Sportsmanship Education

What is sportsmanship?

Good sportsmanship is viewed by the National Federation of State High School Associations as a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others:

- Play fair, take loss or defeat without complaint, or victory without gloating
- Treat others as you wish to be treated
- Respect others and one’s self
- Impose self-control, be courteous, and gracefully accept results of one's actions
- Display ethical behavior by being good (character) and doing right (action)
- Be a good citizen.

What is sportsmanship education?

- It is learning about good sportsmanship traits and their link to good behavior so they can be practiced in play.
- It is learning about expectations of administrators, coaches, players, cheerleaders, and fans during an athletic event.
- It is learning that each individual can control choices concerning his/her own behavior, and that such control is worthy of praise and respect.
- It is using co-curricular activities to promote understanding.
- It inspires development of good sportsmanship traits among all students.

Why implement sportsmanship education?

- Sportsmanship education is a part of the ABSS Character Education plan.
- Sportsmanship education is needed to teach students the differences between middle and high school athletics and athletics at higher levels.
- Sportsmanship education is needed to promote ethical behavior.
- Sportsmanship is the most important concept or value in sports. It is our foundation, our starting point. It promotes fair play, respect, and the importance of following the rules.
- Sportsmanship education is the right thing to do, the ethical thing.

Sportsmanship Traits

(Applications to athletics of ABSS eight character traits, to be displayed by coaches, athletes, officials, cheerleaders, spectators, and school administration)

Courage is having the determination to do the right thing even when others don’t; the strength to exhibit fairness, to be courteous, to gracefully accept the result of the contest, to attempt difficult things that are worthwhile

Good Judgment is choosing worthy goals; setting priorities in accordance with team, county, state and national rules; leading others to follow these rules
Integrity is having the inner strength to be fair and courteous during athletic events, to play according to the rules, acting positively and honorably not only to your team, but to your opponent.

Kindness is being considerate, courteous, and generous in spirit to the opposing team; showing care, compassion and friendship in victory or defeat; treating others as you would like to be treated.

Perseverance is being persistent in pursuit of worthy objectives in spite of opposition, difficulty, injuries, handicaps or discouragement, and exhibiting patience and the fortitude to try again when confronted with mistakes or failures.

Respect is showing high regard for coaches, officials, opponents, fans, administrators, self, team, and the school you are representing.

Responsibility is being dependable in carrying out obligations and duties, showing reliability and consistency in words and conduct, and being accountable for your actions.

Self-discipline is demonstrating hard work and commitment to purpose, regulating yourself for improvement and refraining from inappropriate behaviors, maintaining self-control at all times, and doing your best in all situations.

"High Fives" to Sportsmanship

Everyone's "high five"

1. Show respect for the opponent at all times. The opponent should be treated as a guest, greeted cordially on arriving, given the best accommodations and accorded the respect, honesty and generosity which all people deserve.
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 the letter of the rules.
4. Maintain self-control at all times. A prerequisite of sportsmanship requires one to understand his 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.

Coaches' "high five"
1. Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow, exemplifying the highest moral and ethical behavior.
2. Teach good sportsmanship and establish high standards for the athletes, parents, and fans.
3. Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.
4. Treat opposing coaches, participants, and fans with respect. Shake hands with officials and opposing coaches.
5. Teach the value of honest effort in conforming to the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.

**Student-Athletes' "high five"**

1. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing your school and community; display positive public action at all times.
2. Treat opponents with the respect that is due them as guests and fellow athletes.
3. Exercise self-control at all times, accepting decisions and abiding by them.
4. Accept both victory and defeat with pride and compassion, never being boastful or bitter.
5. Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coaches and help fellow athletes and fans maintain these standards.

**Parents, Students, and Other Fans' "high five"**

1. Realize that a ticket is a privilege to observe a contest and support middle school activities, not a license to verbally assault others.
2. Be an exemplary role model by positively supporting teams in every manner possible, including content of cheers and signs.
3. Recognize and acknowledge good performances by athletes on either team.
4. Give support to those participating in, conducting, and/or officiating the athletic event.
5. Respect the judgment and strategy of the coach.

