athletics.
- 4-5-3 Physical attacks on any official shall be reported to the Association office immediately by the officials involved. The Commissioner shall conduct an investigation and determine the penalties involved.
- 4-5-4 Any students who are ejected from an athletic contest in any sport for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be immediately placed under the direct supervision of a school official.

OHSAA Sports Regulations Pertaining to Sportsmanship

12. Ejection for Unsportsmanlike Conduct

12.1) Players

Any player ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant foul shall be ineligible for all contests for the **remainder of that day**. In addition, the player shall be ineligible for all contests at all levels in that sport until two regular season/tournament contests (one in football) are played at the same level as the ejection. When ejection of a player results from illegal substitution in baseball, fast pitch softball or basketball, the two contest suspension does not apply.

If the ejection occurs in the last contest of the season, the student shall be ineligible for the same period of time as stated above in the next sport in which the student participates. A student under suspension may not sit on the team bench, enter the locker room or be affiliated with the team in any way traveling to, during or traveling after the contest(s).

A student who is ejected a second time shall be suspended for the remainder of the season in that sport.

A student who has been ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct for the second time in the season during the last contest shall be ineligible for a period of time/number of contests subject to the discretion of the Commissioner. The period of ineligibility shall commence during the next sport in which the student participates.

It is the responsibility of the local school authorities to ensure this regulation is enforced. When an ineligible student is allowed to participate, forfeiture of the contest is mandatory. This regulation shall apply to all regular season and tournament contests and shall in no way limit the discretionary authority of the Commissioner as specified in the OHSAA tournament regulations. In accordance with Bylaw 8-3-1, the decisions of contest officials are final.

2.2) Coaches

Any coach ejected from an interscholastic contest for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be suspended from coaching in all contests for the **remainder of that day**. In addition, the coach shall be suspended from coaching for all contests at all levels in that sport until two regular season/tournament contests (one in football) are played at the same level as the ejection.

If the ejection occurs in the last contest of the season, the coach shall be ineligible for the same period of time as stated above in the same sport during the following season in the next school year.

A coach who has been suspended from coaching may attend the contest, but must be seated in the spectator area and may not give instructions to the players or to the individual who has been assigned to coach the team any time prior to or during the contest including halftime or any intermission. A suspended coach shall not travel with the squad to an away contest.

A coach who has been ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct for the second time shall be suspended indefinitely and required to attend a mandatory conference with the Commissioner at the OHSAA headquarters. The principal of the school shall be required to attend this conference as well. Any penalty shall be determined in accordance with Bylaw 12.

It is the responsibility of the local school authorities to ensure this regulation is enforced. When a suspended coach is allowed to participate, forfeiture of the contest is mandatory. This regulation shall apply to all regular season and tournament contests and shall in no way limit the discretionary authority of the Commissioner as specified in the OHSAA tournament regulations. In accordance with Bylaw 8-3-1, the decisions of contest officials are final.

17. Coaches' Comments to the News Media

OHSAA Bylaw 8, Section 2, reads in part, "Great care shall be exercised in the selection of officials well in advance of the contest and agreed upon by schools involved. When the contest begins each school waives all of its rights so far as objecting to the officials. Public criticism of officials is a direct reflection upon those who were responsible for assigning the officials to the game. Officials are trained and expected to make no derogatory comments regarding the players, coaches, or schools. Coaches are expected to follow the same procedure. Failure to follow this request will result in disciplinary action.

CROWD CONTROL PROCEDURES FOR ATHLETIC EVENTS

Efficient management of interscholastic athletic contests, both at home and away, is an increasingly important aspect of administering a high school athletic program. The following recommendations have been assembled to assist schools in preparing adequately for crowd control at athletic contests.

1. Preseason and pregame responsibilities are shared by both schools competing in any athletic contest.
2. Responsibilities during the game are shared by both schools with the home school assuming the major role. A dual responsibility exists at a neutral site.
3. Postgame responsibilities are shared by school officials, local police, and the citizens of the community.
4. Advance preparation of all details pertaining to athletic contests is necessary for efficient administration.
5. The coach is usually a stabilizing influence in an emotionally charged situation. In the present social climate, the coach must always assume this important responsibility. No person should be coaching who does not realize that the future of high school athletics is more important than winning or losing a particular game.

PROCEDURES BEFORE THE GAME

Home School

1. Develop an operational plan for each home event.
2. Contact the visiting school as early as possible to arrange for a meeting or telephone conversation to discuss the game, including prior and existing school/community control problems.
3. Discuss any situations peculiar to the stadium (or gym) and send a map of the stadium to the visiting school.
4. Formulate plans which provide directions and instructions for all visiting personnel regarding safest routes, parking, seating and dismissal from bleachers, and loading and unloading buses and automobiles.
5. Have parking areas well lighted. Arrange for on-site parking of visitors' autos and buses. Arrange for bus parking so that the buses do not create a hiding place for loiterers. Police should periodically patrol the bus parking area.
6. Have stadium or gym secure and all gates locked prior to the scheduled opening time.
7. Arrange for supervision to continue until after all visitors, including the team bus, have left the area.
8. Prepare a supervision chart and inform assigned personnel of their duties before the game. (Persons on duty from both schools should have some type of identification—shirts, jackets, armbands, badges, etc.).
9. Staff representatives should be informed of any court orders or other restrictions placed on specific individuals limiting their presence at school events or school property.
10. All faculty members or other personnel helping supervise should be identifiable. This can be done by special T-shirts, armbands, caps, etc. Easily recognized apparel that will let people know that these individuals are on duty is highly recommended.
11. The host school must assign supervisors on the visiting side; their main duty is to keep students from the home side from moving into the visitor section. They should assist in overseeing the visiting students and fans only if absolutely needed. In this regard, always designate specific seating for students, bands, adults, and visitors. Student bodies and the respective spectator sections should be kept separated at all times.
12. Provide for adequate police supervision before, during, and after the game.
 - Be sure that there is police supervision both inside and outside at games.
 - Police should be assigned to known or likely trouble spots. Law enforcement supervisors should make sure that officers do not congregate at one place or become spectators.

