

## Sportsmanship

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League Principal's Committee on Athletics has been and is committed to promoting good sportsmanship at all member high school athletic contests throughout the regular season and playoffs. Specifically, they are concerned with the behavior of student athletes and coaches on the field or court and the ever-increasing unsportsmanlike behavior of spectators, the committee believes it is essential that all member schools have sportsmanship standards and programs in place.

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League has been vested with the responsibility to ensure that all contests during the regular season or regular tournament competition are conducted satisfactorily, as it applies to the principles of good sportsmanship. The RIIL will be guided by the following rule:

**HIGH STANDARDS OF COURTESY, FAIR PLAY AND SPORTSMANSHIP MUST PREVAIL AT ALL REGULAR MEMBER SCHOOL COMPETITIONS AND ALL INVOLVED MUST ALWAYS PURSUE VICTORY WITH HONOR.**

While this rule is a general standard in terms of enforcement, it is the heart of the entire RIIL program. Good sportsmanship, respect for the rules, respect for others, fair play, and ethics are basically the motives through which an interscholastic athletic program is justified and defended.

*As a minimum, the RIIL Principal's Committee on Athletics expects member schools and leagues to have clearly defined and articulated standards of sportsmanship which are enforced at all levels of play. The standards should align with the standards which follow. The standards should be published in the student athlete/parent handbook and in other documents and publications provided by the school. Expectations for spectators should be posted at each contest site and announced when appropriate.*

### The Objective of the Good Sportsmanship:

- Encourage all coaches, players and spectators to exhibit good sportsmanship
- Develop a set of standards identifying what good sportsmanship is
- Identify who is responsible for promoting good sportsmanship
- Identify ways to enforce good sportsmanship

### Standards of Conduct:

The RIIL acknowledges that the school administration is responsible for the athletic program, including the making of broad and specific policies relating to sportsmanship and the conduct of activities in the school. The school principal has the responsibility for establishing the principles of good sportsmanship in the minds of the entire school community. He/she must realize that the kind of sportsmanship that is practiced or displayed by the representatives of his/her school will reflect to its credit or otherwise.

Behavior that is not considered sportsmanlike or appropriate in connection with Events includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- i. Striking (e.g., kicking, hitting, throwing objects at) or other acts of violence, attempted acts of violence or attempts to incite violence;
- ii. Obscene, profane, demeaning or unduly provocative language, gestures or actions directed towards an opposing team, institution, contest official, staff member or spectator;
- iii. Public criticism of or publicly disparaging statements about an opposing team, institution, contest official, staff member, or spectator;
- iv. Failure to immediately leave the playing area when ejected from a contest;
- v. All other actions, as determined by the School Administration in violation of the principles and standards of sportsmanship

### Ways to enforce good sportsmanship:

- The Superintendent, Principal / Administration are essential to promoting and enforcing good sportsmanship. They set the tone for prioritizing good sportsmanship with students, parents, coaches and players.
  - The management and conduct of games are the responsibility of the home school. In their discharge of this responsibility, through the appropriate seating of students and the provision of adequate support personnel and security, all member institutions shall ensure a competitive environment that is safe, fair, and consistent with the principles and standards of sportsmanship.
  - All ancillary support groups subject to institutional control (e.g., spirit squads, bands, mascots) shall conform to the principles and standards of sportsmanship.
  - Institutions are responsible for the conduct of spectators at games they are hosting. Spectators whose conduct is abusive to officials, participants or spectators, or that violates reasonable social standards of conduct, should be removed from the game.
  - Spectators should not be permitted on the court or the field of play until the visiting team and officials have made safe transition to the locker room.
- Administration must
  - Create a Code of Conduct to be reviewed and signed by all parents, coaches, and athletes.
  - Principals should present and discuss this at all seasonal sport meetings (if possible, include the Superintendent)
  - Principal and AD meet with all coaches prior to each season to reinforce the need to exhibit good sportsmanship – to players, officials, and fans.
  - Prior to games make in-school and at each game an announcement regarding good sportsmanship and hold all accountable.
- Game Management is critical:
  - The school Principal/AD must select those responsible for supervising games:
    - Announcer, Security, ticket personnel, etc. and assign duties and responsibilities
    - Prior to each season the AD and or Administration meet with all those who will be working at the games. Taylor responsibilities to the types of events (indoor/outdoor)
    - The RILL will organize a workshop for any school staff assigned to work at games.
      - How to seat fans, what to look for before, during, and after games, what to do with an uncooperative fan, etc....
  - Assigning school administration to games is very important!!! Administration will support game supervisors and be able to witness those exhibiting inappropriate behavior (fan, coach, player), and escort or appropriately remove any spectator who refuses to comply.
- Additional suggestions:
  - As a result of unsportsmanlike behavior -schedule games earlier in the day. And explain why the school this is necessary
  - Eliminate fans from a game
  - Penalize - suspend players, and or coaches for inappropriate unsportsmanlike behavior during a game as determined by the AD or Administration.
  - The RILL will penalize specific teams (coaches, players) for multiple ejections during the same season

- Organize groups of students(fans) and coach them on appropriate behavior.
  - Make all aware that sportsmanship is a priority of their school.
- Officials
  - Encourage all participants (players, coaches, and fans) to respect game officials.  
Disrespectful behavior towards game officials will not be tolerated.
  - At the end of each game have players and coaches thank officials.