

WHAT IS SPORTSMANSHIP?

sports'man ship' (n.) *the practice of playing fair, of taking loss or defeat without complaint or victory without gloating, and treating opponents with fairness, generosity, courtesy, etc.*

- Sportsmanship is a demonstration of generosity and genuine concern for others. It is a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.
- Sportsmanship is a blending of cheers for "your team" and applause for the "opponents," observing the letter and spirit of the rules, and showing consideration for others.
- Sportsmanship is the "golden rule" of athletics - treating others as you wish to be treated.
- Sportsmanship is respect. Respect for the game, the moment, for others and for one's self.
- Sportsmanship is personal responsibility. Owning your behavior.
- Sportsmanship is all this and much more.
- For a coach, sportsmanship may be accepting a "questionable" call without protest. For an athlete, it may be extending a helping hand to an opponent who is down.
- For a general spectator, it may be cheering for his team when it loses, and applauding the opponent when it wins. For an official, it may be showing restraint when verbally assaulted by coaches, athletes and spectators.
- For parents, it may be avoiding living their lives through their children's sporting activities.
- Sportsmanship encompasses all that which is good in human nature. Sportsmanship is citizenship in action.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SPORTSMANSHIP

Every year the MHSAA has been emphasizing the importance of good sportsmanship. Many people have not had good sportsmanship explained to them. The following six steps will help those people to understand their responsibilities at an athletic contest.



- ***Gain an Understanding and Appreciation for the Rules of the Contest.***

The necessity to be well informed is essential. Know the rules. If you are uninformed, refrain from expressing opinions on the officials, coaches, players, or administrative decisions. The spirit of good sportsmanship depends on conformance to a rule's intent as well as to the letter of a given rule.

- ***Exercise Representative Behavior at All Times.***

Good sportsmanship requires one to understand his/her own prejudices that may become a factor in his/her behavior. The true value of interscholastic competition relies on everyone exhibiting behavior which is representative of a sound value base. A proper perspective must be maintained if the educational values are to be realized. Your behavior influences others whether you are aware of it or not.

- ***Recognize and Appreciate Skilled Performance Regardless of Affiliation.***

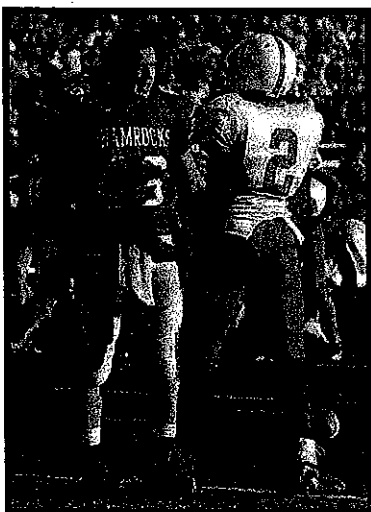
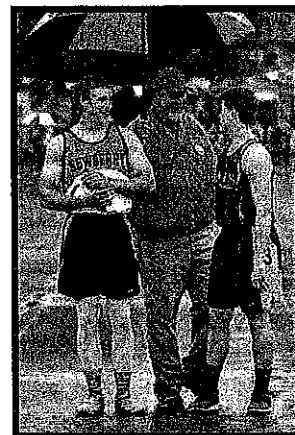
Applause for an opponent's good performance displays generosity and is a courtesy that should be regularly practiced. This not only represents good sportsmanship, but reflects a true awareness of the game by recognizing and acknowledging quality.

- ***Exhibit Respect for the Officials.***

The officials of any contest are impartial arbitrators who are trained and who perform to the best of their ability.

Mistakes by all those involved in the contest are a part of the game. We should not rationalize our own poor or unsuccessful performance or behavior by placing

responsibility on the officials. The rule of good sportsmanship is to accept and abide by the decision made. This value is critical for students to learn for later application in life.



- ***Display Openly a Respect for Opponents.***

Opponents are guests and should be treated cordially, with thoughtfulness, be provided with the best accommodations, and accorded tolerance at all times. Be a positive representative for your school, team and family. This fundamental is the Golden Rule in action.

- ***Display Pride in your Actions at Every Opportunity.***

Never allow your ego to interfere with good judgment and your responsibility as a school representative. Regardless of whether you are an adult, student, player, coach, or official, this value is paramount since it suggests that you care about yourself and how others perceive you.