- At a set time after the game starts, police should “sweep” the area outside the stadium. Everyone should be inside or off the premises.
- Provide escorts, preferably police, for game officials and visiting teams before, and particularly after, the event.
- Marked police vehicles at each vehicular access will serve as a deterrent and a uniformed officer at the gate sends a message as to expected behavior.
- Traffic control should be delegated to other than sworn-officers if possible.
- Sworn officers should never be used for parking control. Service clubs and other groups can perform this duty.
- Make arrangements with local police departments at the highest level possible in order that adequate police protection will be available to control the spectators at the conclusion of the contest. Develop a plan of action in cooperation with the police for measures to be taken in the event of trouble. Review prior and existing school/community control problems.
- Arrange to divert traffic away from the athletic field or gym so that spectators leaving the game can do so quickly.
- Work with local police in providing “no parking” signs around the stadium or gym, blocking off streets if needed and arranging for one-way traffic where necessary.
- Give specific instructions concerning responsibilities to auxiliary police, ushers, and faculty members hired by the school; designate someone to provide further instructions and direction to paid auxiliary police, ushers, and faculty members at the game.
- Develop a supervision chart for police coverage before, during, and after the game. Police supervision of the parking areas during the game should not be forgotten.
- Suggest a suitable location to detain anyone arrested by the police until that person(s) can be taken away with the least amount of confusion.
- All security personnel should be readily identifiable by the public. Prevention, not apprehension after trouble begins, should be emphasized.
- Review the need for and the provision for metal detection equipment. If such equipment is to be used, inform administrators of the visiting school prior to the day of the event.

13. School employees may tend to no longer feel responsible when uniformed police or other security personnel are present. This is incorrect. School officials have the ultimate responsibility.

14. Depending on local conditions, you may wish to advise ticket sellers to screen for troublemakers and group agitators. In some communities, it may be necessary to consider the advisability of not admitting elementary and junior high students unless accompanied by adults.

15. Instruct the operator of the video taping equipment to record all incidents of inappropriate behavior and to continue taping as teams depart the playing area after conclusion of the contest. Contact the OHSAA for specific video taping policy for tournament events.

16. School personnel know and are known by potential troublemakers. The presence of a staff person in the right place at the right time may well avoid a potential problem. Staff members should know the limits of dealing with a situation personally and seek the assistance of a police officer in any doubtful circumstances.

17. Have all special seating areas roped off prior to opening the gates. Use school service club members (ROTC, student council, etc.) for ushers and monitors of student sections and make sure that these students are rehearsed in their duties.

18. Provide reserved seats for bands. The amount of time they will have for halftime activities should be known to them and should be strictly observed.

19. Seat students from opposing schools in separate sections. Seating for home and visiting spectators should be adequate. Spectators should remain on their side of the field or gymnasium throughout the contest. Do not oversell the facility. Admission for OHSAA tournament events cannot be included as part of season ticket sales. Keep general admission spectators separate from student sections if possible.
20. Arrange for interested parents and patrons to assist with supervision of general admission section.
21. Check fire code for seating capacity and other recommendations.
22. Provide an escort to meet the visiting team when it arrives and to direct it to the dressing quarters. A good-sized room, a blackboard and chalk, a training table, benches, chairs, and drinking water should be provided. It may be necessary to ask opponents to come dressed for the game if the visiting team's quarters are not adequate.
23. Provide security measures to protect visitors' clothing and valuables while the visitors are on the field or court. The playing field or court and the area immediately adjacent to it at all athletic contests shall be restricted to team members, coaches, managers, officials, and other parties necessary to conduct the game. Student or faculty associates should wear something distinctive so that they may easily be identified. Sufficient personnel should be provided by the host school to enforce this regulation. The visiting school should see that this rule is enforced in its area. Schools must bear a dual responsibility when playing at a neutral site.
24. Provide reserved parking for game officials and doctor/medical personnel. Arrange for the game administrator to meet officials when they arrive and to escort them to their dressing area.
25. Emphasize to game officials the importance of keeping the game under control.
26. Take care in the preparation, printing, and sale of athletic programs. Correct names and numbers, major rule changes and interpretations, and statements concerning spectator behavior have proven effective. The following message has been adopted by the National Federation of State High School Associations and may be considered for inclusion in the game programs and should be announced several times throughout the game during breaks for timeouts, quarters, halves, etc.—

“These are high school athletes who are performing here tonight. They are friendly rivals as members of opposing teams. They are not enemies.”

“This basically is the theme of interscholastic athletics — the idea of friendly competition. The visiting team tonight, and in every interscholastic game, is a guest of the home team. They are expected to be so regarded and so treated.”

“The officials are individuals who, by agreement between competing teams, are assigned to administer the rules of the game. Their experience and their integrity qualify them for their part in this friendly interscholastic contest. This attitude of sportsmanship should be reflected by all spectators, too, no matter what their personal feelings of loyalty may be to one or the other of the teams in tonight's contest.”
27. Arrange for adequate concessions as a service to spectators. If possible, concession stands should be available on both sides of the stadium at football games.
28. Have a custodian check restrooms for sanitation and supplies before game time and between quarters. Separate restrooms should be provided for visitors.
29. Check game facilities: Conditions on the field or court and areas throughout the facilities being used by players and by spectators should be checked before the game for hazards, cleanliness, and proper markings. Special attention should be given to the position of fences and players' benches.
30. Athletic trainers are required for all high school football contests. It is further recommended that an athletic trainer or a physician be present at all other rugged-contact athletic contests. If possible, an ambulance should be available. It should be brought on the field only on request of the athletic trainer or physician. The home team athletic trainer or physician may be made available to the visiting team if the visiting team does not bring its own trainer or physician to the contest.
31. Have properly trained adult scorers and timers for officials at games. The same assistants should be used the entire season.

