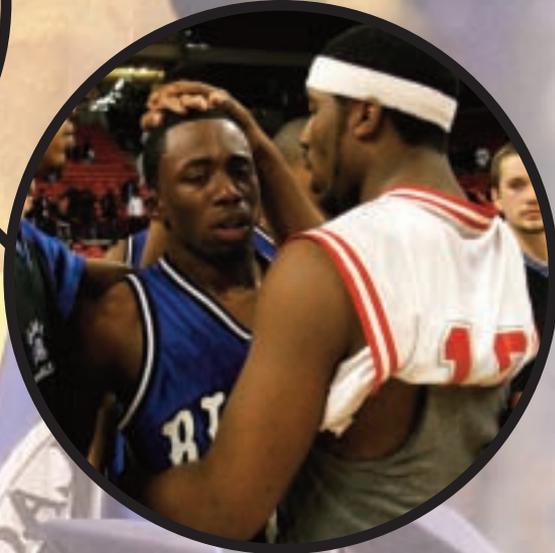




*Respect*  
  
*The Game*



# **MPSSAA**

*Respect The Game Handbook*



# MPSSAA.ORG

The screenshot shows the MPSSAA website in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar displays <http://www.mpssaa.org/respectthegame.html>. The website header features the MPSSAA logo on the left and the text "MARYLAND PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION" in the center. Below the header is a navigation bar with "FALL SPORTS", "WINTER SPORTS", and "SPRING SPORTS" tabs. A news ticker below the navigation bar reads: "MENS FOOTBALL: The 2007 State Football Finals will be held on December 6, 7 and 8th at M & T Bank Stadium." The main content area is titled "RESPECT THE GAME" and features a large graphic with the text "Respect The Game" in a cursive font, accompanied by a checkered racing flag. Below the graphic, the text reads: "MPSSAA Launches *Respect The Game* Sportsmanship Initiative". The left sidebar contains a list of menu items: "THIS IS THE MPSSAA", "AROUND THE STATE", "RESPECT THE GAME", "COACHES/ATHLETIC DIRECTORS", "OPEN DATE EXCHANGE", "SANCTIONING", "CORPORATE PARTNERS", "OFFICIALS", "MEDIA", "FACILITIES", "TICKETS", and "CONTACT US". The right sidebar includes a "SEARCH" box, an "INFO CENTER" with links to "Respect The Game Logo", "Respect The Coach", "Respect The Fan", "Respect The Player", "Respect The Parents", "Respect The Game Management", "Game Management Check List", "PA Announcements", and "Public Address Reminders", and an "EVENTS CALENDAR" for the month of September.

Launching in September 2007, the newly designed home of the MPSSAA will feature a *Respect The Game* page with downloadable logos, public address announcements, upcoming events and information and ways you can contribute to sportsmanship in Maryland High School Athletics. Get involved and *Never Forget To Respect the Game.*

ORGANIZED 1946



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MEMBER OF  
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATIONS

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
200 WEST BALTIMORE STREET  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201

EDWARD F. SPARKS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings:

The ultimate indicator of the value of school athletic programs must be the level of citizenship displayed by those who participate. Hence, teaching and living good sportsmanship is the fundamental objective of our program.

The "Respect the Game" initiative speaks to the heart of sportsmanship. There are no fancy strategies or lofty exhortations. There are no official pronouncements or haughty platitudes. The message is simple and direct. Let all of our actions be guided by respect. To achieve that goal, everyone is targeted in a way that relates to their individual circumstances yet collectively achieves a common goal.

This booklet offers a few key points as a reminder that everyone has a role to play in educationally related athletics. I invite you to use this resource in your efforts towards promoting good citizenship through sportsmanship. It is the first in a series of aids we plan to share as the MPSSAA brings focus to the theme "Respect the Game." There can be no greater objective for us all.

