



# OSAA Equity and Diversity Newsletter

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## Regarding Sportsmanship, It's Time for Wake-Up Call In High School Sports By Dr. Karissa Niehoff February 23, 2022

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/regarding-sportsmanship-it-s-time-for-wake-up-call-in-high-school-sports/>

From time to time, everyone needs a wake-up call to get back on course, to regain focus and to “get with the program.” That time is at hand in high school sports as it relates to unsportsmanlike conduct.

In the 103-year history of the NFHS and organized sports in the United States, good sportsmanship has been one of the most important outcomes of these programs. When appropriate behavior occurs, competitive play is more enjoyable for everyone.

And for some individuals recently, the games have not been enjoyable. In the past few months, following are some of the unfortunate incidents that have occurred at the high school level:

- The mayor of a city was ejected from his daughter’s high school basketball game after threatening a referee.
- A volleyball official was followed off the court by a coach who was shouting obscenities.
- A referee was assaulted and knocked unconscious during a basketball tournament.
- A student from the opposing school in the stands shouted racist comments at a high school basketball player on the court.
- At another game in another state, inappropriate chants were made against the opposing team’s players on the court.
- While it was at a lower level, continued poor parent behavior in the stands led a Central New York youth basketball league to end the season early.

Unfortunately, the list could go on and on. When hearing accounts like these and many others that regularly occur, the primary reason for the current officials’ shortage becomes painfully obvious – unacceptable behavior on the part of coaches, parents and other spectators.

While all of these displays of unacceptable behavior must stop, the recent occurrences of students and other spectators using hurtful, demeaning and hateful language at individuals on the opposing team is heartbreaking.

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## Regarding Sportsmanship, It's Time for Wake-Up Call In High School

High school sports and other activities exist to lift people up, not demean or tear people down. The goal is to treat everyone equally and treat each other with respect. Any speech or harassment that is insulting, demeaning or hurtful will not be tolerated.

High schools must establish a culture that values the worth of every single person – both players on the school's team and players on the opposing team. There must be a no-tolerance policy regarding behavior that shows disrespect for another individual.

Likewise, the accounts of violent attacks against officials are incomprehensible and must be stopped. As Dana Pappas, NFHS director of officiating services, said, "Do you really think that these individuals who are volunteers are going to take a half-day off of work, get paid less than they're probably making at their real job to go and be unfair in a game? It doesn't make sense. They are there to give back. They are there to be community servants."

NFHS playing rules are written to encourage sportsmanship. Participation in these programs should promote respect, integrity and sportsmanship. However, for these ideals to occur, everyone involved must do their part. Because of a concern that unsporting behavior in education-based athletics has increased the past year, the NFHS has made sportsmanship the No. 1 Point of Emphasis in all sports for the 2022-23 season.

And if there was ever a doubt, the recent unfortunate events at the college level should make it crystal clear that the person most responsible for setting the tone at high school athletic contests is the coach(es).

If coaches act in a sportsmanlike manner, their behavior sets the tone for players, spectators and others. If coaches, however, are constantly complaining about the decision of contest officials, spectators are more likely to do the same.

There must be a collaborative, working relationship between contest officials and game administration to promote good sportsmanship and safely conduct the contest. Everyone has their roles to play in creating a positive, sportsmanlike atmosphere at contests.

Officials should focus on the actions of players, coaches and other bench/sideline personnel. A positive, open line of communication between officials and coaches ultimately results in a better contest for everyone involved.

Contest officials, however, should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior. Once the contest begins, school administration is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators. A proactive approach by school administration includes monitoring the behavior of spectators and intervening as needed.

If spectators are using demeaning or profane language at officials – or at others in the stands – those individuals must be removed from the contest by school administration.

Rather than spectators like the ones described above, more **fans** are needed at high school sporting events. Fans support the officials, the players and the coaches, unlike the **fanatics** who tear down and do harm to the participants, the school and the community.

Good sports win with humility, lose with grace and do both with dignity. It takes the efforts of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities in education-based activity programs.

# How To Lead a Youth Sports Team Towards a Positive Culture as a Coach

By National Sports ID

<https://www.nationalsportsid.com/positive-youth-sports-culture/>

**Sports are played by kids to learn something valuable and to have fun. It becomes essential for the coaches to guide the teams with positivity as most of the other teams have been indulged in negativity due to the unethical behavior towards the sports.**

## **You can solve this problem:**

Coaches and ADs have got a huge opportunity to make a lasting impact on youth sports culture. Your values and goals become visible from your team's culture. It expresses your team's mindset that whether they focus on growth or just winning.

You need to focus on creating a culture as it is very impactful and will influence the performance and the attitude of your team. The coaches need to guide their team with positivity because today, we see that every team is involved in unethical and negative practices in the world of youth sports.

As a coach, you should focus on creating such a culture that encourages growth, players' development, success, and enjoyment. Focusing on creating a culture that includes these things can help the young youth sports athletes to stay away from the negativity and compete more healthily and ethically.

## **Be A Role Model:**

The way your team players treat each other is the reflection of your team culture and your attitude towards the players. You are not just a coach, but a teacher for the kids as well, and being a good coach ultimately means you are a great teacher. A coach prepares players not just for the match, but beyond that as well. Whatever you teach them will stay forever with them and will put an impact on their lives even after their sports career has ended. By not focusing only on the athlete, but on the whole person, you will be able to help the kids make full use of their inherent capacity.

Following are a few of the tactics used by some of the successful teachers:

- Show positivity during the kid's learning moments. When players fail, make them realize that it's a learning opportunity for you not making this mistake again. This particular idea of success and failure will help young athletes in their self-development as well.
- Lead by example on the pitch and the practice sessions as well. Behave positively with the match officials and your players will get influenced by this. They will follow and replicate your actions.

Appreciate and give positive feedback to the players. Motivate them and teach them how they can utilize the smart goal model to analyze themselves.

## **Consistency Will Lead To Success:**

Organize your team by implementing a routine. Set some rules, and a standard that everyone would need to follow consistently. It is a player, coach, or a parent, everyone must know about those rules and must maintain that standard. Try to implement these rules consistently, and once it becomes a routine, the system will automatically work.

## Parents Are The Partners:

Parents and coaches must have a mutual understanding and should cooperate. They should communicate with each other and should work together for the success of their team and themselves as well.

A few of the parents already plan something for their kids. If you as a coach believe that it might affect the kid's and the team's performance, you must discuss it with the parents and resist them from doing so. You can make them clear about everything at the start of the season and can help them understand their role they have to play for their kid's success.

## Play By The Rules:

As a coach and role model, it is always important to not only make sure your team is playing by the rules but also teach them on a continuous basis. All your players and parents should know the rules of the league or tournament you are playing in so it is clear to all that you are a coach that has good morals and ethics. Using a platform like [National Sports ID](#) is a great way to learn and enforce the rules for your team.

## Make Fun The Cornerstone:

No doubt kids can develop skills and can grow from playing sports, but the main reason for them is to have fun. The majority of the kids quit sports due to the factor of seriousness. If sports become boring due to the coach's serious behavior, then you should make sure to make it joyful by creating a fun environment. The kids will automatically stay.

If you use the techniques mentioned above and have a dynamic approach, you can easily create a positive culture in your team. As told before as well, the solution lies in your hand.

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