32. Assign a competent person to take charge of the scoreboard.

33. Post signs reminding spectators that West Virginia State code 16-9A-4 prohibits smoking on school property.

Public Address Announcer

Many individuals certainly play key roles and assume important responsibilities to ensure the successful administration of an athletic event. One of these people is the public address announcer because of the major contribution which he/she can make to set the tone for the game, match, or meet which will proceed in the spirit of fair competition and true sportsmanship.

1. Be organized and prepared. This item really speaks for itself, but the good PA announcer will have announcements and forms prepared ahead of time to facilitate his or her job. Being prepared simply means that PA personnel are better able to handle the announcements for emergency situations as they arise.
2. Check that all equipment operates properly. There is more to be concerned with than just a properly working microphone. Do not forget about tape and cassette players, electronic message centers, and so forth. Often, announcements are to be synchronized with songs or scripts, so ensuring that all equipment works properly will make for a quality presentation.
3. Be professional and unbiased. High school sport announcers should not imitate the styles and antics of some college and/or professional PA personnel who draw attention to themselves and away from the athletic contest.
4. Speak slowly, clearly, and distinctly always! Of these, “slowly” is most important. Not only does the announcer need to be heard, he or she also must be easily understood.
5. Say only what is necessary. Talking all the time and speaking constantly into the microphone—especially with unnecessary comments and/or endless promotion—turns people off and makes them not want to listen. People who “turn off” the announcer may miss out on important, valuable, or emergency announcements.
6. Do not rush and do not panic on public service announcements or emergency announcements. Public service announcements related to sportsmanship and PROJECT TARGET and SPORTSMANSHIP are available from the OHSAA office.
7. Do not attempt to do play-by-play.
8. Do not editorialize about or comment on any aspect of the game. The fastest and easiest way for an announcer to lose all respect and credibility with everyone at the contest (spectators, players, officials, coaches, and others) is to make a comment about or react to a game situation or outcome. As with item seven, this is not the announcer’s role or responsibility.
9. Be involved with the teams and the competition, not with yourself. Enjoy the competitive atmosphere of the game, meet or match and become excited about the young people who are performing. Do not become wrapped up in yourself and excited to hear yourself talk.
10. The announcer is not the entertainment. The spectators came to watch the game and the players perform, to support the cheerleaders, to enjoy the band and its auxiliary units, to congratulate the homecoming courts, to see their neighbor’s kids, to observe special halftime activities—NOT TO LISTEN TO THE ANNOUNCER!
11. Give location of restrooms, concessions, and lost-and-found station.

Band Director

1. Encourage and stimulate good feeling by playing visitor’s school fight songs and other appropriate music.
2. Help in crowd control with music at the appropriate times.
3. Encourage band members to stay in small groups of at least three to five when they are not performing at athletic contests.

4. Prior to the season, the guest band director should make a courtesy call to the host band director and exchange information concerning:

- a. Whether or not the guests are planning to attend.
- b. The length of the halftime performance.
- c. Number and location of seating required. Number of band parents or helpers attending.
- d. Whether or not there are any special events planned.

5. Host band officers should seek out and meet with the guest band officers sometime during the contest for the purpose of promoting goodwill.

6. Provide faculty supervision for all pep or marching bands at all athletic contests.

Visiting Schools

1. Contact home school or neutral site manager to discuss game preparations and obtain information on:

- a. safest route to and from stadium or gymnasium
- b. location of visitors' parking area
- c. visitors' entering and exit gate
- d. visitors' seating area
- e. prior and existing school/community control problems

2. Consider transporting students by bus if there is inadequate parking at the stadium.

3. Student buses should have staff supervision.

4. Have adequate faculty and administrative supervision going to the game, at the game, and after the game. Provide identification for school personnel.

5. Consider asking interested parents and patrons to help with supervision.

6. Provide information to students regarding travel, parking, entrance, seating, and exit.

7. Check on amount of time allotted for band or other halftime activities and adhere strictly to the time limit.

Dual Responsibilities

1. Provide opportunities for cultural exchange between student bodies through assemblies.

2. Use assemblies to orient students to the importance of good conduct.

3. Ask student councils and cheer teams to help by planning campaigns for spectator sportsmanship.

4. Plan assemblies to inform students about game rules, or issue a book of rules and regulations so that everyone knows how to watch a game intelligently and knows what is expected. Utilize physical education classes to instruct these activities and extend the knowledge of the playing rules.

5. Any type of mascot shall be kept on the side of a school's cheering section.

6. Only the school banner, sportsmanship creed, and signs which display positive connotations should be displayed and placed on the participant's side of the field.

