

The Minnesota State High School League looks to a future where students can believe in and live by the values of dignity, respect, equity, fairness, scholarship, and sportsmanship.

"Fairplay necessitates that all competitors have the same chance for success."



Good Sports Program

The Minnesota State High School League's vision for sportsmanship is built on expectations. It calls on the school community— teachers, coaches, students, parents, and directors of music, speech, debate and drama— to strive for sportsmanship in everything they do by teaching the values of dignity, equity, fairness and respect.

The Good Sports Program is the plan that drives the League's vision for sportsmanship. The program, which began in 1995, challenges member schools to develop a year-round sportsmanship program and submit it to the League office. The sportsmanship plan must include codes of conduct, promotional strategies, and a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the sportsmanship program. The League provides sportsmanship banners to schools enrolled in the program.

Nearly 400 League member schools are currently enrolled in the Good Sports Program. Please check the list of participating schools to make sure your school is enrolled in this program. If it is not, then you have some work to do.

This manual is available to help schools develop a sportsmanship program that complies with the Good Sports Program criteria. It's loaded with ideas and easy-to-grasp tips you can use in your efforts to emphasis sportsmanship in your school community. This manual will be updated annually with new ideas for promoting sportsmanship.

A GUIDE to help member schools of the Minnesota State High School League develop a year-round sportsmanship program.

**do
the right
thing**

Good Sports Program Criteria

Every member school of the League is strongly encouraged to participate in the Good Sports Program. To participate in the program, schools must develop a year-long sportsmanship program that includes:

- codes of conduct for coaches, students and fans
- strategies for promoting the sportsmanship program
- method(s) to evaluate the effectiveness of the sportsmanship program
- endorsement by boards of education (resolution or statement of beliefs)

Schools are required to submit their sportsmanship plan to the League in exchange for a Good Sports banner.

Renewal: Once a school submits its sportsmanship plan to the League it will remain on file in the League office. Schools are welcome to submit additional information or revisions to their plans as necessary. Schools are required to complete a report card that the League annually sends to participating schools in the fall. Upon receipt of this information, the League sends year tags to schools to affix to their Good Sports Banner.

Following are ideas and tips you can use to develop your school's sportsmanship plan.

Good Sports Program Recommended Timetable

August/September

- Discuss the value of sportsmanship with **fall** coaches and athletes.
- Create a committee consisting of school administrators, coaches, student council members, athletes, parents, etc., to discuss and monitor the sportsmanship effort in your school.
- Sponsor an evening assembly for fans of **fall** sports teams using school team members, coaches and local officials to emphasize rule changes for the coming season.
- Talk with your event security staff and public address announcers about their role during contests.
- If necessary, send sportsmanship plan or revisions to League office
- Distribute brochures and display posters promoting sportsmanship.
- If necessary, hang Good Sport banner received from League office.
- Send news release to media announcing school's involvement in the Good Sports Program.
- Include sportsmanship messages/logo in printed materials produced at school.
- Send public service announcements to local radio stations.
- Discuss the possibility of a league/conference meeting addressing sportsmanship.
- Complete the Good Sports Report Card and return it to the League office.

October/November

- As **fall** contests approach, emphasize good sportsmanship in school announcements and publications.
- Discuss the value of sportsmanship with **winter** coaches and athletes.
- Develop an editorial on sportsmanship for the school newsletter/newspaper.
- Sponsor an evening assembly for fans of **winter** sports teams using school team members, coaches, and local officials to emphasize rule changes for the coming season.

December/January

- Send out **winter** public service announcements to local radio stations.
- Evaluate sportsmanship efforts for **fall** sports.

February/March

- Emphasize good sportsmanship in school announcements and publications.
- Contact an editor of a local newspaper or host of a local radio or television talk show about an editorial or special program on sportsmanship.
- Discuss the value of sportsmanship with **spring** coaches and athletes.
- Sponsor an evening assembly for fans of spring sports teams using school team members, coaches and local officials to emphasize rule changes for the coming season.
- Evaluate sportsmanship efforts for **winter** sports.

April/May

- Send out **spring** public service announcements to local radio stations.
- Present your sportsmanship evaluation program to community through letters and newsletters that will reach into the home.
- As **spring** contests approach, emphasize good sportsmanship in school announcements and publications.
- Conduct a follow-up sportsmanship meeting to evaluate your efforts and to set goals for the coming year.

