

West Michigan Conference Sportsmanship Guidelines

The MHSAA and the West Michigan Conference have developed some guidelines for our schools to follow to ensure good sportsmanship in our conference. Many officials feel that our conference is the best in the area for our sportsmanship, and we want to keep it that way. The guidelines listed below are not all-inclusive, but should give schools a good idea as to what is appropriate and what is not. The administrators in the West Michigan Conference encourage student groups in the stands, but we also have a duty to ensure that what is being done is appropriate. We hope that you will be loud and have a great time rooting on your team in a positive manner. If you have a question whether something is appropriate or not, ask first.

1. Be courteous to all

Forms of unacceptable behavior:

- a. Fans reading newspapers
- b. Fans turning their backs during starting line-ups
- c. Disrespectful actions during introductions of opponents
- d. Yelling, waving, or other inappropriate gestures during opponent's free throws
- e. Derogatory/disrespectful yells, chants, songs, gestures, including: "hey-hey-hey goodbye," "air ball," "you, you, you," "scoreboard," "warm up the bus," and other such expressions.

2. Know the rules and abide by and respect the official's decisions

Forms of unacceptable behavior:

- a. Booing or heckling an official's decision
- b. Criticizing the merits of officiating
- c. Displays of temper and arguing with an official's call
- d. Derogatory remarks toward the officials

3. Win with character and lose with dignity

Forms of unacceptable behavior:

- a. Yells that antagonize your opponents when you feel you have won the game
- b. Refusing to shake hands or give recognition to the winner or a good performance
- c. Blame a loss on the officials, coaching, individual player's performance, or other rationalizations
- d. Self-centered victory celebrations on the playing surface

4. Display appreciation for a good performance regardless of the team

Forms of unacceptable behavior:

- a. Laughing, pointing fingers, or name calling of opponents in an attempt to distract the other team
- b. Degrade an excellent performance by opponents

5. Exercise self-control and reflect positively upon yourself, team, and school

Forms of unacceptable behavior:

- a. Displays of anger, boasting, use of profanity, throwing, or bouncing balls in the stands
- b. Full body painting which draws attention to individuals in the stands instead of the contest (face painting is great)
- c. Doing own yells or chants instead of following the lead of the cheerleaders
- d. Doing unsportsmanlike yells or gestures
- e. Anything that draws attention to the crowd or an individual instead of the game. The cheers should be positive and be directed at your team, and not negative toward the opponent.
- f. Any cheers that pick out one player on the court
- g. Noise makers are not allowed at any indoor venue. These include, but are not limited to: thunder-stix, whistles, air horns, cow bells, clappers, etc.

Please remember that the host has the authority to ask the fans to stop doing something that they feel is a distraction or not appropriate. We are trying to streamline the conference rules, but there are some things that some schools will allow and others will not.