7. Be alert to prior and existing community or cross-community control problems.

DURING THE GAME

1. Visiting school principal or representative should contact the site manager or athletic director immediately upon arrival to discuss final details and to indicate seat locations so that parties are available to each other.
2. Separate rest rooms and concession booths should be available.
3. Have adequate police, faculty, and patrons distributed among the students and other spectators. Assign someone to help control spectator behavior in the vicinity of the players' bench.
4. Spectators should not be allowed to leave and re-enter the site. This can result in the smuggling of weapons, drugs, alcohol, etc. into the facility.
5. Prepare a plan for acquiring police backup if necessary.
6. Meet faculty supervisors from the visiting school and acquaint them with their areas.
7. Employ a walkie-talkie system, tied into the police department, if possible.
8. Check on supervision each quarter.
9. Keep lines of communication open to administrators from the visiting school and the site manager.
10. Assign a responsible adult, other than the coach, to help attend to injured players and, if necessary, to accompany them to the hospital.
11. Provide supervision during halftime. Whether or not there is halftime entertainment, supervision is necessary to help direct the crowd, keep spectators off the playing area, and keep the area under the stands cleared.
12. Provide an escort with a key to the locker room for officials during halftime.
13. Maximum available lighting shall be utilized during any contest and shall not be restricted to the area of competition.

AFTER THE GAME

1. Use public address system to give directions to students and spectators regarding exit from the stands.
2. Provide police and faculty supervision until all students and spectators are well dispersed. Permit no loitering.
3. Provide an escort with a key to the locker room for officials.
4. Arrange an area for press interviews.
5. Check supervision of all areas; provide continuous security for locker room area.
6. Assign someone to assist police in dispersing hangers-on who wait for the team after the game.
7. Buses loaded with fans, band, and team should depart immediately after the game.
8. Administrators of both schools should confer before leaving to be sure that all details have been covered.
9. When deemed necessary, have police escort officials to their cars and team and spectators to buses to the city/town limits.
10. Letters of appreciation should be sent to the opposing school, coaches, officials, and newspapers, if appropriate.

GUIDELINES FOR CHEERLEADERS

1. The host school cheerleaders should go to the visiting side and greet the visiting cheerleaders. Cheerleaders should lead a cheer for the visitors' section and follow with a cheer for the home section. Cheerleading coaches, coaching staffs, and other game management advisors should meet to discuss the importance of spectator and player sportsmanship.
2. Cheerleaders' functions are to make a positive contribution to good spectator reaction at an athletic contest and to create better relations between opposing supporters.

3. Cheers should be positive and not aimed at antagonizing an opponent. Care should be taken to make certain that words used in a cheer are not suggestive and do not have a connotation which would inflame an audience.
4. Cheerleaders should remain silent when the opponents' cheerleaders are cheering and during free throws at basketball games.
5. Cheerleaders are expected to lead the cheer group in a round of applause for an injured player leaving the game. Cheering is appropriate.
6. When "booing" occurs, the cheerleaders should attempt to stop it by immediately starting a popular sideline cheer. Immediate action is the key to the control of booing.
7. Cheerleaders, properly trained, can be as important to the spectator behavior as the coach is to his/her team.
8. Student bodies and teams will react as they are instructed, inspired, and led by neat and well-poised cheerleaders.

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Police/Security

1. Police/Security should arrive in sufficient time before game starting time and report to principal or his/her representative to request instructions, such as best locations for observation, nearest phone, etc.
2. During the game, officers should be requested to assist in controlling the following:
 - Non-students who may cause disturbances seated in student sections.
 - Any person appearing to be under the influence of alcohol and denied admission to the event.
 - Any suspicious gathering of individuals in restrooms, behind the stadium, in parking areas, or elsewhere.
 - Loiterers should be asked to move on and crowds dispersed outside gym once game is sold out.

Coaches

1. Coaches influence not only the conduct of the players under their direction but also that of the student spectators, parents of squad members, and interested citizens who attend athletic contests. Since the coach is influential in setting the tone of conduct, he/she shall be a role model for self-restraint, fair play, and sportsmanlike behavior.
2. In dealing with the officials, the coach's approach must be professional at all times. The coach must exercise self-control and realize that the official sees through impartial and unbiased eyes. Coaches must familiarize themselves with the proper procedure for requesting a conference with an official.
3. Coaches shall never seek out an official during halftime or at the conclusion of a contest.
4. The behavior of the coach must at all times be marked by dignity and self-control. He/she should not, at any time, use provocative language or engage in any unsportsmanlike actions or tactics. He/she must avoid any actions or remarks which would tend to incite the displeasure of the spectators or provoke disorderly behavior.
5. If the coach, as a professional educator, cannot exercise emotional control under stress, then such behavior cannot be expected from the young people on the team nor from the heterogeneous combination of spectators in the stands.
6. The coach will immediately discipline any player who intimidates an official or displays unsportsmanlike behavior.
7. Deliberate attempts to humiliate an opponent should not be tolerated by school officials, e.g., running up the score. Coaches are encouraged to substitute whenever possible especially when the outcome of the game has more or less been decided.
8. Opposing coaches **must** shake hands publicly and should ask players to shake hands with opponents before or after the game and behave with courtesy at all times.

9. Coaches must be sensitive to situations such as athletes losing control of themselves and must get potential trouble-makers out of the game before difficulty begins. Head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their entire staff.

10. Coaches who repeatedly conduct themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner shall be subject to sanction by the OHSAA.

Players

The less notice the player takes of the spectators, and the more he/she concentrates on his/her part in the game, the more absorbed the crowd will be and the less likely to misbehave.

1. Players should refrain from showing surprise or irritation at a call of an official. The official's ruling should be accepted with politeness.
2. "Playing to the crowd" can cause trouble particularly in basketball where the player's facial expressions are clearly visible to the bench and stands.
3. Unsportsmanlike gesturing or the harassing of an individual opponent should be avoided and must not be condoned by the coaches.
4. Substitutes on the bench must not heckle the opposing team and should never enter the playing field/court.
5. The relationship of players to each other before, during, and after the game affects and helps establish crowd rapport.

School Reporters

1. Stories should be presented fairly and accurately.
2. Losses do not need to be explained or alibied.
3. Wins should not be overstressed.
4. Reporters have many opportunities to speak out for good sportsmanship.
5. Reporters should refrain from criticizing high school athletes in a school newspaper.

