

Article XI – Sportsmanship (Article Under Construction: Fall 2023)

1. THE WCAL SPORTSMANSHIP CODE

Definitions of Sportsmanship

- A. The practice of playing fair, of taking loss or defeat without complaint or victory without gloating and treating opponents with fairness, generosity, and courtesy.
- B. In accordance with the league philosophy and goals (Article II), the promotion of sportsmanship is integral to the functioning of this league. As a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity, sportsmanship demonstrated by all involved in athletics is perhaps the clearest sign that this league and its member schools are treating athletic participation as “integral to the common Catholic mission of our schools.”

2. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Everyone associated with an athletic event - coaches. Athletes, officials, cheerleaders, spectators and school administration - play an important role in seeing that standards of sportsmanship are upheld before during and after a contest is played.
- B. Each person in attendance should strive to meet ideals of sportsmanship:
 1. Show respect for the opponent at all times. The opponent should be treated as a guest, greeted cordially on arriving, given the best possible accommodations and treated respectfully at all times.
 2. Show respect for the officials. The officials should be recognized as impartial arbitrators who are trained to do their job and who can be expected to do it to the best of their ability. Sportsmanship implies the willingness to accept and abide by the decisions of the officials.
 3. Know understand and appreciate the rules of the contest. A familiarity with the current rules of the game and the recognition of their necessity for a fair contest is essential. Good sportsmanship suggests the importance of conforming to the spirit as well as to the letter of the rules.
 4. Maintain self-control at all times. A prerequisite of sportsmanship requires one to understand his/her own bias or prejudice and the ability to prevent the desire to win from overcoming rational behavior. A proper perspective must be maintained if the potential educational values of athletic competition are to be realized. Sportsmanship is concerned with the behavior of all involved in the game.
 5. Recognize and appreciate skill in performance regardless of affiliation. Applause for a good performance of an opponent is a demonstration of generosity and good will. The ability to recognize quality in performance and the willingness to acknowledge it without regard to team membership is one of the most highly commendable gestures of sportsmanship.
- C. Within the framework of these basic fundamentals are the specific responsibilities which each individual must bear.

3. THE COACH

- A. The coach bears the greatest burden of responsibility for sportsmanship. The influence of the coach upon the attitudes and behavior of the players, the students body and the community is unequalled. In order for sportsmanship to become a reality, it is essential that the coach subscribe to the values of sportsmanship and teach its principles through words and action.
- B. The coach should:
 1. Always set a good example for others to follow.
 2. Teach the values of honest effort in conforming to the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
 3. Instruct the players in their sportsmanship responsibilities.
 4. Discipline those students who display unsportsmanlike behavior; if necessary, forfeit their privilege of representing their school.
 5. Be an accommodating host to opponents; treat them as guests.
 6. At every opportunity, remind the student body that the opposing team is their guest, and that as hosts, they should be polite and courteous.

7. Consider providing opportunities for social interaction among coaches and players of both teams before and after the contest.
8. Respect the judgment of the officials and their interpretation of the rules. Public protests can only lead to similar behavior by the players and spectators.
9. Publicly shake hands with the officials and opposing coach before the contest. After the contest, congratulate opposing coach and team on a good effort.

4. THE ATHLETES

- A. The responsibility of the athletes for sportsmanship is second in importance only to the coach. Because athletes are admired and respected, they exert a great deal of influence over the actions and behavior of the spectators.
- B. The athletes should:
 1. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing the school and community.
 2. Treat opponents with the respect that is due them as guests and fellow competitors.
 3. Shake hands with opponents and wish them good luck before the contest.
 4. Offer assistance during a break in game action to an opponent who has fallen.
 5. Exercise self-control at all times, accepting decisions and abiding by them.
 6. Respect the judgment of the officials and their interpretations of the rules. Never argue or make gestures indicating dislike for a decision.
 7. Allow the captain to be the only team member to communicate with the officials regarding the clarification of a ruling.
 8. Accept both victory and defeat with pride and compassion, never be boastful or bitter.
 9. Congratulate the opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
 10. Cooperate with the coach and fellow athletes in trying to promote sportsmanship.
 11. Welcome the opportunity to discuss the rules and strategies of the contest with parents and friends so they can better understand and appreciate the finer points of the game.
 12. Never taunt an opponent or celebrate an accomplishment in such a way as to “show up” the opponent or demonstrate a lack of respect or provoke another team or its spectators.

