

The Coach

- Treats own players, parents, and opponents with respect.
 - Teaches and inspires soccer players to love the game and to compete fairly.
 - Demonstrates by example the type of person he/she wants the players to be.
 - Has control and commands discipline at all times.
 - Respects the interpretation of rules and judgment of the officials.
 - Realizes that as a coach he/she is a teacher and therefore understands the game and proper soccer behavior at all times.
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The Player

- Treats opponents with respect.
- Plays hard plays within the rules of the game of soccer.
- Demonstrates self control.
- Respects officials and accepts their decisions without gesture or argument.
- Wins without boasting, loses without excuses and never quits. Remembers that it is a privilege to represent his/her soccer club and community.

The Official

- Knows the rules and understands the game.
- Places health and welfare of the players above all other considerations.
- Treats players and coaches courteously and demands the same from them.
- Works cooperatively with fellow referees and linesmen.
Is fair and firm in all decisions on the field.
Maintains confidence, poise and self control from start to finish of the game.

The Parents

- Do not coach the team players including your own youngster, from the sidelines during the game.
- Respect the judgment of the referee and do not criticize officials.
- Supportive parents focus on mastering soccer skills and game strategies.

- Decrease the pressure to win.
 - Believe that soccer's primary value is to provide youth an opportunity for self-development.
 - Understand the risks. A soccer game is full of mistakes and the team that makes fewer mistakes generally wins the game. Playing soccer is a willingness to chance failure.
 - Communicate with the coach and create a positive, supportive working relationship.
 - Understand and respect the different roles of parents and coaches.
 - Control negative emotions and think positively.
 - Avoid the use of fear - because player development is rarely fostered by fear of the consequences of failure.
 - Parents must show empathy for the young developing soccer player.
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Value Statement for Youth Sports

Youth sports programs provide an enjoyable learning environment for the physical, social, and personal development of youngsters. The values of youth sports programs include:

- Promoting fitness
- Developing new skills
- Instilling a desire to succeed

- Teaching responsibility and commitment
- Teaching cooperation
- Preparing one to deal with success and failure
- Providing an outlet for the release of energy
- Building character through discipline
- Teaching how to cope with the realities of life
- Instilling positive attitudes toward authority
- Providing a fun and enriching experience

The likelihood that youngsters will realize positive sports values is enhanced when adult sports leaders take the responsibility to serve as facilitators of desirable sports outcomes.

This can be achieved when coaches assume a role as teacher and carry out lesson plans, which develop skills progressively, emphasize positive sports values, and encourage life-long interest in sports participation.

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is defined as:

Qualities and behavior befitting a sportsman.

One who is interested in or takes part in sports.

A person who can take loss or defeat without complaint, or victory without gloating, and who treats his opponents with fairness, generosity, courtesy, and respect.

SPORTSMANSHIP: the demonstration of respect for the sport, players, officials, and opponents while engaged in competition, regardless of the complexion or outcome of the game. Sportsmanship encompasses moral, ethical, and social aspects of behavior. It deals with philosophy and values.

Just as in all human behaviors, there are differences of opinion on some issues and there are gray areas. Sportsmanship provides limits to behavior and circumscribes behaviors that are acceptable and unacceptable. The limits of behavior are often voluntary and there are no written rules governing some behaviors. For the good of the game and the good of the players, coaches need to demonstrate, or role model, the ideals of sportsmanship for the players.

Sportsmanship in matches is the equivalent of character in daily life. Character is defined as "moral strength, self-discipline, and fortitude" and also as "good reputation". Another definition of character is "how one behaves when no one is watching". We all appreciate and value ethical behavior. Sportsmanship requires ethical behavior on the field. Demonstrating sportsmanship does not diminish competitiveness. It allows the result of a player or team's efforts to have meaning and value. Upholding the written and unwritten rules of sportsmanship will enhance the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes with a win or any well-played match. When evaluating your team's performance after any competition be sure to give a thought to the sportsmanship component.

The line between sportsmanlike and unsportsmanlike becomes less distinct when gamesmanship is considered. Gamesmanship is the ability to use every ploy or advantage at your disposal. However gamesmanship does not mean breaking the rules. When Briana Scurry moved off her line early to block the Chinese player's shot in the shootout, she broke the rules. The official did not make a call and the US women's team won the match. Was this good gamesmanship or not? Is breaking the rules

OK if it is not called? It was undoubtedly not good sportsmanship. How about the Maradona handball/headball goal in the World Cup a few years back? Were either of these wins tainted? Were the losing teams unfairly treated?

When an individual takes on the responsibility of being a youth coach there is no set of instructions concerning sportsmanship that come with the job. It is up to the coach to seriously and conscientiously evaluate his/her behavior at all times and make decisions during games and practices that demonstrate and promote sportsmanship to his players. Sportsmanship often means making sacrifices and choosing a more difficult path but as coaches we do this for the benefit of our players and the game. No one will care or remember much about the outcome of the game or the standings or whatever other statistical measure seems to be of primary concern at the moment. A scoreboard does not necessarily reflect excellence or the truth as to the way the game was actually played.

