



## **Behavior Expectations for Fans**

### **Behavior Expectations of Student Groups**

- Always provide positive support for your team. Never ridicule or degrade the opposing team or players.
- Conduct yourself in an exemplary manner. Remember that you represent your school both at home and away.
- Assist cheerleaders with yells, chants, etc. Always be a working part of pep assemblies with preparation, organization and involvement.
- Treat opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups with respect and enthusiasm. Applaud good performances on both teams. Doing this will show that you understand and can recognize good performance, regardless of team affiliation.
- Always display proper sportsmanship toward officials and value their contributions to the game. Respect the judgments made during a contest. All calls are impartial and should be accepted by all parties.
- Use only positive cheers, signs and chants during a contest. This will show that you understand proper sportsmanship while giving your organization and school a good reputation.

### **Behavior Expectations of Spectators**

- Always support your team and the efforts of all participants involved.
- Do not intimidate or ridicule a player, coach, or official before, during or after a contest.
- Always praise athletes for their actions during a game; never degrade a participant for their efforts. Athletics are a learning experience for students, and mistakes will be made.
- A ticket is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others or be generally obnoxious.
- Learn the rules of the game so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
- Always respect the integrity and judgment of officials. They are present to regulate the flow and enforce the rules of the game. An official should never be degraded or ridiculed for a call they make.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups. Treat them as guests to your school.
- Use only cheers that support and uplift the teams involved.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Refrain from the use of any controlled substance (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before, during and after the game, on or near the site of the event (i.e. tailgating).
- Be a positive role model at events through your own actions and by censuring those around you whose behavior is unbecoming.



## Helpful Information for Crowd Control Planning

An important part of ensuring that proper sportsmanship is displayed at athletic contests is to have a policy in place for dealing with crowd control. The following general suggestions will help administrators and managers prepare for situations that may arise.

- Establish written behavioral standards and expectations. Coaches, players, students, cheerleaders, spectators, and school personnel should understand these standards and expectations. They should be communicated in a variety of ways, expected to be followed and consequences in place when they are not.
- Make sure that visiting schools and the officials are greeted when they arrive and a supervision plan is in place to escort teams and officials to safely enter, participate, and exit the facility at the end of the event without harassment.
- Establish and communicate policies and emergency procedures. Have policies and emergency procedures in place regarding fire, drinking and possession of alcoholic beverages, possession, use or sale of drugs, medical emergencies, public health emergencies, bomb threats, active shooter scenarios, severe weather, alternatives in case of score clock, light or other facility failures, transportation problems, and other crowd disruptions.
- Identify supervisors and ushers. They should be expected to be active and visible to spectators to discourage and quickly identify problems.
- Establish job descriptions and expectations of event personnel. Inform event staff about their duties, rules, regulations, and emergency procedures. Encourage them to avoid becoming too involved in watching the event and to be observant, active, and consistent in applying rules and procedures.
- Be consistent in applying policies and rules. Be supportive of your supervisory personnel at contests. Make sure they know you respect and appreciate their role in supplying the students involved with educational and character-building lessons.
- Seat student groups and spectators in appropriate places. Avoid seating bands or spectators near the visiting team bench and the visiting team seating area.
- Act on policies and procedures. When someone is behaving in an undesirable way which violate the rules of good sportsmanship, do something about it. Actions speak louder than words. Inaction allows the establishment of undesirable examples and habits that can lead to more serious problems, and result in negative learning.
- Do not allow illegal substances inside the contest facility. Have admissions, ticket sales and parking lot personnel observe and screen people for possession of alcoholic beverages, intoxication and abnormal or suspicious behavior. Alert crowd control supervisors to observe behavior and whereabouts of potential problem people.
- Supervise restrooms. Have personnel in place to identify and discourage any negative behavior that may occur at or around the restroom facilities.
- Assist and accommodate all persons with special needs. Make every reasonable attempt to ensure any person with special needs can enjoy the athletic contest. This includes providing viewing areas for special needs individuals as well as informing them of exits and pertinent facility information.
- Have facility diagrams visible to the public showing accessible areas and emergency exits. Every spectator at the event needs to be aware of the proper exits and points of access available to them. This will help with crowd control and prepare all parties in case of emergency.

