



# NORTH COAST SECTION, CIF

*Gil Lemmon, Commissioner of Athletics*

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TO: Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors and League Commissioners  
FROM: Gil Lemmon, Commissioner of Athletics  
DATE: February 5, 2014  
SUBJECT: **SPORTSMANSHIP ISSUES**

I am contacting all NCS member schools and stakeholders regarding the topic of sportsmanship and concern about an increase in unsporting issues within NCS this school year. Sportsmanship has been an emphasis in the CIF and North Coast Section for our 100-year existence, a topic of focus at the Los Angeles Athletic Conference March 28, 1914, the birth of the CIF, and the Bay Section, later changed to North Coast Section. In summary, the purpose of the establishment of governance of school athletic programs was based on several premises:

1. A belief that school programs should be governed and managed by school personnel.
2. The principal of each school should be responsible for all aspects of activities that are conducted with other schools.
3. Athletic activities are an effective way to develop “moral character and physical training”.
4. There should be basic rules and regulations that all schools follow in the conduct of athletic programs, creating fairness in competition.
5. Competition should be free from “profane and obscene language and other objectionable conduct”.
6. Winning should be regarded as secondary to fair play; that spectator behavior should refrain from “disreputable and unsportsmanlike conduct”, and “high standards of sportsmanship are maintained as the dominant purpose of organized athletics”.

During the 2013-2014 school year there has been a 40% increase in contest ejections, and in just the last month three alleged assaults of officials. In addition the NCS Office has received several officials’ reports and school communications that reflect behavior that does not adhere to the sportsmanship values that NCS member schools have embraced for many years. The North Coast Section Board of Managers established a Code of Ethics and Policy Statement concerning sportsmanship and I believe now is a good time to review with all school administrators, coaches, athletes and spectators the commitment that NCS member schools have made concerning behavior at all athletic activities. I have provided this information on a separate handout.

I am asking that your school take measures to immediately address sportsmanship at all athletic contests. Some of the measures are:

1. Share this letter with all administrators and coaches at your school.
2. Use the attached handout to share with spectators, or use the entire letter and handout if you wish.
3. Ask coaches to review with their athletes what is sportsmanlike behavior and give examples; such as
  - a. Not complaining to an official about their call;
  - b. Accepting the call at the time of infraction;
  - c. Helping an opponent up in a situation where the opponent takes a fall;
  - d. Compliment opponents on a good play.
  - e. At the conclusion of the contest, win or lose, shake hands with your opponent.
4. Place sportsmanship best practices in your school or athletic newsletter.
5. Commend student-athletes for outstanding sportsmanship acts or gestures.
6. Share any outstanding sportsmanship acts or gestures with the NCS Office so we can share on the NCS Facebook page and website.
7. Remind all that our contests are human events and as such are subject to mistakes at all levels. Officials, coaches and athletes will make errors and no contest is conducted under perfect conditions.

The “Pursuing Victory With Honor” program, which has been adopted by the CIF and the North Coast Section, and all NCS member schools as a condition of membership, exemplifies a commitment on the part of all individuals associated

with your school to insist upon outstanding sportsmanship from your coaches, student-athletes, and spectators. It is not just a catchword or phrase. The sixteen-16 principles of the program identify the highest standards for high school athletics and an ideal we should all be focused on and striving toward, found in our Constitution under Bylaw 12.

It is the strong leadership of school administrations, athletic directors and coaches that will make the “Pursuing Victory With Honor” program, and other established sportsmanship guidelines, a reality and more than just a “document” of sportsmanship and character. We must be proactive and outspoken when it comes to sportsmanship and character building for our student-athletes. Don’t be intimidated by aggressive parents, undisciplined young people, or a “sixth team”. Let’s stand up to the challenge and let our communities know what we stand for and what the sixteen-16 principles can do for our young people as our programs develop their character. Under your leadership and commitment more sportsmanlike attitudes and values will be demonstrated.

As our recent guest speaker at the Board of Managers, Dr. Don Toomer, former high school and college athlete, parent of four children, one Amani Toomer, 13 season star football player with the New York Giants, and outstanding official, stated, “Athletic activities are games, not war.” The lessons of good sportsmanship - playing the game hard but fair, winning humbly, losing gracefully, developing respect for discipline and authority, playing and living by the spirit as well as the words of the rules-are not confined to those who play the game. EVERYONE should see the full impact and potential of high school athletics as an educational experience. This is a challenge that we must take to heart and pursue vigorously. In our 100<sup>th</sup> year of operation this is the perfect time to re-focus on the core values established in our very beginning as an organization. Thank you!

Cc: NCS Executive Committee  
Wendell Greer, Chair, Values and Ethics Commissioner, Asst. Superintendent, West Contra Costa County USD  
Karen Smith, Associate Commissioner, NCS/CIF  
Bri Niemi, Assistant Commissioner, NCS/CIF  
Harry Schrauth, Coordinator of Officials, NCS/CIF



**Code of Ethics**

It is the duty of all concerned with high school athletics:

- 1) To emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play.
- 2) To eliminate all possibilities which tend to destroy the best values of the game.
- 3) To stress the values derived from playing the game fairly.
- 4) To show cordial courtesy to visiting teams and officials
- 5) To establish a happy relationship between visitors and hosts
- 6) To respect the integrity and judgment of sports officials.
- 7) To achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
- 8) To encourage leadership, use of initiative, and good-judgment by the players on a team.
- 9) To recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being of the individual players.
- 10) To remember that an athletic contest is only a game--not a matter of life and death for player, coach, school, officials, fan, community, state or nation.