**Cheerleaders' "high five"**

1. Help develop a reputation of good sportsmanship for your team, school, and community.
2. Stimulate desired crowd response using only positive cheers, signs and praise without antagonizing or demeaning opponents.
3. Treat visiting cheerleaders and fans with respect.
4. Give encouragement to your team and recognize outstanding performances, regardless of team affiliation.
5. Maintain enthusiasm and composure, serving as a role model.

**School Administrators' "high five"**

1. Develop a plan for teaching and promoting the ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship within the school.
2. Provide appropriate supervisory personnel for each athletic event.
3. Be sure parents thoroughly understand what the school expects of its athletes.
4. Recognize exemplary behavior and actively discourage undesirable conduct by participants, coaches and fans.
5. Recommend to the county school board the employment of athletic coaches who are concerned with educational objectives and the well-being of students.

The Acceptable "five"

1. Applaud during introduction of players, coaches, and officials and at the end of a contest for the performances of all participants.
2. Shake hands with participants and coaches at the end of the contest, regardless of outcome.
3. Accept all decisions of officials.
4. Engage in positive school yells in a respectful manner.
5. Encourage surrounding people to display only sportsmanlike conduct.

The Unacceptable "five"

1. Yelling during the opponent's free-throw attempt, in a disrespectful manner, or to antagonize opponents.
2. Booing or heckling an official, coach, player or cheerleader.
3. Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances.
4. Blaming the loss of a game on officials, coaches, or participants.
5. Using profanity or displaying anger that draws attention away from the game.

Crowd Control Checklist

Develop a pre-contest checklist of items and work requiring completion prior to the event. Items on the list should include.

___ Provide a clean facility.
___ Notify opponent in writing of all necessary details such as time, location, dressing facilities, etc.
___ Appoint a "greeting committee" to meet the opponent.
___ Select supportive personnel (ticket takers, supervisors, scorekeepers, clock operator) carefully, and discuss their assignments prior to the contest.
___ Provide security for officials.
___ Provide local police for help in controlling the crowd.
___ Start the event on time.
___ Prohibit free entry to contests.
___ Limit re-entry and have gates supervised throughout entire contest.
___ Keep playing area clear of spectators.
Provide surveillance for: visitors’ bus, concessions, rest rooms, hallways

Establish good communications with all connected to the event.

Good Sportsmanship

Ten Ways to Promote

1. Develop a sportsmanship awards program and honor those individuals who exhibit outstanding sportsmanship, ethics and integrity. This can be done at the school and conference level.
2. Hold pre-season meetings and assemblies before contests to encourage students to exhibit proper conduct.
3. Become involved in a Character/Sportsmanship Education week or day.
4. Display messages on good sportsmanship throughout school hallways and gymnasium/playing field.
5. Discuss Sportsmanship Education during homeroom or other part of the school day. Post expectations in all classrooms.
6. Meet with coaching staff to discuss positive approach to good sportsmanship.
7. Use physical education classes to promote and practice sportsmanship.
8. Promote good sportsmanship before and throughout contests with P.A. announcements.
9. Welcome opponents to your school with posters and banners.
10. Give certificates to individuals or groups of individuals that display sportsmanship at athletic events.

Acknowledgements

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- Broward County Athletic Association, "Unsportsmanlike Conduct Learning Packet."
- Florida High School Athletic Association, "Thumbs Up to Sportsmanship."
- Gough, Russell W., "Character is Everything." National Federation News
- Indiana High School Athletic Association, "Sportsmanship: The Winning Edge."
- Missouri State High School Activities Association, "Speak OUT for Sportsmanship," Sportsmanship Campaign Kit.
- National Federation of State High School Associations, "The Case For Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity In High School Activities."
- Ruster Foundation, "Winning Isn't Everything...But Good Sportsmanship Is!"