Respectfully yours,

Edward F. Sparks  
Executive Director, MPSSAA



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Credits: All material produced by the office of the MPSSAA. Cover and page layouts by Andy Warner, Assistant Director of the MPSSAA. Photo credits to 20-20 photos, John Roemer IV and the MPSSAA. All quotes on the back cover are from written responses in the 2007 MPSSAA Sportsmanship Survey.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# Coaches



## *Respect the Game*

- *Respect* the rules by teaching athletes to play fair.
- *Respect* the important leadership role you play within the dynamics of high school athletics. Fans, players and parents mimic your behavior.
- *Respect* officials for their efforts in keeping the game within a set of boundaries. Recognize that a neutral observer of an event will not always agree with your perception.
- *Respect* the language you use in communicating with athletes. Would you talk to their parents the same way?
- *Respect* that high school athletics is based on an education model. As teachers you are entrusted with impressionable young people. Your responsibility to your athletes begins by respecting every player and his or her set of life experiences.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# Players



## *Respect the Game*

- *Respect* your opponents as fellow athletes and worthy competitors; like you, they have worked hard to represent their school.
- *Respect* your teammates. Everyone makes a contribution to the team in his or her own way. Respect everyone's effort.
- *Respect* your coaches for their efforts in molding the team that represents your school.
- *Respect* officials for their efforts in keeping the game within a set of boundaries. Recognize that a neutral observer of an event will not always agree with your perceptions.
- *Respect* yourself. What you do is a reflection on you, your school and your family.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# Parents



## *Respect the Game*

- *Respect* the fact that all athletes are someone's son or daughter.
- *Respect* coaches and their decisions. Remember their job performance is on display at every game. Very few professions are so openly observed and publicly critiqued. Second guessing their work does not provide a positive atmosphere for the player, coach and parents.
- *Respect* a time and place to air concerns with the coach. After a game or practice is usually not the best time.
- *Respect* your son or daughter by realistically assessing their skills. Don't relive your experiences through them.
- *Respect* the educational component of school athletics. Remind your son or daughter that there is many times more money available for academic aid to college than there is for athletic aid.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# Fans



## *Respect the Game*

- *Respect* all athletes because they are representatives of their school. They are not the enemy but fellow competitors in athletic games designed to mold character.
- *Respect* all opponents along with their symbols, traditions and heritage. That includes student-athletes, coaches, cheerleaders, mascots, bands, signage, logos, etc. They are supporting their team as you are supporting your team.
- *Respect* all fans as they are merely encouraging their teams as you are encouraging your team.
- *Respect* our country, its flag and anthem. Recognize our blessings as a nation allow us the ability to compete in today's contest.
- *Respect* officials and the role they need to play. The game needs them in order to be contested. Remember calls go both ways and we should respect their honest assessment of the rules.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# PA Announcers

## *Respect the Game*



1. Be organized and prepared. This item really speaks for itself, but the good PA announcer will have announcements and forms prepared ahead of time to facilitate his or her job. Being prepared simply means that PA personnel are better able to handle the announcements for emergency situations as they arise.
2. Check that all equipment operates properly. There is more to be concerned with than just a properly working microphone. Do not forget about tape and cassette players, electronic message centers, and so forth. Often, announcements are to be synchronized with songs or scripts, so ensuring that all equipment works properly will make for a quality presentation.
3. Be professional and unbiased. High school sport announcers should not imitate the styles and antics of some college and/or professional PA personnel who draw attention to themselves and away from the athletic contest.
4. Speak slowly, clearly, and distinctly always! Of these, "slowly" is most important. Not only does the announcer need to be heard, he or she also must be easily understood.
5. Say only what is necessary. Talking all the time and speaking constantly into the microphone--especially with unnecessary comments and/or endless promotion--turns people off and makes them not want to listen. People who "turn off" the announcer may miss out on important, valuable, or emergency announcements.
6. Do not rush and do not panic on public service announcements or emergency announcements.
7. Do not attempt to do play-by-play.
8. Do not editorialize about or comment on any aspect of the game. The fastest and easiest way for an announcer to lose all respect and credibility with everyone at the contest (spectators, players, officials, coaches, and others) is to make a comment about or react to a game situation or outcome. As with item seven, this is not the announcer's role or responsibility.
9. Be involved with the teams and the competition, not with yourself. Enjoy the competitive atmosphere of the game, meet or match and become excited about the young people who are performing. Do not become wrapped up in yourself and excited to hear yourself talk.
10. The announcer is not the entertainment. The spectators came to watch the game and the players perform, to support the cheerleaders, to enjoy the band and its auxiliary units, to congratulate the homecoming courts, to see their neighbor's kids, to observe special halftime activities--NOT TO LISTEN TO THE ANNOUNCER!
11. Give location of restrooms, concessions, and lost-and-found station.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# PA



