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The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

*By Matthew Baron
Monson High School*

A child's parents are the most influential role models in life. Although superstar athletes and pop stars may adorn the bedroom walls of the next generation, their influence is dwarfed in comparison to that of the people that have worked to build those walls, buy those posters, and heat that room. The values instilled during youth are the parameters that define character, and that character is the basis for life, athletic or otherwise. The character of an individual determines whom one admires, what one believes, and how one handles himself. Parents are the roots from which their children grow, for better or for worse.

The way in which children are raised establishes their view of competition. If growing up they are bombarded with questions relating to how many points they scored, if coach played them enough, or the fairness of the referee, it establishes one type of sportsman. On the other hand, if they are greeted with questions associated with their enjoyment of the game, the quality of their opponent, or if any of their teammates will be coming over for dinner, it cultivates a very different kind of sportsman. While the latter will tend to view sports as a happy social medium with the additional enjoyment of competition, the other will tend to feel pressure to outperform his opponents and teammates alike, and depart with memories consumed by the final values on the scoreboard.

This outlook on priorities may be the single most defining characteristic among athletes. Most readily witnessed at the conclusion of a game, it can be seen in who stamps off pouting to the showers in self-loathing or who sticks around to get to know the rivals and discuss the universal disdain for sloppy joes and mystery meat. Competition is often intense and makes sport what it is, but one must be able to funnel that intensity into performance as opposed to cheap shots, and know when and how to shut it off. It is the coach's job to get his team to play to the apex of their potential, but all too often this coach has a dozen or more unofficial assistants. In the middle of homework and in between bites at the breakfast table are not the time or the place for coaching. The responsibility of a parent is to make sure that the place sports held in their child's heart growing up continues to maintain its residence throughout high school and beyond. No little kid picks up a wiffleball bat because he feels the need to put in a hard day's work.

Although words of encouragement and lectures on priorities can get a child on the right track, they are worth nothing without example. The hypocritical nature of some parents in the stands is not only counterproductive, but also embarrassing. Whether it is a parent's inability to control their emotions or their need to live vicariously through their children, everything they've taught can be thrown away with a single obscene gesture or slip of the tongue. A parent can't ask more of a child than they can expect from themselves and they must expect a lot of themselves when it comes to sportsmanship, the backbone and greatness of high school athletics.

You're Looked Up To By All

By Daniel Hackenson

Bartlett High School

It's the bottom of the ninth,
As he walks to the plate.
He's moving really slow,
Like he can't carry his weight.

Runners at the corners
And two outs already done.
The crowd is laughing
And the game's no longer fun.

A bit on the hefty side.
A little bit short.
He's not the athletic type,
Not for any sport.

Pitch one comes in,
A change-up to the mitt.
He watches it cross,
To tough for him to hit.

"Strike One" the ump calls,
As the crowd goes wild.
His father turns red,
Embarrassed for his child.

Another ball thrown,
Which makes it strike two.
The pitcher's dad calls out
'Any pitch will do.'

As the pitcher's dad
Continues to scream and yell,
The batter's father
Prays his son will do well.

Then a lonely voice
Cries out from the fans.
"This batter is awful
He belongs in the stands"

A tear falls down his face,
But is quickly wiped away.
Then another guy yells
"Who let this boy play?"

The dad can't take it,
He must defend his son.
But a glance from the plate
Says he has already won.

So he keeps cheering him on
And keeps clapping his hands.
Even though everyone else
Believes there's no chance.

The third pitch is thrown,
As he swings for the skies.
I only wish you could have seen
The *want* in his eyes.

But the ball got by him
And the game was done.
The boy walked off crying
As others made fun.

It took more courage
For his dad to stay cool.
Rather than retaliate
And look like a fool.

They made a boy cry.
Is that not good enough?
To send a message to parents
About being too rough.

Parental sportsmanship
Is part of playing ball.
So control yourselves,
You're looked up to by all.

You Were an Inspiration

By Jennifer Masztal

Ware High School

Dear Mom,

You'd be proud of me. I know you would be. Remember when you came and watched me at my soccer games and hated it because I would push and kick the other players just because I was mad. Remember when you encouraged me to play just for fun and not play to hurt others and be aggressive. Remember when I didn't take your advice seriously.

You would calm down that other mother, Mrs. Snipt, when she started harassing the referee about his calls. You would give me encouraging shouts like, "You go girl!" or "You're doing great honey, keep up the good work." You gave my brother the same advice. You came to our games faithfully and celebrated and mourned with us. You even were a great example of superb sportsmanship when you congratulated the opposing team on their win when the other parents were throwing scorn at them. I didn't understand you. Eventually you stopped coming to my games because you couldn't bear to see my pounding the opponents on purpose, but you would still encourage me to be more kind hearted on the field. I thought you were being silly and worrying too much. I should have listened to your advice.

It was a cold and rainy fall day. The kind of day where you could just cuddle up on the couch with a mug of hot cocoa and watch cartoons. It was the last five minutes of the game and the score was tied, 2-2. My coach sent me in as a substitute for the left halfback. We started, and I was passed the ball. I dribbled past everyone and set up for the winning shot when the center defensive player stole the ball and passed it away for their winning goal. I can barely remember what happened next. All I know is that I became more enraged than I ever was and intentionally kicked that center defense player straight in the right knee. Of course I was carded, but that wasn't what I was afraid of. That night I announced to our sports fanatic family and to you that I had quit the soccer team, forever. I didn't want to disappoint you like that again. I figured that I couldn't fix my mistakes so I just had to stop. Yeah, your worries were over, but I was never able to make you proud.