## **Public Address Announcements – Rhode Island Interscholastic League**

### **SAMPLE PRE-GAME ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- We are pleased to welcome you today to [SCHOOL NAME]. Good sportsmanship is one of the primary purposes of educational athletics. Our student-athletes recognize that judgment calls- by officials, coaches and themselves- are made in good faith and should be respected. Spectators can support both of these teams by refraining from derogatory or demeaning comments and cheers today. We hope that you will enjoy the game and support the students in a positive and sportsmanlike manner.
- When [SCHOOL NAME] sponsors an athletic event, it considers that school event to be an extension of the classroom, with the lessons learned as important as those coming out of a textbook. One very important lesson for our students is the one of sportsmanship. Please help the [MASCOT NAME] in promoting good sportsmanship by refraining from derogatory remarks and gestures to players, coaches, officials or other spectators. School athletics is a vital part of student development, and together we can all help our students prepare for the future.
- Sportsmanship is a vital part of athletics. The Rhode Island Interscholastic League and its member schools are dedicated to promoting sportsmanship around the state. During the contest, if you see someone using poor behavior please notify facility personnel. [SCHOOL NAME] believes sportsmanship is of utmost importance and wants you to enjoy the contest in a fun and healthy environment. Thank you for your cooperation.
- [SCHOOL NAME] is proud to be a member of the Rhode Island Interscholastic League and believes that proper sportsmanship should be displayed at all times. Please assist the [MASCOT NAME] in showing good sportsmanship during the contest by refraining from derogatory remarks or gestures towards participants, coaches, officials or other fans. Thank you for your help and enjoy the fine efforts showcased tonight by these student-athletes.
- The student-athletes involved in tonight's contest understand the importance of sportsmanship and know that it should be practiced at all times. Please help our students by showing respect to all participants and spectators at tonight's contest and cheering only in a positive manner.

### **SAMPLE IN-GAME ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Fans, while enjoying the action tonight, please remember to show good sportsmanship by refraining from derogatory yells or gestures. With your help, [SCHOOL NAME] can ensure everyone has a positive experience.
- Interscholastic athletics teach many important lessons that extend beyond the sidelines. One such lesson is sportsmanship. Please help teach our students this important life lesson during and after the contest by cheering and showing support for good plays on both teams.
- [SCHOOL NAME] would like to thank you for attending tonight's contest. Please remember to show good sportsmanship by cheering and showing positive support for your team as well as displaying encouragement for all participants involved.
- Hard work, dedication and perseverance are instrumental in reaching success on the athletic field. Please help in supporting the efforts of all the athletes participating tonight and remember that sportsmanship is something that should be practiced at all times.

### **SAMPLE POST-GAME ANNOUNCEMENT**

- [SCHOOL NAME] would like to thank you for attending tonight's contest and wish you a safe trip home. Remember that sportsmanship is always important and should be practiced before, during and after the game. Our students are very important, and with your help we all can teach them the lesson of proper sportsmanship.
- As you leave the facility (gym, field), please remember that all participants involved in tonight's contest gave their very best effort. Please help show your support of these fine student-athletes by acting in a sportsmanlike manner.

## ARTICLE 12

### SPORTSMANSHIP

#### **Section 1: SPORTSMANSHIP**

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League Principal's Committee on Athletics has developed a common set of sportsmanship standards that can be implemented in every member school. Concerns 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.

Member schools are expected to conduct their relations with each other at all levels of competition in a spirit of good sportsmanship. Everyone involved has the obligation to see clearly his/her influence and act accordingly.

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.

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.***

#### **Section 2: TAUNTING**

**A.** If you examine the standards of conduct required in high school athletics compared to the major college and professional levels, you will conclude that the older the athlete is, the more immature that person is allowed to behave.

Routinely, high school athletes will be penalized and ejected from contests for antics that are praised and emulated at higher levels. This is to the everlasting credit of those who lead, coach, officiate, participate in, and watch interscholastic athletics. It is this challenge that the contrast between educational athletics and so-called higher levels become even more obvious as we raise the standards of what is expected and tolerated in school sportsmanship.

