

NEW TO THE INTRODUCTION

AN OPEN LETTER ON TAUNTING FROM STATE CIF AND SHELDON ATHLETICS

A recent trend in sports threatens the educational mission of high school athletics. The trend of taunting, trash-talking and intimidating "in-your-face" behavior has become widespread in college and professional sports--even idolized here in our state with celebrated individuals or groups of athletes.

This kind of behavior is the most serious threat to educational athletics in some time. Unfortunately, some call the disrespect shown by taunting and trash-talking just "a part of the game."

If we are to maintain the justification for our programs, we must unite now to let our student body, student-athletes, spectators and community know that this and other forms of disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated in our athletic classrooms.

In all sports, at all levels, taunting, trash-talking, and intimidating behavior can be cause for a player or coach to be ejected from a contest and miss the next day of competition as well. During tournaments, a spectator can be ejected from an event by tournament management. In preseason and league games, a spectator can be ejected from an event by the school's administration. Remember that it is a privilege and not a right to attend a high school athletic event.

Tremendous authority to give an official? Not at all! In fact, the referee, tournament manager, or school administrator is the last line of defense in this program. It is up to our administration, our coaches, our young people, and our spectators to understand what is appropriate behavior at school athletic events.

Every year the school's principal must sign a contract with the governing body for high school sports, the CIF and the local section, which states the school will abide by the rules of sportsmanship for its coaches, athletes, and spectators. There is to be no taunting, trash-talking, or intimidating behavior, including no booing of athletes, coaches, or officials and no artificial noise makers may be used during games. What the contract requires for all to do is show respect and to cheer positively for our team. The league also requires that the visitor's mascot is not disrespected in any way. Keep it LOUD, PROUD, and POSITIVE!

If we all do our jobs, the officials will not have to do so. And our students will understand that respectful behavior is a "part of the game."

Sincerely,

Bob Baker
Athletic Director
Sheldon High School

SPECTATOR'S CODE

What Spectators Can Do to Promote Good Sportsmanship

Remember that student athletes play organized sports for their own fun. They are not pro athletes.

Be on your best behavior. Don't use profane language or harass players, coaches or officials.

Applaud good plays by your own team and the visiting team.

Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would be no games.

Never criticize a student athlete for making a mistake during a competition.

Condemn the use of violence in all forms.

Respect officials' decisions.

Encourage players to always play according to the rules.

ATHLETE'S "BILL OF RIGHTS"

Every high school athlete who competes in our interscholastic athletic program is afforded the right to:

Try-out for any athletic team within the legal parameters of the California Interscholastic Federation, Section and league rules.

Be instructed by a coach who places the athlete first, the team second, the coach third, winning fourth, and to be able to use athletic participation as an opportunity to "try-out" life free of adult-imposed pressure to be a winner.

Have equal access to practice and compete in all school athletic facilities.

Participate in a Fall, Winter and Sprint sport without pressure from out-of-season coaches.

Voice opinions openly to the coach without fear of repercussion.

Report any physical pain to the coach and parents without fear of reprisal and loss of self-esteem.

Be provided with safe equipment essential to the playing of the game.

Be coached by those who have been trained or made aware of the various stages of emotional and psychological development in youth, and to be treated on a level equivalent to his/her emotional and physical maturity.

Be properly supervised at all practices and contests.

Be treated with respect by all involved with the school athletic program.