



## Athletes: Professional and Students

Historically athletes have been in a unique position to influence society. Youth continue to look up to athletes at all levels – high school, college and professional – and they will mimic or imitate what they see them do, whether their behavior is positive or negative. Therefore, these athletes have the responsibility of being good role models. To further these goal athletes should:

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- **Speak** articulately without using profanity.
- **Dress** appropriately for all occasions.
- **Act** politely and treat everyone they encounter with respect.
- **Utilize** their unique position to reach out and share positive messages with minority communities and beyond.
- **Complete** their own education and encourage others to do the same. Persons with high school diplomas and/or college degrees are less likely to be involved with anti-social or illegal behavior. Athletes should, therefore, exercise the discipline learned within their chosen sport, off the field, in their daily lives and in the community.
- **Take** responsibility for being aware of, and sensitive to, the issues in the community in which they are employed and live in during the season and perhaps off-season as well.
- **Participate** in community events when invited to do so and develop responsible connections to the community. Use the concept of team spirit to mobilize the community. It takes the efforts of *everyone*, including athletes, to heal the community. Team spirit, therefore, becomes community spirit.
- **Demonstrate** and share that athletes have to deal with the same kinds of issues and problems faced by many other people.

### Professional Athletes

Professional Athletes are in a unique position to gain access to people in power at a level not available to the average citizen. In addition to the above stated responsibilities, professional athletes have an extremely powerful opportunity to impact the violence in the communities where they play. Therefore, professional athletes should:

- **Support**, organizations that provide needed services for children living within the various communities with their time, talents and treasures.
- **Freely** donate their time for occasions throughout the year in the various communities to demonstrate their commitment to the cities from which they gain their livelihood. Such participation could enhance the financial success of many community events.

- **Consider** forming new foundations; holding major annual fundraising events to benefit charities of their own choosing; providing funds and other resources for smaller events such as school and/or community events; repairing recreational facilities; building new facilities, such as community or wellness centers; providing recreational equipment, uniforms, books for libraries; and so on. Professional athletes could also provide scholarships for youth or others from disadvantaged communities.
- **Partner** with the business and corporate community in carrying out the action points identified in the Coalition Against Violence 2012 anti-violence document and support the anti-violence initiatives of other organizations and agencies.

## Student Athletes

Student athletes must embrace the fact that they are often considered role models for their fellow students and the youth of the community that they represent. Because the community supports their team on the playing field, student athletes must return the gracious gift of support to the community and their school.

- **Take** the lead in the classroom. Be the example to other students for appropriate classroom behavior. Fundamentals include: being on time; sitting in the front of the class; sitting up straight (no slouching, side-ways and/or leaning on chairs).
- **Actively participate** in classroom discussion (do not make yourself feel inferior). When students see their leader on the playing field also participating in the class they will probably follow.
- **Be** respectful to the teacher; offer to aid the teacher in helping her to redirect other students that seem to get off task easily.
- **Volunteer** to pass out work or to be a group leader.
- **Consider** becoming involved in other activities besides sports. High Schools offer so many extra-curricular activities that athletes often avoid. Join some clubs and bring positive notoriety to them.
- **Stop bullying incidents** when witnessed. A majority of the time, bullies will listen to a fellow peer before they listen to an adult. If you know that either another student and/or group are being bullied sit at their table during lunch. Ask them to work on school work together. Make them part of your group and avoid making other students feel isolated.

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