5. THE CHEERLEADERS

- A. Since the cheerleaders are the chosen representative of the student body, they have an unusual opportunity and a significant responsibility for promoting sportsmanship. Cheerleaders should be chosen who are respected by fellow students. The most aggressive and vocal individual does not necessarily make the best cheerleader. By setting an example, the cheerleaders can influence and help control the reactions of student spectators.
- B. The cheerleaders should:
 1. Work with moderators to design standards of desirable behavior for the leaders and cheering section
 2. Select positive cheers which praise their own team without antagonizing their opponents.
 3. Make spirit signs that are positive in nature and do not refer to the opposing team in a derogatory or negative manner.
 4. Use discretion in selecting when to cheer. Give the opposing team’s cheerleaders equal opportunity to execute their cheers.
 5. Give encouragement to injured athletes and recognition to outstanding performances for either team.
 6. Serve as host to the visiting cheerleaders. Meet them upon arrival and show them hospitality.
 7. Assist school officials at rallies or other gatherings in reminding students of the expectations of good sportsmanship and that the reputation of the school depends largely upon the behavior of its students at athletic contests. It should be emphasized that no derogatory remarks or booing should be made at any time.
 8. For desired spectator response, cheers should be executed with precision and ease.
 9. Develop a large repertoire of desirable and timely cheers which may be called upon at appropriate moments.

10. Always maintain enthusiasm and composure especially in trying circumstances, remembering responsibilities for leadership.

6. THE STUDENT BODY / CHEERING SECTION

Spectators and their tremendous enthusiasm for sports are indicative of their vital responsibility for sportsmanship. Their habits and reactions determine the quality of sportsmanship which reflects upon the reputation of the school they are supporting.

A. The spectator should:

1. Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of sportsmanship.
2. Respect, cooperate and respond enthusiastically to cheerleaders.
3. Censure fellow spectators who display negative behavior.
4. Respect the property of the school and the authority of school officials.
5. Show respect for an injured athlete when he/she is removed from the contest.
6. Never applaud errors by opponents or penalties inflicted upon them.
7. Never heckle or jeer members of the opposing team.
8. Never criticize the athletes or coaches for the loss of the contest.
9. Respect the judgment and strategy of the coach. Refrain from being a second gesser.
10. Avoid profane language and obnoxious behavior which are contrary to sportsmanship.
11. Never participate in an unauthorized visit to another school or engage in any acts of vandalism.
12. Remain in stands or spectating area; never enter athletic field or court.

7. THE BAND AND OTHER ENTERTAINERS

- A. The band directors should contact each other before the game in order to coordinate times for playing and any other necessary details.
- B. Band members should be supervised by a staff member and they should enter the stadium or gym as a group.
- C. Bands should only play before a game, during time-outs, at halftime and after the game. In this regard, band directors should be sensitive to any school which may desire to sing its Alma Mater at the end of the game and provide opportunity for them to do so without interruption. Visiting schools should be allowed to sing Alma Mater first.
- D. Bands, dance troupe members, and other entertainers should not interfere with the officials, with practicing teams, or with the playing of the game.

8. THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

- A. Less visible than the coaching staff, but nevertheless of great importance to the overall program of sportsmanship, is the athletic director. The numerous details which are essential for a smoothly functioning educational contest require the efforts of an individual dedicated to the true purpose of school athletics. The philosophy which this person holds is reflected in the policies and procedures which he/she initiates, the behavior of the coaches and athletes, and in the conduct of all athletic contests. This person must subscribe to and promote the ideals of sportsmanship.
- B. A responsible athletic director will:
 1. Secure competent officials who will be satisfactory to both teams and provide adequate compensation to assure quality officiating.
 2. Schedule opponents who have similar standards.
 3. Avoid scheduling opponents in which rivalry has reached the point that unruly behavior has become an accepted matter of course.
 4. Enlist the support of student leaders in the development of sportsmanship programs.
 5. Work closely with the cheerleaders and/or their moderator in the techniques of spectator management.
 6. Secure competent public address announcers who promote the fundamentals of sportsmanship, who do not elicit undesirable spectator reactions, and who announce the game in a nonpartisan manner.
 7. Maintain a good relationship with the media; keep them well-informed of the activities and the

objectives of the program.

8. Provide for clearly defined and appropriately separated rooting sections.
9. Notify visiting school of location of rooting sections, procedures for halftime, etc.

9. THE PRINCIPAL AND HIS/HER DESIGNEES

- A. The administration must establish the importance of the fundamentals of sportsmanship in the minds of the entire school family and all those who associate with any of the activities of the school. The quality of the sportsmanship displayed at athletic contests reflects the leadership provided by the administration.
- B. The principal should:
 1. Pursue avenues for proactively promoting sportsmanship (e.g., pre-game gatherings with opposing school's faculty and coaches, prayer before start of contest, etc.)
 2. Establish definite eligibility policies and procedures and be sure that they are thoroughly understood.
 3. Prevent outside influences from exerting undue pressure upon the athletic program.
 4. Be sure parents thoroughly understand what the school expects of its athletes.
 5. Take an active role in the development of athletic policies.
 6. Be sure that all students have a definite understanding of the kinds of behavior expected of them.
 7. Support and encourage school programs designed to enhance the understanding of sportsmanship.
 8. Establish and enforce consequences for students and athletes who violate expectations of sportsmanship.
 9. Establish good rapport with the media relative to its obligation for promoting good sportsmanship.
 10. Ensure the employment of coaches who are concerned primarily with educational objectives and the well-being of students.

