

Dear Hanson Sports Fans (Parents, Grandparents, extended family members),

“ROLE MODELS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER. YOU CAN SERVE AS A ROLE MODEL FOR OTHERS THE NEXT TIME YOU DISPLAY GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP.... GOOD SPORTS ARE WINNERS AND ARE ALSO VITAL TO PRESERVING OUR FINE SPORTS TRADITIONS.”

THE SCORE OF ANY ATHLETIC EVENT IS GENERALLY FORGOTTEN OVER TIME, BUT **THE ACTIONS OF PLAYERS, COACHES AND SPECTATORS LEAVE LASTING IMPRESSIONS.**”

The most important part of this long message is an offering of applause to those parents who honor Hanson by conducting themselves with gracefulness and truly reflect in their actions those qualities that represent the school’s mission and Catholic and Christian principles.

I hope that those who understand what sportsmanship is-- mainly respect for others and in the end positive character development-- will recognize that they provide a great service to the school by adhering to high standards of conduct. Each of these leaders should find within his or her fortitude a responsibility to aid in managing those who have not yet fully accommodated a Christian ethic into an appropriate social behavior at sporting events and practices. Thank you to those who fully demonstrate Christ-like sportsmanship. But please read on as to what does and doesn’t constitute respectful and honorable cheer leading.

1. If positioning a son or daughter for a college athletic scholarship or grandstanding for the showcasing of one’s child in every play or game is what motivates parents, it’s misplaced and disadvantages the progress of the majority of others who are driven by nobler team goals. A single individual never equates to a winning strategy in team sports, or a winning individual. If the zeal for the individual outweighs the strength of the team, then we’ve lost even when we win. Zealous parents second guessing or insulting Hanson coaches, other team’s players, or undermine team building is not a fan’s/parent’s right.
2. Here’s what we know about criticism as applied to the learning environments, which includes team sports: productive criticism is one of the top ten correlates that make a difference in the K-college settings. Positive criticism yields results-- that is criticism that reveals error and attempts to regulate and facilitate corrective pathways by capitalizing on strengths, not weaknesses; negative criticism-- ugly comments or actions that serve no useful purpose or red ink corrections without any other guidance-- is inversely related to success.

3. Specifically on playing time, unless the principals/A.D.'s meeting generates some other expectation, at the Hanson junior high level and to some extent freshman year, students should experience equitable playing time, as equal amount of playing time as possible for each athlete, so that each has time to hone skills and grow or demonstrate ability, but on the varsity level and at this school, the coaches call the shots, not parents. Coaches know the players; know best what player's skill sets work for each situation. Parents who question the ability of our coaches during practice or during games are more than welcome to send their teaching, coaching, and officiating credentials to administration for consideration for employment. Otherwise, their questionable commentary is out of order with the goals and objectives of the school and unwelcome. The coaches require your support to do their jobs, not unfounded and usually selfish and biased interjection. Parents who cannot maintain a supportive and positive decorum will not be tolerated. Those who cannot refrain from harassment and disrespect **will** be banned from sporting events.
4. Regarding voices from the side-lines deriding referees/umpires and the other teams and, worst yet, voices deriding our coaches, parents typically see only what they want to see. Our coaches work **tirelessly** and warrant parent modeling that reflects earned respect.
5. Regulating and reforming errant processes and thinking is a hallmark of advanced thinking. Prejudiced minds tend to ascribe labels to entire groups of people, generalized character labels of race, ethnicity, sex, religion, gender, ability... rather than focusing on the underlying, core social issues. This Catholic school is not a safe haven for bigots, and as a member of this school, you have a bound conscience and a formal contract to abide by this statement: "Hanson Memorial does **not** discriminate on the basis of race, creed, sex, or national origin." At Hanson, part of our existence in the Catholic faith and our intellectual and faithful promise is to **love others**, to lift up others, not to deride others. Christians do not truly comprehend persecution when their hate ridden attitudes, words, and actions are purposefully harmful toward different groups. Such hatred serves no good purpose and is a contradiction to the school's purpose We are either leaders in this community or less than those we deliberately choose to continue to damage or ostracize Race or religion... does not make the player or the citizen; ability, integrity, **dignity**... do. Given attendance at sporting events is a privilege, not a right, I repeat our State Athletic Association's words of wisdom, so that everyone's action is driven by a higher code of responsibility:

"THE SCORE OF ANY ATHLETIC EVENT IS GENERALLY FORGOTTEN OVER TIME, BUT THE ACTIONS OF PLAYERS, COACHES AND SPECTATORS LEAVE LASTING IMPRESSIONS. THE NEXT TIME YOU ATTEND A HIGH SCHOOL GAME, "THINK OF HOW HISTORY WILL REMEMBER YOU. CHOOSE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP AND HELP REKINDLE

THE SPIRIT OF CITIZENSHIP. REMEMBER, **THE LESSONS YOU TEACH TODAY WILL HELP DEVELOP BETTER CITIZENS IN OUR COMMUNITIES FOR TOMORROW.**

6. "THE GAME IS NOT ONLY A COMPETITIVE CONTEST BETWEEN TWO SCHOOLS, BUT IT'S ALSO AN **EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE** FOR THE STUDENTS INVOLVED. BECAUSE HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ARE ABOUT **LEARNING LIFE VALUES**,... EVERYONE [AT HANSON MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL] IS TO DO HIS OR HER PARTS IN KEEPING OUR HOMETOWN SPORTS **A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE. DO YOUR PART...BY SHOWING GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP.**

7. "WHEN YOU ATTEND A HIGH SCHOOL GAME, DO YOU STAND AT ATTENTION DURING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM? **DO YOU CHEER A GOOD PLAY BY THE OPPOSING TEAM? IF YOUR TEAM LOSES, DO YOU TAKE IT WELL IN STRIDE? IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES' TO ANY OF THOSE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE SHOWING POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF SPORTSMANSHIP.** DON'T FORGET THAT WHEN YOU ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS, **YOUNG EYES ARE WATCHING YOU FOR EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR.** BY MAKING A CONSCIOUS EFFORT, YOU'LL BE **HELPING OUR STUDENTS GROW** INTO BETTER ADULTS."

8. "WHETHER IT'S BALLS AND STRIKES, FOULS OR FLAGS, YOUR REFEREES AND GAME OFFICIALS [and coaches] ARE A VITAL PART OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS. **IF YOU'VE EVER TRIED YOUR HAND AT OFFICIATING, YOU KNOW HOW HARD THESE MEN AND WOMEN WORK,** AND YOU CERTAINLY KNOW THAT THEY WOULD NEVER MISS A CALL INTENTIONALLY. KEEP THESE THINGS IN MIND AS YOU ATTEND SPORTING EVENTS. AFTERALL, **RESPECTING OFFICIALS AND AUTHORITY FIGURES IS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE LESSONS THAT WE CAN TEACH OUR STUDENTS.**"

"THE LESSONS YOU TEACH TODAY WILL HELP DEVELOP BETTER CITIZENS IN OUR COMMUNITIES FOR TOMORROW.... RESPECTING OFFICIALS AND AUTHORITY FIGURES IS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE LESSONS THAT WE CAN TEACH OUR STUDENTS."

Make Hanson a better learning and sporting environment through dignified actions and words.

Sincerely,

Vincent Miholic