# Announcements

## *Respect the Game*

### Team Sport Competition

\_\_\_\_\_ (Host School) welcomes everyone to today's contest. As each team represents their respective schools we remind you that honoring the values of sportsmanship is the essence of every athletic contest. We ask you to please show Respect for players (pause), Respect for coaches (pause), Respect for officials (pause) and Respect for those around you. Players, Coaches and Fans; Let's all remember to **"RESPECT THE GAME"**.

### Individual Sport Competition

\_\_\_\_\_ (Host School) welcomes everyone to today's contest. As all athletes represent their respective schools we remind you that honoring the values of sportsmanship is the essence of every athletic contest. We ask you to please show Respect for athletes (pause), Respect for coaches (pause), Respect for officials (pause) and Respect for those around you. Athletes, Coaches and Fans; Let's all remember to **"RESPECT THE GAME"**.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# Game Administration



## *Respect the Game*

- *Respect* your facility by promoting a positive atmosphere for competition between schools who share the same goals for their students.
- *Respect* your role in providing for the safety of all who come under your authority.
- *Respect* the atmosphere created at your school through the selection of music, PA announcements, cheers and chants.
- *Respect* your position as the one charged with the overall authority of the event.
- *Respect* the treatment your school provides to visiting teams and guests. Their treatment has a direct reflection on you as their host.

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# Game Administration

## *Respect the Game*



Participation in sound and wholesome athletic programs is an extension of the educational experience. Cooperation and competition are both important components of life and, as such, it is important for administrators, athletic directors, and coaches to do everything possible to create a climate conducive to good sportsmanship. A crowd faced with a disorganized event is more prone to become disruptive. These procedures are designed to help promote a wholesome atmosphere, encourage good sportsmanship, and provide a safe experience for all students, athletes, officials, and spectators at athletic events.

Local schools, school systems, and sports statewide have a wide variety of different needs. The following checklist was prepared for the athletic director/game manager to be used and modified as needed and as appropriate.

| Yes | N/A |  |
|-----|-----|--|
|     |     | <b>Contact visiting school AD / Principal to discuss upcoming contests</b>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact police to discuss needs, supervision, assignments</li> </ul>  |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact coaches to discuss with teams the expectations and responsibilities of players as representatives of the school and local school system</li> </ul>            |
|     |     | <b>School administrators stress expectations with students, parents, boosters, community, and PTSA</b>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcements week of contest and prior to game emphasizing positive sportsmanship</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If there are serious concerns, consider limiting the number of tickets sold or selling tickets only by advance sale (requires notification of all parties)</li> </ul> |
|     |     | <b>Prepare diagram or map of gym/ stadium/ field for visiting school. Send following to visiting school.</b>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directions/ routes</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seating (signs designating special sections for home, visitors, band, pep squads, etc.)</li> </ul>  |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An emergency plan (inside and outside)</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An evacuation route (weather, disruptive behavior)</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <b>Creating a parking plan</b>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic direction: pregame and postgame</li> </ul>  |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reserved areas for buses, special guests, etc. (use of barrels, sawhorses, etc.)</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handicap access/ parking</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <b>Prepare a supervision chart</b>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solicit additional help from parents, boosters, and PTSA</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly define duties, expectations, responsibilities, i.e., staying the whole game or until everyone leaves</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a site plan, designating who is assigned where</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue sideline tags/ passes to limit access to field/ court</li> </ul>  |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider not admitting elementary and junior high/ middle school students unless accompanied by an adult</li> </ul>   |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly identify the passes that are acceptable at the gate</li> </ul>  |
|     |     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a plan for acquiring police backup, if necessary</li> </ul>   |

