Part 5

Champions of Character

SPORTSMANSHIP

Responsibility
Respect
Integrity
Sportsmanship

NAIA Champions of Character

The Star: The Star in Education

BUFFALO FUNDS
Good sportsmanship means good conduct

Good sportsmanship is based on doing what you’re supposed to do. Pretty simple, right? Or maybe not — countless athletes, coaches and fans fail to practice good sportsmanship. So perhaps it’s more of a challenge than it should be.

The key to practicing good sportsmanship is knowing your job and doing it. As a participant, coach, official or fan, you have specific duties. However, everyone associated with group activities — not just sports — is responsible for conduct that meets the highest standards. This means you must:

- Know and follow the rules of the sport or activity.
- Respect officials and accept their decisions.
- Maintain self control at all times.
- Respect opponents.
- Cheer and communicate positively.
- React appropriately, even when others don’t.

These common courtesies help everyone enjoy the event and do his or her best. Good sportsmanship is the foundation of any competition and ensures a level playing field.

Making sure everyone involved respects and follows the guidelines for good sportsmanship is only the first step. The second step is knowing your role and sticking with it.

You can be a player, an official, a coach or a fan. But you can’t play more than one role. If you’re a fan, you can’t pretend to be an official — that means you can’t make a call or disagree with an official. If you’re a player, it’s not your job to coach — so let the coach do his or her job.

The crazy fan who yells that his grandma could throw, run or tackle better than a specific player is Example A of bad sportsmanship. He’s not maintaining self control or cheering positively. And, he’s forgotten his role. Fans aren’t coaches and they aren’t players, either. No matter what your role, you must respect those around you and empower them to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

You know what my favorite part of the game is? The opportunity to play.
— Mike Singletary, NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame member
What's your role?

**Player**
As a participant, your job is to do your best at every practice and competition – both as an athlete and as an enthusiastic and supportive team leader. Good sportsmanship for athletes means you must:
- Treat opponents with respect. Shake hands before and after the game, and avoid verbal or physical action that is disrespectful.
- Respect officials and accept their decisions.
- Follow the rules of the game.
- Remember that you represent your school, your family and your community. Avoid any behavior that would embarrass or shame these groups.
- Cooperate with coaches, teammates and officials.
- Avoid foul language.
- Act as a role model. Know that whether you realize it or not, you are setting an example for teammates and fans.
- Know that participating is a privilege, not a right.

**Coach**
As a coach, your job is to enthusiastically guide your team and set an example for players and fans. Good sportsmanship for coaches means you must:
- Treat opposing coaches, players and fans with respect. Shake hands with coaches before and after the game.
- Respect officials and accept their decisions. Shake hands with officials before and after the game.
- Follow the rules of the game.
- Maintain a positive attitude and expect the same from your team.
- Act as a role model of good sportsmanship for players and fans.
- Avoid foul language.
- Develop a code of ethics for team members and enforce penalties for players who display poor sportsmanship.
- Demand good sportsmanship at all times — not only during competitions, but also at practice and in the locker room.

**Official**
As an official, your job is to enforce the rules of the game and to maintain a fair environment for competition. Good sportsmanship for officials means you must:
- Treat all coaches, players and fans with respect. Shake hands with coaches before and after the game.
- Know the rules of the game and enforce them equally and fairly with each opponent.
- Avoid over-officiating.
- Maintain poise and self-control for the duration of the event.
- Avoid arguments with coaches or participants.
- Avoid foul language.
- Demand good sportsmanship from all participants. Enforce penalties for those who display poor sportsmanship.
- Act as a role model of good sportsmanship for coaches, players and fans.

**Fan**
As a fan, your job is to provide positive, enthusiastic support for your team and to respect the opponent. Good sportsmanship for fans means you must:
- Treat coaches and players from both teams with respect.
- Acknowledge outstanding efforts from both teams.
- Respect officials and accept their decisions.
- Avoid negative comments or signage.
- Avoid foul language.
- Maintain enthusiasm, composure and a positive attitude.
- Act as a role model of good sportsmanship for other fans.
- Stay in areas designated for fans. Avoid disrupting play.

Photo by Rebecca Friend/The Kansas City Star
Reacting correctly even when others don't.