That was what I regretted the most as I sat there next to you, holding your hand, as God took you away from us. You taught us, you preached to us, you even set an excellent example, but I never took it upon myself to do as you did. I never fulfilled your wish of having me possess great sportsmanship as you did. That's why I'm telling this to you to say that I think I finally have done it, even if it is a little late. I don't know if you could have seen it through the clouds, but I helped a girl up after I accidentally knocked her over and I apologized to her. I even thought of you as I congratulated the opposing goalie on her almost impossible save. I rejoined the team a year after you left us. I wanted to make amends.

You were an inspiration to me. You are an inspiration to others. My team has learned your ways. I have become a referee for the under 8 league so that I hope I can spread the message to other players and their parents. Mrs. Snipt has even stopped harassing the referees and the other teams because of you. Mom, I know that you might have thought it hopeless to teach me good sportsmanship while you were here, but it was not in vain. I learned it and others saw your example. I hope I made you proud. Love always, your daughter, Jenn

The Parent's Influence on Sportsmanship

By Matthew DeFinis

Reading Memorial High School

As a high school athlete, I have observed how behavior involving sportsmanship on the field often translates into how athletes carry themselves as people in everyday life. Playing sports is often the first time a child experiences competition and important values such as fair play, respect and hard work. The parents' approach to how they teach sportsmanship to their child is critically important in building the foundation of a better and stronger individual.

Sportsmanship is defined in the Webster New World Dictionary as "characteristics of or behavior befitting a person who can take loss or defeat without complaint or victory, without gloating, and who treats his opponents with fairness, generosity, courtesy, etc.

Whether a young athlete behaves in a "sportsmanlike" way is influenced by their parents and the behavior they demonstrate. Parents who attend their children's sporting events and complain to officials or berate opposing players are forgetting that playing sports is not about winning at all costs. It is about learning to play as a team, achieve as a team, and overcome adversity as a team. It is about the joy of being young and being able to enjoy these experiences.

When I was fourteen, I worked as a U-10 soccer referee. It was interesting to observe how not a single player or myself could control the quality of the game as much as the parents on the sidelines. When they behaved and kept their remarks positive the kids responded by playing hard and having fun, even the U-10 team. The problem was that sometimes the parent's behavior was not positive. I remember one team I dreaded refereeing because their parents would constantly barrage me with insults and complaints. Sadly, the children would respond by playing dirty and parroting the complaints of their parents. I remember on one occasion the kids started mumbling to me *after* the game, saying that I was the reason they lost when the score was 6-0 and they clearly got outplayed.

Doctor Marty Ewing, a sports psychologist for the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports says, "Children learn to assess their social competence i.e ability to get along with and gain acceptance from others, in sports through feedback received from parents and coaches."

As a seventeen-year-old that has played many sports, I can testify that parents, more than any other factor, influence the behavior of their children in sports. The way they act on the sidelines and after the games basically dictates the way their child will perceive what is happening and how they will end up acting as well. It is so unfortunate that many parents don't realize that while they're yelling at the referee of their child's U-10 summer league game saying, "You stink, you're blowing the game!" that they're actually blowing the chances of their children growing up to be fair and respectful sportsman. Clearly, one of the best opportunities and most natural ways that parents can help their children build character is through sports and it is always such a shame to see these precious opportunities missed.

To the Parents of a Sportsman

By Lisa Redden

Medfield High School

Do you yell at every whistle? Do you argue every call? Do you think that it will help to tell me that only the referee is at fault? Do you think it does not matter?

You are wrong, you know. Each word you say I hear, each word I log away.

With every curse and every cry, the sport is a bit less fun.

Every action you make, I see. In time I will follow suit.

You are my role model. I am young. I can be influenced. With so many types of people out there, people doing crazy things, I look to Mom and Dad. I watch them. I learn from them. A parent holds a child's trust, and assumes they will use it well. Do you?

What you think is important. It matters if you are on the sideline every game. Your encouragement keeps me strong; your dedication makes me proud. Your attitude... that counts too. I like to hear your thoughts. Did you think that I played well, played hard... or do you think I should have won? Did you agree when I told you about that bad referee? Did you tolerate my remarks? Is it okay, because I do not know yet, I am not sure what is right. You do. You are Mom. You are Dad.

I like to see you in the stands. I want to have an audience even on the coldest day. It matters what you say and do. I care what you think. How should I win? With grace? With arrogance? Should I lose with dignity? Should I hold myself high and enjoy the game instead of worrying about an unsuccessful outcome? Is it unsuccessful... if I tried my best? Tell me, because you know, I am sure, and I am still learning.

What do you value in this game, because I value it too. Should I do everything to win? If you want that, then I will, because I am your daughter, I am your son. I want to please you. Is it so serious that I cannot err? Or it is fun; is it a game to laugh about and enjoy? What message are you sending me, because I promise that I am listening.

Tell me. Show me, Mom and Dad. I am still learning.

Parents' Role in Sportsmanship; Lead by Example

*By Matthew Sloan
Beverly High School*

I acknowledge how cliché it has become to lead into an essay with what Webster's Third Edition thinks of the term "sportsmanship." Rather, I shall indulge my listeners with the feelings that Matthew Sloan's First Edition has on the subject. I feel sportsmanship is the understanding that athletics involve contests and games of skilled fitness and the realization of these "sports" as such. Sportsmanship is the value of seeing sports as they truly are.

The role of parents in sportsmanship is simple: instill the positive values of sportsmanship into their children. In the beginning, all parents should teach their children that sports are just games. As with all games, they should be played fairly and graciously. The most admirable part of sports that I can see today is the shaking of hands after a game. It verifies that it was merely a game, and win or lose, we can all still be friends, admiring each other's skills. Parents who overemphasize the importance of sports in a child's life are making a grievous mistake. It is not uncommon, from my experiences, to attend a sporting event of any rank or level in high school athletics and find parents taking the game more seriously than their children. This is an off-putting trait in an adult (and I use the term "adult" loosely referring to any person who has a child).