10. THE DEAN

- A. The Dean Should:
 1. Provide sufficient supervision for all football and basketball games as well as other athletic events which require special supervision.
 2. Provide, when necessary, additional security such as police to assist in maintaining order and safety at athletic events. It is the responsibility of the home team to assess the nature and extent of security needs for an event.
 3. Attend all varsity football and basketball games and any other events he/she determines to require the dean's presence; if the Dean is unable to attend an athletic event, he/she will assign a designee and provide the name of this designee to the Dean of the opposing school. The designee will confer with the opposing Dean prior to the start of the athletic event.
 4. Notify students of consequences for unsportsmanlike behavior, inclusive of potential expulsion for serious offenses such as vandalism.

11. BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTS

- A. Acceptable Behavior:
 1. Applause during introduction of athletes, coaches and officials
 2. Athletes shaking hands with opponent who fouls out while both sets of fans recognized athlete's performance with applause.
 3. Accepting all decisions of officials.
 4. Cheerleaders leading fans in positive yells in positive manner.
 5. Handshakes between participants and coaches at end of contest, regardless of outcome.
 6. Treating competition as a game, not a war.
 7. Coaches/athletes searching out opposing participants to recognize them for outstanding performances of all participants.
 8. Applause at end of contest for performances of all participants.
 9. Everyone showing concern for an injured athlete, regardless of team.
 10. Encouraging surrounding people to display only sportsmanlike conduct.

B. Unacceptable Behavior

1. Disrespectful, taunting, derogatory yells, chants, songs or gestures (including such cheers as “Nah, Nah, hey, hey, good-bye” or “Airball, Airball”).
2. Turning backs or holding up newspapers while teams are being introduced, or when teams, dance or drill teams are performing.
3. Booing or heckling an official’s decision.
4. Criticizing officials in any way; displays of temper with an official’s call.
5. Yells that antagonize opponents.
6. Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances.
7. Blaming loss of game on officials, coaches or athletes.
8. Laughing or name-calling to distract an opponent.
9. Using profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game.
10. Doing own yells instead of following lead of cheerleaders.
11. Using noisemakers at any time unless these are mascots or traditional items that have prior approval of the league. The Bellarmine Bell, the St. Francis Cannon and the Riordan Fog Horn are league approved in the context and have special rules for their use. Schools wishing to introduce new “noisemaking” devices must receive the approval of the league.
12. Unauthorized visiting of other school’s rooting section.
13. Going onto the court or field at any time before, during, or after contest.

12. PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS

Should any school identify unsportsmanlike behavior by another member school, the following process should be followed.

- A. For violations of the sportsmanship code, every effort should be made to resolve the concern at the lowest level; that is, contact should be made between coaches, Athletic Directors, Deans, or Principals to articulate the concern. The school that was contacted about a minor violation has the responsibility to investigate and respond appropriately and to then inform the other school in writing of the action taken. A copy of the written response should be sent to the Commissioner.
- B. Upon receipt of this letter it becomes the responsibility of the league commissioner to investigate the incident. If upon completion of his/her investigation, he/she feels there has been a serious violation of the sportsmanship code, he/she may take one of the following actions:
 1. Send a formal letter of sanction to the violating school and give formal notification to the Board of Managers;
 2. If the Commissioner feels there is a need for further review of the incident he/ she may notify the President of the WCAL that the Commissioner would like the WCAL Incident Advisory Board to review the incident and advise the Commissioner on any possible action they deem to be warranted regarding the incident. Refer to page 28 6. WCAL INCIDENT ADVISORY BOARD for procedures to follow for further review.

13. PRAYERS

Each school that uses a public address system to announce a game in any sport shall read a prayer from the approved list of prayers prior to the start of that game.

14. ANNUAL SPORTSMANSHIP MEETING

Each year the League Commissioner shall conduct a meeting on Sportsmanship with all the member schools. Attendees at this meeting shall include the League Commissioner, each school’s Dean, and select students from each school such as yell leaders, etc. The meeting will be held in September each year, and shall be hosted by all schools on a rotation basis established by the Commissioner. The Agenda for this meeting shall be prepared by the Commissioner with the assistance of the Deans Council.