



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Sportsmanship Course Updated in NFHS Learning Center with Call for Better Behavior at High School Contests**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Dan Schuster

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (September 6, 2022) — One of the longest-running and most utilized online education courses in the NFHS Learning Center has been updated with an urgent call for better behavior and conduct by everyone at high school games and contests.

The free *"Sportsmanship"* course, which debuted on the NFHS Learning Center in 2011, has been delivered to more than 920,000 individuals in the past 11 years, and is among the top five most popular courses offered through the NFHS' online education center.

With sportsmanship being one of most important outcomes of involvement in education-based activity programs, perhaps appropriately, students have taken more than 70 percent of the *"Sportsmanship"* courses in the past. Given the decline in behavior by other groups at high school games, the updated *"Sportsmanship"* course reiterates the critical importance of positive behaviors by everyone – parents, coaches, students, officials and others.

In the opening of the updated course, Dr. Karissa Niehoff, CEO of the NFHS, addresses the behavior of parents and other fans at high school games and its effect on the state of officiating around the country.

"Parents and other fans must come to school events to cheer for their school's players, not against the officials or opponents," Niehoff said. "We all have the opportunity to change this negative

and dangerous culture of spectator behavior. It starts with each of us, no matter our role – coach, student, administrator, official, fan or parent. We all must commit to treating one another with dignity and respect.”

The revised “*Sportsmanship*” course provides an understanding of what good sportsmanship looks and sounds like, clearly defines everyone’s roles during interscholastic events and reaffirms a commitment to maintaining those roles for the betterment of the students and activities involved. The revised course also features interviews with students, parents, coaches, administrators and officials about sportsmanship.

“Nothing is more important to education-based activity programs than sportsmanship,” said Dan Schuster, NFHS director of educational services. “With the growing concerns about how bad behavior is affecting recruiting and retention of officials, we felt this course needed to be updated to include some strong messaging in this regard.”

After starting with two courses – “*Fundamentals of Coaching*” and “*First Aid, Health and Safety*” – in 2007 through the former NFHS Coach Education Program, the NFHS Learning Center now offers 88 online courses – 68 of which are free – at [www.NFHSLearn.com](http://www.NFHSLearn.com).

Amazingly, more than 17 million courses have been taken since the inception of the program, including 700,000 in August, an all-time record for one month. More than 6.6 million “*Concussion in Sports*” courses have been delivered, and just over one million “*Concussion for Students*” courses have been taken.

Courses are now available to students, coaches, parents, administrators, officials and performing arts/educators.

###

#### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors

professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; offers online education courses for coaches, administrators, students, officials, performing arts educators, parents and others; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Bruce Howard, 317-972-6900  
Director of Publications and Communications  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[bhoward@nfhs.org](mailto:bhoward@nfhs.org)

Chris Boone, 317-972-6900  
Assistant Director of Publications and Communications  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[cboone@nfhs.org](mailto:cboone@nfhs.org)

Cody Porter, 317-972-6900  
Manager of Media Relations  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[cporter@nfhs.org](mailto:cporter@nfhs.org)

Nate Perry, 317-972-6900  
Coordinator of Media Relations  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[nperry@nfhs.org](mailto:nperry@nfhs.org)