Spectators

1. Student councils can develop codes of sportsmanship.
2. Cheerleaders and bands can help promote good sportsmanship.
3. Sportsmanship rating forms are helpful.
4. Sportsmanship trophies can be given to encourage good conduct.
5. Pep boosters can promote better sportsmanship.
6. The pregame atmosphere is improved if spectator participation is encouraged. Standing and singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" is one opportunity for such participation.
7. Handbooks on regulations dealing with crowd conduct are helpful.
8. Disorderly persons should be removed promptly.
9. Posters can be used to stress courtesy and sportsmanship.
10. Noisemakers and drunkenness should not be permitted.
11. Students should sit as a group.

Students and adult spectators who have general knowledge of game rules and of officials' techniques and signals seldom cause disturbances at athletic contests.

Other Considerations

1. Conduct preseason meetings for athletes and parents. Invite members of the community to also attend.
2. Post a copy of the crowd control policy in a conspicuous place in the gym and/or lobby.
3. When crowds are anticipated to be large, conduct a pregame sale of tickets.
4. If prior circumstances indicate the possibility of problems, change the time of the game to the afternoon.

CROWD CONTROL CHECKLIST

The OHSAA is aware of the need for preventative measures to overcome crowd control behavior problems.

Good crowd control consists of sound preventative planning and organization long before problems arise. While most interscholastic contests are conducted without incident, it is necessary to plan for all contests in advance and to explore every possible avenue.

Listed for your considerations are some guidelines which may assist those responsible for planning adequate crowd control.

- Develop a pre-contest checklist listing items and work requiring completion prior to the event.
- Provide a well-ordered, carefully maintained facility.
- Notify opponent in writing of all necessary details such as time, location, dressing facilities, pre-contest procedures and specific information that applies to a particular sport.
- Appoint a “greeting committee” to meet the opponents and serve as their host/hostess through their stay at your school.
- Select supportive personnel (ticket takers/sellers, supervisors, etc.) carefully, and discuss their assignments thoroughly prior to the contest.
- Select experienced scorers, timers and public address system 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 the event on time.
- Ban artificial noisemakers, confetti, etc. from the facility.
- Avoid overcrowding seating accommodations. In cases where seating is at a premium, reserve in advance an 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 have gates supervised throughout the entire contest.
- Pay special attention to people who do not come to a contest to watch it.
- Discourage attendance of elementary students unless accompanied by an adult.
- Keep playing area clear of spectators.
- Use ropes to set aside areas.
- Provide surveillance before, during and after the contest for spectators arriving by bus.
- Continual surveillance should be maintained at all facilities pertaining to crowd convenience such as concession areas, drinking fountains, first-aid stations, restrooms and aisleways.
- Before leaving the facility, check with the police to determine whether any unforeseen incidents transpired.
- Establish good communications with all connected to the event.

SAMPLE OF BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY ON SPORTSMANSHIP, ETHICS, AND INTEGRITY IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We believe that all people can learn; therefore, we will challenge all students to excel. We will provide opportunities for obtaining knowledge, attitudes, experience and skills that enable our students to be individually prepared to assume a position of responsibility in society. We believe that promoting sportsmanship, ethics and integrity in extracurricular activities should be part of that challenge to excel.

Promoting sportsmanship includes for our athletes, administrators, and coaches:

1. Treating opponents and officials with the respect that is due them as guests and fellow human beings.
2. Shaking hands with opponents.
3. Taking victory and defeat without undue emotionalism, i.e. gloating, or demonstrating disappointment.
4. Controlling of tempers at all times on and off the playing field.
5. Being positive with officials, without criticism for officials or coaches after the game.
6. Cooperating with the coaches and fellow players in trying to promote good sportsmanship.
7. Being positive with opponents, refraining from swearing or making insulting remarks to their opponents before, during, or after the contest.
8. Letting student audiences know that inappropriate behavior reflects poorly on the team.

The Board of Education recognizes the value of extracurricular activities in the educational process and the values that young people develop when they have the opportunity to participate in an organized activity outside of the traditional classroom.

Participants and responsible adults involved in Board-approved extracurricular activities are expected to demonstrate the same level of responsibility and behavior at practice and competitions as is expected in the classroom. The Board further encourages the development and promotion of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity in all phases of the educational process and in all segments of the community, including administrators, participants, adult supervisors, parents, fans, spirit groups and support/booster groups.

ETHICS

I want to be a person whose behavior is ethical. How do I recognize if my behavior meets this high ideal?

1. Ethics is the discipline of dealing with what is good and bad. Ethics deals with moral duty and obligation.
2. Ethical behavior is being honest, truthful, and doing the right thing even at the expense of self-interest.
3. 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.
4. Ethical behavior enables the strong to help the weak.
5. People who practice ethical behavior realize that it is hard work and commitment that are the sources of excellence, regardless of the endeavor.
6. Being ethical ensures an equal opportunity for fair participation and competition. Ethical participants place fair play above personal gain or victory.
7. Ethical behavior promotes equal opportunity to participate regardless of race, gender, or cultural affiliation.
8. Ethical people understand that unethical actions undermine any success they experience as a participant, coach, or administrator.
9. A person who behaves ethically calls upon every participant to treat others with the respect he or she would want from them.
10. A person with ethics lives by the Golden Rule.

INTEGRITY

More than anything in this world, I wish to have integrity. More than money, more than prestige, more than power . . . I seek integrity. What is this thing I seek?

At its root, the word means unity or wholeness. An integer is a whole number — one that isn't divided into fractions. To integrate is to blend all ingredients.

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 without.

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.