"Fans are not at an event to intimidate or ridicule, but to support and enjoy the competition."

Sample Sportsmanship Resolutions

Recognizing that participation in interscholastic activities is a privilege, (*district's number*) requires that the conduct of student participants be exemplary at all times. Participants are representatives of the District and their school and must conduct themselves appropriately both while in school and out of school. Student participants who violate this policy are subject to being removed from the activity at the discretion of the coach, athletic director, game supervisor or building principal.

The building principal, with input from coaches/advisors, parents, teachers and students shall develop rules and/or conduct codes for all participants consistent with this policy and the rules adopted by the Minnesota State High School League. These rules shall be applied equitably at all times and shall be reviewed by the building principal periodically at his or her discretion and presented to the school board.

School districts must develop rules and establish policies necessary to create a playing environment that fosters sportsmanship.

Sample Belief Statement

The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior, which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Further, an awareness is expected of the impact of an individual's influence on the behavior of others. Good sportsmanship is viewed by (*district name*) as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

Sample News Release

(*Name of school or school district*) takes part in Good Sports Program

(*Name of school/or school district*) has joined forces with the Minnesota State High School League to promote sportsmanship throughout the state through the Good Sports Program.

The Good Sports Program is part of a continuing, grass roots effort to promote sportsmanship at high school sporting events. The program, sponsored by the Minnesota State High School League, challenges member schools to develop a year-long sportsmanship program that includes codes of conduct, promotional strategies, and methods to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

"So many times, we take for granted that our coaches and athletes, as well as student body and other spectators, know what is acceptable behavior at high school sporting events," said (*name of principal or school board member*). "We are constantly bombarded with so many images of unsports-like behavior, that it becomes important to emphasize at the interscholastic level the proper respect that should be accorded to one's opponents during a game and the officials administering that contest."

The Good Sports Program will see schools across the state develop sportsmanship programs aimed at all students and adult groups in the community.

"We feel that sportsmanship doesn't end with students," (*principal name of school board member*) said. "It is necessary to have parents and other adult spectators set the tone for our students with their exemplary behavior at events."

Additional information about the Good Sports Program may be obtained by contacting (*name of principal or school board member*) at (*telephone number*).

Good sportsmanship begins with you

Ideas for Codes of Conduct

School Board —

- Adopt policies/resolutions that promote the ideals of good sportsmanship.
- Serve as a positive role model and expect the same from parents, fans, participants, coaches, and other school personnel.
- Support and reward participants, coaches, school administrators and fans who display good sportsmanship.
- Recognize the value of school activities as a vital part of education.
- Attend and enjoy school activities.
- Apply sportsmanship policies/rules equitably at all times.

School Administrators —

- Develop a program for teaching and promoting sportsmanship.
- Provide appropriate supervisory personnel for each interscholastic event.
- Recognize exemplary behavior and actively discourage undesirable conduct by participants, coaches and fans.
- Attend events whenever possible.
- Apply sportsmanship policies/rules equitably at all times.
- Develop a crowd control plan for both home and away games.

Coaches —

- Follow the rules of the sport during the progress of the contest.
- Accept the decisions of contest officials.
- Avoid offensive gestures or language.
- Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
- Avoid public criticism of game officials.
- Teach sportsmanship and reward/acknowledge players that display good sportsmanship.
- Provide instruction, training, and motivation without put-downs and/or the use of abusive language.
- Educate and sensitize themselves to cultural differences, gender equity and disability issues.

Student-Athletes —

- Show respect at all times for coaches, opponents and game officials.
- Accept the decisions of contest officials.
- Avoid offensive gestures or language.
- Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
- Follow the rules of the game.
- Show respect for public property and equipment.

Spectators —

- Avoid criticism of game officials and sideline coaching which may side track the athletes from their performance.
- Stay off the playing area.
- Show respect for public property and equipment.
- Take part in cheers with the cheerleaders.

Cheerleaders / Bands —

- Know the contest rules and cheer/play at proper times.
- Encourage support for any injured participant.
- Show respect for opposing cheerleaders/bands.
- Lead positive cheers which praise your team without antagonizing the opponents.
- Dress in school-approved uniforms.
- Work cooperatively with contest officials and supervisors in keeping order.
- Show respect for public property and equipment.

