



A GOOD

SPORT

LESSON COMPANION

TrueSport[®]

Quick-Hitters

1

REAL WINNERS ACT THE SAME TOWARD THEIR OPPONENT WHETHER THEY WIN OR LOSE.

2

FOLLOW THE RULES AND BE A GRACIOUS WINNER AND RESPECTFUL LOSER.

3

SPORTSMANSHIP REVEALS YOUR TRUE CHARACTER.

Coaches' Corner 5 KEYS TO SPORTSMANSHIP

**1
COOL
HEADS
PREVAIL.**

**2
YOU CANNOT
CONTROL
A BAD CALL.**

**3
THE OTHER TEAM IS THE
OPPONENT, NOT YOUR ENEMY.**

**4
ARROGANCE
IS UGLY.**

**5
WIN OR LOSE,
COMMIT
TO CLASS.**

Five Keys to Sportsmanship: Adapted from Craig Hillier's *Playing beyond the Scoreboard*

during and after the event will determine if the experience is positive or negative. A good sport never blames someone else for the loss (teammates, officials, coaches, etc.). They take responsibility for their part in the outcome no matter what the outcome may be.

Being a good sport involves striving for success while adhering to fair play, honesty, and respect for following the rules. Good sportsmanship should be extended throughout all competition, not just at the finale.

Sportsmanship should be encouraged and emphasized by coaches on all levels. Sometimes in competition, even when both competitors are fairly playing, the experience still may not be a positive one. How each competitor responds

TrueSport Activities

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TRUESPORT CHALK TALK

Lead a group discussion with the questions below. Next, encourage the athletes to reflect on their own sport experiences and how they can make improvements on how they conduct themselves related to fair play, even when the competition is intense.

Suggested Questions:

1. Can you provide examples of when you witnessed good sportsmanship? What did it look like?
2. Can you provide examples of when you witnessed poor sportsmanship? What did it look like?
3. Is there ever a time in competition when poor sportsmanship is acceptable?
4. Can you provide some examples of people in your own life who serve as good role models for sportsmanship?
5. Some sports implement a 'mercy rule' when the score becomes lopsided, and they end the game early. Do you think this is an example of good sportsmanship? Why or why not?

TRUESPORT IN ACTION

“Role Play”

The goal of this activity is to demonstrate the differences between being a good sport and a poor sport.

Ask for three volunteers to participate in a role play. Privately converse with the volunteers and describe the scenario you would like them to portray in front of the larger group.

SCENARIO I:

One athlete will represent the winner of a race, another will represent a poor sport who loses, and the third athlete will represent a good sport who also lost. Have the volunteer athletes choose which role they will play and give them a minute to prepare. Then have them simulate a race and play out their respective roles. Once the role play is complete, have the audience share what they witnessed and further discuss the scenario.

SCENARIO II:

There are also cases in competition where winners can be a poor sport. Replay the scenario above, but assign the role of the poor sport to the winner of the race.

Suggested Questions:

1. *What actions did you notice the poor sport made? What might they have done differently?*
2. *What actions did you notice the good sport made? What did these actions say to you about this person's character?*
3. *Has there been a time in your life when you felt like you were a poor sport? If so, what could you have done differently?*
4. *In what ways can you encourage your teammates to be good sports before, during, and after competition?*



Look For...

Moments to recognize your athletes for displays of good sportsmanship:

- *Supporting teammates after they make a mistake*
- *Acknowledging a good play by an opponent*
- *Shaking opponent's and official's hands after the game or competition*
- *Controlling emotions and reactions when they disagree with an official's call*
- *Showing empathy when an opponent or teammate gets injured*



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Children model their behavior and communication styles from what they see and experience.

This translates into the way they interact with teammates, opponents, referees, and coaches in youth sports. Raising a good sport on the field starts by showing kids what being a good sport looks like off the field.



1) Play by the Rules

If you behave as if the rules don't apply to you, your young athletes are likely to believe the same is true for them. This applies to everything from laws, like stopping at stop signs, to cultural norms, like waiting your turn and not cutting in line.



2) Own Your Mistakes

Two of the biggest lessons youth sports can teach are that everyone makes mistakes and that when they happen, it's not the end of the world.

Being able to accept ownership of your own mistakes is a big part of learning that second lesson, but it can be difficult for young athletes to own a mistake if they see their coaches project infallibility. Coaches who consistently blame others for their own errors or try to shield athletes from accepting responsibility for mistakes contribute to a sense of being infallible on the field.



3) Be a Team Player

Teamwork is another learned skill that progresses along with children's stages of development.

Youth sports are a great place for children to learn and apply the concept of teamwork, but they also need to see the concept modeled outside of competition. Show your team that working together is a more effective and efficient way to complete a task and achieve a desired outcome.



4) Avoid Trash Talk

For better and worse, we've all heard our own words come out of a child's mouths, and that goes for what they say on the field as well.



5) Disagree Respectfully

Whether it's a disagreement between parents or with a ref, the way you conduct yourself provides the example for how your team will handle disagreements with each other, opponents, coaches, and referees.

It's important to show your athletes they can disagree and advocate for their desired outcome, but that disagreements don't need to devolve into disrespectful words and behaviors toward another person.

Life isn't about perfection, and neither are youth sports, but we can all get better through the pursuit of excellence.

To learn more about how to teach athletes how to be a **GOOD SPORT**, check out [Learn.TrueSport.org](https://www.TrueSport.org) and [Teach.TrueSport.org](https://www.Teach.TrueSport.org) for insightful articles, videos, and additional resources full of sportsmanship-related advice.