Thus, the person of integrity has a highly developed conscience . . . and listens to it, having the courage to act on convictions.

The person of integrity, in other words, is obedient to the unenforceable. No one forces a choice of a code of conduct that is a cut above the norm . . . it is done anyway. No one makes the person of integrity obey the conscience . . . it is done anyway. No one forces a love of God . . . it is done anyway.

That is the person each seeks to be, but is not yet, and may never fully be.

Sample of Coaches' Policy on SEI "Coaching Silence"

By Pat Marrinan, head soccer coach, Xenia High School

Soccer coaches can do a lot to coach their players to remain silent during pressure situations.

Even the soccer coach who is most concerned with sportsmanship may fall prey to an occasional player who cannot handle the pressure. Still, coaches must coach. Coaches can coach their players to resist the temptation to dissent. Some suggestions from coaches who work on this problem include:

1. Do not tolerate dissent or swearing in practice.
2. Set a good example as a coach of how to address other players, coaches and the officials.
3. Have players sit out a significant amount of time when they receive a yellow card.
4. If a player is subject to a red card, discuss the implications of this with the team. Use the two game suspension as a time for the team to resolve not to have another ejection. Discipline the carded player beyond the game suspensions.
5. Make a pregame goal of no yellows or reds. Reward the team at season's end for no cards. Include comments on carding part of your postgame analysis with the team.
6. If a player commits an ejectionable offense without the official seeing the offense, still discipline the player in some manner.
7. Make a strong example of the first time a player is guilty of dissent in your scrimmages.

I doubt that there are coaches actively teaching their players to dissent, swear, or commit other red card offenses. Still, we must remember that our silence can be the strongest statement we can make as a coach. If we are silent about yellow and red card offenses we can only expect them to continue.

Sample, Tournament Regulations — Basketball

Pregame Regulations

1. Teams are to be supervised warming up by the school's coaching staff at all times.
2. Teams are not allowed to use the center circle at any time for any team ritual meeting(s).
3. Teams are to stay on their designated warmup side of the court. Intentional running around the other team as a part of the pregame warmup is prohibited.

Introductions

1. The team introduction portion of pregame activities will follow the order of activities below:
 - a. Welcome, introductions of officials, and statement involving the importance of good sportsmanship as supplied by the Ohio High School Athletic Association.
 - b. Playing of the National Anthem.
 - c. Introduction of starting five (5) players of both teams and head coaches alternating schools with the visiting team going first.
 - d. As introductions are made, individuals will come out onto the floor to the center circle and wait to shake hands with their counterpart.
 - e. After the handshake, both individuals will move to the foul line of their bench side of the court facing midcourt until all starters and the head coach are introduced.
 - f. The entire team may assemble at their bench side foul line or return to the bench area.
 - g. The game begins.

Postgame Regulations

Team Congratulatory Procedure:

1. The sequence below is the postgame congratulatory procedure to be followed:
 - a. Both the runner-up and championship teams will participate.
 - b. Coaches are to designate by listing the names of the individuals to receive individual awards on a form provided by the District Tournament Manager using the designated number of awards allowable.
 - c. The runner-up team award will be presented first followed by the individual awards. Coaches are to line up those to receive the awards in the key area directly across from their team bench. The Tournament Manager designee, or coach, may present the individual awards as their names are read. The same procedure will be followed for the championship team. The runner-up team is to remain on the floor during the championship team and individual award presentations.
 - d. Following the award presentations, the teams may leave their awards area. Host school managers may allow for the traditional ceremony of cutting down the nets.

Sample Letter to:

School Board Members

An essential element of educational athletics is to teach lifetime values, such as ethics, integrity and respect. These values must be conveyed not only to our students, but to the community as well.

For a number of years, our school has been working with the Ohio High School Athletic Association's Sportsmanship Committee, and the (Your League) to raise the level of behavior expectations of our coaches, student-athletes and spectators at our athletic events by participating in the Harold A. Meyer Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Program. The reason for taking on this challenge is a simple one. The values taught by achieving and maintaining a high level of sportsmanshiplike behavior will reflect on our school and our community in a positive manner. This effort we believe will counter possible negative influences that exist in our society in regards to sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship, quite simply, translates to citizenship for our young men and women and all those involved with the interscholastic program. Through our programs young people learn and practice RESPECT . . . respect for self and respect for others. You are encouraged to be the leaders in our community and help rekindle the spirit of citizenship through athletics.

As a school board member and a recognized leader of our community, you can play a role in this campaign by speaking out for good sportsmanship and helping to raise the level of what should be acceptable behavior by our coaches, student-athletes and spectators at our events, home and away. More importantly, your leadership by example, conducting yourselves in an exemplary manner at events, is essential to our success in this area.

Good sportsmanship is something which requires constant attention. We plan to stress it in a variety of ways this year. We encourage your support of this program, which we feel will have far-reaching benefits for everyone who is a part of our school system.

Sample Letter to:

Student-Athletes

Student-athletes who are good sports are positive role models within our school and the community at-large. A good sport knows that athletic competition builds character and shapes lifetime attitudes. You, in turn, experience 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 at our school, your sportsmanship goals should include:

- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances;
- Respecting the rules of the games, the officials who administer the rules, and their decisions;
- Respecting opponents as fellow students; and acknowledging them for striving to do their best while you seek your best at the same time;
- Refraining from engaging in all types of disrespectful behavior, specifically taunting, trash talk and other forms of intimidation;
- Looking at athletic participation as a potentially beneficial learning experience, whether you win or lose;
- Educating other students and fans to understand 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 give us a roadmap to follow toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

You are the spokesperson for your school when you represent us in athletic competition. 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 things about you and our school; and hopefully, remind us all that in the end, sport is meant to be fun.

