



PECATONICA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 321

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To Our Pecatonica School Community:

As Superintendent of our Pecatonica Schools, I am extremely proud to share that our boys and girls basketball teams continue to reach new heights this season. Tonight, our girls basketball team will be playing in a Sectional Final for the very first time in school history! Our boys basketball team will be playing in the Regional Finals tomorrow night.

Our student/athletes, coaches, and families have put in a lot of time and hard work to reach this high level of success. Both teams have been state ranked and received a great deal of recognition through the press and news media because of these efforts.

I was unable to travel to Galena last night for the boys Regional Semifinal but thankfully was able to login to the broadcast link to watch it at home. By now, you are probably wondering what is the point of this message? The point of this message is to remind our proud and loyal fans about the expectation of our fans when attending school sponsored extracurricular events. I am going to be brutally honest - what I heard being yelled from our fans on the broadcast was absolutely embarrassing. Our teams are being talked about all around the state of Illinois because of how fun they are to watch. I am sure there were people whose seasons have already ended that logged in to watch our teams. Unfortunately, the people that logged into watch did not get a good first impression of the type of fans we were last night. I am a former player, coach, and parent and can understand that there was a high level of frustration last night and especially in the first half. However, in my close to forty years of experience with high school sports, berating and verbally attacking officials has never been a productive or beneficial way to deal with those frustrations. Abusing officials will not lead to positive outcomes. In a fifty-fifty call, do you think they will pick the side that has been screaming in their ear all night? Probably not.

I am not sending this message because I am perfect. I am sending this message because in my discussion with our administration this morning, it was shared with them that in the event our fans demonstrate similar unacceptable behaviors Friday they will be ejected from the game. It is surprising that the officials did not eject anyone either since there were people standing up, yelling profanities, and directly pointing at the officials. Please know that a person that is ejected from a game is also suspended from

attending the next game. People that have previously been ejected that get ejected again would face longer suspensions from attending events. A person that gets ejected from a game does not get a call overturned or changed. All it does is force that person to miss out on watching their child or team moving forward. This would be the result of the choices you made on how you behaved as a fan attending an event.

In case you didn't know, there is an extreme shortage of officials and umpires across all activities. It is getting to the point that it will be difficult to schedule a full season of games in the near future because we won't have officials to oversee the events. The biggest reason people don't go into officiating is because they don't want to be abused by fans. The admission you pay to attend an event goes toward offsetting the cost of hosting the event and gives each person the privilege to watch and enjoy the event. It does not entitle a person to personally attack officials.

For those of us that are basketball fans, we know what the phrase "March Madness" means and it is something that we look forward to as it is the exciting culmination of an exciting season. As our boys and girls basketball teams continue on their quest to reach the high expectations they have set for themselves, I want to remind our fans that we should have high expectations of ourselves as fans and demonstrate better sportsmanship. Our poor behavior as fans will not help our team's chances of reaching their goals. However, it could be the reason that keeps them from reaching them. Let's not let that be the reason!

I want to wish our boys and girls teams the best of luck tonight and tomorrow. We are all so proud of you - Go Pec Go!!

Yours in Education,

Carl B. Carlson
Superintendent