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### Sportsmanship and Success

What constitutes a good player is not only talent, but sportsmanship as well. Players who embody sportsmanship play with integrity and have empathy for their opponents and teammates alike. I believe that I model these virtues and that they will lead to my future success by treating others with respect and handling adversity with poise.

Integrity is often a broad concept, but in my mind, it is simply the action of realizing that moral obligation outweighs personal triumph. Moral obligation, in this context, means two things: the duty to play fairly, and the responsibility to represent one's program. Integrity demands of us that we play fairly at all times, whether the opponents are fair to us or not. I strive to play fairly every day by doing the little things, not only by aiming for the ball instead of the player, but by staying true to my word. As a twice-consecutive soccer captain, I avoid hypocritical actions. If I tell my teammates to improve on something, it is assured that I myself am working hard to improve on that task as well. Always prevalent in my mind is the idea that I represent my community. I constantly remind myself that regardless of what happens on the field or on the court, what truly matters when the final buzzer goes off is how I reflect the values of my school and team. The game always ends, but the legacy lasts.

It is my hope and belief that this ability to remain dedicated to fairness and honesty will help me handle adversity in my life. If the ability to avoid compromising my integrity, even against harsh opponents or officials, is translated to my ability to cope with the unfair situations of the

outside world, then I will be able to stay true to myself no matter what challenges I face. Though this does not guarantee my success, it guarantees that any success I have is honest and true.

Another important pillar of sportsmanship is empathy, or the capacity to relate to everyone, including those whom I play both with and against. My devotion to my teammates is founded on the knowledge that, regardless of captainship or even talent, every player is as essential and important as the next. Conscious of this, I treat my teammates with respect, and when I give feedback, I do so in a positive manner. Conversely, I also treat the opponents with respect as well. I never taunt the other team and I tolerate no taunting from my teammates, because as states the MIAA Sportsmanship Manual, “the opponent is exactly that, an opponent, and not the enemy.”

The ability to empathize with others has and will enable me to build respectful, lasting relationships with people throughout my life. These relationships are the foundations on which I expect to build my future success.

Ultimately, sportsmanship will allow me to face hardship with integrity and spread respect through empathy. I look forward to what the future holds.