Sportsmanship says a lot about you

Good sportmanship is more than shaking hands with your opponent. It's a way of conducting yourself that says a lot about you — and your school.

“Sportmanship plays a role in every sport and extracurricular activity,” said Jill Owens, assistant volleyball coach at Park Hill South High School, Parkville, Mo. “There are expectations for behavior at the state, district and building levels. Behavior expectations are non-negotiable.

“At the same time, we are dealing with students who are teenagers and who may be learning to deal with constant conflicting emotions. Coaches must set a positive example for the teens to follow.”

Practice, discipline

Managing your emotions — especially during intense competition — is a skill that requires practice and discipline. But it’s an ability that’s necessary in athletics and in life.

“We have all been around teams and individuals that did not have good sportsmanship,” Owens said. “The negatives of sportsmanship are easy to identify. We just don’t want people to think of us like we think of teams and schools that have bad sportsmanship. It is great to cheer and be supportive of your teams and teammates, but it is important not to go too far and cross the line into taunting and negative examples like that.”

Finding creative ways to torment your opponent isn’t the best use of your energy. After all, poor sportmanship does more damage besides tarnishing your image.

Bad behavior has consequences

“Consequences for players may be something [like] a conversation with the coaching staff...to something as severe as loss of playing time,” Owens said. “We have had some students that have been forbidden to attend games as a fan because of unruly or inappropriate behaviors. That is probably the most severe punishment for a student.”

Losing the privilege of playing — or even attending a game means that you have a lot to lose due to poor sportmanship. But there’s so much to gain from good sportmanship.

“We hope [our athletes and students] gain a sense of right and wrong,” Owens said. “We want them to be positive role models for others. We all watch television and see many more examples of bad sportsmanship. Unfortunately, that gets attention on ‘SportsCenter’ or video games. We hope they gain ways to be positive in all situations.”

A positive attitude and gracious manners are welcome in all situations — both on the court and off. Find someone who practices good sportsmanship and use that person as a role model. And remember that good sportsmanship isn’t limited to athletes and coaches.

“Sometimes, fans and parents can be the biggest opponent to good sportsmanship,” Owens said. “Parents can yell comments about players, opponents, referees and sometimes their own children.”

No matter what your role, good sportsmanship is a necessary skill. Take the time to develop it and reap the benefits.

What does sportsmanship look like?

1. Encourage teammates. Cheer them on and applaud their efforts.
2. Know and follow the rules of the game.
3. Give your best effort everyday — in practice and in competition.
4. Respect the officials and their decisions — even when it isn’t what you want to hear.
5. Respect your opponent. Avoid name-calling and dirty play.
6. Accept responsibility for your actions and those of your team.
7. Avoid arguments. Address disagreements away from the field.
8. Play fair. Respect yourself, your opponent and the game.
9. Follow the direction of your coach.
10. Set a good example for fans and other players. Remember you are a role model.

“Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.”

— John Wooden, Legendary UCLA and NAIA teacher and coach
How high are your standards?

The rules of good sportsmanship apply not only in sports, but in all sorts of situations. Is there ever a time when it isn’t appropriate to treat other people with respect? No! Living according to high standards always makes a positive impact.

Good sportsmanship in your family
Which of these family dinners do you prefer?

1) Family members shove each other to be the first to get to the dinner table. Once seated, the shovers make fun of the people who weren’t the first to sit down and refuse to pass food to those family members.

2) Family members approach the table together and those who need help are assisted. Once seated, the food is passed and everyone gets fair portions. The chef is praised.

Unless you don’t mind being hungry and ridiculed, option two is the way to go. It sounds like common courtesy – and that’s what sportsmanship is all about. How can you bring more sportsmanship into your family?

Good sportsmanship in your community
Which of these shopping experiences do you prefer?

1) Shoppers run throughout the store, knocking over displays as they rush to get the hot new widget. Hair is pulled, grown men fight and little old ladies wrestle over the last widget on the shelves.

2) Shoppers approach the widget display calmly and follow a first-come, first-served courtesy. Although supplies are limited, most shoppers get what they came for.

While option number one sounds entertaining, it’s not funny if you’re a shopper getting trampled or it’s your grandma doing the wrestling. Option two features respectful opponents, agreed-upon rules and fair treatment for all participants – all examples of good sportsmanship. How can you exhibit good sportsmanship in your community?

