

SECTION VI SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

Adopted May 20, 1992 - Section VI Athletic Council

I. SPORTSMANSHIP

Groups responsible for Interscholastic Athletics are focusing sharply on sportsmanship. The National Federation, NYSPHSAA, through its sections and other similar organizations are responding to the need for action regarding sportsmanship.

The following proposal is presented to the Athletic Council with the intention of providing an organized, intentional and ongoing plan to promote the values and ideals of sportsmanship in Western New York.

The recommendations included in this proposal are presented to initiate section-wide action that involves a broad base of leadership focused on a common goal.

The theme of this proposal is positive, instructive and enthusiastic...one that encourages leaders to act creatively and one that places a major emphasis on recognition and rewards for exemplary sportsmanship.

The approach toward resolving problems and differences stresses the need to keep these concerns and solutions at the appropriate level and stresses prevention, using punitive rulings as a last resort.

II. PHILOSOPHY

The members of Section VI believe that interscholastic athletics is an important part of education and support the ideals and values embodied in good sportsmanship.

We believe that sportsmanlike behavior is essential if interscholastic competition is to contribute usefully and constructively to the broad goals of education and to the quality of life of those involved.

Therefore, we pledge ourselves individually and collectively to encourage and support the development and maintenance of a sportsmanlike atmosphere for athletic competition.

III. ACTION STATEMENT

To achieve our objectives relating to sportsmanship, we propose: A Section VI definition of Sportsmanship, Standards of Sportsmanship and Policies to initiate and implement action.

SPORTSMANSHIP IN SECTION VI - Definition

Sportsmanship is possessing and practicing the skills of a sportsman - honesty - being fair-minded - having knowledge of rules - respecting rules and officials - demonstrating self-control - recognizing good play - treating others and all situations in a manner you would expect to be treated - accepting victory with grace and defeat with dignity.

STANDARDS OF SPORTSMANSHIP IN SECTION VI

We believe that sportsmanlike conduct will reflect the following ideals, attitudes and values:

A. A Genuine Interest in and Enjoyment of Interscholastic Competition

This standard requires conduct that reflects the understanding that games as a part of an overall school program are intended to be enjoyed. Further, behavior that reflects a use of the activities that exploit the program to serve other agendas or that reflects a winning at all cost attitude violates this standard.

B. An Understanding That Interscholastic Competition Exists as a Part of Education

This standard is significant for it clearly establishes that "athletic competition" is intended to be educational. That valuable lessons and learning occur in these experiences that are not possible in the regular classroom setting.

Further, the standard recognizes the emotional nature of athletic competition and supports the need for all involved to develop the ability to compete with enthusiasm and to accept winning with grace and losing with dignity. When this is accomplished, it demonstrates that these exciting activities are being kept in proper perspective.

C. Respect for One's School and Community, its Reputation and Traditions

This standard places important responsibilities on everyone involved, but most importantly upon coaches, players, and supporters. It requires that they remember that each school team is just that, "the school's team" and that their participation is an honor and privilege which requires them to conduct themselves so as to bring honor and pride to their school and community.

D. Respect for One's Opponents, Their School and Community, Including its Cultural and Ethnic Makeup

This standard suggests the need for coaches, players and supporters to understand "where their opponents are coming from." To recognize and respect differences, to remember that the opponent also has hopes and aspirations for their team and school.

The standard places significant responsibility on school leaders and coaches in assisting athletes to enter the competition with an understanding of their opponents and to view them as competitive opponents, not enemies.

The standard suggests that planned activity is needed to demonstrate a warm and friendly welcome, mutual respect and a genuine and healthy readiness "to have a good game."

E. An understanding and respect for the rules of the game and for those responsible for implementing them

This standard places great responsibility upon coaches to teach the rules and to cultivate attitudes by players that demonstrate both knowledge of the rules and respect

for the game officials and their decisions. Since many misunderstandings between players and officials stem from lack of knowledge of the rules by players, it is necessary for coaches to stress this aspect of the game with emphasis on new rules and rule changes.

The standard also places responsibility on school officials and support groups to respect the game officials and recognize they are well prepared and are doing their best to fairly enforce the rules.

F. Readiness to Participate Regardless of One's Role in a Constructive and Contributing Fashion

This standard is different in nature from the others in that it assigns responsibility for action to all persons associated with high school sports according to their role. There are not violations to the standard, only success through thoughtful action or failure when the opportunity to act is denied.

POLICIES TO INITIATE, IMPLEMENT AND REVIEW

- A. The Athletic Council, as a representative body of Section VI, accepts a leadership role in the development, promotion, and implementation of activities intended to ensure a sportsmanlike atmosphere for interscholastic competition. The Council assigns it highest priority to this duty and pledges to provide its time, talent and resources.
- B. The Athletic Council establishes a permanent standing committee on sportsmanship with the charge to plan, promote, implement and review activities designed to accomplish our sportsmanship goals. The committee shall be comprised of an Activity Council and a Review Council.