The problem of decaying sportsmanship at all levels of competition is a major concern that needs to be addressed. Misconduct in athletics is a high profile reflection of the general acceptance of disrespect in society. It is a social problem and sports are a microcosm of that problem.

The Principal's Committee on Athletics passed a recommendation of the Sportsmanship Committee to broaden the definition of "taunting" and make it a disqualifying foul in all sports. As a result, officials will be expected to eject players and bench personnel (***including coaches***) for taunting; and the Rhode Island Interscholastic League tournament supervisors will be expected to eject from the premises any spectator who engages in taunting.

**The definition of taunting is this:**

***"Any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters."***

Examples of taunting by coaches, players or spectators include:

Any form of "Trash Talk"

Ethnic or racial slurs

Physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game

References to sexual orientation

"In the face" confrontation by one player to another

Standing over or straddling a tackled or fallen player

**PLEASE REFER TO THE RIIL TAUNTING POLICY**

Noticeable improvement in school sportsmanship will require concerted effort.

Good sports don't need to wait for other's actions. Good sports already know what is offensive, and what has no more place in school sports than it would have in a school classroom.

This is educational athletics. We must maintain the highest education standards in all facets of the athletic arena.

B. **OFFICIALS** who are assigned to Rhode Island Interscholastic League contests must enforce the rules regarding sportsmanship without tolerance for abuse. The only warning to participants and coaches regarding sportsmanship should come at the beginning of the contest. Once the contest begins, penalties, not warnings, must be assessed for unsportsmanlike conduct. The Rhode Island Interscholastic League expects that officials will eject any coach who protests an unsportsmanlike conduct call provided by the rules of the sport.

Each official at a Rhode Island Interscholastic League sponsored event will be provided with a card with the following statement which must read to the **All Team Members** at every contest prior to the beginning of the contest:

***"The Rhode Island Interscholastic League requires Officials to enforce all Rules regarding unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches and players. There will be no tolerance for negative statements or actions between opposing players, especially trash-talking, taunting, or baiting of opponents. If such comments are heard, a penalty will be assessed immediately. We have been instructed not to issue warnings during the contest. It is strongly suggested that you remind your participants of this policy."***

**Section 3:** The following expectations are designed to serve as a guide for member schools and leagues in developing their sportsmanship standards and to define responsibilities.

**A. School Administration**

The RIIL PCOA recognizes that the principal is the final authority responsible for all athletic activity of his/her school at all levels of competition. The administration must take a leadership role in developing standards for their school and league and in articulating those standards to their entire school community.

1. The PCOA expects all member schools and leagues (whether one sport or multi-sport) to develop, approve, and implement a league-wide code of sportsmanship for athletes, coaches, cheerleaders, and spectators. The code should be based upon and consistent with the standards of sportsmanship developed by the RIIL (see RIIL Sportsmanship Manual for samples).
2. All member schools, as a minimum, adopt their league's sportsmanship code as the school's sportsmanship code. Member schools are encouraged to expand the basic league sportsmanship code to further meet their needs.
3. League and school sportsmanship codes specifically and directly state the requirement for all athletes, coaches, cheerleaders, and spectators as well as the acceptable conduct to which each will be held.
4. League and school sportsmanship codes specifically state expectations: respect for the decisions of game officials and coaches, no taunting, profanity, derogatory language or gestures, no epithets, etc.
5. League sportsmanship codes specifically state the penalties that will occur when an individual fails to adhere to the sportsmanship code.
6. The code be as widely disseminated as possible using the student-parent handbook, student-athlete handbook, school newspaper, parent newsletter, school web site and the local media.
7. The sportsmanship code for spectators be read by PA announcers prior to each contest.
8. The sportsmanship code(s) of conduct be prominently posted at all sports venues.
9. When event programs are provided, the sportsmanship code be included.
10. Member schools work with community officials to insure that levels of good sportsmanship are enforced when contests are held at their school and at non-school facilities.
11. The RIIL PCOA insists that rules of good sportsmanship be rigorously enforced at all regular season contests and at all regular tournament contests. This is particularly important when contests are held at non-school sites.

