

WPIAL SPORTSMANSHIP MESSAGE

Several recent negative incidents in high school, college, and professional sports have had a negative impact, which threatens the educational mission of interscholastic athletics. The WPIAL reminds member schools to act proactively in developing plans to curb negative incidents and to emphasize the importance of good sportsmanship at all athletic events. We request your cooperation in considering the following steps in planning for your athletic events:

1. The principal, athletic director, and/or their designee should be present at all home events to provide leadership and supervision in the management of games. It is strongly suggested that the principal, athletic director and/or their designee be present at selected away games.
2. Review security measures and provide adequate security to ensure that fans, players, and officials are in the best possible environment.
3. Treat all visitors with respect. Take appropriate measures to discourage taunting, trash-talking, vulgar language and disrespect directed toward opponents and contest officials. In advance, advise your students that disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated at games.
4. Coaches should be positive role models by setting a good example for participants and fans to follow. Work with your coaches to insure that their players demonstrate good sportsmanship and act appropriately while representing your school.
5. The presence of signage which does not display a message which is sportsmanlike in nature should not be permitted.
6. Student-athletes or coaches who are ejected must be dealt with strongly. The PIAA ejection rule specifies a minimum penalty. When necessary and appropriate, act to extend suspensions for player or coach ejections.
7. Do not oversell your venue.
8. A sportsmanship message emphasizing house rules and regulations should be read prior to every contest.
9. Observe and be aware of the activities of student groups and take preventative measures to discourage negative behaviors. Remove from the premises those who exhibit poor sportsmanship and/or behavior.
10. Remind all concerned that the WPIAL will use every means available to legislate against those who disrupt the efforts to conduct athletic contests in a safe and positive environment.

Good sportsmanship may be an overused expression, but good sportsmanship is the key to success in interscholastic athletics. The WPIAL will support the actions of member schools in fostering appropriate behavior and sportsmanship at athletic contests. Remember the WPIAL motto: SPORTSMANSHIP-THE ONLY MISSING PIECE IS YOU.