

**2.5 SPORTSMANSHIP**  
**THE QUALITY OF RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR CHARACTERIZED BY A SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY AND A GENUINE CONCERN FOR OPPONENTS, OFFICIALS AND TEAMMATES**

Students and spectators should:

- realize you represent the school as does a member of a team; therefore, you have an obligation to be a true sportsman, encouraging through this behavior the practice of good sportsmanship by others
- recognize that good sportsmanship is more important than victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by either team
- remember that the primary purpose of interscholastic athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being of the players through the medium of contest
- be modest in victory and gracious in defeat
- respect the judgment and integrity of game officials

Student-athletes are expected to sign the sportsmanship pledge, and coaches are expected to sign the code of conduct for coaches.

2.5.1 **Social Media Policy:** The NCHSAA recognizes, encourages and supports its student-athletes', coaches' and officials' rights to freedom of speech, expression and association, including the use of social media. Social media applies, without limitation, to any web-based and mobile technologies, in use now or developed in the future, that enables individuals or entities to disseminate or receive information, communicate, or otherwise interact. The Association believes that student-athletes, coaches, and officials are role models, and their use of social media should conform to standards consistent with sportsmanlike conduct. Please remember that everything you post is public information, and derogatory, defamatory and otherwise inappropriate social media commentary may result in the imposition of penalties.

2.5.2 **NCHSAA Sports Wagering Position Statement:** The NCHSAA opposes all forms of legal and illegal sports wagering which has the potential to undermine the integrity of sports contests and jeopardizes the welfare of student-athletes and education-based athletics.

2.5.3 **Conduct at Games:** The NCHSAA Board of Directors has the power to penalize the school and its officials, the coach, and the individual players in case sportsmanship is not observed. The penalty is to be decided according to the seriousness of the incidents involved.

- (a) **Police protection:** A law enforcement officer in uniform shall be present at all high school varsity football and basketball games and is recommended for soccer, lacrosse and baseball games, with member schools using their own best judgment as to when and if police are needed in that sport.
- (b) School management is required to provide escort for officials off the field when law enforcement is not there; and the NCHSAA has the authority to require schools to provide law enforcement officer in uniform at games where it deems necessary.

- (c) Code of sportsmanship:
  - (1) It is recognized that public school interscholastic athletic events should be conducted in such manner that good sportsmanship prevails at all times.
  - (2) It is therefore necessary that superintendents, principals and coaches be individually and collectively responsible for taking every possible step to provide the physical arrangements necessary to conduct such events and to promote good sportsmanship at every athletic event.
  - (3) These steps should include the provision of such things as safe and adequate facilities for participants, spectators, and officials; the best possible officials for the events; and adequate control of spectators, players, and pre-game and post-game activities.
  - (4) Every effort should be made to promote a climate of wholesome competition.
- (d) When a situation develops which indicates negligence on the part of school personnel to provide conditions which meet minimum standards for the conduct of an athletic event, or when there is evidence of poor sportsmanship, the superintendent and principal of each school involved shall be expected to investigate and take necessary corrective action.
- (e) When the school or schools involved fail to take adequate action, the NCHSAA will investigate the situation and take the action it deems appropriate.

**2.5.4 Guidelines for Student-Athletes:** Education-based athletics is an extension of the classroom. It is difficult to learn the lessons expected through high school athletics in an environment that is lacking good behavior, sportsmanship, and respect for all. Participation in education-based athletics is a privilege and student-athletes should be aware that their behavior, both positive and/or negative, reflects not only on themselves but also on their school, their community, and their family. Therefore, the following are expectations coaches and administrators should ensure student-athletes abide by:

- (a) Players shall refrain from exhibiting surprise or irritation towards a call of an official. Verbal and/or physical responses are not acceptable behavior.
- (b) Players should not communicate with spectators within the contest venue, before, during or after the contest.
- (c) Unsportsmanlike gesturing or verbal comments should be properly penalized with the player being removed or ejected from the contest.
- (d) Substitutes on the bench should not be unsporting towards the players, opposing team, spectators, or game officials.