12. Schools will conduct a pre-season meeting with student athletes, coaches and parents to review the athletic standards for sportsmanship for the school and league.
13. Member schools require having athletes, parents/guardians, sign an acknowledgment which would show that they have read the student-athlete handbook and understand the sportsmanship code, rules of the school and team and RIIIL eligibility requirements.
14. Inform school who will be representing the school at away events.
15. Send letter to parents, student-athletes, students, cheerleaders, coaches, spectators and the media emphasizing the need to support school athletic events and promote the principals of good sportsmanship (see RIIIL Sportsmanship Manual for sample letter.) Please refer to the RIIIL Sportsmanship Manual for the entire list.

### **Athletic Administration**

The athletic director is the person responsible for the implementation of the school league sportsmanship effort. The athletic director must be aware they are the leader of all athletic events and the behavior of coaches, players, and spectators is their direct responsibility. Sportsmanship is enhanced when the athletic event is well organized and supervised.

1. Follow the Guidelines for Security, Safety and Crowd Control found in the RIIIL Manual for Tournament Operations.
2. Make available to visiting schools necessary game information, include directions for parking, location of ticket booths, seating arrangement, ticket prices, game time, directions for reach game site.
3. Designate specific seating areas for students, bands, adults and visitors. If possible, opposing student bodies should be separated.
4. Arrange for adequate police supervision.
5. Post in plain site at the entrance to the field, track, pool or gymnasium a copy of the causes for expulsion from the contest, e.g., use of alcohol, drugs, throwing objects, unruly behavior.
6. If possible, assign officials to dressing facilities separated from both teams. Provide escorts for the officials when it appears that disturbances may develop.
7. To prevent long lines, assure extra help at concession stands during half-time and at breaks.
8. Take measures to prevent fans from getting near or on the playing area and around the players benches. After the contest prevent fans from going onto the playing area.
9. Provide for adequate supervision of students and facilities. Supervisors should sit in the stands with the students.
10. Direct the route for movement of all visiting school busses and all home team busses. (Include band, pep clubs, etc.)
11. Inform visiting school where they are to park busses.
12. Have the PA announcer give the location of rest rooms, concession stands and the lost and found.
13. Provides a first aid area for emergencies. Assure access to a telephone from the contest area.
14. Provide reserved parking and has a host to greet the officials when they arrive at the site.
15. Eliminate from the gymnasium during the regular season – banners, signs, noisemakers, bugles, etc. These tend to be offensive and negative in tone and cause hard feelings. (Note: The RIIIL does not permit banners, signs, noisemakers, bugles, etc., at all games).
16. Do not permit all of the lights to be turned off for such things as the introduction of players or special pre-game and half time shows. Make sure there is sufficient lighting necessary to provide good crowd control for the spectators' safety.
17. Insist that unruly spectators be removed from the premises. Take legal action against those who are guilty of assault or disturbing the peace.
18. Encourage non-high school age students to attend high school athletic contests with an adult.

### **COACH**

The coach plays a critical role in supporting and enhancing good sportsmanship. The coach must accept primary responsibility for the behavior and actions of his/her players and assistant coaches, **during and after all games..** The coach serves as a role model for his/her players, their parents and the spectators. The coach must always be in control, practice sound values and ethics and always pursue victory with honor.

1. Will model ethics and sportsmanship, always pursue victory with honor and maintain dignity and self-control.
2. Shall stay informed about sound coaching techniques and the physical, mental, and emotional development of the student-athlete.
3. Will teach players the rules of the game and to respect the game, officials, and opponents and will take action when athletes exhibit poor sportsmanship.
4. Will place the academic, emotional, physical and moral well being of student-athletes above desires and pressures to win.
5. Will be an ambassador for sport among athletes, schools, families and the community.
6. Will abide by the rules of the game and RIIIL in letter and spirit.

7. Shall exemplify high moral character, behavior and leadership, lead by example and set a standard for players and spectators to follow.
8. Will respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.

#### **D. The Student-Athlete**

As members of their team, a student athlete serves as a role model. They are admired and respected by many, including younger athletes and their behavior and actions often have a significant impact on others. The student athlete plays an essential role in the promotion of sportsmanship and they must accept the responsibility to always display high standards of sportsmanship.