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# Game Administration

## *Respect the Game*



| Yes | N/A |   |
|-----|-----|---|
|     |     | <b>Identify key people</b>  |
|     |     | • Provide each person on duty with easily identifiable arm band, hat, button, etc., labeled "event staff"                                       |
|     |     | • Identify representatives from each school   |
|     |     | • Identify cheerleader and pompon sponsor/ coaches  |
|     |     | • Identify band directors   |
|     |     | • Identify administrators from host schools   |
|     |     | <b>Establish guidelines for cheerleaders</b><br><b>NOTE: Inform visiting school of exception to allowable number, due to local regulations.</b> |
|     |     | • Do not allow taunting, inflammatory, or insulting cheers  |
|     |     | • Request sponsors/ coaches to identify themselves to game manager  |
|     |     | • Designate special seating/ specific areas based on available space.   |
|     |     | • Give mascots specific directions and limitations<br>(Note that mascots are under National Federation Spirit Rules.)                           |
|     |     | <b>Secure equipment that may be helpful</b>   |
|     |     | • Access to phone   |
|     |     | • Communication devices, such as walkie-talkies, bull horns, etc.   |
|     |     | • Rope, tape  |
|     |     | • Signage   |
|     |     | • Flashlights/ lanterns/ batteries  |
|     |     | • Barrels, saw horses,, etc.  |
|     |     | • Money bags for frequent pickups (secure area for deposit)   |
|     |     | <b>Consider availability of and access for medical personnel and supplies</b>   |
|     |     | • Paramedic, trainer, or physician  |
|     |     | • Plan emergency vehicle access to site   |
|     |     | • Ice/ water  |
|     |     | • First Aid Kit   |
|     |     | <b>Analyze and prepare facility</b>   |
|     |     | • Have designated home and visitor dressing rooms   |
|     |     | • Know seating capacity and do not exceed   |
|     |     | • P.A. system (announcements should be positive, helpful, and impartial)  |
|     |     | • Maximum available lighting should be utilized during any contest and not restricted to area of competition                                    |
|     |     | • At sold-out contest, clear the site of fans that could not gain admission   |
|     |     | • Evaluate conditions, factors, and resultant impact of on-site construction projects   |
|     |     | • Instruct video taping equipment operator to record all incidents of inappropriate behavior  |
|     |     | • Consider announcing that fans will not be allowed on the field/ court at any time   |
|     |     | <b>Follow-up</b>  |
|     |     | • Evaluate procedures (update information/ resolve issues)  |

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*



# SURVEY



## Respect the Game

The MPSSAA took a survey on the status of sportsmanship in Maryland high school athletics. With over 1,500 responses, the MPSSAA was able to take a closer look at opinions of those involved in high school athletics and how they view the state of sportsmanship. The following is the overall results from the survey.

