August 1, 2019

“Respect the Game”



**Sea-King District 2
Sportsmanship Initiative**

2019-20 Basketball Season

**Why do we have High School Sports in our schools?**

Interscholastic athletics is a program of sports activities directed specifically to all the students of our school-, either as participants or supporters. It is intended that competitive athletics would develop within the student-athlete the qualities of leadership, initiative, and good judgment. This program must promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the student-athlete so that he/she may be able to effectively perform and lead under stress and in competition. It is desired that the participants in this program, through individual hard work and self-sacrifice, discover their own self-identity and learn to respect other participants for their identity, as well as learning to respect other participants for their accomplishments.

The student-athlete is not only responsible to self but also to his/her teammates. Athletics would be slighted if only portrayed as a program for development of youth. Interscholastic athletics is the enjoyment of companionship and new friendships, the exhilaration of meeting and exceeding personal and team goals, and the development of personal skills and standards. Interscholastic athletics is the involvement of the whole student body and school community in spirit and support beyond the academic sphere of the school.

**What is the “Respect the Game” Initiative?**

The Sea-King District 2 determined that we would promote an initiative in the 2016-17 school year to promote great sportsmanship during our winter basketball season. There has been a marked increase in the number of ejections of both coaches and players in the last several years. Surprisingly, last year we witnessed a new phenomenon for us – parents and other spectators being ejected from contests. We know that nationwide, there has been a dramatic burst in unacceptable behavior in the stands at basketball games – behavior that would not be tolerated in a classroom, but for some reason we seem to think it is OK in our athletic classrooms.

In addition, the WIAA and WOA have been involved in the RTO program designed to recruit, retain, and educate officials throughout the state. The number of basketball officials who don’t last the first year and/or who don’t stay in the associations longer than three years are at crises levels. Just like in our overall society, we have an aging population of officials, too. Young officials are difficult to recruit and retain. They leave in many cases because of the abuse they receive from coaches, players, parents, and other spectators. If we don’t turn this around, we will be wanting for quality officials in a short time.

District 2 chose to develop a program for coaches, athletes, administrators, parents, and officials to encourage working together to keep the great game that we have, to enhance the experience for all participants, and to lay out basic behavior expectations for all district schools and participants.

We hope that you will embrace the idea of “Respecting the Game” and encourage and applaud all those who make the effort to enrich this experience for all. Thank you for taking sportsmanship seriously and for letting the players play, the coaches coach, and the referees ref. Together we can make the 2016-17 League and District basketball season a model throughout the state. “Respect the Game”!

**Mission**

Foster and grow a “healthy culture” surrounding the sport of basketball as expressed in positive sportsmanship and “respect for the game”.

**Goals**

1. Coaches – As the most visible symbol of sportsmanship, bring understanding about the most appropriate coaching behaviors and positive modeling of interaction with team, opponents, and officials.
2. Athletes – Encourage acceptance of official’s decisions as a necessary part of the game and create awareness of a player’s role and leadership in creating a “healthy culture” of sportsmanship in all.
3. Parents – Build awareness of appropriate behavior at contests and encourage parents to help moderate others who may forget occasionally.
4. Administrators – Create awareness and planning around the critical duty of supervision of contests at all levels. Encourage home and visiting supervisors to work together to create a positive experience for all.
5. Officials – Enhance the recruitment and retention of officials as well as educate officials in their personal relationship skills with their clients.

**Coaches**

1. Basketball coaches will meet with their AD prior to the season to discuss their role in promoting sportsmanship with “the big 5” – opponents coaches, athletes, parents, administrators, and officials. They will list 3 top priorities for modelling and promoting “Respecting the Game” with these five groups. This list will be submitted to the league basketball coordinator.
2. How do you think others in your league perceive you and your team in terms of sportsmanship?
3. Basketball coaches and ADs will submit a plan for how to ensure that non-varsity level coaches are operating under the same policies and expectations. Currently, many of our annual ejections take place at the non-varsity level and sportsmanship especially needs to be addressed here.
4. All League coaches will meet with their League Basketball Coordinator to discuss what is appropriate sideline behavior from a coach who “respects the game”. The coordinator should promote a discussion about how our league is perceived throughout the district and state in terms of sportsmanship. The coordinator should invite an official to address the group about the retention and recruitment crisis that official’s organizations are facing.
5. Coaches will meet with parents and athletes to lay out expectations for behavior in the stands, on the court, and on the bench. Coaches will go over the “top 10” list from the student athletes with parents that athletes created.
6. Coaches will contact their assignor to request officials for a scrimmage on parent night. Coaches will invite the officials to address parents and athletes about the new rule changes and points of emphasis for this year. Consider including some of your ASB officers or other student leaders.
7. Coaches will agree to make a pre-game announcement about “Respecting the Game” on a rotating basis with athletes, parents, and officials.
8. Sample: A Coach’s job is to work with officials and discuss calls in an honest and respectful way. We ask that you players, parents, and spectators accept the decisions of these professional officials who aren’t concerned with the outcome, only the proper enforcement of rules and management of the contest. We ask you to thank them for coming and sharing their expertise with us. They are an important and necessary part of the Game. Let’s respect them for their effort tonight.

