

Over the past two years, Wapakoneta varsity sports have won 2 State Championships, sent record numbers of athletes to district/regional and state competitions, won 8 league titles and won the WBL All Sports Trophy for the first time in nineteen years! The success of the Redskins is largely due the fact that our parents and community value athletics, support our teams, and encourage our students to be involved. Winning is fun and brings everyone together. However, if you asked our graduates what they remember, I bet it would be working together with friends and teammates, playing in front of great crowds and playing on some the best facilities in the state. We can learn from our student athletes and remind ourselves where this success came from.

Parents, encourage and support your child. Encourage them to do their best. In every level of sports, kids inherently try to do their absolute best. They don't need constant reminders of what they aren't doing; they know it and they don't like it either. Sometimes less is more; let them bring it up if they want to talk about it. Encourage them to be a good teammate. High school sports are about building relationships and learning how to work as a team. Support your child through the ups and downs and the wins and losses. We all know there will be good times and bad. There will be times when your child will not play as much as you think, but let your child find his or her role and accept it. Every team needs a really good practice player, a cheerleader, a star, a specialist, and a substitute. Each of these roles is equally important to the success of the team. As a parent, these roles can be hard to accept, but if you encourage your child to work as hard as possible and be the best at their role, the overall experience for everyone involved will be a positive one.

Support the Redskins and let all other factors of the game be secondary. As a fan we can't control what the other team does or what call the officials make, so why focus on them? In the heat of the moment, competition frustrates us all, but the only thing yelling at the officials does is embarrass your child and make Wapakoneta look bad. During game play, our role as a parent/spectator is to support our team and let the Redskins feed off of our enthusiasm and support.

Finally parents, encourage your student athlete to get involved in as many activities as possible. We as adults all know that you are only a kid once. I have had the pleasure to be the Athletic Director at Wapakoneta for the past seven years and during that time we have had only one athlete receive a full athletic scholarship to a Division I program. Recently, there have been many well know athletes and coaches talk about the importance of being a multi-sport athlete. From Urban Meyer to Jimbo Fisher to JJ Watt to the US Women's Soccer team to the famous Dr. James Andrews...all of these individuals believe in the importance of competition in a variety of sports. If your athlete is the best on the team or even in the state, as they move up the ranks in the sport, statistics prove that likely won't remain the case. Although it's hard to realize sometimes, it will actually help your son or daughter to not be the best in a different sport, because chances are someone will eventually be better than them. That second sport (or third), will test them to be a better teammate and to experience a different kind of pressure. Mentally, the star pitcher can strike out batters in his sleep, but how much better would he be if he could use his experience of going three periods in wrestling knowing he can outlast his opponent when his stuff is not the greatest, or use the pressure of lining up a putt to give his golf team the WBL title to throw the perfect pitch in the bottom of the seventh with the bases loaded and two out? The mind can only get stronger with competition and adversity. Additionally, it has been well documented from the physiological side that repeated motion of the same sport puts undue stress on the body increasing the likelihood of injury. The body needs a break. Parents-encourage participation; students-try something new.

Again, we have had an outstanding few years. Thank you community members, parents, students (athletes and fans), and local businesses for providing our teams with support, encouragement and the finest facilities around. It is a privilege to work and live in your community.

Go Redskins!

Brad Rex, Athletic Administrator

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I would first like to take this opportunity to congratulate our Wapakoneta students and community on yet another outstanding year. Last year's Redskin athletes won 8 of 20 contested WBL Championships (an amazing 40%), en route to our second consecutive WBL All Sports Championship. The hard work by our athletes, coaches, parents, and the support of our entire community has not gone unnoticed.

As I enjoyed my summer days, I had the opportunity to attend baseball games at every level; pee wee, high school, Lima Locos, Fort Wayne TinCaps, and Cincinnati Reds. Not surprisingly, as the level of play increased, so too did the number of fans in attendance. As I observed these fans at all levels, I witnessed some acts and heard words that, if reflected upon later, likely would not have been the fans' proudest moments. While fans yelled at officials, coaches, players, and other fans, I was proud to call Wapakoneta home. There are times when we all get caught up in the intensity of the moment, so it would be hypocritical of me to say that I have never seen a Wapakoneta fan say or do something that wasn't right. However, as a whole, our community has a great sense of pride in doing what is right, and teaching our kids to do the same. Because of this, when I am outside the community, I am still surprised, on occasion, at the words people so freely use, regardless of who is around. Being a parent has taught me that the next generation has very good hearing, so each time I hear a negative word uttered, I am reminded of a poem by an anonymous author I once read:

### **He is Only a Boy**

Please don't curse the boy down there,  
He is my son you see.  
He's only just a boy you know,  
He means a lot to me.  
I did not raise my son dear fan,  
For you to call him names.  
He may not be a super-star,  
It's just a high school game.  
So please don't curse those boys down there,  
They do the best they can.  
They never tried to lose a game.  
They're boys and you're a man.  
The game belongs to them you see,

You are just a guest.  
They do not need a fan like you,  
They need the very best.  
If you have nothing nice to say,  
Please leave the boys alone,  
And if you have no manners,  
Why don't you stay home.  
So please don't curse those boys down there,  
Each one's his parents' son.  
Win, lose or tie, you see.  
To us they're "NUMBER ONE"  
-Anonymous

That boy could be the coaches, players, officials or the people selling tickets, running the scoreboard or passing out popcorn. Regardless of the score, there is a reason the Redskins win on and off the field - it all starts with those in the stands.

Thank you Wapakoneta and Go Redskins!

Brad Rex, Athletic Administrator

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