Please check one of the following that best represents you. Fans are those that have affiliation with Maryland high school sports but are not a coach, administrator, student athlete, parent or official.

|                          |  | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| Coach                    |  | 37.6%            | 578            |
| Athletic Director        |  | 6.1%             | 94             |
| Student Athlete          |  | 12.6%            | 193            |
| Parent                   |  | 15.2%            | 233            |
| Principal                |  | 0.7%             | 10             |
| Other Administrator      |  | 2.5%             | 38             |
| Officials                |  | 18.0%            | 276            |
| Fan                      |  | 7.5%             | 115            |
| <i>answered question</i> |  |                  | <b>1537</b>    |
| <i>skipped question</i>  |  |                  | <b>0</b>       |

Please check one of the following.

|        |  | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------|--|------------------|----------------|
| Male   |  | 68.7%            | 1056           |
| Female |  | 31.3%            | 481            |

*Never Forget To Respect the Game*

## Questions on Coaches Actions

|  | Rarely Occurs       | Sometimes Occurs   | Often Occurs | Very Frequently Occurs | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| How often do coaches argue calls by officials in order to get a call later in the contest?   | 24.0% (318)         | <b>45.8% (607)</b> | 24.0% (318)  | 6.1% (81)              | 2.12           | 1324           |
| How often do coaches teach hard-to-detect illegal moves, holds or actions to gain an advantage in a contest?                             | <b>55.8% (730)</b>  | 33.3% (436)        | 8.6% (113)   | 2.2% (29)              | 1.57           | 1308           |
| How often do coaches utilize foul language in front of athletes?   | <b>47.5% (627)</b>  | 37.8% (499)        | 10.7% (141)  | 3.9% (52)              | 1.71           | 1319           |
| How often does coaches neglect rules they do not necessarily agree with (examples: eligibility, scheduling policies, academic policies)? | <b>66.3% (865)</b>  | 25.7% (336)        | 5.1% (67)    | 2.8% (37)              | 1.45           | 1305           |
| How often do coaches talk to opposing players in order to intimidate or throw off their game?  | <b>85.2% (1124)</b> | 12.0% (158)        | 1.9% (25)    | 1.0% (13)              | 1.19           | 1320           |
| <i>answered question</i>   |                     |                    |              |                        |                | 1328           |
| <i>skipped question</i>  |                     |                    |              |                        |                | 209            |

| Questions on Competitor Actions  |                    |                    |              |                        |                          |                |  |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--|
|  | Rarely Occurs      | Sometimes Occurs   | Often Occurs | Very Frequently Occurs | Rating Average           | Response Count |  |
| How often do competitors taunt, use foul language or derogatory comments at opposing competitors?              | 26.5% (349)        | <b>48.7% (641)</b> | 18.5% (244)  | 6.2% (82)              | 2.04                     | 1316           |  |
| How often do competitors take cheap shots at opposing competitors when they think officials are not looking?   | 40.0% (525)        | <b>44.1% (580)</b> | 12.4% (163)  | 3.5% (46)              | 1.79                     | 1314           |  |
| How often do competitors berate (show up) officials during a contest?  | <b>52.0% (681)</b> | 38.8% (508)        | 7.0% (91)    | 2.2% (29)              | 1.59                     | 1309           |  |
| How often do competitors abuse equipment in loss or frustration?   | <b>47.4% (616)</b> | 41.2% (536)        | 8.8% (114)   | 2.6% (34)              | 1.67                     | 1300           |  |
| How often do competitors use hard-to-detect illegal moves, holds or actions to gain an advantage in a contest? | 40.6% (528)        | <b>43.2% (562)</b> | 12.6% (164)  | 3.6% (47)              | 1.79                     | 1301           |  |
| How often do competitors retaliate for unsportsmanlike behavior by an opposing competitor?                     | 35.2% (460)        | <b>45.2% (591)</b> | 16.4% (214)  | 3.3% (43)              | 1.88                     | 1308           |  |
| How often do competitors play to the crowd?  | 33.3% (434)        | <b>45.3% (591)</b> | 16.2% (211)  | 5.3% (69)              | 1.93                     | 1305           |  |
|  |                    |                    |              |                        | <b>answered question</b> | <b>1318</b>    |  |
|  |                    |                    |              |                        | <b>skipped question</b>  | <b>219</b>     |  |

