

SPORTSMANSHIP MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the “Sportsmanship: The Only Missing Piece Is You!” program is to educate, promote, and assist in the perception of and the practice of those qualities which are inherent in good sportsmanship. The ideals of sportsmanship apply equally to all disciplines. Individuals, regardless of their roles in interscholastic athletics, are expected to be aware of their influence on the behavior of others and act in a responsible manner at all times.

What is SPORTSMANSHIP?

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTSMANSHIP

PIAA and its member schools are strongly emphasizing the importance of GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP. The one thing we need to realize is that many people have not had GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP explained to them. Hopefully the following will help everyone to understand their responsibilities at a Contest.

1. GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION FOR THE RULES OF THE CONTEST.

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

2. EXERCISE REPRESENTATIVE BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

A prerequisite to 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 upon everyone exhibiting behavior that is representative of a sound value base. A proper perspective must be maintained if the educational values are to be realized. Your behavior influences others whether you are aware of it or not.

3. RECOGNIZE AND APPRECIATE SKILLED PERFORMANCES 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 also reflects a true awareness of the Contest by recognizing and acknowledging quality.

4. EXHIBIT RESPECT FOR THE OFFICIALS.

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

5. DISPLAY OPENLY A RESPECT FOR THE OPPONENT AT ALL TIMES.

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

6. DISPLAY PRIDE IN YOUR ACTIONS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

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

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