Officials —

- Accept your role in an unassuming manner.
- Know the rules, apply them equitably at all times and keep the game moving.
- Publicly shake hands with coaches of both teams before the contest.
- Never show emotions or argue with a player, coach or fan.
- When watching a game as a spectator, give the officials the same respect you expect to receive when working a contest.

Contest Workers —

- Supervise all areas of the facility including parking lots and restrooms.
- Be consistent in applying sportsmanship policies and rules.
- Wear jackets, armbands, and badges so they are easily identifiable.
- Establish/communicate emergency procedures.

Acceptable Behavior

- Accept all decisions of contest officials.
- Applause during player introductions.
- Cheerleaders leading fans in positive cheers.
- Handshakes between participants and coaches at the end of the contest, regardless of the outcome.
- Treat the competition as a game, not a war.
- Everyone showing concern for an injured player, regardless of team.

Unacceptable Behavior

- Disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs or gestures.
- Booming or heckling an official's decision.
- Criticizing officials in any way.
- Yells that antagonize opponents.
- Refusing to shake hands.
- Blaming the loss of a game on an official, coach or participant.
- Taunting or name-calling to distract an opponent.
- Use of profanity.
- Doing own yells instead of following lead of cheerleaders.
- Hand-held signs containing derogatory language.

Behave
or
Be Gone

Promotional Strategies

- ◆ Develop a Good Sports Recognition Program to reward coaches, players, and fans for showing good sportsmanship.
- ◆ Create a "warning ticket" to hand to those who exhibit poor sportsmanship in the stands.
- ◆ Using the Good Sports theme, create a one-week promotion at your school focusing on sportsmanship. Promotions could include a poster or essay contest.
- ◆ Development of a speaker's bureau: administrators, coaches or selected student-athletes could talk with local adult civic organizations about the Good Sports Program. Student-athletes could deliver talks to students in the junior high and elementary schools to stress good sportsmanship.
- ◆ Principals and/or superintendents could write commentaries for school district newsletters.
- ◆ Send public service announcements to local radio and television stations on a quarterly basis (see enclosed samples).
- ◆ Encourage fine arts advisors to incorporate good sportsmanship themes/goals into their competitions.
- ◆ Send news releases to media outlets (electronic and print) stating that your school is participating in the Good Sports Program (see sample news release).
- ◆ Use the Good Sports logo in event programs or other school publications.
- ◆ Place an article in event programs that promote good sportsmanship.
- ◆ Develop a plan for crowd control for both home and away games. A list of suggestions for developing a plan is included in this manual.
- ◆ Create a postage meter ad that goes on school mail with a message promoting good sportsmanship.
- ◆ Create banners/posters that convey the messages of good sportsmanship.
- ◆ Create a sportsmanship report card for visitors to your school to fill out and drop off after contests (see sample report card).
- ◆ If you, your athletes, your spectators, etc., felt they were treated particularly well while visiting another school for an event, encourage them to write a letter to the principal or athletic director of that school. Chances are the school may share that letter with its constituents. The end result is that both parties are encouraged to practice good sportsmanship.
- ◆ Have your public address announcer or participants read a pregame statement encouraging sportsmanship and proper respect for opponents and game officials (samples are included in this manual).
- ◆ Develop an in-school public address announcement program.
- ◆ Make sportsmanship part of the criteria for any performance awards such as M-V-P; All-Conference; All-Area, etc.
- ◆ Conduct in-school programs or pep rallies/assemblies emphasizing sportsmanship.
- ◆ Have your public address announcer read P.A. announcements about sportsmanship (samples are included in this manual).
- ◆ Conduct a conference meeting or sessions on sportsmanship involving students/coaches.



Coach—

A coach will be in violation of the standards for good sports established by the Minnesota State High School League by:

- Making degrading/critical remarks about officials during or after a contest either on the field of play, from the bench or through any public news media.
- Arguing with officials or going through motions indicating dislike/disdain for a decision.
- Detaining the officials following the contest to request a ruling or explanation of actions taken by the official.
- Being ejected from any contest.

Players—

As a student participating in my school's interscholastic activities, I understand and accept the following responsibilities:

- I will respect the rights and beliefs of others and will treat others with courtesy and consideration.
- I will be fully responsible for my own actions and the consequences of my actions.
- I will respect the property of others.
- I will respect and obey the rules of my school and the laws of my community, state and country.
- I will show respect to those who are responsible for enforcing the rules of my school and the laws of my community, state and country.

