

Sportsmanship and ethical conduct initiatives at NCAA member institutions

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Currently, three NCAA bylaws address sportsmanship and ethical conduct. The first, Bylaw 2.4 - The Principles of Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct, places the responsibility on each member institution. It reads:

For intercollegiate athletics to promote the character development of participants, to enhance the integrity of higher education and to promote civility in society, student-athletes, coaches, and all others associated with these athletics programs and events should adhere to such fundamental values as respect, fairness, civility, honesty and responsibility. These values should be manifest not only in athletics participation but also in the broad spectrum of activities affecting the athletics program. It is the responsibility of each institution to: (a) Establish policies for sportsmanship and ethical conduct in intercollegiate athletics consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution; and (b) Educate, on a continuing basis, all constituencies about the policies in Constitution 2.4-(a).

The second, Bylaw 2.21, establishes the Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical conduct, whose duties shall be to promote sportsmanship and ethical conduct within the Association. This committee has created the RESPECT campaign, an initiative to increase awareness and commitment to sportsmanship association-wide, with an emphasis on institutional activation.

The third, Bylaw 10.1- Unethical Conduct, does not address fan behavior, but focuses on issues related to present and former student-athletes or institutional staff members.

The present study examines actions undertaken by NCAA member institutions in regard to guidelines of the RESPECT campaign. In general, the researchers are examining the breadth and depth of sportsmanship and ethical conduct on specific campuses. Specifically, the researchers are examining the make-up of sportsmanship groups on campus, their mission and charter, membership requirements, how information is disseminated, and if there are measurable changes in the game environment based on the sportsmanship initiatives on certain campuses.

Early results of this investigation reveal a wide range of commitment to sportsmanship and ethical conduct initiatives among NCAA member institutions.