

# Putting YOUTH Back Into Sports

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## Kids' Guide

### How to Keep the Fun in Sports!

**Remember, it's just a game!**

Having fun is the main reason to play.

**Understand there are ups and downs in every game!**

**Keep in mind that you are still learning.**

Even the pros make mistakes! Try to learn from your mistakes.

**Talk to your parents and friends about how you want them to act during a game.**

If you feel pressure when they yell, ask them to stop. Let them know that you want them there to support you...quietly!

**Keep in mind that the best competition is with yourself.**

You may not always be the star of the team. Or your team may not always win. But you can always improve your skills. Learn to be the best you can be.

**Ask the coach for help.**

Let her/him know what you need. Make a promise to practice.

**Remember everything sports has to offer.**

You're with your friends. You're learning a new skill. You're getting in shape. And, you're having fun!

## Positive Talking

Communication is the most important skill every player should have in any sport. How you communicate is essential and it takes effort. Here are some simple rules to follow when talking with your teammates, coaches, parents, and officials:

**Try to speak positively.** Be encouraging instead of discouraging.

**Remember that words can hurt.** Be respectful and honest.

**Use "I" statements.** They help people better understand what is wrong and why.

**Tell your parents and coaches how you are feeling.** Don't assume they know.

## Attentive Listening

Good communication isn't just about talking. It also involves good listening.

**Take time to listen** – to your teammates, coach, parents, and officials.

**Don't interrupt.**

**Pay attention during practice.**

**Listen and learn the rules of the game.**



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## You can't be a good winner without good sportsmanship!

Do you know what it takes to be a good sport? How can your team be known as a team that shows good sportsmanship? Check the sportsmanship statements that fit you:

- \_\_\_ I follow the rules of the game.
- \_\_\_ I try to use positive communication skills.
- \_\_\_ I try to respect all players, coaches, parents, and officials.
- \_\_\_ I try to play fairly and honestly.
- \_\_\_ I encourage my team members.
- \_\_\_ I listen to my coach.
- \_\_\_ I accept the officials' calls.
- \_\_\_ I say only positive things.
  
- \_\_\_ I understand losing is part of sports. I try not to make excuses or complain but rather I look for things that I could do to improve my game.
- \_\_\_ I try not to gloat when I win or tease the other team when they lose.
- \_\_\_ I understand that I am part of a team, and I need to give everyone a chance to play.
- \_\_\_ I try to give my best effort every game.
- \_\_\_ I understand sports are games and winning is not everything.

What did you learn about yourself? Are you a good sport? Do you need to work on your sportsmanship? Do your teammates, your coach, or even your parents?

## Attitude is Everything

Positive attitudes can make or break an athlete. It's important to keep a positive attitude when learning new skills, belonging to a team, and competing.

### Bad or Negative Attitudes

- I am a bad player. I should quit.

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- This team always beats us.  
I know we won't win.

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- The coach never helps me. She just says "good job." It is obvious I am not good enough.

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- I scored three times last game. I can't do that again. The pressure is too much.

### Good or Positive Attitudes

- I may not be the best player, but I am going to keep practicing and improve my skills.

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- It doesn't matter if we lose. I am going to give it my best effort. I like the way this team challenges me.

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- I should tell the coach I want more specific feedback. I should ask more questions and let her know how I feel.

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- I understand I am going to have good games and bad games. I can only do my best. I will talk to someone about the pressure.

