



PALM HARBOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Florida Civility and Sportsmanship Rules in School Athletics

Florida's school sports are governed by the **Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA)** and individual school district policies.

Here's a breakdown of the key expectations related to civility and sportsmanship for students, coaches, parents, and spectators:

1. Student athletes

- **High Academic Priority:** Place academic achievement above athletics.
- **Respectful Conduct:** Show respect towards teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and fans.
- **Fair Play:** Exhibit fair play, sportsmanship, and proper conduct both on and off the field.
- **Official Decisions:** Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
- **Positive Language:** Refrain from using profanity, vulgarity, and other offensive language or gestures.
- **Safety Awareness:** Maintain a high level of safety awareness and respect equipment.
- **Adherence to Rules:** Follow all state, section, and school athletic rules and regulations, including eligibility rules.
- **Controlled Substances:** Refrain from using alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and performance-enhancing substances.
- **Win and Lose with Dignity:** Be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat.

2. Coaches

- **Positive Culture:** Cultivate a culture of sportsmanship within their programs.
- **Lead by Example:** Model appropriate sportsmanship, such as shaking hands with opposing coaches and treating officials politely.
- **Set Boundaries:** Make it clear that unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and will have consequences.
- **Acknowledge Sportsmanship:** Recognize student athletes who display good sportsmanship.

3. Parents and spectators

- **Positive Support:** Cheer for their team and not against the opponent.
- **Allow Coaches to Coach:** Avoid criticizing coaches' decisions during games and practices.
- **Respect Officials:** Respect the officials and their authority during games.
- **"24 Hour Rule":** If there's an issue to discuss with a coach, wait 24 hours after a game or practice to schedule an appointment.
- **Good Sportsmanship Expected:** Repetitive and/or egregious unsportsmanlike behavior can result in spectator removal and potential trespass warnings.

Unsportsmanlike conduct and consequences

- **Definition:** Acts of a malicious and hateful nature towards officials, opponents, or attendees, including profanity, threats, slurs, or excessive physical contact, are considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
- **Penalties for Students:** Can include suspension or termination of athletic participation privileges. Gross unsportsmanlike conduct can lead to ineligibility for up to six weeks, with fines imposed on the school for repeat offenses.

- **Penalties for Coaches:** Can be suspended from coaching or attending the next game, with the school facing fines. Major violations by coaches can lead to sanctions, including prohibition from coaching or attending athletic activities and reimbursement of financial penalties assessed to the school.

Fostering civility and sportsmanship

- **NFHS Initiatives:** The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) promotes sportsmanship through online courses and emphasizes the importance of respect for everyone in high school sports.
- **FHSAA Programs:** The FHSAA has established programs like the Fred E. Rozelle Sportsmanship Program and the Roger Dearing Spirit of Sport Award to recognize schools and individuals that embody exceptional sportsmanship and character.

These rules and initiatives underscore the importance of fostering a positive and respectful environment in Florida's school sports, emphasizing values beyond simply winning or losing.