Activity Council – Pro-active

- (1) Role: It shall be the responsibility of the Activity Council to promote activities through the Section and within its Leagues that encourage and recognize exemplary sportsmanlike conduct.
- (2) Organization: The Council shall consist of a maximum of 13 members as follows:
 Chairperson: The Section VI Sportsmanship Coordinator
 Members: One representative from each league and additional members as needed.

Review Council – Re-active

- (1) Role: It shall be the responsibility of this Council to receive, review and rule upon matters properly brought before it.
- (2) Organization: The Council shall be chaired by the President-Elect of the Section Athletic Council. Other members shall include two Central Committee Representatives, two retired Athletic Council members, and two at-large members. The retired and at-large members shall be appointed annually by the President.

The Review Council has the authority to review and rule upon properly received reports of possible violations of standards of Sportsmanship. Their decisions will be rendered only after providing all parties due process. Decisions of this council, or similar league committees will stand. Only appeals regarding process and procedure will be received. Such appeals shall be directed to the appropriate Executive Committees; i.e., Section VI for sectional activities and League for league activities.

- C. The Athletic Council requires and directs member leagues to organize similar committees on sportsmanship with comparable responsibilities and authority relative to league competitions.
- D. The Athletic Council delegates authority to the principals of the schools involved to resolve concerns and violations related to non-league competition.
- E. Violations
The Athletic Council adopts section-wide penalties for violations occurring at sectional and league competition. The use of such common policies is based on the belief that consistency is in the general best interest.

The reporting of violations is limited to persons with specific roles related to interscholastic athletics. For sectional activities these will include: sports chairpersons, game officials, principals of competing schools, and the section's Executive Committee. (Leagues may choose to designate persons appropriate to their activities.)

It is recognized that violations will vary in scope, intensity, and severity - therefore, to provide committees sufficient direction and appropriate flexibility, two categories of violations are outlined below.

CATEGORY I: School and/or team violations. These incidents are largely the responsibility of a school or team; for example, unacceptable and unsportsmanlike conduct by school personnel or supporters, or unacceptable behavior by the majority of team members and/or coaches.

CATEGORY II: Player(s) violations - these incidents involve the unsportsmanlike conduct of a player or players.

PENALTIES FOR CATEGORY I

- Letter of Concern: From the League or Section Sportsmanship Committee chairperson to be sent to the school principal (cc: Superintendent and Athletic Director) expressing concern about a specific incident(s). The intent is to bring a matter of concern to the attention of school leaders with the expectation that the matter can be resolved before it becomes more serious.

- Letter of Admonishment: From the League or Section Sportsmanship Committee Chairperson to be sent to the Superintendent (cc: Principal and Athletic Director) requiring a written response from the Superintendent to include a description of the action intended to prevent repetition of the incident under consideration.
- Notification of Sanctions: A series of stronger measures.
 - a. Probation: The first level of sanction that places the school or team in a probationary status and may include the assignment of specific measures to be implemented. Probation does not limit eligibility for competition.
 - b. Forfeiture: Requires forfeiture of a specific contest(s) that does not necessarily limit eligibility from further competition.
 - c. Disqualification: Involves disqualification from competition in a specific sport for the remainder of the season.
 - d. Suspension: Involves suspension from competition in a specific sport for a longer but specified period, including the assignment of remedies to be implemented prior to lifting the suspension.

PENALTIES FOR CATEGORY II

- An automatic one-game suspension for a player(s) for the next scheduled contest following ejection from competition by game officials for unsportsmanlike conduct which violates the Section VI Standards of Sportsmanship; ex: fighting, use of profanity, disrespect for officials. These infractions do not include "technical violations" related to a specific sport that results in disqualification.
- Extended suspension: extended suspension for a specified number of games for flagrant or repeated acts of unsportsmanlike conduct that resulted in ejection from competition.
- Letters of concern: letters directed to appropriate school personnel as in Category I.
- Letters of Admonishment - letters directed to the appropriate school personnel as in Category I.
- The coach of an ejected player(s) will report the incident to the appropriate school official within 24 hours.
- Coaches ejected by a game official will report the incident to the appropriate school official within 24 hours.
- Section VI recognizes that coaches are school district employees and are therefore subject to varying disciplinary procedure. However, Section VI expects the school districts to impose appropriate penalties when coaches violate the Sportsmanship Standards. Such penalties should be consistent with others in Categories I and II.

IV. LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

The following section clarifies and spells out reasonable expectations for those in leadership roles.

