



Sportsmanship Guidelines for VHSL Events

The following guidelines are provided to the administration, teams, cheer squads, students and spectators of VHSL member schools. These guidelines/expectations will be followed at all VHSL event competitions. Please educate your constituents regarding what is expected of them when participating in state level tournaments. It is the hope that all member schools will also utilize these guidelines during their regular season as well as district and regional competition.

Good Sportsmanship is a top priority of the Virginia High School League. The manner in which your school is represented is far more important than wins and losses. Good Sportsmanship is about respect – respect for oneself, for teammates and coaches, for your opponents, contest officials and the game itself.

This document was prepared by VHSL Staff and questions regarding its content should be directed to them.

Cheerleading Coaches/Advisors of VHSL Tournament Teams

Cheerleaders play an important role in promoting good sportsmanship and appropriate behavior at athletic events. After the players, cheerleaders are probably the most visible group at the game. It is critical that cheerleaders represent their schools and communities in a positive manner and that they encourage, through their actions and leadership, others to do the same.

Please review the following important information with your cheerleaders. This will help make their experience at the VHSL State Tournament a positive one.

ARRIVING AT THE TOURNAMENT

- Uniformed cheerleaders will be admitted via the team entrance. Cheerleaders will be admitted only after participating teams have been checked in.
- A maximum of 20 uniformed cheerleaders and 2 coaches as listed on the “Authorized Spirit Group Admittance List for State Competition” will be admitted via the team entrance. Any additional squad members must buy a ticket.
- Tournament staff will be on hand to greet you and escort your squad to the appropriate bleacher/seating area. Locker rooms will not be available for cheerleaders.

BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE GAME

- Adherence to the NFHS Spirit Rules is required. Please make sure you are familiar with those rules.
- Cheerleaders will not be permitted on the playing surface except before the game (if the court/field is otherwise unoccupied), during pre-game introductions, during half-time and during time-outs. At all other times, cheerleaders should remain in front of their respective student section where they can lead appropriate cheers and encourage positive behaviors.
- Cheerleaders will NOT participate in pre or post-game handshakes with players and coaches from the opposing team. If handshakes are to be exchanged, they should be exchanged with the opposing cheerleaders.
- Cheerleaders must remain in front of their own student section. During time-outs and half-time, cheers should be done in the direction of their own student body (end zone section). If performing a routine to music, the routine may be done across the center of the court.
- Cheerleaders are to remain OFF the court/field at the game’s conclusion, including after the championship game. Only the teams will be permitted on the court after the game.

The following actions will be considered violations of the VHSL Sportsmanship Rule and will result in the discontinuation of cheerleading activities for the offending school at that contest. Cheerleaders will be directed to leave the floor and will need to find seats in the bleachers. This list does not address ALL possible inappropriate behaviors, but is meant simply to provide examples of behaviors that should not be tolerated of anyone, but that **will not** be tolerated on the part of cheerleading squads.

- Taunting anyone
- Booing anyone
- Interfering in any way with game officials
- Yelling at or otherwise attempting to distract opposing players at any time.
- Using megaphones as noisemakers (other than for the purpose of amplifying one's voice)
- Leaving the area in front of your school's student section except to perform a cheer at half-time or during a time-out
- Leaving the half of the court/field in which your team's bench is located
- Full court "in-your-face," "one-upmanship" tumbling – tumbling intended to "challenge" the other squad to do the same
- Leading or participating in actions or cheers that are clearly negative and/or show disrespect for participants
- Failure to abide by NFHS Spirit Rules
- Failure to comply with directions given by tournament staff/ personnel

Effective cheerleading squads can do a great deal to enhance the atmosphere in which a game is played. A cheerleader who is a good sport is a true leader within the school and community. Please remember the following responsibilities as you support your team in today's contest:

- Treat opposing cheerleaders and players the way you would like to be treated, as a guest or acquaintance.
- Select positive cheers which praise your team without antagonizing or belittling the other team.
- Begin popular, positive cheers when booing or inappropriate chants begin.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
- Remember that your primary purpose at today's contest is to provide positive support for your basketball team and to lead others in doing the same.

Good sportsmanship is all about respect. Good sports win with humility; lose with grace; and do both with dignity!

VHSL State Tournament School Administrators

Welcome to the State Tournament. We hope you, your team, your student body, and your fans will enjoy their experience.

As you know, good sportsmanship is a top priority of the Virginia High School League. The manner in which your school is represented is far more important than whether your team wins or loses the games they play here. Good sportsmanship is all about respect – respect for oneself, for teammates and coaches, for opposing players and coaches, for contest officials, and for the game. Inappropriate behavior is easy to identify. One need ask only two questions:

1. Is the observed behavior respectful of the targeted audience?
2. Does the observed behavior reflect positively on your school?