Parents, I beg of you, do not scream; do not grow angry or frustrated with a child because of his or her athletic performance. A parent must love his or her child and encourage the child to work and compete to reach his or her potential. When children become disillusioned with themselves for their lack of athletic prowess, it is not their parents' turn to degrade them further, but to console them as best they can. Children, I am almost certain, have not been known to attend their parents' place of business and heckle them and scream when they error!

It is perfectly understandable to want to see a child succeed and do well. The parent who yells, "Hang in there!" or "You can do it!" is being supportive. It is the adults who scream, "What are you thinking?" or worse yet, holler at other people's children, that I feel have no place in youth sports.

I praise the parents who teach their children early to love sports with equal fervor as they would love pursuits of knowledge and the arts. For the majority of young athletes, high school will be the last years of their lives in which they will engage in sports at such a competitive level. Some of the more gifted athletes will continue in college at that level; of course, those idolized professionals can eventually make a rather lucrative career out of their talents. This possibility of success arouses strong feelings to compete in athletics; however, parents' role in sports should be that of encouraging and consoling bystanders. As children see parents display good sportsmanship, they will follow.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

*By Brittany Porter
Malden High School*

There never were best friends
Like Tommy and Timmy.
Tommy was chubby
And Timmy was skinny.

Tommy's dad coached a team
Called the Hodge's School Hogs
And Timmy's dad was the coach
Of the Diddle Middle Dogs.

They both loved to play against
And practice with each other.
Neither were sore losers and
Both loved the other like a brother.

Then one day they discovered
Next week the Hodge's School Hogs
Would be up against none other
Than the Diddle Middle Dogs!

Both children were excited.
And when the day finally arrived,
The Diddle Middle Dogs had won!
A close game: four to five.

"What?! That ball was foul!"
Tommy's dad began to shout.
The umpire came to see what
All the commotion was about.

Tommy's dad yelled at the umpire
With unbelievably rude names
And with such a fury he was banned
From all their future games.

Tommy soon lost interest in
The game he loved to play.
While Timmy's dad helped him excel
More and more each day.

He was taught good sportsmanship,
While Tommy never played again.
He developed a bad attitude and
Lost track of his childhood friend.

The moral of this story is
Don't underestimate the position
That parents play in sportsmanship
And how much they influence children.

Just look at both Timmy and Tommy.
Tommy will be hearing Timmy's name
Over the loudspeaker at Fenway
As he bats in the World Series game.

Meanwhile Tommy's accomplishments
Are sadly few and far between.
Maybe if he'd been taught good ethics
He would be on the same team.

Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Ashleigh Bergeron

Monson High School

Children practice good sportsmanship when they treat their teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials with respect. Sportsmanship is not one of those things kids just learn on their own. The basics of sportsmanship are learned from the adults in their lives, especially their parents.

Those who see adults behaving in a sportsmanlike manner will eventually understand that it's not about winning or losing a game, the real winners in sports and life itself, are those who know how to behave with drive and dignity.

Remember that saying, "Actions speak louder than words?" That's especially true when it comes to teaching ones kids what good sportsmanship is all about. Parent's behavior during practices and games will influence kids more than any pep talk or lecture given to them. With small gestures and a friendly demeanor, parents can help their children understand what one means by good sportsmanship. It starts with something as simple as shaking hands with opponents before a game and continues with acknowledgment of good plays made by others and accepting even bad calls gracefully. It isn't always easy to display good sportsmanship; it can be tough to congratulate the opposing team after losing a close or important game, but the kids who learned how to do it will benefit in the end.

As a parent, it's their responsibility to be both encouraging and supportive of their children. It is this positive reinforcement that will give their children integrity and perseverance. Parents are not players on their child's team, but contribute heavily to the success which their child and his or her team experiences. Parents are also not the coaches of the team; there is a difference between shouting words of encouragement and that of directions.

Parents should understand that it is a privilege to be able to watch the support the sporting event they're attending. For this reason, it is important for them to set a good example by acting courteously with parents and fans of kids on the other team and also, recognize and acknowledge good plays and performances by athletes on either team.

Respect is the key for parents when setting the right example. If they can respect the judgment of the coaches and calls of the officials, chances are their children will as well. By engaging in positive school chants, parents have the opportunity to express their enthusiasm and spirit for their child and the game. Finally, and maybe most importantly, parents must remember what they preach to their children, "It's only a game." Even if ones child doesn't make every foul shot, isn't in the lead during a race, or is just part of a team that never wins, the world isn't over. Parents need not to live their athletic lives through their kids, instead just have fun watching.

The saying is true, "The apple doesn't fall far from its' tree." Parents are role models and their attitudes are emulated by their children. With their respectful and supportive actions being looked up to, schools are able to achieve the sportsmanship like environment they strive for.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Henry Stebbins

Amherst-Pelham Regional High School

The role of parents in sportsmanship is to be the primary teacher for their children of all morals and values. A good sport plays by the rules of the game and conducts himself in a respectable manner. Sportsmanship is essentially behavior learned from parents.

This responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of parents because sportsmanship begins at home, before a child participates in a sport. Children are influenced by every sporting event viewed on TV, and by their parents' reactions. To a child, a celebrity, professional athlete exemplifies perfection. He plays the game exactly right, otherwise he wouldn't be a professional athlete. If a famous batter hits a homerun and gloats, or strikes out and overreacts, the child considers this acceptable behavior and then acts exactly like their hero. After an unfortunate call, the child might not quietly return to the dugout, instead he might throw his helmet and raise a fuss. Why? That is how Manny Ramirez or Barry Bonds conducted himself.

