

Catholic Secondary School Administrators

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Dear Parents and Students,

We, the chief administrators of the Catholic High Schools within the territory of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, want to share with you some thoughts about athletics and their place in our schools. From the outset, we wish to be clear. This letter is not prompted by any incident within our own league. Rather, it stems from a rising lack of civility and sportsmanship evidenced by today's professional athletes. These athletes serve as models or even heroes for many of our students. The behavior of these professional athletes, good and bad, usually trickles down to the collegiate level and eventually to the high school level of play. Our shared statement is not limited to any sport or any level of play. Rather, we seek to share some reflections with you on the way we, as a Catholic High School Athletic Association, expect our athletes and fans to conduct themselves.

Athletic programs in our schools exist to support our educational mission. Primarily, we seek to present to our students the person of Jesus Christ as the model of how each one of us ought to conduct our life. In all endeavors, whether they be academic, athletic, or social, the Gospel animates all that we do and the behavior that we seek to inculcate in our students. Many other influences strive for your child's attention. Some of these support our philosophy; others are diametrically opposed.

Therefore, the climate in our Catholic High School Athletic Association needs to serve our mission. This environment encompasses athletes, fans, coaches, and parents. Our climate seeks to refocus the example set by some in professional sports who do not reflect our values. We want to maintain a proper perspective and a qualitative atmosphere. For this, we need everyone's assistance.

Certain behaviors are unacceptable. We have chosen not to list specifics here. Simply expressed, we seek conduct that reflects the message of Jesus Christ, namely sportsmanship, fairness, and a healthy environment to highlight a few. We encourage cheering for one's team; not jeering at one's opponent.

We extend this same philosophy to our referees as well. The men and women who officiate at our athletic contests know our philosophy and know the kind of behavior we

expect from our athletes and coaches. We count on these officials to insure fair play and safety, and are grateful for the service they perform.

Please do not misinterpret us. A well-played contest between two teams where all play their best and where fans encourage their team to victory is wanted and welcomed. However, immature displays of poor sportsmanship, foul language and, of course, brawling are simply not who we are as Catholic schools.

We ask you to reflect on this and to discuss these principles with your son or daughter, whether they be an athlete or a fan, in any sport. If you invite guests to our contests, please share our philosophy with them in advance and ask them to respect our role as educators seeking to create an environment in athletics that is conducive to their maturity as Christian women and men. We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to seeing you at the many athletic contests that will take place during the rest of this academic year and beyond. Working together, we can foster in each young woman and young man a healthy, spirit-filled athletic environment.

Catholic Secondary School Administrators

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