

SPORTSMANSHIP

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What Is Sportsmanship?

Sportsmanship is defined as:

- playing fair
- following the rules of the game
- respecting the judgment of referees and officials
- treating opponents with respect

Treat the people you play with and against as you'd like to be treated yourself. You demonstrate good sportsmanship when you show respect for yourself, your teammates, and your opponents, for the coaches on both sides, and for the referees, judges, and other officials.

However, sportsmanship isn't just reserved for the people on the field. Cheerleaders, fans, and parents also need to be aware of how they behave before, during and after a competition. Sportsmanship is a style and an attitude, and it can have a positive influence on everyone around you.

Practicing Good Sportsmanship

So what does it take to demonstrate good sportsmanship in real-life situations? Here are some examples of things you can do:

- Learn as much as you can about your sport. Play by its rules. Show up for practice, work hard, and realize that on a team, everyone deserves a chance to play.
- Talk politely and act courteously toward everyone before, during, and after games and events. That includes your teammates and coaches, your opponents and their coaches, the officials presiding over the game, and even spectators (who can sometimes be loud about their opinions).
- Stay cool. Even if others are losing their tempers, it doesn't mean you have to. Remind yourself that no matter how hard you've practiced and played, it is, after all, just a game.
- Avoid settling disputes with violence. If you're in a difficult situation or someone's threatening you, seek help immediately from your coach or from an

official. Remember, too, that if you respond with violence you could get penalized, which ultimately hurts your team.

- Cheer your teammates on with positive statements — and avoid trash-talking the other team.
- Acknowledge and applaud good plays, even when someone on the other team makes them.
- When officials make a call, accept it gracefully even if it goes against you. Remember that referees may not be right every time — but they're people who are doing their best, just as you are.
- Whether you win or lose, congratulate your opponents on a game well played.

Sportsmanship Off the Field

Learning good sportsmanship means finding that the positive attitude learned on the field carries over into other areas of life. At school, for example, you're able to appreciate the contributions made by classmates and know how to work as part of a team to complete a project. You may enjoy more success at work as well, because a big part of learning good sportsmanship is learning to be respectful of others, including customers and coworkers.