A. SUPERINTENDENTS:

We request that the CSO's of Section VI accept an important leadership role in our shared and ongoing Section-wide effort to encourage a sportsmanlike atmosphere in Western New York Interscholastic Athletics. We offer these initial expectations regarding their participation:

- (1) That they become aware of and informed about Interscholastic activity in their League and the Section, particularly as it relates to Sportsmanship. This can be done in large part by reading communications and minutes, requiring their Principals and Athletic Directors to keep them updated and by attending games where they can observe first hand, never forgetting that such attendance is recognized and appreciated.
- (2) That they encourage their Boards of Education to review their District policies related to Interscholastic Athletics with the intent of keeping those activities in their proper places in the overall program of Education.
- (3) That they provide direction and leadership to the high school Principal and Athletic Director through regularly scheduled meetings.
- (4) That they encourage a sportsmanlike attitude among their coaches. This can be reflected in their selection, appointment, and orientation of coaches.
- (5) That they exercise leadership within their School District as conditions require. A Superintendent should always keep in mind the importance of his or her interest, understanding and presence.

B. PRINCIPALS:

We request that High School Principals accept an important and ongoing leadership role in our shared effort to encourage sportsmanlike conduct in W.N.Y.

We recognize the unique position the Principal fills in each of our Schools and further recognize that their interest and support of this effort is vital to the success of the venture. We offer these initial expectations regarding their participation:

- (1) That they be aware of and informed about Athletics and Sportsmanship at both the League and Sectional level by:
 - (a) participating actively in League and Section activities with other Principals and Athletic Directors.
 - (b) reading and responding to communications at both levels.

- (2) That they initiate regularly scheduled meetings with the Athletic Director, including meeting with coaches to:
 - (a) provide them specific instructions; explain policies, procedures, and clearly set forth expectations for the coaches' conduct, reminding them of the key leadership role they play in developing the desired attitudes and behaviors of athletes.
 - (b) demonstrate their support of interscholastic activities and explain how these activities fit into the total school program.
- (3) That they initiate meetings with faculty, students and support groups to clarify the role and intent to Interscholastic competition, and to clarify expectations about the behavior expected at these games and activities.
- (4) That they attend the games and in so doing demonstrate their interest while at the same time being aware of the atmosphere surrounding the games including the attitude and conduct of coaches, players and supporters.
- (5) That they initiate activities and events in their school and community that encourage and reinforce the desired attitudes and sportsmanlike behavior with a primary focus on recognizing examples of exemplary conduct.

C. ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, COACHES, CHEERLEADER ADVISORS: We recognize that each Athletic Director is vital to the direction and success of the Interscholastic program in their District on both the long-term and day-to-day basis. They are the "hands-on" leaders.

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR: Conducts meetings with coaches and cheerleading advisors:

1. Discuss sportsmanship guidelines. All information from Superintendent/Principal's meetings...ENLIST THEIR SUPPORT!!!
2. Attend coaches/advisors meetings
3. Establish custodial follow-up routine with chaperons/administration/participants.

COACHES

1. Attend Athletic Director/Principal's meeting
2. Actively support guidelines...set example
3. Conduct "YOUR" sportsmanship session, conveying these guidelines to all.
4. Recognize players and "Good Examples."

CHEERLEADING ADVISORS

1. Attend meetings...become enthusiastic supporters of guidelines.
2. Convey this support to your students.
3. Assume a positive role in pre-game sportsmanship promotions.

STUDENT BODY

Through Principal/ Athletic Director/ Cheerleading Advisor: establish a "SPORTSMANSHIP COUNCIL."

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. LEAGUE SPORTSMANSHIP COUNCIL
(Made up of school's sportsmanship Council and Advisors.) Meet 2 to 3 times at different schools...discussions...projects...recognition...
2. EACH SCHOOL'S COUNCIL
 - Inform student body on League Highlights
 - Create sportsmanship sign/poster group
 - Create positive cheer group to assist cheerleaders' efforts.
 - Recognize positive student efforts by:
 - a) P.A. Announcements
 - b) "Good Sport" of the week
 - Create "teams" of greeters...meet other teams' "spectators"...assist in seating them ...discourage "Poor Choices"...assist cheerleaders in pre-game promotions:
 - Welcome Statement/Welcome Cheer
 - Establish contact with adult booster club (if one exists) and/or PTA
 - (a) Share guidelines - projects you do
 - (b) Encourage their participation in positively recognizing "Good Examples"
 - (c) Joint gatherings inviting officiating representatives to discuss/share concerns and projects.
3. CHEERLEADERS' ROLE at athletic contests is to encourage and support their teams, encourage good sportsmanship and help control spectator reaction.

V. SUMMARY STATEMENT

This vast and important subject is difficult to adequately address in a written document.

Hopefully this proposal will spark interest, offer some direction, and provide a shared framework for action. If we are to experience success, it will be the result of the support, creativity and action by interested people. The extent of success will likely reflect the number of these "contributing" leaders.

The proposal is intended to be open ended and continuous so as to respond to changing circumstances and encourage long-term results.

The following statement will be read over the public address system just prior to the Pledge to the Flag. If there is no public address system, the statement will be read to both teams by the site chairperson or his representative:

"Welcome to Section VI _____.
(Name of Sport)

Athletic competition can provide everyone with a sense of accomplishment and pride if all of us - players, coaches, an spectators - abide by the rules of good conduct. We ask that you enjoy the performance of our outstanding athletes in a spirit of sportsmanship and appreciation of competition."