If the answer to either question is no, then the behavior is inappropriate and must not be tolerated. Respect for players and coaches of participating teams, game officials and tournament personnel must be a priority at all times and in all situations.

As school administrators, you bear a huge responsibility for making sure that good sportsmanship is valued in your school community. The VHSL State Tournament draws state-wide media attention. Inappropriate behavior on the part of players, coaches or fans can be an embarrassment to you, your school, your community and the VHSL.

Attached to this memo you will find a number of documents outlining tournament procedures. Please review them carefully with your coaches, players, student body and community, as appropriate. You are urged to meet with student leaders before coming to the state event venue to stress with them the importance of positive behavior. Your familiarity and understanding of these procedures will help make your state tournament experience more enjoyable.

Once again, congratulations on a fantastic season and welcome to the State Championships. If there is anything that VHSL or tournament staff can do to help you while you are here, please let us know. Good luck to you and your team!



TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES – ADMINISTRATORS

Each participating school will be expected to provide administrators and other chaperones to actively supervise your student body during your games and address inappropriate behavior if or when it occurs. Individuals who behave inappropriately will be escorted from the facility.

SECURITY AND CROWD CONTROL

- School administrators have primary responsibility for observing their student body and team followers, and for taking corrective action when their students or team followers behave inappropriately. Students will react more quickly and more positively to their own teachers and administrators than they will to an unknown security guard.
- The Events Staff is on-site to **assist** school administrators and chaperones in maintaining the proper atmosphere for the games. They are not responsible for making sure your students and fans behave. As school administrators, that is your responsibility. Staff is there to help you should you need it.
- Your student body will be encouraged to use seating nearest your team's bench. .Students in this area may stand throughout the game if they so desire. They must remain in the bleachers and may not come down onto the floor/field level. **(In Volleyball, the host site will determine movement of fans in correspondence with bench changes. In all sports, school student sections MAY be designated.)**
- The athletic director and/or other individuals you designate from your school will have responsibility for observing the student body during the game, and taking whatever corrective action might be necessary in the event that someone behaves inappropriately. Each of these individuals will receive credentials which must be worn during your school's games. Watching the game will be secondary to observing your school's fans. These individuals are "on duty" during your game. Their supervision must be "active," not "passive." VHSL and tournament staff will assist when necessary.
- It is suggested that each school have additional chaperones for its student body. Individuals so-identified will also be given credentials so that they can be easily identified, but will sit among the student body
- An individual from the Event Staff will be introduced to a school designee. That Event Staff person will be available to assist you before, during and after your games.
- Fans will not be permitted on the court/field at any time. No one will be permitted on the court/field except the players, coaches and game officials.
- Near the end of the game designated school personnel will join and assist Event facing your student body and will discourage students from coming onto the floor/field at the game's conclusion.

EXAMPLES OF UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR

The following list is by no means “all inclusive,” but is provided to draw attention to behaviors often witnessed at athletic contests. Please review this list with your student body so that they will know what is not acceptable.

- Turning your back or pretending to read a newspaper during player introductions – this is disrespectful.
- Not standing attentively or shouting “oh” during the National Anthem – this is disrespectful.
- Booing anyone – this is disrespectful
- Taunting or baiting anyone – this is disrespectful
- Singling out an opponent and yelling personal remarks – this is disrespectful
- Mooing, barking, or making other inappropriate gestures or sounds toward anyone – this is disrespectful
- Chanting such things as “over-rated,” or “you, you, you” (after a foul), “warm-up the bus,” etc. – these things are disrespectful.
- Using profanity toward anyone – this is disrespectful
- Using racial, ethnic or other slurs – this is disrespectful
- Throwing things onto the court/field or toward others – this is disrespectful and dangerous

The behaviors above must be addressed by school administrators if/when they occur. Failure to do so is a violation of The League's Sportsmanship Rule.

Remember, good sportsmanship is all about respect. Win with humility; lose with grace; do both with dignity.

PLEASE REMIND YOUR STUDENTS AND OTHER SPECTATORS OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Artificial noisemakers are not permitted at indoor events – this includes bells, whistles, thunder sticks, clappers, megaphones (except cheerleaders), horns, etc. Artificial noisemakers are prohibited by NFHS Rules. Some of our sites may have more restrictive rules regarding this policy. Local site restrictions will be enforced where required.
- **Body paint is not permitted at any indoor event. Body painting is not permitted on site at any outdoor event.** Face painting is acceptable provided that it has been done prior to entering the stadium/arena.
- No containers/products for face painting will be permitted to be bought into the stadium/arena.
- Bare chests are not permitted **at any indoor events.**

- No one will be permitted on the court/field at the end of the game.
- Outside food and/or beverages may not be brought into stadium/arena unless specifically granted, in advance, by the facility and event directors.
- Individuals who are disruptive, disrespectful, or who fail to comply with stadium/arena and/or VHSL procedures will be escorted from the facility.

