

GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE

Positive Strategies for Helping Kids Win at Life and Sports

The Far-Reaching Impact of Sportsmanship by David Benzel



Although you cannot **predict** the future for your children, you recognize that the steps you take today can **impact** that future. In fact, you probably make decisions fairly regularly, that reflect this belief:

- You view their education seriously
- You try to instill in them, healthy habits regarding sleep, nutrition, and activity
- You teach about the benefits of saving money

These practices may seem basic but they are established around the idea that what you do today influences the behaviors and opportunities of tomorrow.

Sports participation surely fits into this formula. You hope that the self-discipline, confidence, and skill sets learned will not just affect the here-and-now but will also shape your child moving forward.

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Practicing good sportsmanship has far-reaching implications on your child's character. Here are a few things to consider in regards to your child and his/her sportsmanlike conduct.

Good Sportsmanship is Purposeful

Losing gracefully, being kind to opponents, and thinking of the feelings of the other team doesn't generally happen by accident. Human nature makes sure of that.

Sportsmanlike reactions require a purposeful effort. And they need to be practiced. Coaches and parents modeling these qualities have the best shot at influencing young athletes to do the same.

What does being purposeful in regards to sportsmanship look like?

It starts with **always** honoring your values before, during, and after the game. Here are some examples:

- Lift other teammates up so that they can do their best
- Have a positive attitude when things don't go your way
- Play with integrity; even when nobody's watching

As part of a team, your child will have plenty of opportunities to respond in ways that don't always match his/her feelings. What perfect preparation this is for life as an adult where family life, job situations, and social settings will require the same.

Good Sportsmanship Centers Around Respect

Respect acts like a boomerang. If you show respect to someone, it inevitably comes back to you as respect.

It is a quality that has many applications in sports. Here is what respect might look like practically:

- Accepting the calls of a ref, even when it goes against us or our team
- Obeying the instructions of the coach without chiming back with comments
- Acting positively towards the fans and spectators
- Following the rules of the game
- Honoring opponents and other teammates by being courteous and kind

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Being respectful is a learned behavior that requires practice. The sports platform provides the perfect structure for this to take place.

Healthy relationships throughout life center around mutual respect. Focus on developing this quality when your child is young and you will set them up for success in their future relationships with a spouse, children, bosses, co-workers, neighbors etc.

Good Sportsmanship Flows from a Strong Work Ethic



A fierce sense of competition is what seems to drive top athletes. When this ambition crosses over to a win-at-all-cost attitude, however, it becomes an obstacle to good sportsmanship.

Teach a young athlete to rely on a strong work ethic to accomplish the same results and you empower them to take control of their goals and success.

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A willingness to “go the extra mile” in practice or put in additional time to work on a technique can catapult an athlete with moderate skill to top performances. When an athlete sees the connection between their hard work and probable success they are more positive towards circumstances that come up in competition. Good sportsmanship flows naturally from there.

Adults with a willingness to “do what it takes” in a career position usually end up rising above the crowd. Once again learning this in sport, at a young age serves your child well into adulthood.

Final Thoughts

Sportsmanship does matter. Parents and coaches that consistently model this for young athletes and follow through to correct poor sportsmanship behaviors set kids up for success – now and later in life.

[CLICK HERE](#) to ask David Benzel a question about this topic:

<http://www.growingchampionsforlife.com/coachdavid>

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