

### SPORTSMANSHIP: ENCOUNTERING SUCCESS WITH HUMILITY AND FAILURE WITH CONFIDENCE

by Scott McCurley, Academic Dean

As we have moved through these early weeks of the athletic calendar, it has been encouraging to see the students turn out in droves to support and cheer one another on. Indeed, it seemed as if more than three-quarters of the high school was in attendance at the first set of away games at Timberlake two Fridays ago. That sort of school spirit can be a great benefit to the athletic program and school culture in general. School spirit, unchecked, however, can also go off the rails.

In our Portrait of the Graduate we claim that a New Covenant graduate encounters success with humility and failure with confidence. This is certainly applicable to student academics but is very much in the fore in athletics. Another one reads, A New Covenant graduate is prudent in speech and action. Does taunting an opposing player/fan reflect these qualities? Is it prudent to dress down a referee for missing a call? These are simple questions to answer – no.

We absolutely want to encourage students and parents to come out for our games and cheer on our teams. We

want to earn a certain type of reputation among our conference schools – that we would be known as a place where the fans come out in number, and they are loud and engaged! What we wish to avoid is a reputation for degrading or mocking behavior.

Although as parents we have all fallen back at some point on the well-worn adage, ‘do as I say and not as I do,’ we know that this simply isn’t how life works – our children learn by watching us. Unfortunately, it is fair to say that at some of our sporting events members of our parent community model behavior contradictory to the spirit we seek to teach our students. We ask that, as a community, we all pull together - students and parents - and hold ourselves to the highest standard of good sportsmanship. To aide in this we would ask all of us to abide by some simple rules:

- NCS fans should never address a member of the opposing team (player, coach or fan)
- NCS fans should never address a referee or comment on their calls. That’s the coach’s job.
- NCS fans should never enter the court or field of play during the game.

On our website you can find a copy of conduct for players and fans provided to us by Virginia Independent School Athletic Association (VISAA) detailing expectations at athletic competitions of participating schools. Please read that when you have a moment. Here is the last

paragraph of that short document:

“The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association is committed to establishing and developing healthy environments for competition. We ask all spectators to remember to treat the officials and participating teams with respect. Cheer the strengths and victories of your team and do not denigrate the performance of your opponents, their fans or the officials. We expect that all fans will act in an appropriate manner, and respect the opposition and the officials. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the premises. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.”

We embrace the enthusiasm of the parent and student communities with respect to our athletic program. We are thankful for all of you and your contributions. We look forward to many more exciting athletic events this school year. Go Gryphons!