OTHER REMINDERS

- All school faculty members, administrators, school board members, and any other “VIPs” must either have one of the VHSL Accepted Passes (along with picture ID) or must purchase a ticket.
- Individuals with passes must enter via the pass gate. They may not enter via the team entrance.
- Only players, coaches, and non-participating team members will be permitted on the team bench.
- NO ONE (except those participating in the awards ceremony) will be permitted on the court/field after the game.
- Food may not be taken out of any hospitality room, unless specifically allowed, as stated by, the facility.
- School/Pep Bands may only play at times not prohibited by NFHS Individual Sports Rules
- Hand-held signs (in good taste) are permitted but may not be mounted on sticks, poles, etc and should not obstruct the view of others.



VHSL State Event Coaches

Congratulations to you and your team on your successful season and welcome to this year's VHSL State Tournament. We hope you and your athletes will enjoy their experience, and that they will have the tournament of their lives!

Please review the attachment to this memo with all members of your team prior to your first game. Compliance with the procedures outlined in the attachments will help make your State Tournament experience a positive one.

Good sportsmanship is a top priority of the Virginia High School League. In fact, the manner in which you and your team represent your school is far more important than whether you win or lose the games you play here. Good sportsmanship is all about respect – respect for teammates and coaches, respect for opposing players and coaches, respect for contest officials, and respect for the game. Please demand from your players and team personnel that as they compete for this year's state championship, they treat all other teams, officials and tournament personnel with courtesy and respect at all times, regardless of the situation. Please encourage your fans to do the same. And, finally, please lead by your example.

Once again, congratulations on a fantastic season and welcome to the State Tournament. If there is anything that VHSL or tournament staff can do to help you while you are here, please let us know. Good luck to you and your team!



COACH,

THE ATTACHED MATERIALS ARE TO BE REVIEWED WITH YOUR TEAM PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST GAME. AFTER REVIEW, PLEASE SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW AND BRING THIS SHEET TO THE SITE DIRECTOR DURING WARM-UPS PRIOR TO YOUR GAME.

I certify by my signature below that I have reviewed the tournament procedures with my team and coaching staff, and that we will make every effort to conduct ourselves in a manner which is courteous and respectful of all other tournament participants, officials and attendees.

Printed Name of Head Coach

School

Signature of Head Coach



TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES – COACHES

ARRIVING AT THE STADIUM/ARENA

- Teams should enter via the designated team entrance.
- A specific time line for warm ups and field access will be provided one week prior to the contest.

PREGAME

- The team bench is for the specific team travel party.
- The team designated as the HOME team will occupy the bench area specified by event staff.
- Prior to contests the National Anthem will be played. It is expected that ALL players and team personnel will stand quietly (unless they choose to sing the Anthem) and attentively until the Anthem is fully completed. Failure to do this is extremely disrespectful to our country.

AFTER THE GAME

- Immediately at the conclusion of the game, players should return to their team benches, where coaches and players will form a line and proceed to shake hands with each coach and member of the opposing team. This process should be initiated by the winning team and must be done prior to any team huddle or celebration. (If appropriate for the event)
- Following the handshake, teams may huddle briefly before leaving the court/field (or preparing for the medal ceremony). (If appropriate for the event)
- Players may NOT go into the stands or into the other team's area of the court/field to celebrate.
- Players may NOT stand on team benches, the scorer's table, or any other equipment on or around the court/field.
- Players may NOT remove any part of their uniform – whether in celebration, or in disappointment.
- Players may NOT dump or spray Gatorade, water, or any other substance, wet or dry, on anyone or anything as part of a post-match celebration or at any other time.
- Win with humility. Lose with grace. Do both with dignity.

POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE (if scheduled)

- Five minutes after the conclusion of each game, the winning coach and selected players will be escorted to the Media Room where they will participate in a post-game press conference. The press conference will last approximately 10 minutes.
- The coach and selected players of the non-winning team will be available for interviews in the Media Room immediately following the winning team's press conference.
- No post-game interviews will be conducted on the court/field.