How does a parent educate the child in praiseworthy sportsmanship? Inform your child Manny isn't perfect and create a good example with your own conduct. If you see Manny throw his helmet or Barry break his bat in anger, specify exactly how foolish this appears. Explain these antics and temper tantrums are unsuitable. The only thing more influential on the child than the athlete's behavior is their parents', those omnipotent parents, who handle everything. If a parent doesn't consider anything wrong with foul language and unrestricted antics, the child certainly won't. If a parent uses vulgar language, disrespects officials, and loses his temper over a questionable call, a child will consider that as normal, and correct, behavior and reproduce it.

Once children participate in athletic events, reinforce lessons of good sportsmanship by continuing to set a proper example and discussing inappropriate actions. Support both athletic failures and victories. Instead of demanding success, encourage children to try hard, do their best, and have fun. When a mistake occurs don't criticize, it's a teaching opportunity. Find something to praise and mention the highlights. Tell your child "good pass" or "I like how you supported your team", since parental praise is their ultimate reward. Praise helps the disappointment of the missed catch be remembered in proper perspective. Remind everyone games are not critical to life and death, and there are many future games to be played.

As a multi-sport player, referee, and volunteer coach, I see players arrive at games feeling pressure from their parents to perform. Children want to fulfill these monumental expectations but with failure, may vent their frustrations through cheap shots, grumbling about officials or teammates or other inappropriate conduct. Parents, those primary teachers, need to set behavior limits. Winning isn't everything because after all sports are merely a form of entertainment. The important thing is the challenge. If you're unable to have fun while losing, how are you ever going to start winning?

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Charity Delsie

Hopkins Academy

Have you ever watched those athletes who are able to completely tune out everything around them to focus on the game? You know the athletes I mean; the ones who are so in tune with themselves and the team that they seem oblivious to everything else. These amazing sports-players aren't distracted by anything; the officials, the fans, or the other players. These are the athletes who will continue to play the game in spite of a bleeding cut or sprained ankle, and not notice until after the game that they are, indeed, injured. Unfortunately, most athletes don't have the same focus as do those gifted few, and distractions from their game influence how they play.

For most sports players, the focus is not only on the game, but on the events surrounding the game. My freshman year playing soccer, one of my teammates confided in me she felt like throwing up from nerves, because her father had come to the game for the first time all season. When she first got on the field, I noticed she was having one of her best games; being uncharacteristically aggressive, and keeping up her energy. She even tried to head the ball (one of her fears) but missed it. Sadly this led to her father shouting to step it up and go to the ball, in an upset tone. She looked angry, and started making mistakes. She would overrun the other players, kick too far, and even got a call for pushing. Later she tearfully told me all she could think during the game was how disappointed her dad would be.

I learned from my friend that parents who aren't supportive of their children or expect too much from them, often hinder their child's athletic skill rather than drive it forward. In a child's mind, the opinion of their parents means a lot. Parents should, at all times, encourage their child and their child's team. This heartens players, and makes them want to work harder. It gives them needed confidence to go that extra inch to make the game a good one. It is the same way with fans that a player doesn't know. If an athlete hears a parent from another side jeering at them, it may make them angry, or upset them, which interferes with their ability to play the game to their full potential. Also, parents who are unsportsmanlike (such as yelling at the official) can be kicked out, after causing much embarrassment and hostility.

Although many fans believe it is up to the athletes alone to make or break the game, the fans, including and often especially parents, have a large impact. Parents should always be supportive while cheering, which leads to the athletes pushing themselves to be worthy of the praise. It's like I've told my dad; "There's no better feeling than stepping out onto that field and hearing my name being cheered by countless people, with your voice loudest of all."

Like Father, Like Son

By Leah Gunning

Ursuline Academy

The sun was shining, the day was bright,
Just perfect for a game.
The two teams were ready to go head to head;
Their moment had finally came.

The parents were on the sidelines,
Most showing support for their team.
But some felt winning was more important,
Or at least that's how it seemed.

Johnny's dad supported his son;
He told him to try his best.
That winning isn't the most important;
It's how you treat the rest.

Billy's dad supported his son too,
Only in a different way.
"Do whatever you must to win this game,"
Is always what he would say.

The whistle blew, the ball was kicked,
Johnny went with the ball at a run.
It didn't matter whether he scored a goal;
The game was all about fun.

Billy stole the ball from John,
This game he had to win.
He couldn't let the ball get by,
The goal it couldn't get in.

Johnny wasn't about to give up,
He went to go get the ball.
But in the process, he kicked Billy's leg,
And Billy began to fall.

He hurt his hand and skinned his knee,
And then looked up to see,
That Johnny was now approaching him,
To say something to he.

Well Billy wasn't going to look like a wimp,
His heart was filled with rage.
So he lunged at John and before you knew it,
In a fight they were engaged.

Johnny was hit here and there,
He didn't know what to do.
So he waited awhile and took the blows,
And finally Billy was through.

His chest hurt with every breath he took,
His eye swelling black and blue.
Yet in his pain he looked at Bill and asked,
"What's wrong with you?"

And Billy replied, with a triumphant grin,
"This fate was yours to choose.
You came at me to start a fight,
And I wasn't about to lose.

"My father taught me that I should win,
In everything I do,
And I wasn't about to take second place,
Especially to the likes of you."

And a troubled look came over Johnny,
He didn't quite understand.
So this kid thought that he wanted to fight?
He wasn't that kind of a man!