Note:

Any allegation of sexual, racial or religious harassment or violence may also constitute a violation of the Student Code of Responsibilities.

Sportsmanship Announcements

Sample Game Announcements:

Good evening, (*name of school*) welcomes you to (*name of stadium/field/gymnasium*) for tonight's game. We remind you that interscholastic events are an extension of the classroom, and that lessons are best learned when respect is shown to all. Please, let your good sportsmanship show during the game. And now let's meet the starting lineups...

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Good evening, (*name of school*) welcomes you to (*name of stadium/field/gymnasium*) for tonight's game. One of the goals of high school athletics is learning lifetime values. Sportsmanship is one such value that makes these games an educational experience. Remember, be a good sport! And now let's meet the starting lineups...

(After lineups are introduced—introduce officials)

The officials for tonight's game are (*name of official*) and (*name of official*). These individuals are registered by the Minnesota State High School League. Their experience qualify them to administer the rules of the game. An attitude of good sportsmanship should be upheld by all spectators, players and coaches, no matter what their personal feelings or loyalties may be in this contest.

(For use during breaks in action)

Admission to an interscholastic event is a privilege, and with that privilege comes responsibility—responsibility to conduct oneself in a manner where the game is enjoyable for other fans and participants. (*Name of school*) reminds you to be a good sport! — on the court (*field*) and in the stands.

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Sample Pre-game Announcements

This game is being played under the rules of the Minnesota State High School League. These rules provide for fair competition among players. Spectators can help promote good sportsmanship by observing the rules of fair play. Everyone is responsible for keeping this game at a high level of good sportsmanship.

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Student Sportsmanship Creed:**ATHLETE NO. 1**

Good afternoon/evening. Welcome to (*name of high school*). We appreciate your attendance at this game and hope you enjoy it.

ATHLETE NO. 2

Tonight's game is being played under the rules of the (*conference name*).

These rules provide for fair play and good sportsmanship among players and coaches.

As athletes we ask that spectators promote the ideals of good sportsmanship, fair play and respect for our opponents and officials.

In-game Announcements

PSA #1: Good sports are winners, no matter what the score. And good sportsmanship is everyone's responsibility. You keep the standards high and the game enjoyable for all by showing respect for players, coaches and officials. (*school name*) thanks you for being good sports.

PSA #2: (*school name*) welcomes you to today's game between (*team name*) and (*team name*). The educational value of this event is more important than its outcome. Respect for others, including opponents and officials, is one of those values. So, please be a Good Sport today—the teams are counting on it!

PSA #3: Fans, did you know that good sportsmanship equals good performance? High school athletes know it. Fans in the stands applaud it. Respect for players, coaches, fans and officials sends a message athletes carry with them on and off the field of competition. Let's support our team with good sportsmanship.

PSA #4: Win or lose, the name of the game is sportsmanship in high school athletics. The rules of the game: fair play and respect for coaches, players, fans and officials. "Good sports are winners no matter what the score" is the lesson learned on the playing field and in the stands. Support high school athletics with good sportsmanship.

Sample Announcements for Radio and Television Stations

The score of any athletic event is generally forgotten over time, but the actions of the players, coaches and spectators are remembered. So, the next time you attend a high school game, please remember to be a good sport. A message from (*school name*) and (*station name*).

PSA #2: Ethics, integrity and respect are values important in our daily lives. On the playing field, they are translated into one word—sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is an important value that young people learn when they participate in high school activities. So remember, be a good sport. A message from (*school name*) and (*station name*).

PSA #3: Don't ever confuse a good sport with the nice guys who supposedly finish last. Sportsmanship has nothing to do with an athlete's or spectator's competitive spirit, and more often than not, a display of poor sportsmanship leads to a losing performance. Remember, be a good sport! Regardless of the final score. A public service message from (*school name*) and (*station name*).

PSA #4: In our society, winning has come before everything. But if winning comes at the expense of good sportsmanship, then nothing is gained in the long run. Good sportsmanship is the result of a disciplined effort to respect yourself, your opponents, and to practice the golden rule. So remember, be a good sport. A public service message from (*school name*) and (*station name*).