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

Sample Letter to:

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:

- Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game;
- Leading our spectators 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;
- Learning, understanding and respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- Respecting cheerleaders and athletes from opposing schools as fellow students; and acknowledging them for striving to do their best;
- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances; and
- Educating other students and fans to understand 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 give us a roadmap 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 sport is meant to be fun. Your display of good sportsmanship will show the most positive things about you and our school.

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

Sample Letter to:

Student Groups

Being a member of the (name of group), you have assumed a role of leadership, not only within our school, but 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 much in the same way as the athletes, acquiring skills and values that will last a lifetime. Integrity, fairness and respect are the principles of good sportsmanship, and with them, 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:

- Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game;
- 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;
- Learning, understanding and respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- Respecting our opponents as fellow students; and acknowledging them for striving to do their best;
- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances; and
- Educating other students and fans to understand 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 give us a roadmap to follow 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 show the most positive things about you and our school; and hopefully remind us that sport is meant to be fun.

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

Sample Letter to:

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 our school, we hope you will become involved in those that interest you.

Athletic events are always among the most popular activities for participants and spectators, and these games provide another learning experience. Integrity, fairness, respect and the principles of good sportsmanship 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 the community. As a member of our school, your sportsmanship goals should include:

- Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game;
- 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;
- Learning, understanding and respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- Respecting our opponents as fellow students; and acknowledging them for striving to do their best; and
- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances.

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

You are the spokesperson for your school when you attend an athletic, or any cocurricular event. 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 things about you and our school; and hopefully remind us that sport is meant to be fun.

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

Sample Letter to:

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 cocurricular activities.

There is a value system — established in the home, nurtured in the school — that young people are developing. Their involvement in classroom and other activities contributes to that development. Integrity, fairness and respect are lifetime values taught through athletics. These are the principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of the results.

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

- Realizing that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game;
- Encouraging our students to perform their best, just as we would urge them on with their classwork, knowing that others will always turn in better or lesser performances;
- Participating in positive cheers that encourage our youngsters; and discouraging any cheers that would redirect that focus — including those that taunt and intimidate opponents, their fans and officials;
- Learning, understanding and respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- Respecting the task our coaches face as teachers; and supporting them as they strive to educate our youth;
- Respecting our opponents as fellow students; and acknowledging them for striving to do their best; and
- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances.
- 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 give us a roadmap to follow toward a more educational atmosphere for interscholastic athletics.

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

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

Sample Letter to:

Contest Officials

Welcome to the _____ Conference _____ sports season. As a conference, we are very pleased to have you as a member of our officiating ranks for the __season. We feel our member schools support athletics in the proper perspective as learning experiences for both those participating in contests and those who attend as spectators. We value both the competitive aspect of interscholastic athletics as well as the learning values sports impart.

We are very concerned with an issue which we feel threatens the wholesomeness of athletics. All too often we hear of contests which are marred with fights, with verbal bantering by competitors and fans, and by general rowdiness which results from baiting or taunting opponents during the course of the games. In the past we have experienced racially demeaning comments used in the course of games by both participants and fans. We want to eliminate that from our athletic venues.

Enclosed with this cover letter is a copy of the unanimously adopted sportsmanship special point of emphasis. We expect every one of our officials, regardless of the sport or level, to address the issue of “trash talking, baiting, or taunting”, and do whatever is necessary to put a stop to it before it destroys what we feel is a very important part of our educational program. Please understand, this is not intended to be a “gag rule” which prevents competitors from talking in the course of the contests. It is, however, specifically designed to prevent inappropriate chatter used to break an opponent’s concentration or otherwise upset someone.

Obscenities, vulgarities, racial slurs, etc. must not and do not belong in high school sports. We want you to know that the principals, athletic directors and coaches of the _____ Conference totally endorse efforts to keep our competition clean and as wholesome as possible. Preventative officiating will go a long way in preserving the many positives high school has to offer.

Good luck this year as you work as an official. Your contribution to high school sports and athletes is critical to the success of everyone.

Sample Letter to:

Officials

Welcome to the _____ Conference _____ sports season. As a conference, we are very pleased to have you as a member of our officiating ranks for the __season. We feel our member schools support athletics in the proper perspective as learning experiences for both those participating in contests and those who attend as spectators. We value both the competitive aspect of interscholastic athletics as well as the learning values sports impart.

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Good luck this year as you work as an official. Your contribution to high school sports and athletes is critical to the success of everyone.

Sample Letter to:

Officials

SPORTSMANSHIP SPECIAL POINT OF EMPHASIS

Effective immediately, athletic officials contracted to work league contests will be sensitive to any and all verbal abuse engaged in during the course of interscholastic athletic competition in the _____ Conference.

During the pregame captains' conference with officials, it shall be the responsibility of the game officials to clearly communicate to each team captain that verbal baiting and bantering during the course of the contest shall be prohibited. Should a participant violate the standards of the sport, the appropriate penalty will be assessed. This may include both the penalty of the particular sport and/or possible disqualification of the individual, given the seriousness of the violation.

As a league, we shall direct our Assigner to stress in writing to all approved officials the importance of enforcing these rules as they pertain to game administration. We would hope for as much preventative officiating as possible, including the stopping of a contest to confer with the head coach of a team and the offending player(s) before the assessment of the game penalty. Further, game administrators shall remind officials upon their arrival at game sites that the member schools of the _____ Conference expect rigid enforcement of the verbal bantering/baiting rules of the games.

Should fan heckling of a derogatory nature, racial, obscene or otherwise, take place, the contest officials shall request assistance from game administrators to intervene to stop that activity or, as a last resort, interrupt the game and, if the abusive behavior continues, have the game administrators eject the offending fans from the premises or discontinue the game.