## Questions on Fans and Parents Actions

|  | Rarely Occurs      | Sometimes Occurs   | Often Occurs | Very Frequently Occurs | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| How often do fans partake in vulgar chants and cheers?   | <b>42.1%</b> (553) | 37.8% (497)        | 14.1% (185)  | 6.0% (79)              | 1.84           | 1314           |
| How often do fans utilize cheers aimed at other schools?   | <b>37.2%</b> (486) | 37.0% (484)        | 18.7% (244)  | 7.1% (93)              | 1.96           | 1307           |
| How often do fans demean or demoralize opponents in victory (example: sing Hey, Hey, Hey, Good Bye)?                             | 34.8% (456)        | <b>35.7%</b> (468) | 19.6% (257)  | 9.8% (129)             | 2.05           | 1310           |
| How often do fans berate officials?  | 14.3% (187)        | <b>35.3%</b> (461) | 33.7% (441)  | 16.7% (218)            | 2.53           | 1307           |
| How often do fans not use proper decorum during the playing or singing of the National Anthem?                                   | <b>55.4%</b> (722) | 25.4% (331)        | 11.6% (151)  | 7.6% (99)              | 1.71           | 1303           |
| How often do fans encourage competitors to retaliate for hard fouls or unsportsmanlike acts by an opposing competitor?           | <b>45.3%</b> (593) | 37.2% (486)        | 13.1% (172)  | 4.4% (57)              | 1.77           | 1308           |
| How often do parents encourage their son or daughter to play outside the rules in order to win?                                  | <b>59.6%</b> (777) | 29.7% (387)        | 8.6% (112)   | 2.1% (27)              | 1.53           | 1303           |
| How often do parents interfere with a coach doing his or her job because they believe their child is not getting fair treatment? | 30.0% (391)        | <b>38.5%</b> (503) | 20.4% (266)  | 11.1% (145)            | 2.13           | 1305           |

*answered question*

**1318**

*skipped question*

**219**



# Logos



*Respect the Game*

*Respect*



*The Game*

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*Respect the Game*

***2006-07 MPSSAA  
State Tournament  
Sportsmanship Award Winners***

Volleyball .....Catonsville

Boy's Soccer .....Sparrows Point

Girl's Soccer.....Glennelg

Boy's Basketball .....Fort Hill

Girl's Basketball.....Atholton

Softball .....Hereford

Boy's Lacrosse .....Parkside

Girl's Lacrosse .....North Harford

***Never Forget To Respect the Game.***

# What Does Respect the Game Mean To You?

"Respect The Game" means that the rules of the game are applied and adhered to by all concerned. The referees, players and coaches all follow the rules of the game. If the coaches and players set this standard and adhere to it, I believe the fans will follow suit.

--- MPSSAA Parent

"Respect The Game" means to compete to the best of your abilities within the rules of the sport at all times, while treating opponents and officials with the dignity that you would expect for yourself.

--- MPSSAA Fan

"Respect The Game" means that you should play the game in as mature and responsible way as possible and have fun doing so. You shouldn't berate anyone playing, coaching or officiating.

--- MPSSAA Student-Athlete

"Respect The Game" means respecting traditions of a particular sport. Behaving with dignity and class when winning or losing.

--- MPSSAA Official

"Respect The Game" means to abide by ALL of the rules of the particular sport and to compete in a manner that brings out the best in yourself, your teammates and your opposition.

--- MPSSAA Coach

"Respect The Game" is understanding that any game presents unique "teachable moments" that are difficult to find anywhere else for our kids. It means allowing coaches to teach sportsmanship, how to deal with failure and what it means to be a team member when you might have to sacrifice the "I" for the "We".

--- MPSSAA Administrator

"Respect The Game" means that everyone involved in a contest whether a player, coach or fan must adhere to conduct that does not take away from the spirit of fair play. Respect must be demonstrated by each participant or spectator.

--- MPSSAA Principal