1. Will accept the responsibility and privilege the student-athlete has in representing their school and community by learning and showing teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline in all aspects of the game.
2. Will demonstrate respect for self, coach, teammates, opponents, officials and spectators by exhibiting good character and conducting themselves as a positive role model.
3. Will win and lose graciously.
4. Will have a thorough knowledge of and abide by all rules of the game and RIIIL.
5. Will work for the good of the team at all times.
6. Will cheer for your team, not against your opponent.
7. Will congratulate opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
8. Will refrain from the use of illegal or unhealthy substances to gain an unfair advantage.

#### **E. The Official**

The official is responsible for assuring the safety of the players, the management of the contest and the enforcement of sportsmanship standards during the game. By controlling the game and demanding that sportsmanship standards be followed by players and coaches they enhance the event and defuse inappropriate behavior by everyone, especially the spectators.

1. Will be fair and impartial at all times.
2. Will keep calm and poised and will not exhibit emotions or argue with players or coaches when enforcing a rule.
3. Will encourage and enforce good sportsmanship and understand his or her role in controlling not only the game, but also the safety and welfare of players and the contest environment.
4. Will be fully knowledgeable of the rules of the game.
5. Will not tolerate unsportsmanlike behavior on the part of players or coaches before, during or after the game. Fighting and unsportsmanlike penalties will be within the authority of the officials at all times at the contest site.
6. Will demonstrate positive support of all players, coaches, fellow officials and athletic administrators at all times.
7. Will accept their role in an unassuming manner.

#### **F. The Parent/Spectator**

Controlling parent and spectator behavior at games is proving to be a major challenge for school and athletic administrators. Leagues and schools that have well defined standards for sportsmanship that are discussed with parents at pre-season meetings and announced at game sites experience more positive behavior at games.

1. Will respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
2. Will be respectful of all players, coaches, officials and other spectators.
3. Will never target anyone for abuse whether it be physical, verbal or emotional.
4. Will never engage in name calling, taunting, harassment, obscenities, and any other disrespectful language or gestures.
5. Will always be a positive role model for other spectators and your child.
6. Will cheer for your team, not against your opponent.
7. Will make an effort to know and understand the rules of the game.
8. Will recognize that attending a middle or high school athletic contest is a privilege, not a license to verbally assault officials, coaches or opposing team(s) and their spectators.
9. Will recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.

#### **G. Cheerleaders and Other Spirit Groups**

All spirit groups including pep bands share the responsibility of promoting sportsmanship at games and events. They must always represent their school in a positive way and show respect for their opponents, their fans and the officials. Spirit groups have a tremendous impact on the atmosphere at the game and have a big influence on the behavior of the fans. They must accept and demonstrate their responsibility to promote good sportsmanship.

1. Will cheer for you team, not against your opponent.
2. Will know the contest rules and cheer/play at proper times.
3. Will who respect for opposing cheerleaders/bands.
4. Will lead positive cheers which praise your team without antagonizing the opponents.
5. Will show respect at all times for officials, opponents and spectators.
6. Will establish themselves as leaders in their conduct before, during and after contests and events.
7. Will conduct themselves in an exemplary manner as representative of their school, both home and away.

#### **H. The Announcer**

The announcer plays a major role in supporting sportsmanship at all events. The announcer should remain impartial, never be critical of officials or others and be aware of their influence over the tone of the contest.

1. The game announcer must not show favoritism; must use proper language at all times; be enthusiastic, but keep calm.
2. Let no one except those in charge of the event use the microphone. The announcer is responsible for any remarks made into the mike.
3. The announcer must never criticize an official's decision.
4. The announcer should explain the procedure for pre-game introductions.
5. The announcer should explain to the spectator that the cheerleaders have established a schedule of rotation of floor cheers (basketball games).
6. The announcer should explain state and conference rules and regulations.
7. The announcer should be aware of what is going on I the stadium/gym/pool so that directions can be given calmly in an emergency. Serious situations can be avoided if the announcer will caution the crowd against coming down to the field/floor/deck, throwing things, or causing other disturbances. (Please refer to game announcements in the RIIL Sportsmanship Manual.)