Sample of Letter from:

Principal/Athletic Director to Coaches

The privilege of coaching young people carries with it many responsibilities. As a high school coach, your responsibilities go well beyond wins and losses. Help your student-athletes, and parents realize that winning as a goal itself is failure-oriented, because at least half the participants will not achieve it. Success is oriented in the development of a skill, and should make athletes feel good about themselves after each game—win or lose. In fact, wins and losses should rank near the bottom of the list of your expectations and ours, in your work as a teacher in the athletic classroom.

Good sportsmanship and all the values it embodies are perhaps the most important reason we sponsor athletics. Taking a leading role in our sportsmanship efforts will convey a powerful message to your players. Sportsmanship, quite simply, translates to citizenship for our young men and women and all those involved with the interscholastic program. Through our programs young people learn and practice RESPECT . . . respect for self and respect for others. You are encouraged to be the leader in our community and help rekindle the spirit of citizenship through athletics.

We are continuing our efforts in the Harold A. Meyer Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity program sponsored by the Ohio High School Athletic Association's Sportsmanship Committee. This has been a successful program statewide which reinforces the need for sportsmanship as one of the values taught through athletics. But it is truly at the local level, where each individual school's efforts will blossom into success. Your involvement is essential and critical.

Good sportsmanship requires as much work as any play or skill you will teach an athlete this season. It is more important in the respect that the values instilled by good sportsmanship will serve our community for years to come.

We hope the upcoming season will be a rewarding one for you!

Sample of Letter for:

General Public in School District Newsletter

One of the missions of extracurricular school activities is to serve as an extension of the classroom. There are strong lessons to be learned in athletics. One of those lessons is to set and maintain high standards of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity in our schools and our society. It is up to us to provide the direction and constant vigilance under which good sportsmanship can prosper and have a positive impact on our children, the leaders of tomorrow, and ourselves.

We are continuing our efforts in the Harold A. Meyer Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Program sponsored by the Ohio High School Athletic Association's Sportsmanship Committee. This has been a successful program statewide which reinforces and rewards the need for sportsmanship as one of the values taught through athletics.

The value of the lessons learned by exhibiting good sportsmanship will last a lifetime. If we ever lose sight of that, then athletics, or any extracurricular activity, is not worth sponsoring. The positive actions of a coach, athlete or spectator at an event can influence how our school is perceived in our own community and the communities of those schools we meet on the field of play.

Sportsmanship, quite simply, translates to citizenship for our young men and women and all those involved with the interscholastic program. Through our programs young people learn and practice RESPECT . . . respect for self and respect for others. You are encouraged to be the leaders in our community and help rekindle the spirit of citizenship through athletics.

We are asking for your support in this effort by emphasizing to your son or daughter what is expected of them at an athletic event as a competitor or spectator. After all, such events are an extension of the school day, and we should expect the same type of respectful behavior exhibited in the athletic arena as we do in the classroom. We urge you to ask your children to demonstrate self-control and self-discipline and at the same time, enjoy the games.

Everyone represents our school at an athletic event. One act of sportsmanlike, or unsportsmanlike, behavior by even one person paints a picture of how we are perceived by neighboring communities, schools and the media. Maintaining the proper perspective about school sports will help us in our quest for good sportsmanship, show what is good about our school district and remind us that school sports are here to educate students, and be fun.

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

Sample of Letter to:

Parents/Adult Spectators just prior to tournament play

As we prepare for the upcoming tournament, it is an appropriate time to review the goals of our program as they relate to sportsmanship. As an educational institution, our school is committed to teaching our young people to set goals, strive for excellence, and to properly handle whatever adversity they encounter along the way. This aim is the same in the classroom as it is on the playing field.

The greatest challenge to good sportsmanship is adversity. When things are not going well the easy response is to shift the blame. In particular, to shift it away from ourselves to our opponents, or, more often, to the officials. When this is done, the focus is away from the positive, to play harder or better, to the negative, how can we possibly overcome the bad calls. As teacher/coaches we feel it is essential that our athletes maintain a positive approach to handling adversity. We need the support of our parent-body, as role models, if we are to accomplish this.

At times this year some parents have become quite vocal at games and loudly criticized both game officials and opposing players. This type of abusive behavior is counterproductive to what we are trying to teach. In addition, it creates a very uncomfortable environment for the fans who come out to support their team and wish to enjoy the game. Finally, it is an embarrassment to our school and to the young people on the playing field. We are asking **ALL** our fans to keep comments positive and upbeat.

As a school we hire the game officials during the regular season. All of our officials are deemed competent by our coaching staff and athletic administration. They are not perfect, and their interpretation of the action may be different from yours. However, they are an essential part of the game, and they are doing the best they can. Let's strive to pay less attention to their performance and more to the superb skills of our young athletes. Let's come out in the next few weeks and cheer on our team to success in the tournament.

Sample of Letter to:

Print and Electronic Media Sports Editor/Directors

Our school has joined a statewide campaign sponsored by the Ohio High School Athletic Association to promote sportsmanship at our events. We feel the need to stress the type of exemplary behavior that should be exhibited by all players and spectators at our events.

The purpose of athletics, or any cocurricular activity, is to educate our young people. If we ever lose sight of that goal, then such events are not worth sponsoring. The positive actions of a coach, athlete or spectator at an event can influence how our school is perceived in our own community and the communities of those schools we meet on the field of play.

We are aware that the media's role in our events is to report the facts to the public. If you can find a way to also stress the need for high levels of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity at our events and in our daily lives, it would be deeply appreciated.

If you would like to further discuss the campaign, and how we are attempting to communicate the values of good sportsmanship to our constituents, feel free to contact us or the OHSAA.

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