"My dad says it's not about winning or losing,
It's how you play the game.
And I intend to play it with respect for others,
Even though that may sound lame.

"And just to make my point quite clear,
I didn't want to fight with you.
I came over to apologize,
And ask if there's anything I could do.

"But now I think I'm losing time,
So I must hurry up and say,
That if you had shown sportsmanship to me,
This wouldn't be my last day.

But perhaps it isn't your fault,
Sportsmanship doesn't come to everyone.
It's something a father must teach his child:
Like father, like son."

A Letter Concerning the Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Tawny Virgilio

Wahconah Regional High School

Dear Side-Line Fan:

It has come to my attention, that whenever I play soccer, in whatever league I am in, you are always there yelling whatever comes to you in a rush of adrenaline at any given moment. I would like to politely ask you only to yell the encouraging thoughts that come into your head for whichever team you are here to cheer on and support. Because, you see, whatever you yell and how you control yourself is a direct reflection of the young women in which my team and I are facing, and this also challenges my team's sportsmanship. It is very hard to set a good example for the people in which *we* look up to, hence assuming the challenging role of *their* luminary. This is why it has become so very difficult not to become annoyed with the referee's when they make a bad call. Have you ever "ref'd" a game? I have, and believe me, they do the best that they can

But I would like to let you know that after all of these years that I have played the game, you have been improving, and so have I; at blocking you out. I can hone in on my teammates and coaches and hear only them now. However, I will not so easily forgive you for what you did to my teammates and I when we were younger, calling us names and demeaning our spirits. I never understood what it was you called my coach until I was twelve. Not until now have I been able to put it all behind me and realize that I play the game for my own personal gratification and reward, but first and foremost for the team; not for your praise. You know, all of what you said held me back - until now. I push myself forward.

I am not trying to make you feel bad, but I wish you had held your tongue when we were younger, because you bred the opponents that I have to play now. It takes all the fun out of the game when your opponents are calling you foul names and throwing punches because that's what they saw their *fathers* doing in "*house league*." I then become angry and wish that things would befall them that I would never normally wish on any other human being. I don't like the feeling of not being able to control my anger. I don't play soccer to come off the field hating myself for the way I played; not good enough. But all of the pressure that is put on our shoulders to win and to succumb to your standards makes it very hard to enjoy the game. It has become almost truthful that to lose is a very bad thing, even if you had given it your best.

But I would like to let you know that no matter how much negativity has spawned from your yelling, our teams wouldn't feel very good if no one came to watch us either. And for that we owe you. Many die-hard fans come to see us even in the bitter rain, and that takes a lot of commitment when it is optional to come. I can only hope that we provide good enough entertainment for what you are put through. I can deal with your cheering and comments because the cheers outweigh the dismal comments. Even though it is tough when you are a kid, hopefully you will have been able to stick with the sport long enough to see that it's all part of the game, all that yelling you side-line fans do. Thank you for listening to *my* complaints and I'll try to avoid making you speak out yours. Keep up the good work and so will we.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Player

Poor Sportsmanship and Parents

*By Shannon Daley
Scituate High School*

It is a stupendous day at the baseball field, the sun is shining, the grass is freshly mowed, and the field is groomed - ready for play. Proud parents fill the stands as the game begins. The game is slightly competitive, but light hearted all the same. A boy steps up to bat and connects - sending a hard ground ball straight to the shortstop. The shortstop fumbles the ball mildly, and regains control rather quickly. Then with a hop, fires the ball over to the first baseman just in time to reach the bag simultaneously as the batter. The umpire, unsure of the call, hesitates before calling the batter "safe." A cheer arises from the offensive team's stands, and slight disappointment can be detected from the other. However, quickly it is gone and replaced by clapping as well. Through the clapping a man yells out. He is very audible with his expletives and insults that are directed toward the umpire. It is obvious that he is the shortstop's father. The shortstop lowers his eyes and kicks the dirt timidly as the shouts carry out across the field. When the man is subdued, the game continues. However the game has changed. It does not contain the same lightheartedness and relaxed attitude it began with. The teams play quietly and seriously. A day that was once just plain stupendous, is now glazed with an awkward and angry mood.

As demonstrated, poor sportsmanship in any form, especially in parents, kills the positive mood of a game. What may have started as simply a game turns into a debate and insult contest between umpires and parents or parents and other parents. It is obvious that while these parents are battling each other with their words and actions, they are not taking into account their children. If they did, they would see that much of the time the child is embarrassed. If the man in the story had taken the time to look into his son's eyes, he would have seen the humiliation and disappointment that rested there. This is not a good attitude to continue a game with. The boy will most likely go back into the game and not perform with confidence. Mood is an extremely important thing in a game. Success is directly related to the mood of the team. After such an event it is difficult to pick up the positive mood with which the game was started.

Poor sportsmanship in parents reflects and instills negative values in children. It is the parents' role in the family to teach their children positive values and how to act in situations. Parents should be examples for their children, and not the other way around. When parents lash out violently in these situations, what is this man saying to his child? He is saying that it is appropriate to be disruptive and be totally consumed by something as unimportant as a little league game. He is teaching his son the wrong values. His actions will also make it harder for his son to accept failure. Everyone makes mistakes, and if his father can't accept that, how will his son? The poor sportsmanship that his father portrayed not only affects the game, but affects his son then and in the long run.

Sportsmanship plays an extremely large role in a game, and sportsmanship that parents demonstrate plays an even larger part. Adults, especially parents, are the role models for the adults of the future. If unsportsmanlike conduct is shown, it will be picked up on and repeated in the future. Parents need to step back a moment and remember what is really important, and keep a game exactly what it is meant to be - a game.

Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

*By Britney Cullen
Milford High School*

Ever since the young age of 3,
When my mom sat down next to me,
To talk about what sports I'd play,
And have the honor to watch me one day.

It was winter of 2001,
Inside the "bubble" we played for fun.
But springtime soccer came mighty fast,
And no longer did fun last.

My mom always tried to make me smile,
But it only worked for a little while.
My coach would tell us we needed to win,
And all my teammates just looked with a grin.
We never complained when we lost by 5,
But only managed to say "We'll get them next time."

At the end of my games when I got real sad,
I'd run to my mom to not feel bad.
There was always a time when I was in a bad mood,
My emotions were mixed and words came out rude.

Nevertheless she was at every show,
Wherever you sat you'd always know.
She came with her loud voice, ready to roar,
For her little princess running the floor.

Sometimes she was obnoxious but always talked clean,
She's the same even now as I've become a teen.
I'm in high school now and she's still here for me,
She's at all of my games, even if admissions not free.

As I step onto the field with my head held high,
I look up into the stands to see my mom cry.
She worries for me and all the team,
But we can count on her to boast and beam.

For when we win it's quite a thing,
To watch all our moms yell and sing.
It makes us feel proud for what we've done,
And somehow it always comes back to fun.

We go through it all, good and bad,
And learn when to be happy and when not to be sad.

I look up to my mom the most of all,
For all those times I've wanted to fall,
She picked me up and wiped me down,
And makes a smile from the frown.

She says it doesn't matter how good I do,
She'll always be there to pull me through.
And that's why I think she plays a great part,
She makes me feel good and makes me feel smart.

There's nothing more I'd like to say,
Only a "Thank you to mom" for making my day.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Christopher Strew Jr.

Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School

Sportsmanship can be defined as “conduct considered fitting for a sportsperson, including observance of the rules of fair play, respect for others, and graciousness in losing.” Sportsmanship is something that is instilled and taught to children from the time they are able to walk. It is taught by their parents and reinforced every day of their life. Hopefully it is taught by teachers and coaches alike. A good sportsman is an individual who is polite and gracious. They have common respect for all people no matter what their ability or ethnic origin. My mother always told me about the Golden Rule. She insisted that I “Do unto others as I would have them do unto me.” I know that if I live by this rule, I will be respectful of all people and treat them in a caring manner. This does not guarantee that all other people will treat me with the same respect; however, I hope that this attitude will be contagious and catch on by others.

Parents play the ultimate role in educating their children about sportsmanship. The parents must be the role models out on the field. Children look up to their parents and try to mimic how they act, and most parents forget this at games. Parents cannot get defensive if the coach pulls their son or daughter out of the game, or if they don’t like the call the referee made. We all disagree with things that happen, but the sportsmanship shows through when you can sit there and restrain yourself from saying or doing something that is inconsiderate or possibly against the law. Like many things in life, “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

In other words, generations repeat themselves and children become the same as their parents were. Then their children become the same. We must break the chain and educate parents so that more children will grow up patient and understanding. There are too many children and parents today who are too hyper and out of control. We must continually educate people so that this will change.

If a parent does not agree with a particular coach’s philosophy about coaching or about his general dealings with people, then the parent should not allow their child to play on that particular team. They should not allow it, and then try to change it.

Parents must take matters into their own hands and start teaching their children about sportsmanship early. Once the children are teenagers it is too late to start teaching morals and values. It starts the day they are born!

In conclusion, parents must realize that constant education on their part is what is needed to instill values and morals into their children. They must live by the expectations they try to instill in their children. If all parents and adults did this, what a better world we would be living in and what a happier environment we would be a part of.

Parents in Sportsmanship
By Molly Gallagher
Reading Memorial High School

While watching a sporting event such as a soccer game, you may see a player head a ball out of her defensive end, or make a great steal and send it up the field towards her teammate. Many things may wander through your mind, but one of the last thoughts you would probably come across would be, "I wonder what her parents are like." Most people overlook how the behavior and attitude of parents influence their children. Parents pass down values, manners, and conduct from generation to generation, so is there any surprise when the sportsmanship of athletes directly correlates with that of their parents?

Throughout my sports career I've come into contact with many opponents, and more times than I'd like to remember, their parents as well. I've watched disputes be either merely kindled or fueled further by a disgruntled parent, and looked on helplessly as both of these scenarios spiraled into heated and unnecessary brawls. In a soccer game during last season, one particular team's parents were harassing the officials and opposing players while also suggesting that their own team play more physically and violently. It didn't take long for the girls' team to begin to feed off of the behavior of their parents, as one by one they also started yelling towards the officials and going after players. By the time the final whistle was blown, the game had gotten so out of control that the parents had to be warned, and the last few minutes of the game were hardly even playable, tainted by whistle after constant whistle. The actions of the parents in the stands were a direct cause of the reaction on the field by the players. If the parents had not escalated the situation by adding in their own comments and emotions, the game would have had a completely different and more positive ending.

When the parent is constantly displaying poor sportsmanship or bad behavior, oftentimes their child begins to lose sight of what is right and wrong. For instance, I am forced to recall at this very summit last year, in which a girl stood up and began discussing the poor sportsmanship ways of her father. She went on to explain how there have been several gymnasiums, ice rinks, etc., in which her father has been banned. Throughout the entire story, however, she remained seemingly sympathetic towards her father and believed that he was not doing anything that he should be so severely punished for. The continuous actions of her father have affected the young girl so significantly that her entire concept of what sportsmanship should be is misconstrued.

