



**Montana High School Association
Sportsmanship Program
Crowd Control**

Section (33) **SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES**

A. Statement of philosophy: The Montana High School Association has established policies, expectations and responsibilities which will cultivate the ideals of good sportsmanship. It shall be the responsibility of each member school to ensure that all individuals employed or directly associated with the inter-scholastic program conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. The coach represents the school at interscholastic athletic activities. It is the responsibility of the head and assistant coaches to serve as role models for students and the public.

B. Code of Conduct: A coach will be in violation of the standards for good sportsmanship established by the Montana High School Association by:

1. Making degrading/critical remarks about officials during or after a contest either at the competition site, from the bench, in the locker area or through any public news media;
2. Arguing with officials or going through motions indicating dislike/disdain for a decision;
3. Detaining the officials following a contest to request or argue a ruling or explanation of actions by the official;
4. Being ejected from a contest;
5. Physically assaulting an official.

Section (34) **CROWD CONTROL AT MHSA CONTESTS**

Because of incidents during past seasons, the MHSA member schools have been made aware of the need for crowd control measures at interscholastic contests. Believing that working toward prevention is better than seeking a cure, the MHSA offers the following guidelines to aid in planning crowd control strategy which will help insure the safety of contestants and fans. Good sportsmanship must become a common goal.

A. Schools should understand the true purposes of athletic contests and educate their patrons to that purpose. Athletic contests are not to become rivalries to the point of losing the primary objectives of the game.

1. Provide worthwhile educational experiences for all students, players and spectators.
2. Provide enjoyable recreation regardless of whether the game is won or lost.

B. A full knowledge of each game's rules applying to sportsmanship which have their purpose to enhance the educational values of interscholastic athletics

should be taught. How these are taught will depend upon the innovation of the school personnel. Schools might be wise to insert in their eligibility rules some concern over the misconduct of players.

C. Copies of game rules pertaining to sportsmanship should be made available to fans. These rules could be printed in the game programs, along with the sport's recent rule changes. In the buildings where contests are being held, bulletin boards and other means of conveying the information can be used to inform the public.

D. Leadership must be provided by the school faculty with the superintendent, principal, and athletic director leading the way and delegating authority. The superintendent, principal and athletic director are completely responsible for the entire program, including all levels of competition.

1. This includes providing an event supervisor who will be responsible for duties including but not limited to game preparation, greeting of officials, and supervision of the game/event area for the duration of the event.
Special attention must be given to the supervision of student cheering sections.

E. Ample help, even involving law enforcement officers, stationed at strategic points and alerted to potential problems will help prevent the initial onset of any conflict.

F. All schools should inform their people involved in any contest that there is a specific role for the visiting participants to play as well as the host school. Amenities and courtesies should be displayed and extended to the visiting organizations without flaunting of rivalries.

G. Spectators should not be allowed to enter a building where a contest is being held if they are observed in the possession of alcohol or other mood altering substances or are believed to be under the influence of these substances.

H. Schools should eliminate possible confrontations by close observations of people who might contribute to any confrontation such as people under the influence of these mood altering substances ***or persons with a past history of unsporting behavior. If your team is traveling and you are aware of a likelihood of fan misbehavior, it is your responsibility to communicate those concerns with the game management of the host school.***

I. In the event a spectator assaults a referee or other official in connection with an Association Contest, he/she should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. To save the status of interscholastic competition, schools will have to work together and be alert of potential dangers in their own communities and when they are visiting other communities.

J. The use of bells, horns, wooden blocks and other noise makers during **indoor** Association contests is prohibited. Bands may only play before the start of a contest, during intermissions between periods (quarters) and during a time out. They may not play during “live ball.”

K. The formation of “rally lines” by spectators, fans and/or students on or near the playing field/floor during the introduction of players or at any other time before, during or after a game is prohibited. Exceptions may be cheerleaders, introduction of parents as part of a “Parents’ Night” ceremony, homecoming participants or special guests who have been approved by the home school administration.

L. Schools are required to erect sideline barriers for all football, soccer and softball fields during all contests.

M. During player introductions, players may not leave the playing floor or enter the spectator section; players may not throw objects into the spectator section.

N. Anyone associated with an Association contest (regular season or post season) is prohibited from throwing any type of object into or from any spectator section.

Coaching Staff

The coach bears the greatest burden of responsibility for sportsmanship. His/her influence upon the attitudes and behavior of the players, the student body and the community is unequalled. In order for good sportsmanship to become a reality, it is essential that the coach subscribe to the values of sportsmanship and teach its principles through word and deed. Specifically, it is recommended that the coach:

1. Always set a good example for others to follow.
2. Instruct the players about their sportsmanship responsibilities.
3. Discipline those players who display unsportsmanlike behavior. If necessary, forfeit their privileges of representing the school.
4. Be a good host to opponents; treat them as guests.
5. Provide opportunities for social interaction among coaches and players of both teams before and after the contest.
6. Select only officials who have demonstrated the highest ethical standards.
7. Respect the official’s judgment and interpretation of the rules. Question them with respect and dignity only when the game rules permit.
8. Publicly shake hands with the officials and opposing coach before and after the contest.

