

TrueSportPARENT | A Good Sport



It's easy for athletes to amble through the post-game handshake line and look like they are being good sports. But how is their behavior when it matters most: during the actual game? And how is the sportsmanship of those on the sideline watching them?

Sportsmanship can seem like a vague thing to teach, but communicating these five points to your athletes (and keeping them in mind yourself) will ensure they play the right way:

- 1. *The other team is the opponent, not the enemy***
- 2. *Commit to class, win or lose***
- 3. *Cooler heads prevail***
- 4. *Arrogance is ugly***
- 5. *You cannot control a bad call***

How to Help Athletes Practice Good Sportsmanship

Often, how a sports program is structured by parents and coaches affects how a young athlete behaves. Young people learn from watching others, which is also the case with being a good sport.

When possible, create an environment for learning how to be a good sport by incorporating the following into your athlete's sports program:

Positive role models: Reach out to local accomplished athletes that would be willing to speak about why showing sportsmanship has mattered in their careers

Famous examples: Tell of or show YouTube examples of high-level athletes committing great acts of sportsmanship

Set a standard: Discuss hypothetical scenarios specific to your athlete's sport and talk through how a good sport would respond in each situation

Reinforce by recognizing: Regardless of the outcome of a game, always praise your athlete for demonstrating great sportsmanship

Young people learn from watching others, and how adults conduct themselves on the sideline is also crucial in setting an example of what good sportsmanship looks like.

To learn more about developing youth athletes into good sports, check out:

- **Learn.TrueSport.org** for insightful articles and videos full of valuable sportsmanship advice
- **Teach.TrueSport.org** for an entire lesson plan surrounding being a good sport
- **Play.TrueSport.org** (app available on the App Store and Google Play) for fun sportsmanship-focused games and activities you can complete with your athletes