Root for your team today, cheer them on, they love the support. Let’s appreciate the effort of all these players. There will be a winner on the scoreboard when we are finished tonight, but all of these kids are winners. Let’s show them the respect they deserve.

**Athletes**

1. Coach and/or AD meet with team to discuss the “Respect the Game” theme and the relationship between the five subgroups. How can you demonstrate your “respect for the game” to each of the five groups – parents, coaches, athletes (opponents), administrators, officials?
2. As part of the discussion, ask athletes to answer the following:
	1. What do your parents do at basketball games that makes you proud?
	2. What do your parents do at basketball games that embarrasses you?
	3. If you knew we were talking to them tonight, what would you like us to tell them for you about their support/behavior?
	4. As a group, develop a list for a, b, c. Submit this list to the league basketball coordinator who will develop a “top 10” list from the league schools to distribute for parent night conversations.
3. How is your team perceived throughout the league in terms of sportsmanship? Are you OK with that?
4. What expectations do you have for fellow students during contests?
5. Sample Pre-game Statement with both captains or leaders standing together:
We are looking forward to this “test” tonight between our two teams. We believe each team is a worthy opponent deserving respect for the effort put out tonight. We ask you to cheer for your team, not against your opponent. If you see a great play, regardless of the team, appreciate it. Let the officials do their job. They have a difficult job and we believe they will do it fairly, impartially, and professionally. We thank them for coming tonight. Enjoy the game.

**Administrators**

1. Sit down with all those who will be supervising games. Review WIAA and League policies requiring supervision and laying out expectations and guidelines.
2. Create a list for your site of possible “conflict points” and your plans for addressing any concerns.
3. Discuss concrete problems that have occurred and develop a plan for addressing similar situations that might occur.
4. Discuss how you will promote “Respect for the Game” at non-varsity contests.
5. Discuss how you will communicate your expectations and guidelines to coaching staff.
6. Schedule a parent night to cover appropriate sportsmanship and communication issues. Discuss what is “acceptable behavior”, what isn’t, and how all can help promote sportsmanship.
7. Supervision “musts”:
	1. Officials
		1. Provide safe parking spots if possible. Do not mark them as reserved for officials.
		2. Meet and greet all officials as they arrive for a contest at all levels.
		3. Assure safe access and regress for officials before, during, and after the contests – from court to locker room to parking lot.
		4. Provide a private, secure locker room space.
		5. Make sure the officials know the home and visitor administrators and their location.
		6. Have the expectation that coaches will teach their players to respect the decisions of the officials and that administrators will immediately address inappropriate behavior of students and spectators in the stands.
	2. Visitors
		1. Meet and greet visiting team’s supervisor. Go over potential “flash points” in your gym and make sure both supervisors know where and how to find the other.
		2. Visitor school supervisors should take direct responsibility for addressing their coaches, parents, and athletes as needed so the home school supervisor doesn’t have to step in.
		3. Home and visiting supervisors will meet briefly with the official’s crew chief prior to the contest and indicate where the supervisors will be stationed during the contest.

**Parents & Booster Clubs**

1. The AD should hold a pre-season Booster club meeting to discuss the theme of “Respect for the Game” and the five constituencies.
2. List how parents can support the theme with each of the five groups. Develop a “top 3” list for each.
3. Ask the booster club/parents how they think their school is perceived throughout the league in respect to sportsmanship. Is this appropriate and acceptable?
4. Develop a plan for how parents can help promote respect in the stands and help defuse problems before they become noticeable. (e.g., tootsie roll pops)
5. How can parents help each other remember the values and purposes of high school athletics at critical moments, especially in non-varsity contests?
6. Parent night – either mandatory or strongly encourage every parent to attend. Go over the “top 10” list that the basketball team created. Bring in an official to provide direction on the new rule changes and the points of emphasis for the season.
7. Sample Parent Announcement Statement:
	1. We would lie to take this opportunity to welcome all the fans from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for supporting your team, coaches, and schools so profoundly. High School sports were founded to allow these two teams of athletes to test their skills against each other and to learn and to grow from that experience..

