

MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP

Statement of Purpose

The Missouri Valley Conference is committed to establishing sportsmanship and developing healthy environments for competition. The Missouri Valley Conference sets forth this code to maintain intercollegiate athletics in harmony with the educational purposes of its member institutions.

Principles of Sportsmanship

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship. The highest potential for sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character.”

Standards of Conduct

Coaches and administrators shall conduct themselves in a professionally dignified manner. Student-athletes shall similarly conduct themselves as positive role models and represent their institutions in a manner which exhibits the principles of sportsmanship.

The standards for the conduct of administrators, coaches and student-athletes immediately preceding, during and following athletics events are:

- (1) exhibiting respect and courtesy towards all participants including the coaches, student-athletes and officials;
- (2) exercising restraint in their actions, both physical and verbal, toward other participants;
- (3) commenting about other institutions, coaches and student-athletes only in a positive manner;
- (4) refraining from making public comments critical of officials or the quality of their work.

Administrators. MVC administrators must develop the attitude that the treatment of a visiting team and its fans will be consistent with how they would want their teams to be treated. It is their responsibility to effectively communicate to all staff, coaches, student-athletes, spirit groups, cheerleaders, and bands the basic principles of sportsmanship and standards of conduct. As a member institution becomes aware of an incident in which the standards have been violated, it has the obligation to take appropriate disciplinary action.

The athletics director at the host institution, or a designated representative, must welcome the visiting coach at every MVC contest provide an opportunity for the coach to address any concerns, indicate the location of the game manager and identify security personnel present for the contest. The athletics director or designated representative should be available to assist in

controlling the crowd and be responsible for educating security personnel to ensure that the visiting team is protected from abuse.

Specifically:

1. Public address announcers must announce the contest in an even-handed manner. Additionally, there shall be an announcement reminding spectators to adhere to good sportsmanship prior to each contest.
2. Institutions must take responsibility to ensure that fans, especially student sections, do not attack or abusively single-out student-athletes or coaches.
3. Each institution must arrange its seating at spectator events so as to emphasize sportsmanship and minimize the harassment of the visiting team and its fans.

Sports Information Directors. Sports information directors and other staff members who interact with the media have a unique opportunity to promote the educational values of intercollegiate athletics and to build positive relationships among the Conference, its member institutions, their fans and the general public. All information distributed should be accurate, objective, fair and contribute to stories and broadcasts that build a positive image of intercollegiate athletics. This positive influence must include those employed as talent for radio and television broadcasts.

Coaches. Coaches have great influence and must set the tone for responsible behavior for both their teams and fans. This includes disciplining student-athletes who have demonstrated disrespect for their opponents. This discipline measure educates that individual and his or her teammates about the importance of sportsmanship over participation and winning. Such education is needed to counteract the constant messages received by our young people from many professional athletes and others who demonstrate a lack of respect for opponents. This Conference and its coaches are committed to teach appropriate messages about sportsmanship.

In all dealings with the public and media, including social media, MVC coaches must take every opportunity to reinforce sportsmanship and stress that the participants are young people who deserve to be treated in accordance with this Code.

These same standards of sportsmanship must be applied by coaches in the recruiting process with adherence to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all dealings with prospective student-athletes. Specifically, coaches shall advocate the positive advantages and attributes of their university and its intercollegiate athletic program and shall avoid making any derogatory statements concerning another member institution's athletic program, facilities or educational opportunities.

Student-Athletes. Respect for the game in which the student-athlete participates also demands respect for the opponent. Student-athletes at MVC institutions are expected to treat opponents with respect. There will be no tolerance for taunting and baiting of opponents.

MVC student-athletes must understand that they are often the most visible representatives of their institutions and their behavior is observed and emulated by many who are younger. MVC

student-athletes must honor the responsibilities that accompany the privilege of representing our schools by behaving with dignity and class in all forums -- on and off the field and via social media.

Spirit Groups. Like our student-athletes, spirit groups are visible representatives of our institutions. As such, we place high expectations on them for decent behavior. Cheerleaders, bands, mascots and other spirit groups are admitted to the contests at the pleasure of our institutions to support their teams and assist in creating a fun atmosphere. They are not admitted in order to disrupt or confront the opponent and such behavior will not be tolerated. Their focus must be toward encouragement of their team and respect for the opposing team.

Officials. Officials assigned to Conference contests must enforce the rules regarding sportsmanship, without tolerance for abuse. The only warning to participants and coaches regarding sportsmanship should come at the beginning of the contest. Once the contest begins, penalties (consequences), not warnings, must be assessed for violations of unsportsmanlike conduct. The Conference will require that officials eject any coach who protests unsportsmanlike conduct calls, provided such ejection is permissible by the rules of that sport.

Officials who do not follow this policy will be subject to reprimand or suspension. Further, officials will be protected from any retaliatory action (e.g. negative impact on ratings, reduced assignments) for enforcing MVC sportsmanship standards. Conference policy prohibits any public criticism of officials by coaches or staff members including comments critical of any game official's performance, character, appearance, or abilities.

Commissioner. The commissioner is expected to enforce Code of Sportsmanship. He or she is authorized to assess penalties for improper behavior that is not detected or properly addressed during the contest. Institutions and their personnel are expected to fully cooperate with his or her effort to investigate possible improper behavior.

Fans. The Conference hopes and believes that the establishment of the principles outlined in this document will create a wholesome atmosphere that will attract more fans to our events. Fans should be encouraged to applaud the effort by both institutions. They should be reminded that the participants are young people who should be treated as if they were their own sons and daughters.

Fans are expected to act in a manner consistent with the Code of Sportsmanship. Individuals who fail to do so will be dismissed from athletics events.

This MVC Code of Sportsmanship is designed to promote sportsmanship throughout the league and ensure healthy environments for competition. By signing this document, I am verifying that I have read and understand the Code in its entirety.