Another prime example of how poor sportsmanship in parents could be very damaging on their children would be the classic over-involved parent and overly talented athlete. I know what your thinking, "Is it possible to be overly talented?" but there comes an unstated point at which a parent finds their child to be so talented that they believe they need to be involved in every second of every one of her games. For example, two years ago I played against what I firmly believe to be the best female high school soccer player I have seen to date. The young girl had a short temper towards the referee's calls and only after the game did I find out that her father was a more extreme version of herself. In fact, this father was so troublesome from the sidelines, that this incredibly talented young soccer player could not find a

single travel team on which she could play for longer than a year. None of the coaches could have her on their team because they could no longer control the father. Here, the attitude and behavior of the father impinged on the daughter so greatly that not only did it affect her own attitude, but also it restricted where and with whom she could play.

Thankfully, however, a parent's effect on their child is not solely a negative one. A child receives and mimics the lessons of good sportsmanship and behavior equally as well as that of negative behavior. Talking from my personal experience, when I was in 4th grade and first started playing softball, my father was the coach of my team. With two older brothers to play rundown with in the yard, my base running skills were often more advanced than the capability of the infield to stop me. I could get myself in pickles between every base and often round the bases and receive a homerun off of an infield hit. However, this was not how my dad liked to play the game. From early on, he taught me the class and sportsmanship in the game and gave me a simple red-light sign to signal that we didn't need to run up the score. He would let kids hit away to let them see what they could accomplish, but he would never permit any demoralizing of the opposing team. Also, back during my 4th grade days, there were a number of cheers that in one rhythmic way or another would make some sort of pun against the other team. Our team was never allowed to sing these particular cheers, and if they were said, the offenders were not allowed to play the following inning. Without me consciously noticing, these same values stay with me today. By growing up with these positive demonstrations, I possess the understanding and ability to be a good sport that others without such a background are lacking.

In all these cases the conduct of the parents shows through blatantly in their children. Although not always so pronounced, it would be impossible to deny the effect that parents have to cause their children to follow in their footsteps. Of course it is not only the job of the parents to insure the sportsmanship in the youth of America; there are coaches and athletic directors who take over where the parents inevitably leave off. But we cannot overlook the long-lasting effect that the way in which we carry and present ourselves has on our children who mimic what they see and what they are taught.

The Role of Parents in High School Sportsmanship

By Duncan Pickard

Martha's Vineyard Regional High School

Since the beginning of recorded history, sport has been used to feed a natural desire for competition. It is human nature to let some emotions get out of control, and competition can lead to extremely volatile emotions. Rules and courtesies of sport were established to help keep competition fair and virtuous. We define these as sportsmanship, and players are required to be good sportsmen in all levels of competition. In high school athletics, however, another party has a unique role in promoting and exhibiting sportsmanship: parents. Parents need to abide by the same rules and courtesies of sportsmanship as are expected for student-athletes and nurture these traits in their children in order to advance the goals of athletic organizations like the MIAA.

It is the goal of any athletic organization to influence its participants with positive “lifelong and life-quality learning experiences,” as cited by the MIAA Mission Statement. Parents need to be especially aware in today’s world when the professional athlete has so much influence on children. The unfortunate incident in the 2003 American League Championship Series in which Don Zimmer of the New York Yankees charged Pedro Martinez of the Boston Red Sox is an example of poor sportsmanship in professional sports. No immediate official consequences were imposed on Zimmer or Martinez that affected the way the game or series was played; only fines were issued. A student-athlete gets a negative impression of how conflicts should be resolved by watching these and similar shenanigans. Such behavior is thus detrimental to the positive influence the MIAA wants to impress upon its participants. The parents must explain why such acts are inappropriate so the student-athlete retains a clear idea of what sportsmanship is and how to handle conflicts on the field. Consequently, the parent needs to provide a positive example for his child to prevent being hypocritical. “We reveal our true selves through sports,” says Dr. Darrell J. Burnett, a child and sport psychologist. “Our kids are...looking to us as role models of good sportsmanship.” Parents, with their special interaction with the student athlete, are the first step in promoting sportsmanship and the positive aspects of the high school athletic experience.

As the role of athletics in the high school curriculum develops, it is important for all those involved to reflect back on the purpose of this endeavor. Athletics promote lifelong values that are hard to develop away from competition. Parents are the prime influencers of the benefits of sport, and poor sportsmanship by parents is detrimental to the promotion of these benefits. Parents need to promote these characteristics in their children through real life examples and be good sportsmen so student-athletes have the opportunity to emulate a positive influence. Parents can be extremely constructive in the high school athletic experience, and sportsmanship is the first step to positive parental influence.

Dear Mom and Dad
By Evan Greathead
Nashoba Valley Technical High School

Dear Mom and Dad,

When I got this assignment to write an essay, letter, short story, poem, song, or other piece of literary work on "The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship" I realized how lucky I have been, and that's when I realized my essay would be in the form of a thank you letter to you both.

I realized that I am only fourteen years old but I have been playing sports since I was four years old. I have been involved with soccer, baseball, football, basketball, and swimming. I have been on many sports teams and I have seen some questionable behavior. For example, I have had coaches yell at refs or umpes, I have seen parents yell at refs or umpes, and I have seen parents yell at other parents and even at their own kids. What always happened after these incidents occurred was a talk in the car on the way home. We talk about what happened, what should or should not have happened, and why it was wrong.

I realize how lucky I am to have you come to all my sports games and meets because I think that support is what is so important. As a sports player I have learned so many things at a young age, but it is not just for on the field or in the pool. You have taught me to be polite, be respectful, but to always give everything I do one hundred percent. You have also taught me these things through example. I have not learned these things from what you tell me but by watching how you act. I think that kids learn by example. Parents need to practice how to preach and kids will follow. I think I am a better athlete whether it be in the pool or on a field because I bring with me a great competitive nature with a respect for who ever I will compete against.

