

# Sportsmanship for the Coach and the Participant

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**Sportsmanship: Conduct of one participating in a sport. This includes fairness, respect for one’s opponent and graciousness in winning or losing.**

- 1. Always keep a positive attitude.** Believe in your coach, believe in yourself and believe in your teammates. Belief comes from hard work, practicing with a purpose and making good decisions in your life. *“Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.” John Wooden*
- 2. Communicate in a positive manner.** Explain what should be done, never how not to do it. Studies indicate a person is encouraged to act by his dominant thoughts. Coach by creating a vivid picture of the best way to accomplish the task. Most often yelling or screaming results in a breakdown in communication. There is no place for sarcasm or humiliation in sports. *“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is most important.” Abraham Lincoln*
- 3. Coach and play by the rules and in the spirit of the game.** All sports have a specific code of rules to follow. Finding ways to circumvent the intent of the rule results in confusion and unethical play. Example: Intentional teaching of holding in football is wrong and may lead to a distorted interpretation of how to play the game and affect how future decisions are made. *“The ultimate goal should be to doing your best and enjoying it.” Peggy Fleming*
- 4. Coaching is teaching.** Explain, check for understanding, drill and practice through repetition. These are all essential for success. The player and coach must remain patient and realize each learns in a specific manner. Encourage teammates and believe in your ability to perform the task. *“I don’t know that there are any shortcuts to doing a good job.” Sandra Day O’Connor*
- 5. Mutual respect is essential.** All coaches and players want the team to be successful. A wide variety of individuals comprise the team. Be aware of different personalities and relate to each person with concern for what is best for them and the team. Players must realize they don’t have to “like the coach” to be a good team player. *“The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender.” Vince Lombardi*
- 6. Be a good role model.** Coach who you are first and then what you know. Always be on time and prepared for every practice. Players are expected to make good decisions with regard to training rules and following team expectations. *“If there is no struggle there is no progress.” Fredrick Douglass*
- 7. Do everything with class.** Conduct yourself in a manner that brings credit to the team. Following the game give credit to your opponent and maintain your self-control. There is no place for “trash-talking,” demeaning gestures, yelling out of the bus or behaving in a manner that could discredit your opponent. Remember the Golden Rule – treat your opponents the way you would like to be treated. *“Being a great athlete is important to me, but it’s more important to be a great person.” Jackie Joyner Kersee*
- 8. Be the best TEAM player you can be.** Whether you are a starter or reserve always practice to get better and see yourself as a valuable member of the team. Coaches must make decisions based on performance, but a hustling, hard working player will get the coaches attention. Play an important role in every practice and expect to play in every game. *“Every player must put the team first—ahead of personal glory.” Paul “Bear” Bryant*
- 9. Team performance is more important than personal records.** Once a game has been decided leaving the “star” in to build stats or break a record is unfair to the rest of the team and shows disregard for the opponent. *“I will not let my teammates down, and I will not let myself down.” Mia Hamm*
- 10. Appreciate the officials.** Concentrate on the game and your performance. The officials will do their best to see that the game is played within the rules. If you must speak with an official, address them with respect. It shows a lot of class when both coaches recognize a job well done. *“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are endless.” Mother Teresa*