Evaluation

During the course of each school year, schools are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their sportsmanship program. Items to evaluate include:

- promotional activities
- team and fan behavior
- school procedures to handle conflicts
- recognition programs to reward good sports behavior
- crowd control plans
- codes of conduct
- contingency plan

Crowd Control Planning

1. Establish written expectations for coaches, players, students, cheerleaders, spectators, and management personnel. Communicate them in a variety of ways, expect them to be followed, and do something when they aren't.
2. Establish and communicate policies and emergency procedures regarding:
 - a) fire
 - b) drinking or possession of alcoholic beverages
 - c) possession, use, or sale of drugs
 - d) medical emergencies
 - e) lost and found articles
 - f) bringing food, beverages, radios and hand-held signs, noisemakers into the gym or stadium
 - g) bomb threats
 - h) alternatives in case of score clocks, lights, or other facility failures
 - i) transportation problemsWritten emergency procedures should be clearly understood by the public address announcer.
3. Provide crowd control supervisors for both home and away games and identify them by use of jackets, arm bands, T-shirts or badges. Alert crowd control supervisors to observe behavior and whereabouts of potential problem people.
4. Be consistent in applying sportsmanship policies and rules equitably at all times.
5. If possible, avoid seating bands or spectators near the visiting team bench or the visiting team spectator section.
6. When someone is behaving in an undesirable way, do something about it. Actions speak louder than words.
7. Have admissions, ticket sales, and parking lot personnel observe and screen people for possession of alcoholic beverages and/or intoxication.
8. Supervise the rest rooms.
9. Establish precise job descriptions, expectations, and authority of all working personnel and inform them of all rules, regulations, and emergency procedures.
10. Develop a contingency plan to respond to critical contest situations.

Procedures for Dealing with Unruly Spectators

1. Timing is critical: get to problems quickly.
2. When to go to the stands:
 - a. For abusive or foul language
 - b. For throwing objects
 - c. For obstruction of view
 - d. When a spectator is ignoring the requests of others
 - e. When game management has been informed by the official that a spectator needs to settle down or be asked to leave
3. Sit next to them and explain their options:
 - a. Stop the behavior and explain sportsmanship expectations and consequences
 - b. Final step is being escorted out by security.
4. At that stage, say: "I need to see you in the hallway for a few minutes." Talk with them out of public eye.
5. If that's unsuccessful, say: "I'm going to ask you to leave, and if you don't, we may be asking you not to return for the rest of the season."

Follow Up with People Who Have Been Difficult

1. Use a form letter for some situations.
2. For others, meet individually with the person to talk about the situation.
3. Talk to them in a non-threatening manner.
4. Discuss other ways the spectator might have handled his/her disappointment or frustration.
5. Have an established procedure involving the principal and/or superintendent for problems that are unresolved after the initial letter and/or meeting.

*There's only
one way to
play the
game—FAIR*

Ideas for Pre-Season Meetings

1. Make them mandatory.
2. Provide advance communication that is timely, attractive and upbeat.
3. Schedule officials to explain new rules or misunderstood rules.
4. Explain to parents that they are leaders and need to lead in the stands.
5. Distribute and explain sportsmanship expectations and consequences.
6. Have students explain at pre-season meeting to parents what proper conduct is.
7. Review the privileges and disciplines of athletics.
8. Have parents and students sign a code of conduct.

Win or lose, I pledge to do the best I can to be a team player and respect my teammates, my opponents and the officials, and to improve myself in spirit, mind & body.

*Turnovers,
fouls,
and missed
goals are the
reasons teams
lose ball
games. The
calls made by
a referee don't
lose ball
games.*

Good Sports Worksheet

Use This Worksheet to Get You Going

- I. School belief statement on sportsmanship
 - A. Program goals/expectations
 - B. Target audience
 - C. Sportsmanship committee members
- II. Codes of Conduct
 - A. Administration
 - B. Coaches
 - C. Players
 - D. Spectators
 - E. Cheerleaders/bands
 - F. Game officials/management
- III. Promotion strategies
 - A. List ways that your school will promote its Good Sports Program
 - B. Rewards/recognition for good sports behavior
 - C. Consequences for Acts of Misconduct
- V. Evaluation procedures—Schools are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their sportsmanship program

"Winning is for
a day -
sportsmanship
is for a lifetime."

Please know that the League staff is at your service to help you whenever possible in the promotion of good sportsmanship. Feel free to call 763-560-2262 or write us at:

*MSHSL Good Sports Program
2100 Freeway Boulevard
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430-1735*