What are other situations where demonstrating fairness and treating others with respect is expected? What situations could be improved if the principles of good sportsmanship were introduced?

GAME PLAN

Five ways I can show sportsmanship.

1. _____________________________
   _____________________________

2. _____________________________
   _____________________________

3. _____________________________
   _____________________________

4. _____________________________
   _____________________________

5. _____________________________
   _____________________________

"I think sportsmanship is knowing that it is a game, that we are only as good as our opponents, and whether you win or lose, to always give 100 percent."  
– Sue Wicks, former WNBA player
Voices across America

Making character an everyday goal

Taking the message to the youngest students
Athletes competing in the NAIA women’s soccer tournament visited several Olathe elementary schools in November as a part of the Champions of Character program.
The team from Martin Methodist College made a presentation during an assembly at Indian Creek Elementary. The athletes talked about success in the classroom and on the playing field and the role respect plays in both.
“At a school assembly, the team talked to our kids about persistence, study skills, teamwork, sportsmanship,” Indian Creek Elementary principal Linda Voyles said. “I hope to have them back next year.”

-Martin Methodist College, Pulaski, Tenn.

Reaching out to the classroom
Mountain State University in West Virginia published a booklet to help student-athletes improve their study skills. It includes tips and strategies for classroom performance, reading college textbooks, test taking and time management.
Designed to support the Champions of Character core value of responsibility, the booklet was intended for use by student-athletes at the university. However, it is now in high demand by area high school students and other students at the university. The university is making the booklet available to any student who wants to have a copy. The booklet has become an outreach project and reflects Mountain State University’s commitment to its students, the Champions of Character program and the community.

-Mountain State University, Beckley, W. Virginia

Helping the community
The College of the Southwest baseball team put their servant leadership to work in November. Team members and coaches worked with other community volunteers to help build a house for Habitat for Humanity in Hobbs, N.M.
Head coach Michael Galvan has organized several Champions of Character projects in the community and was pleased with the Habitat for Humanity effort.
“These men did a wonderful job,” Galvan said. “Valuable lessons are being learned outside the athletic world.”

-College of the Southwest, Hobbs, New Mexico

Sending a message
The College of Saint Mary hosted more than 600 members of the Omaha, Neb., community for a Champions of Character event in September. NAIA special presenter Bruce Brown and NAIA director of Champions of Character initiatives Rob Miller led five different presentations at the event. Participants learned about the roles of coaches, student-athletes and parents.
“The enthusiasm shown by our area coaches and student-athletes resulted in what I term ‘wake-up calls,’” College of Saint Mary athletics director Leigh Officer said. “There is no doubt in my mind that participants left inspired and hopeful about their role in the culture of sport. Our community is better.”

-College of Saint Mary, Omaha, Neb.

Getting Real

Sportsmanship means good conduct.

Good sports, bad sports
Being a "good sport" does not necessarily mean actions taken in an athletic competition. In every activity in life people have the opportunity to show good sportsmanship. As a class, make a list of five activities at your school, including activities in your classroom. Then divide your class in half: good sports and bad sports. Under each activity, as a group, list ways you can show good or bad sportsmanship. For example, how can you show sportsmanship in math class? On the debate team? In band practice? Drama Club? Choose a few examples and act them out in front of your class.

In the news
Examples of good and bad sportsmanship can be found in every section of the newspaper. Find articles in the news, sports, entertainment and business sections that show examples of sportsmanship. Clip them and write a paragraph on the sportsmanship shown in each example.

Credits
Champions of Character was created by The Star in Education Department of The Kansas City Star, Kansas City, Mo., in partnership with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). All rights reserved.
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Scott Carr, principal, Liberty Junior High School, Liberty, Mo.
Itasha Goodwin, director of athletics/activities, Kansas City, Mo.
Public Schools, Kansas City, Mo.
Erin Hayes, language arts teacher, Lexington Trails Middle School, DeSoto, Kan.
Nancy Kincaid, veteran substitute teacher, North Kansas City, Mo.
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Then and now: NAIA basketball tournament

Did you know that the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) hosts the oldest national collegiate tournament in any sport? And right here in Kansas City, too! The Buffalo Funds-NAIA DI Men’s Basketball National Championship will take place March 15-21 at Municipal Auditorium in downtown Kansas City, Mo.

