

# What We Believe About High School Sports

## “Pursuing Victory with Honors”

**At its best, athletic competition can hold intrinsic values 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. In the belief that the impact of sports can and should enhance the character and uplift the ethics of the state, we have established a framework of principles and a common language of values that should be adopted and practiced widely.**

**On November 5, 1999 nearly 50 interscholastic sports and educational leaders representing California’s 1292 high schools voted unanimously to adopt and endorse “Pursuing Victory With Honor” as operating beliefs and principles of the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF). “Pursuing Victory With Honor” is the result of a conference convened May 12-14, 1999 in Scottsdale Arizona by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition and the United States Olympic Committee. Listed below are just a few of the principles. For the complete list go to: [www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org)**

- The essential elements of character building and ethics in CIF 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."
- To 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.
- Participation in school sports 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 positive role models who exemplify good character.
- Everyone involved in CIF competition; parents, spectators, associated student body leaders and all 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 athlete’s refrain from disrespectful conduct including verbal abuse of opponents and officials profane or belligerent trash-talking, taunting and inappropriate celebrations.
- 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 also strive to build the character of their athletes by teaching them to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fairness, caring and good citizens.