Players

The responsibility of the players for sportsmanship is second in importance only to the coach. Because players are admired and respected, they exert a great

deal of influence over the actions and behavior of the spectators. Desirable behavior for players would be to:

1. Treat opponents with respect that is due them as guests and fellow human beings.
2. Shake hands with opponents and wish them good luck before the contest.
3. Exercise self-control at all times, accepting decisions and abiding by them.
4. Respect the official's judgment and interpretations of the rules. Never argue or make gestures indicating dislike for a decision.
5. Do not communicate with the officials regarding the clarification of a ruling. This is the captains' responsibility.
- 6. Do not engage in celebrations/chants that will antagonize or embarrass an opponent.**

Cheerleaders

1. Stimulate and control crowd response.
2. Choose the right cheers at the right time.
3. Be certain that words used in a cheer do not inflame an audience.
4. Avoid using bells, horns and noisemakers.
5. Use gestures that are synchronized, pleasing to watch, and easy to follow.
6. Divert the crowd's attention by starting a **positive** yell if booing **or improper cheers** develop.
7. Do not conduct a cheer at the same time as the visiting cheerleading squad.
- 8. School flags cannot be paraded in front of the opposing fans' sections.**
- 9. School mascots cannot engage in antagonistic behavior and must remain in their own cheering section.**

Students

Students' habits and reaction as spectators determine the quality of sportsmanship which reflects upon the reputation of the school. Profane and abusive language and obnoxious behavior have no place at an athletic contest.

1. Know and demonstrate good sportsmanship. **Good sportsmanship means always being positive with your response to the contest.**
2. Respect and cooperate with the cheerleaders.
3. Respect the property of the school and the authority of the school officials.
4. Show respect for an injured player and do not heckle or jeer the opposing team.
5. Remember athletic contests and mood altering substances do not mix.
- 6. Do not use profanity in cheers or direct profane statements at officials, players, coaches or opposing cheering sections.**
- 7. Do not single out opposing players personally and heckle them by directing derogatory or profane statements/chants at them. Racist remarks are never acceptable.**
- 8. Do not advance on the court or field to protest or communicate with officials, coaches or players.**
- 9. Do not direct offensive cheers/chants at opposing cheering sections.**
- 10. Shirts must be worn at all contests.**

Spectators

Fan behavior whether at home or away at athletic contests reflect on the entire community. Hometown fans should treat out of-town guests with respect. Similarly, visiting fans should treat their hosts—both individuals and property — with proper appreciation.

1. Know and demonstrate good sportsmanship.
2. Be positive. Cheer for your team rather than against the opposition.
3. Refrain from booing and name calling.
4. Respect the officials' point of view. He/she is in charge and is doing his/her best.
5. Remember, athletic contests are, in one respect, just like driving, they do not mix with mood altering substances.
- 6. Do not use profanity in cheers or direct profane statements at officials, players, coaches or opposing cheering sections.**
- 7. Do not single out opposing players personally and heckle them by directing derogatory or profane statements/chants at them. Racist remarks are never acceptable.**
- 8. Do not advance on the court or field to protest or communicate with officials, coaches or players.**

Officials

1. Know the rules and accepted officiating procedures.
2. Make decisions promptly and fairly.
3. Be consistent.
4. Be neat and friendly, but businesslike.
5. Be on time and start the game on time.
6. Refrain from placing hands on players during an athletic contest.
7. During the pre-game conference make reference to the fact that you expect captains to exhibit sportsmanlike behavior and demand it from all team members.
- 8. Keep emotions in check. Being emotional can affect your judgment.**

Police and Staff Supervisors

1. Check with the athletic director prior to the contest time for assignments.
2. Arrive on time.
3. Discourage small groups from gathering near entrances and exits.
4. Keep playing area clear of spectators before, during, and after the contest.
5. Move with the crowd.
6. Have adult violators escorted to the police station. Call parents of youth offenders to escort them home.
7. Survey the area after the contest.

Administrative Staff

1. Arrange for a supervision and crowd control committee meeting before the fall season. The committee should be comprised of:
 - a. Superintendent of Schools

- b. High School and/or Junior High School Principal
 - c. Athletic Director
 - d. Cheerleader Advisor
 - e. Student Council Representative
 - f. Community Civic Club Representative or Booster Club Representative.
 - g. Police Representative
 - h. Regular staff supervisors.**
2. Publicize the recommendation of the supervision and crowd control committee.
- a. Meet with the Chief of Police and Highway Patrol prior to the opening of school.
 - b. Hire off-duty police as game and conditions warrants. Assign duties, times, etc.
 - c. Establish traffic patterns in and around the contest site. Use community volunteers or student groups.
 - d. Erect restraining fences and/or rope off areas appropriately.
 - e. Supervise gates at all times and prohibit free entry to anyone during the entire contest.
 - f. Check the physical facility to see that it is in the best possible condition to accommodate crowds.
 - g. Provide first aid capability and/or medical doctor availability.

Athletic Director

1. Review game management responsibilities.
2. Explore crowd control ideas with other schools in your conference.
3. Discuss crowd control with civic and/or booster organizations.
4. Schedule pre-season school assemblies to review contest rules, good sportsmanship and spectator behavior.
5. Review with security personnel their assignments prior to each contest.
6. Review assignments with staff prior to each contest.
7. Make sure that officials and their dressing area are taken care of in the proper manner.
8. Announce that no spectator is allowed on the field or court prior to, during, or after a contest.
9. Check with police and staff at half-time.
10. Provide a check of the facilities after the contest.