

"CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP PREVAILS"

Encourage sportsmanship in your children and others
by living good sportsmanship yourself.

Many years ago, before the onset of professional opportunities, sports seemed to revolve primarily around creating well-rounded men and women. People promoted sports as a way to teach loyalty and leadership, balancing mental activities with physical exertion.

However, as sports have become less amateur oriented, this focus often gets lost. Many of today's athletes seem more concerned with developing themselves as a product than as a person. Even the phrase "Be a good sport" has come to have a negative connotation.

Help your children understand that it is not wimpy or geeky to be a good sport. Rather, being a good sport shows that the athlete has the strength of character to do what is right.

Know, too, that preaching sportsmanship to your children will leave you short of your goals; you must model good sportsmanship yourself.

For parents, good sportsmanship means

- * Respecting the judgment and integrity of game officials
- * Recognizing and appreciating outstanding play by both teams
- * Refraining from negative comments and cheers
- * Being supportive of other parents and players
- * Acting in a civil manner towards officials, coaches, parents and players

For children, good sportsmanship means

- * Treating teammates and opponents with respect
- * Respecting the judgement and integrity of games officials
- * Displaying appropriate conduct
(not arguing, making offensive gestures, or "trash talking")
- * Playing fairly

Above all, good sportsmanship means more than just playing by the rules. Sportsmanship is setting a high standard for behavior and sticking to it.

It is an on going effort of hard work, courage, and dedication to live your life in sports according to the highest personal standards.

This is an excerpt from David Epperson & George Selleck's book
"From the Bleachers with Love", Alliance Publications; 1999.