Your approach to sportsmanship and the game is just as critical as your ability to teach technical and tactical skills to your players. The life lessons dealing with behavior and values will become part of your player's identity and they will be of great significance during the lifetime of the players when they are faced with day-to-day decisions. The ability to play fairly, win graciously, and to maintain dignity during a loss or personal adversity is immensely more important than some crappy piece of plastic that supposedly symbolizes success. Granted, winning games is a lot more fun than losing and winning games should always be a prime objective. However, the ability to play the game with honor and sportsmanship is part of an internalized value system that can be applied to the player's approach to other aspects of personal and social behavior. Having a sportsmanlike attitude will benefit the player and can impact our social and cultural fabric. Playing by the rules and showing respect for others is the oil that makes our social,

political, and economic systems work. Not doing so can erode and degrade our way of life.

Please take the role of teaching sportsmanship very seriously. Keep its importance in the forefront of your coaching and do your best to promote sportsmanlike behavior at all times. Shaping and developing strong character in your players is of greater long-term value than soccer skills. When viewed in these terms this may seem like more responsibility than what many coaches bargain for. Nevertheless, it is part of the job description and needs to be seriously considered by the youth coach.

How do you teach sportsmanship? What constitutes sportsmanlike behavior? Like many concepts, it is difficult to define or hard to say exactly what it is but "you know it when you see it. Sportsmanlike behaviors are those that transcend the good of the individual or the good of the moment for the greater good of the team or the sport. Sportsmanlike behaviors generally avoid immediate gratification for a greater principle. As a coach, your ultimate objective in teaching sportsmanship to the players is to have the players internalize the sportsmanlike values that they can apply not only to sports but also to life. Sportsmanship is something that hopefully will not just be exhibited on the playing field but also off the field.

SOCER ETTIQUETTE AND TIPS

There are some written and unwritten policies in soccer that coaches should be aware of. Some of these relate to sportsmanship and some are considered proper soccer etiquette.

Sideline Behavior

Players and coaches are to stay in the technical area and behave

properly while there. The technical area is 1-2 yards from the sideline and 2-5 yards from the half line. No yelling and screaming. No maniacal ranting and raving at players or officials. There is no place on the field or sideline for negative comments. Realize that the players and officials are trying their best and deserve our support and encouragement.

Do not be incessantly shouting out instructions to players.

Let them play the game and enjoy it. Your time to instruct the players is at training sessions and a brief commentary at the half time. Giving play-by-play instructions inhibits the players making their own decisions and applying what they have learned at training sessions. Limit yourself to positive encouraging instruction and comments during the match.

Parents and coaches are never to be allowed behind the goal lines.

Keep in mind that the players learn from the adults and that they mimic and imitate adult behavior. Your players will pick up from your example so decide what kind of example you want to set for your players. Children learn by observing our example. Teach them to appreciate and enjoy the game by your positive example during the games. Be calm, controlled, and professional, especially when the team is struggling or seems to be receiving the short end of the stick from the officials.

Even though the excitement or frustration "of the moment" may take control, always remember...

The TEAM reflects the personality, style,

and values of the coach and parents.

Winners Are People Like you

Winners take chances.

Like everyone else, they fear failing,
but they refuse to let fear control them.

Winners don't give up.

When life gets rough, they hang in
until the going gets better.

Winners are flexible.

They realize there is more than one way
and are willing to try others.

Winners know they are not perfect.

They respect their weaknesses
while making the most of their strengths.

Winners fall, but they don't stay down.

They stubbornly refuse to let a fall
keep them from climbing...

Winners don't blame fate for their failures
nor luck for their successes.

Winners accept responsibility for their lives.

Winners are positive thinkers
who see good in all things.

From the ordinary, they make the extraordinary.

Winners believe in the path they have chosen,
even when it's hard,
even when others can't see where they are going,

Winners are patient.

They know a goal is only as worthy
as the effort that's required to achieve it.

Winners are people like you.

They make this world a better place to be.

Nancye Sims

Parental Creed

For best results, parents should memorize and use the following:

Before the match:

1. I love you
2. Good luck
3. Have fun

After the match:

1. I love you
2. It was great to see you play
3. What would you like to eat?

Strive for Excellence not Success

There are many people, particularly in sports, who think success and excellence is the same thing, and they are not the same thing. Excellence is something that is lasting and dependable and largely within a persons control. In contrast, success is perishable and is often outside of our control... If you strive for excellence, you will probably be successful eventually... People who put excellence in first place have the patience to end up with success... An additional burden for the victim of the success mentality is that he/she is threatened by the success of others and resents real excellence. In contrast, the person fascinated by quality is excited when he/she sees it in others.

Joe Paterno

Just a Little Soccer Boy

He runs toward the goal with his heart pounding fast.
The fullbacks are coming; the die has been cast.
Mom and Dad cannot help him, he moves all alone.
A score at this moment would send the team home.
The ball meets his boot; he kicks and he misses.
There is a groan from the crowd, with some boos and some hisses.
A thoughtless voice cries, "Take him out."
Tears fill his eyes; the game's no longer fun.
So open your heart and give him a break.
For it's moments like this, a man you can make.
Keep this in mind when you hear someone forget.
He's just a little boy and not a man yet.

Modified from a poem by an unknown author by Rich Randall 1/15/99