The tournament — and NAIA itself — started in 1937. James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, worked with Kansas City business leaders who were interested in the sport to create the association that would later become the NAIA. The organization was established to host a men’s college basketball tournament.

The first tournament in 1937 featured the champions of eight midwestern conferences and provided a way to determine the national basketball champion for small colleges and universities.

In 1938, the field expanded to 32 teams. Play was suspended in 1944 due to World War II, but 16 teams were invited the following year. In 1946, the tournament was back to 32 teams. District qualifying tournaments became mandatory in 1951.

Trailblazing civil rights

In addition to providing groundbreaking post-season play, the tournament became a trailblazer in civil rights, too. In 1948, the NAIA became the first national organization to offer intercollegiate post-season play to African-American student-athletes. In 1953, the NAIA took unprecedented action by voting historically black institutions into membership.

The tournament was held at Municipal Auditorium in downtown Kansas City, Mo., from its inception until 1976. That year, the tournament moved to Kemper Arena, where it was played until the NAIA moved its offices and the tournament to Tulsa, Okla., in 1993.

The 1990s brought other changes to the tournament. In 1991, the tournament was reorganized into two divisions. At the 1993 NAIA National Convention, member institutions voted to discontinue district qualifying tournaments for the men’s and women’s basketball national championships. Conference and regional play were used to determine post-season participants.

The NAIA relocated to Olathe, Kan., in 2001 and brought the tournament back to Municipal Auditorium. Buffalo Funds is the official sponsor of the tournament.

To learn more about the Buffalo Funds-NAIA DI Men’s Basketball National Championship, visit www.naia.org or www.naiahoopskc.org.

NAIA Men’s Basketball Tournament

by the numbers

| 97 | NAIA schools sponsor men’s division 1 basketball |
| 69 | Age in years of the tournament |
| 32 | Tournament teams |
| 31 | Games |
| 7 | Days of non-stop action |
| 1 | National Championship |
The Champions of Character program is dedicated to the improvement and development of the five core values in all aspects of society. Resources are available to further instruct specific groups and individuals on how the Champions of Character program can promote personal growth and integrity for all kinds of teams.

As part of its outreach mission with the Champions of Character program, the NAIA conducts training and motivational presentations to schools, youth organizations, coaches’ groups and business and community groups.

To learn more please contact the NAIA at (913) 791-0044 or visit www.championsofcharacter.org.

“SPOTLIGHT on cheerleading!”

GIVE ME SOME SPORTSMANSHIP!

Cheer squads are in a unique position. It’s their job to be role models of good sportsmanship in front of large crowds — no matter what’s happening in the game. And many cheer squads compete themselves.

So what’s a cheer squad to do?
“We have to be role models and make sure whenever we’re in public that we’re always positive,” said Brenda Moats, coach of the Liberty High School cheer squad in Liberty, Mo. “Whatever the cheerleaders do, people look up to them, especially little kids. Sometimes that’s challenging.”

Liberty’s cheer squad includes 19 girls ranging from sophomores to seniors. All squad members practice two hours a day, every day from May to February. In addition to supporting other sports, the squad also participates in state and regional competitions. Good sportsmanship is a key component of everything the cheerleaders do, both in public and during private team time.

“We do lots of teambuilding so the team learns how to get along,” Moats said. “Someone is always watching them. It’s important to support the positive aspects of athletics.”

Focus on the positive
Staying focused on the positive can be a challenge, especially during intense competition. The true test of sportsmanship is how an individual or team reacts when things aren’t going well.

The Liberty cheer squad knows its role — and its job.
“If there’s a lively crowd, our girls step in and keep it positive,” Moats said. “Basketball is so up close — it’s really important to stay positive and keep smiling, even if the game isn’t going well.”

The same focus on the positive applies when the squad is competing. “When we are at regionals or state, it’s important to be positive with each other and to other squads,” Moats said. “We don’t allow negative talk.”

Effective sportsmanship means having a positive attitude with fans and opponents — and fellow teammates.

“Our cheerleaders work together as a team,” Moats said. “They support each other and provide leadership.”

“It doesn’t matter if you win or lose, it’s how you play the game.”
— Author unknown