AWARDS CEREMONY (for teams participating in a championship game)

- At the conclusion of the championship game, awards will be presented in the following order:
 - Medals will be presented to PLAYERS from the runner-up team.
 - The runner-up trophy will be presented to the HEAD COACH of the runner-up team.
 - Medals will be presented to PLAYERS from the champion team.
 - The championship trophy will be presented to THE HEAD COACH of the winning team.
- All coaches and players from both teams are expected to remain on the court/field and participate in the awards ceremony – win or lose – no exceptions.

Failure to comply with the procedures outlined in this document will be considered a violation of VHSL's Sportsmanship Rule.

Remember, good sportsmanship is all about respect.



FANS of VHSL EVENTS

On behalf of the member schools of the Virginia High School League, welcome to this VHSL Tournament. We hope all of the teams play great and that everyone enjoys the event.

Good sportsmanship is a top priority of the VHSL. The manner in which your school and community are represented is far more important than whether your team wins or loses the games they play here. **ALL** of the teams in this year's tournament should be proud of their accomplishments, and you, as parents, students and team followers should be equally proud and supportive of them as they chase their dream.

Good sportsmanship is all about respect – respect for oneself, for teammates and coaches, for opposing players and coaches, for contest officials, and for the game. Inappropriate behavior is easy to identify. One need ask only two questions:

3. Is the observed behavior respectful of the targeted audience?
4. Does the observed behavior reflect positively on your school?

If the answer to either question is no, then the behavior is inappropriate and must not be tolerated. Respect for players and coaches of participating teams, game officials and tournament personnel must be a priority at all times and in all situations.

Much of the behavior you see televised at college games is inappropriate at ANY level, but most especially at the high school level. The following list, though not inclusive, provides examples of behaviors that are disrespectful and thus unsportsmanlike, but are often witnessed at athletic events.

- Turning your back or pretending to read a newspaper during player introductions – this is disrespectful.
- Not standing attentively or shouting “oh” during the National Anthem – this is disrespectful.
- Booing anyone – this is disrespectful
- Taunting or baiting anyone – this is disrespectful
- Singling out an opponent and yelling personal remarks – this is disrespectful
- Mooing, barking, or making other inappropriate gestures or sounds toward anyone – this is disrespectful
- Chanting such things as “over-rated,” or “you, you, you” (after a foul), “warm-up the bus,” etc. – these things are disrespectful.
- Using profanity toward anyone – this is disrespectful
- Using racial, ethnic or other slurs – this is disrespectful
- Throwing things onto the court/field or toward others – this is disrespectful and dangerous

The responsibility for good sportsmanship rests with each and every one of us. One person behaving inappropriately can ruin the state tournament experience for many. Cheer for your team, but respect the other team and the game officials. Be a fan, not a fanatic.

Remember, good sportsmanship is all about respect. Win with humility; lose with grace; do both with dignity.

The following items are NOT allowed at VHSL State Events

In an ongoing effort to ensure the safety of our guests, participants, and staff, the following security measures will be in place.

Prohibited Items:

Alcohol	Food & Beverages	Umbrellas
Backpacks	Sport Bags	Coolers, Bottles, Cans
Weapons (of any kind)	Video Cameras (most events)	Empty Containers
Laser Pointers	Artificial Noise Makers	Banners/Flags on sticks or poles

Allowable Items:

Purses/Pocketbooks	<i>All bags and allowable items subject to search</i>	
Pagers	Fanny Packs	Cell Phones
Still Cameras	Diaper Bags	Binoculars

These security measures are based upon federal, state, and local law agency recommendations and are designed to increase the safety and security of each and every guest and participant at our events.

- Artificial noisemakers are prohibited by NFHS Rules at indoor events. This includes (but is not limited to) bells, whistles, thunder sticks, clappers, megaphones (except cheerleaders), horns, etc. Again, this is not a "VHSL" rule, but a NFHS rule.
- Body paint will not be permitted. Face painting is acceptable if done prior to entering the event venue. No containers/products for face painting will be permitted in the stadium/arena.
- Balloons will not be permitted.
- Bare chests will not be permitted – individuals must remain clothed!
- It is strongly suggested that student fans sit in the end zone/designated area nearest your team's bench. Students in this area may stand throughout the game if they so desire. If you do not wish to have someone stand in front of you for an entire game, you should not sit in one of the end zones.
- In the interest of safety, NO ONE will be permitted on the court/field at the end of a game. The court/field is for the teams.

- Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Fans that are disruptive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will be escorted from the building. This includes individuals who choose to sit among fans from another team – if you are disruptive and/or disrespectful, you will be asked to leave.
- Hand held signs (in good taste) are permitted but may not be attached to sticks, poles, etc.
- Bands/ Pep Bands are permitted to play except during times prohibited by NFHS Sports Rules.