	Our jobs as parents, students, and spectators is to watch, cheer, and enjoy the skill and talent of these wonderful athletes. Let’s appreciate and “respect the game” for what it is – especially in those heated moments where we just want to win a little too much.

	Let’s allow the officials to do their jobs without the additional pressure of us second guessing every call they make. They are professionals, honest men and women. Let’s thank them for being here tonight and giving their best to our kids.

**Officials**

1. Participate in pre-season and during season training to develop officiating skills. A special emphasis should be put on training officials on personality differences and relationships.
2. List “top 10” ways that officials can work with coaches, especially when they are upset or emotional.
3. Discuss the pressures that coaches have on them when they come onto the floor. Does this help explain some of their behavior? How might it be addressed?
4. Coaches think they need to get a “T” once in a while to get the ref’s attention. Why do they feel this way? How can we address that?
5. What are the referee “stereotypes.” What do we do that promotes those? How can we address them? Examples:
	1. The Ref is ‘god’. Don’t question me!
	2. Ref’s job is to keep the game/number of fouls about even, so if it starts getting out of hand, I need to get it back in balance.
	3. “Let it go” Ref – This is the kids’ game, let ‘em play!
	4. Strict interpretation – call every foul, every time, no matter how many or how long it takes!
	5. Other?
6. Referees will follow WIAA/WOA guidelines and notify the assignor of any ejections right after contests.
7. Referees will notify the assignor of any “T”s called in a contest right after the game with the person (or #) and the reason for the T. This list will be sent to the District Director who will compile a list and deal with any patterns that may present themselves.
8. Sample Referee Announcement/Statement:
	1. Thank you for the honor of working this game tonight with these two deserving teams. We take this responsibility very seriously and will demonstrate “respect for the game” by calling the game to the best of our abilities. We train many hours and many years to be out here. We will do the job to the best of our ability, not caring which team wins or loses, working with coaches and athletes to manage a safe and competitive contest. We ask that you fans enjoy the game and allow the coaches to coach, the players to play, and the referees to ref. Thank you.

**What Are the Next Steps?**

1. The Sea-King District will encourage all its member schools to elect to participate in this initiative. Schools that receive more than 3 ejections during a season or a program that “earns” 5 or more technical fouls during the season will be required to adopt the program.
2. The Sea-King District will compile all data compiled from the questions asked in each of the four sections at each of the schools to develop a common list of suggestions and concerns. PNBOA and SOWB will compile information collected at their meetings and forward to the District Director.
3. The District will compare ejection reports from 2018-19 with previous years to determine if this initiative reduced ejections and increased sportsmanship.
4. The District will track all Technical Fouls (T’s) and determine if there are any patterns that need to be addressed during the season. Officials will report all T’s to their assignors who will pass that information on to the District Director.
5. Pre-game announcements should be made at all home contests and made alternately by coaches, players, parents, and officials (then repeat cycle as needed in regular season).
6. Leagues and schools will be asked to evaluate the initiative at the end of the season and make a recommendation on continuing it or not.
7. Supervision expectations at all District level contests will be enhanced. Supervisors will be required to arrive and check in with game management 30 minutes prior to a contest. Home and visiting supervisors will meet with the crew chief prior to the game. Supervisors will be visible and active during the contests.
8. Pre-Game “Respect the Game” announcements at all Sea-King District contests will be made either by the home team coach or the team captains.
9. Schools may voluntarily request an observation by a Sea-King District representative during the regular season. This person will provide feedback and recommendations on improving supervision and sportsmanship at contests. A checklist will be developed for this purpose.
10. PNBOA and SOWB will provide observers for all contests at a district site (not individual first round home contests). These observers will focus on officiating skills including game management and interaction with coaches and players.
11. Leagues may voluntarily adopt the supervision and announcement procedures for their post season contests if they choose.
12. Expand to other districts as appropriate and requested.
13. The Sea-King District will provide a report detailing the initiative and its effects after the 2018-19 Basketball Season.