**North Coast Section Board of Managers - Policy Statement**

The Board of Managers recognizes that individual school administrators retain primary responsibility for the conduct of all interscholastic athletic activities in which NCS member schools participate. Such responsibility includes the behavior of all participants: players, coaches, representative student groups, and spectators.

The Board of Managers recognizes that each league within the Section, through the several league Boards of Managers, should provide leadership in the matter of upgrading the atmosphere in which all interscholastic athletic contests are conducted. The Board of Managers is appreciative and supportive of such leadership and the programs initiated at the league level.

As the coordinating body for all interscholastic athletic activity conducted within the Section, the Board of Managers establishes the following policy concerning sportsmanship at all athletic events among member schools.

- a) Players are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that shall bring credit to themselves, their schools, communities, coaches and families. They shall refrain from all conduct that tends to degrade, bait, intimidate, or otherwise discredit their opponent, officials, or interscholastic athletics.
- b) Coaches are expected to maintain decorum consistent with the educational values of interscholastic athletics. By personal example, coaches are expected to demonstrate their awareness of these values by showing restraint and composure in the emotional climate of an athletic contest and to insist that players in their charge conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner.
- c) Responsible member school personnel are expected to instruct and supervise the conduct of student spirit leaders, rooting sections, bands, other student groups and coaching personnel in order to achieve an atmosphere consistent with good sportsmanship. School administrators are expected to control or cause to be controlled spectators in such a manner that all athletic contests are conducted in an atmosphere that is consistent with the educational value of interscholastic athletics. (*Board of Managers 5/1/00*)
- d) NCS leagues and schools should take necessary actions to insure that conduct, which is not in conformance with the above policy, is reviewed by schools and leagues and appropriate actions taken to insure that the ideals of good sportsmanship are fostered by NCS schools and leagues.
- e) In the case of NCS/Les Schwab Tires Championship competitions, flagrant instances of unsportsmanlike behavior on the part of players, coaches, and/or fans should be reported by the school principal (s) to the Board of Managers through the Section Commissioner, together with a description of action taken by member schools. The Section Commissioner will contact offending schools regarding the school's deportment at NCS events.
- f) The Commissioner will establish a standing committee to review sportsmanship violations at championship events.

## California Interscholastic Federation OPERATING PRINCIPLES/PURSuing VICTORY WITH HONOR<sub>sm</sub>

The CIF Operating Principles are the 16 Principles of the Pursuing Victory with Honor<sub>sm</sub> program as follows:

- (1) The essential elements of character building and ethics in CIF sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character.”
- (2) It’s the duty of school boards, superintendents, school administrators, parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver and school sports leadership - including coaches, athletic administrators, program directors and game officials - to promote sportsmanship and foster good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling these “six pillars of character.”
- (3) To promote sportsmanship and foster the development of good character, school sports programs must be conducted in a manner that enhances the academic, emotional, social, physical and ethical development of student-athletes and teaches them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.
- (4) Participation in school sports programs is a privilege, not a right. To earn that privilege, student-athletes must abide by the rules and they must conduct themselves, on and off the field, as positive role models who exemplify good character.
- (5) School boards, superintendents, school administrators, parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver and school sports leadership shall establish standards for participation by adopting and enforcing codes of conduct for coaches, athletes, parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver and spectators.
- (6) All participants in high school sports must consistently demonstrate and demand scrupulous integrity and observe and enforce the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
- (7) The importance of character, ethics and sportsmanship should be emphasized in all communications directed to student-athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver.
- (8) School boards, superintendents, school administrators, parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver and school sports leadership must ensure that the first priority of their student-athletes is a serious commitment to getting an education and developing the academic skills and character to succeed.
- (9) School boards, superintendents, principals, school administrators and everyone involved at any level of governance in the CIF must maintain ultimate responsibility for the quality and integrity of CIF programs. Such individuals must assure that education and character development responsibilities are not compromised to achieve sports performance goals and that the academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical well-being of student-athletes is always placed above desires and pressures to win.
- (10) All employees of member schools must be directly involved and committed to the academic success of student-athletes and the character-building goals of the school.
- (11) Everyone involved in competition including parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver, spectators, associated study body leaders, and all auxiliary groups have a duty to honor the traditions of the sport and to treat other participants with respect. Coaches have a special responsibility to model respectful behavior and the duty to demand that their student-athletes refrain from disrespectful conduct including verbal abuse of opponents and officials, profane or belligerent trash-talking, taunting and inappropriate celebrations.
- (12) School boards, superintendents and school administrators of CIF-member schools must ensure that coaches, whether paid or voluntary, are competent to coach. Training or experience may determine minimal competence. These competencies include basic knowledge of:
  - a. The character building aspects of sports, including techniques and methods of teaching and reinforcing the core values comprising sportsmanship and good character;
  - b. The physical capabilities and limitations of the age group coached as well as first aid; AND
  - c. Coaching principles and the rules and strategies of the sport.
- (13) Because of the powerful potential of sports as a vehicle for positive personal growth, a broad spectrum of school sports experiences should be made available to all of our diverse communities.
- (14) To safeguard the health of athletes and the integrity of the sport, school sports programs must actively prohibit the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and performance-enhancing substances, as well as demand compliance with all laws and regulations, including those related to gambling and the use of drugs.
- (15) Schools that offer athletic programs must safeguard the integrity of their programs. Commercial relationships should be continually monitored to ensure against inappropriate exploitation of the school’s name or reputation. There should be no undue influence of commercial interests. In addition, sports programs must be prudent, avoiding undue dependency on particular companies or sponsors.
- (16) The profession of coaching is a profession of teaching. Along with the mental and physical dimensions of their sport, coaches, through word and example, must also strive to build the character of their athletes by teaching them to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring and good citizens.

*(Approved February 2002 Federated Council)*

