

# Pursuing Victory with Honor Arizona Sports Summit Accord

**Pursuing Victory with Honor** is a sportsmanship campaign involving some of the biggest names and organizations in amateur athletics. It began at a May 1999 summit gathering in Scottsdale, Arizona, where more than four dozen leading sports figures called for major reforms in the way sports are coached, played and watched. Participants at this conference — sponsored by the nonprofit Josephson Institute of Ethics, the **CHARACTER COUNTS!** Coalition and the coaching division of the United States Olympic Committee — issued the **Arizona Sports Summit Accord**, 16 principles to be adopted and practiced by sports organizations nationwide. Accord signatories include: the NCAA Division IA Athletic Directors Association, the National Association of Basketball Coaches, the American Football Coaches Association, the National Federation of State High School Associations and most of the nation's Division IA collegiate athletic programs. There are two versions of the Accord: one for youth and interscholastic sports, the other for intercollegiate and Olympic sports.



# Pursuing Victory with Honor

## Arizona Sports Summit Accord

### Our Operating Principles

#### PREAMBLE

At its best, athletic competition can hold intrinsic value for our society. It is a symbol of a great ideal: pursuing victory with honor. The love of sports is deeply embedded in our national consciousness. The values of millions of participants and spectators are directly and dramatically influenced by the values conveyed by organized sports. Thus, sports are a major social force that shapes the quality and character of the American culture. In the belief that the impact of sports can and should enhance the character and uplift the ethics of the nation, we seek to establish a framework of principles and a common language of values that can be adopted and practiced widely.

#### IT IS THEREFORE AGREED:

1. 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 of sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character.”
2. It is the duty of school boards, superintendents, school administrators, parents and school sports leadership — including coaches, athletic administrators, program directors and game officials — to promote sportsmanship and foster good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling these “six pillars of character.”
3. To promote sportsmanship and foster the development of good character, school sports programs must be conducted in a manner that enhances the academic, emotional, social, physical and ethical development of student-athletes and teaches them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.
4. Participation in athletic programs is a privilege, not a right. To earn that privilege, student-athletes must abide by the rules and they must conduct themselves, on and off the field, as role models who exemplify good character.
5. School boards, superintendents, school administrators, parents and school sports leadership shall establish standards for participation by adopting and enforcing codes of conduct for coaches, athletes, parents and spectators.
6. All sports participants in high school sports must consistently demonstrate and demand scrupulous integrity and observe and enforce the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
7. The importance of character, ethics and sportsmanship should be emphasized in all communications directed to student-athletes and their parents.
8. School boards, superintendents, school administrators, parents and school sports leadership must ensure that the first priority of their student-athletes is a serious commitment to getting an education and developing the academic skills and character to succeed.
9. School boards, superintendents, principals, school administrators and everyone involved in sports program governance must maintain ultimate responsibility for the quality and integrity of those programs. Such individuals must assure that education and character development responsibilities are not compromised to achieve sports performance goals and that the academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical well-being of student-athletes is always placed above desires and pressures to win.

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# T

**TEACH** young people that their character counts — that their success and happiness depend on who they are inside, not on what they have or how they look. Tell them to live by the “Six Pillars of Character”: *trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship*. Explain these words. Use examples from your life, history and the news.

# E

**ENFORCE** the Six Pillars by praising good behavior and imposing (or, in some cases, allowing others to impose) fair consequences for bad behavior. Demonstrate courage by enforcing core values, even when difficult.

# A

**ADVOCATE** character by refusing to be neutral or casual about improper conduct. Be clear and uncompromising that you expect the young people you deal with to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring and good citizens.

# M

**MODEL** good character in everything you say and do. Hold yourself to the highest standards by honoring the Six Pillars at all times. Everything you do, and don't do, sends a message. When you slip, act as you want your children to when they behave improperly. Be accountable, apologize sincerely — and do better!

9. School boards, superintendents, principals, school administrators and everyone involved in sports program governance must maintain ultimate responsibility for the quality and integrity of those programs. Such individuals must assure that education and character development responsibilities are not compromised to achieve sports performance goals and that the academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical well-being of student-athletes is always placed above desires and pressures to win.
10. All employees of schools must be directly involved in and committed to the academic success of student-athletes and the character-building goals of the school.
11. Everyone involved in competition — including parents, spectators, associated student body leaders and auxiliary groups — has a duty to honor the traditions of the sport and to treat other participants with respect. Coaches have a special responsibility to model respectful behavior and the duty to demand that their athletes refrain from disrespectful conduct, including verbal abuse of opponents and officials, profane or belligerent trash-talking, taunting and inappropriate celebrations.
12. School boards, superintendents and school administrators must ensure that coaches, whether paid or voluntary, are competent to coach. Training or experience may determine minimal competence. These competencies 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 and the rules and strategies of the sport.
13. Because of the powerful potential of sports as a vehicle for positive personal growth, a broad spectrum of sports experiences should be made available to all of our diverse communities.
14. To safeguard the health of athletes and the integrity of the sport, sports programs must prohibit the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and performance-enhancing substances, as well as demand compliance with all laws and regulations, including those relating to gambling and the use of drugs.
15. Schools that offer athletic programs must safeguard the integrity of their programs. Commercial relationships should be continually monitored to ensure against inappropriate exploitation of the school's name or reputation. There should be no undue interference or influence of commercial interests. In addition, sports programs must be prudent, avoiding undue financial dependency on particular companies or sponsors.
16. The profession of coaching is a profession of teaching. In addition to teaching the mental and physical dimensions of their sport, coaches, through words and example, must strive to build the character of their athletes by teaching them to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring and good citizens.