**2.5.5 Guidelines for Cheerleaders:** Cheerleaders play an important role in creating better relations between opposing supporters and make positive contributions to good spectator reaction at an athletic contest. Cheerleaders are to set the example for all spectators for how they should behave in support of their team. The following are expectations pertaining to cheerleaders at NCHSAA contests:

- (a) All cheers shall be positive, not antagonizing.
- (b) Cheerleaders should remain silent when the opponent's cheerleaders are performing and during free throws at basketball contests.
- (c) "Battling" between opposing cheerleading squads is never acceptable.

**2.5.6 Sportsmanship/Ejection Policy:** This policy applies to all persons involved in an athletic contest, including student-athletes, coaches, managers and game administrators. The NCHSAA may review video, when available, to invoke ejections or sanctions not reported by game officials. Video clips must be presented to the NCHSAA office for committee review within two (2) business days of the contest. The following examples include behavior or conduct which will result in an ejection from a contest:

- (a) Fighting, which includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:
  - (1) An altercation between 2 or more parties that includes swinging, hitting, punching and/or kicking;
  - (2) An attempt to strike an opponent with a fist, hands, arms, legs, feet, or equipment;
  - (3) An attempt to punch or kick an opponent, regardless of whether or not contact is made;
  - (4) An attempt to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes an opponent to retaliate; and
  - (5) Leaving the bench area and coming onto the playing area during a fight (whether or not they participate in the fight).
- (b) Leaving the bench area -- coming on to the playing area when there is not a fight
- (c) Flagrant contact, which includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:
  - (1) Maliciously running over the catcher/fielder without attempt to avoid contact
  - (2) Excessive contact out-of-bounds or away from playing action than is unwarranted and extreme in nature
  - (3) Tackling/taking down a player dangerously in a malicious manner
  - (4) Illegally hitting or cross-checking an opponent in an excessive manner with the stick in lacrosse
- (d) Biting observed or determined by an official
- (e) Taunting, baiting or spitting toward an opponent or official

- (f) Profanity of any kind, inappropriate language, racial or ethnic slurs, sexist or homophobic language (Zero-Tolerance).
- (g) Obscene gestures, including gesturing in such a manner as to intimidate or instigate
- (h) Disrespectfully addressing an official (physically contacting an official is subject to automatic expulsion and can result in ineligibility for remainder of career).
- (i) Use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or other controlled substances.

2.5.7 **Sportsmanship/Ejection Policy Penalties for an Ejection:**

- (a) Ejections during scrimmages:
  - (1) Coach or player is suspended from the remainder of the scrimmage - this is inclusive of multiple scrimmage events on the same day (jamboree).
  - (2) Player must complete the NFHS "Sportsmanship" course before being eligible to compete in next scrimmage or contest.
  - (3) Coach must complete the NFHS "Teaching and Modeling Behavior" course for any player or coach ejection during the scrimmage.
- (b) Football – ejection from the contest, miss the next contest at that level and all contests in the interim (miss the next two contests for fighting).
- (c) All other sports – ejection from the contest, miss the next two contests at that level and all contests in the interim (miss the next four contests for fighting).
- (d) Individuals: Players or coaches receiving two ejections for unacceptable behavior as defined above will be suspended from all sports for the remainder of that sport season.
  - (1) Receiving a third ejection in a school year will result in suspension from athletics for one calendar year (365 days from the date of the third ejection).
- (e) Teams: Teams in the following situations will not be allowed to participate in the playoffs:
  - (1) A team whose players and coaches accumulate six or more individual ejections.
  - (2) A team whose players and coaches accumulate three or more individual ejections for fighting (note: if a situation occurs where three or more players on one team are ejected during one fighting incident, those three individual ejections will cause the team to lose its playoff privileges).
  - (3) If a team hits either threshold (total ejections or ejections for fighting) during the playoffs, it will be disqualified from further participation in the playoffs.
- (f) Penalties are cumulative from sport to sport and from sport season to sport season, but not academic year to academic year.
- (g) Ejections in the last game of the season carry over to the next sport in which the individual participates that year.
- (h) Ejected players may practice during their suspensions but may not play.
- (i) Ejected coaches may not be on the premises for a contest. The coach must leave the premises (press box, bleachers, adjacent field, etc.) and must not have any type of contact with the team. If no member of the school's coaching staff is present to assume the ejected coach's duties, the contest is terminated by a forfeit.
- (j) Athletes who are disqualified or ejected during a contest will remain in the team area for supervision (Reference 1.2.13.a.1).
- (k) Anytime a student or coach is ejected from a game or meet, he or she does not participate or coach the remainder of that day. The student or coach is also suspended from the next two scheduled, re-scheduled or contracted dates at that level of competition (one in football) and all games or meets in the interim at other levels of competition.
- (l) The coach is not permitted to be at the game site during his or her suspension, but the student is allowed at the game site.
- (m) Any student-athlete or administrator who is ejected or disqualified from a contest is required to complete the NFHS Sportsmanship course before being eligible to return to competition. There is no fee for this program. Any coach who is ejected from a contest must take the NFHS "Teaching and Modeling Behavior" (\$20 fee) course before being eligible to return to competition.
- (n) If a team has players ejected due to fighting, the head coach must take the NFHS Learning Course "Teaching and Modeling Behavior" (\$20 fee). It must be completed before coaching in the next game (see Penalty Code 3.2.1.b for additional information on non-compliance with this regulation).
- (o) Clarification For Soccer Only:
  - (1) Coaches and athletic directors will be responsible for tracking yellow cards accumulated by their players.
  - (2) Five yellow cards accumulated by the same player will result in a suspension (miss next contest at that level and all contests in the interim)
  - (3) An additional five yellow cards accumulated by the same player (season total of 10) will result in an ejection. The player will be suspended from all sports for the remainder of that season on the 15th yellow card (or second ejection).

