



# Pursuing Victory With Honor<sup>sm</sup>

## *Possible Action Steps for School Site Principals*

1. Make it clear that you expect all coaches and athletic staff to promote sportsmanship and foster good character by Teaching, Enforcing, Advocating and Modeling the six pillars of character.
2. Think about requiring pre-season meetings of parents, coaches and players wherein your expectations are spelled out, codes of conduct are discussed and parents are given direction on their role in relation to the coach and players. Also include an emphasis on the role athletics can play in the full education of students and in developing character.
3. Ensure that the athletic program enhances the academic, emotional, social, physical and ethical development of the student-athletes.
4. Demand scrupulous integrity of all coaches and athletic staff. Observe and enforce the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
5. Communicate to all stakeholders that athletic participation is a privilege, not a right. To earn that privilege, student-athletes must abide by the rules and conduct themselves, on and off the field, as role models who exemplify good character.
6. Enforce with coaches, athletes, parents and spectators the district-approved codes of conduct. If your district hasn't adopted codes, urge their adoption. Look at ways to honor coaches, athletes and others who are good examples for all and exemplify the best in following those codes.
7. Emphasize in all communications directed to student-athletes and parents the importance of character, ethics and sportsmanship.
8. Ensure the "message" is communicated to all stakeholders is that the first priority of the student-athletes is a serious commitment to getting the best education possible, succeeding in the classroom and developing the academic skills and character to succeed.

9. Make it clear that the desire to achieve sport performance goals and the pressure to win is not placed above education, character development, academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical well-being of the student-athlete. No one should compromise the character development and ethical well being of the student-athletes in order to win.
10. Ensure that athletic coaches, whether paid or voluntary, are competent to coach. These minimum competencies must include basic knowledge of 1) the character-building aspects of sports, including techniques and methods of teaching and reinforcing the core values comprising sportsmanship and good character; 2) the physical capacities and limitations of the age group coached, as well as first aid; and 3) coaching principles related to educational philosophy, adolescent psychology, nutrition, risk management and the rules and strategies of the sport.
11. Make it clear that coaches and staff must model respectful behavior and demand of that their athletes refrain from disrespectful conduct, including verbal abuse of opponents and officials, profane and belligerent trash-talking, taunting and inappropriate celebrations.
12. Ensure that coaches understand that the profession of coaching is a profession of teaching. Through words and example, coaches must strive to build character of their athletes by teaching them to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring and good citizens.
13. Ensure that the athletic program enhances the academic, emotional, social, physical and ethical development of the student-athletes.

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*“Pursuing Victory With Honor” and the “Six Pillars of Character” are service marks of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. For more information on promoting character education and good sportsmanship, visit [www.charactercounts.com](http://www.charactercounts.com).*