- (4) A red card disqualification that is not an ejection is the equivalent of two yellow cards.
- (5) Penalties are enforced at the conclusion of the game, and an ejection report must also be filed at the appropriate time for accumulation of yellow cards.
- (6) Yellow cards are reset to zero once playoffs begin (all previous penalties must be served).
- (7) With three yellow cards in playoffs, player is suspended for next game. A total of five yellow cards and any player is out for remainder of playoffs and may carry over to other sports.
- (p) For Wrestling, Track, Tennis, Golf, Cross Country and Swimming:
  - (1) Any individual ejected from an individual event or individual tournament may not participate for the remainder of the event (entire day(s) of competition or tournament) from which he or she was ejected. Additionally, the individual may not participate in the next scheduled two events or any other events, in any sport, at any level, in the interim.

2.5.8 **Guidelines for Coaches:** Coaches influence not only the conduct of players under their supervision, but also the behavior of many spectators. They also are a reflection on the school, community and administration. Therefore, the following are expectations for coaches during NCHSAA contests:

- (a) Coaches must be businesslike and professional at all times.
- (b) Coaches must ensure the post-game handshake is a positive end to any contest.
- (c) Coaches shall control all of their student-athletes - removing a player who is creating trouble - both verbally and/or physically.
- (d) Head coaches are ultimately responsible for all personnel in the bench area.
- (e) At no time is it acceptable for a player or substitute to leave the bench area. Coaches are responsible for enforcing this policy.

2.5.9 **Code of Conduct for Coaches:**

- The coach is required to review the NCHSAA power point presentation on eligibility rules prior to the season in which they coach.
- The coach has tremendous influence upon student-athletes and shall never place winning above the value of instilling the highest desirable ideals of character.
- The coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct with the student-athlete, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public.
- The coach shall discipline athletes who display unacceptable behavior.
- The coach shall know the game rules and be responsible for their interpretation to team members. Additionally, the coach shall not try to seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- The coach shall promote and work in harmony with the entire interscholastic program of the school.
- The coach shall respect and support contest officials by avoiding conduct which will incite players or spectators against the officials.
- The coach shall actively promote good sportsmanship of spectators by working closely with administrators, cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, and booster clubs.
- The coach shall meet and exchange greetings with the opposing coach before and after contests to set and maintain a positive tone for the event.
- The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse, while stressing the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

**Inappropriate Behavior/Misconduct**

- One of the goals of the NCHSAA is to provide a positive experience and safe environment for student-athletes. Therefore, adults, coaches, officials, staffs, and volunteers should maintain professionalism and avoid any appearance of impropriety in their relationships with students. Coaches, in particular, should recognize the influence, power, and position of trust they have with students and should use this only in a student-athlete's best interest.
- Any incident regarding misconduct should be reported promptly to the appropriate authorities. The NCHSAA encourages personnel to create and enforce guidelines against inappropriate behavior and misconduct. Please refer to local LEA policies for more specifics.