So Mom and Dad I do thank you both for helping me become the athlete I am today.

Love,

Evan

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Vanessa Lynskey

Bartlett High School

Johnny stands at the plate, his heart pounding like a beating drum, his mind racing with a million thoughts. He hears the shouts of encouragement from the parents on the sidelines and the animated words of reassurance from his teammates in the dugout. “Come on Johnny! We know you can do it! Just keep your eye on the ball!” With renewed confidence and one very concentrated swing of the bat, he sends the ball flying high above the pitcher’s head until it finally lands on the opposite side of the fence for a home run. Johnny is ecstatic he has just scored the winning run. As he humbly rounds the bases, he thinks to himself, “They knew I could do it! *I* knew I could do it!” Overwhelmed by joy and satisfaction, Johnny crosses the plate and is greeted by the welcoming arms of his teammates who congratulate him and join in his excitement and celebration. Johnny takes the time to thank his friends for their congratulations and to congratulate them as well for their exciting victory, but after a few moments someone else catches his eye. With a smile that consumes his entire face, Johnny runs to his father, jumps into his arms, and shouts “I did it, Dad!”

Henry paces on the mound, clutching his glove in complete disbelief of what has just happened: “I can’t believe he hit it. That was my best pitch. I lost the game and now everyone’s going to hate me”. With his head hanging, Henry walks toward the dugout, afraid to make eye contact with any of the other players or fans. He fights to hold back tears. Henry notices his coach walking toward him with a few parents trailing behind and worries that they are coming to criticize him for his poor performance. Instead, he is greeted with pats on the back and positive reinforcement from all the adults: “You pitched a great game, Hank. We never would have made it this far without you”. Surprised by the constructive nature of their comments Henry responds, “What are you talking about? I gave up the home run. It’s all my fault”. The parents laugh. “Are you crazy? You’re the one who kept us in the game when we fell behind. It was because of you that we came this close to winning in the first place”. Henry receives similar comments from his teammates who join the crowd at this point, and he soon begins to feel better about himself and his pitching performance that day; he knows that he gave it his all, and his teammates know it too.

The two teams line up to shake hands and when Henry reaches Johnny he pulls him aside, congratulating Johnny on his game-winning hit. Johnny thanks his opponent and the two boys smile as they return to their respective benches.

The Day That Casey Lost

*By Kristyn Lattanzi
Belchertown High School*

Casey took her angry fist
And squeezed it very tight.
She pushed her fingernails into her palm
And shuddered at the sight
Of the view from left field
That showed her team had lost
Yet they were all still happy
But to Casey
Losing had a cost.
It meant another look
With disappointed eyes
It's how her father looked at her
He utterly despised
Losing in any shape or form
At any kind of game,
You see he hated losing because it brought him shame
And now because of Casey's fear
She felt she had something to do
She walked over to the dugout
And pointed at a few
Of her friendly teammates standing in a line
She told how they stunk at ball
And how they waste her time.
She even yelled right at her coach
Saying that he couldn't do his job
And that he was a dope.
Casey's father looked in shock at what he had just seen
Was that his little Casey
Being kicked off of the team?
He stood up on the bleachers and yelled aloud himself
At what a stupid move that was
And how there'd be no trophy without his daughter's help
And then he stopped and looked around
At every single face

He stepped down off the bleachers
And hung his head in shame.
He knew what he was doing
He knew that it was wrong
When he saw the other fathers moving right along
No they were not angry
No they didn't yell
They were there to shake the other parents' hands
And say their kid played swell
Her eyes we glassed with unshed tears
At the loss of her position
On the team and with her friends
As she began to petition
For forgiveness from her father
For losing this big game
And how it was the coach's fault
And how her team was lame.
He walked out onto the field
And looked Casey in the eye
He said, "This is my fault,
And I can tell you why."
"I never showed how to lose
And how to still be kind,
When you're angry 'cause you lost
And defeat fills up your mind."
"I had pushed you all too hard
And led you all astray,
But I think we should change this starting with today."
"Casey, go and shake their hands
Tell them they played well,
And then we'll go out for ice cream, even though you lost
I'm still craving caramel."
And that was the beginning of knowing how to lose.
And now Casey plays a good game
And isn't afraid to lose.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship
By Matthew Paradise
St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School

I believe that the role parents should play in sportsmanship should be that of positive role models setting good examples and conducting themselves accordingly each time they are in attendance at various sporting events. It is not right for people to attend a sporting event and ruin the experiences of other fans by being unsportsmanlike. I would define unsportsmanlike as an action that can draw attention away from a game in a negative manner. However, I understand that it is in human nature to not always agree with every decision that is made.

The MIAA has many rules about sportsmanship; in fact, sportsmanship is what they pride themselves on. I know this from experience, because I play three varsity sports at my school: football, basketball, and baseball. I know that the referees of various sports uphold the rules for sportsmanship during the games for the athletes, but they cannot control the parents too. I believe that parents should encourage and support players on each team but that does not mean that they should cheer on the opposition. All parents should accept the decisions of the officials even if they feel otherwise. I understand that this is a difficult thing to do, especially if an official makes a terrible call in the eyes of the players, coaches or even fans. Parents should not be obnoxious during any sporting event. This means that there should be no yelling, negative comments, vulgarity or hand gestures towards anyone during athletic competitions. Oftentimes I think parents tend to get overly excited during games. It seems as though they are trying to re-live their youth either through their child or the team. I also believe that if more parents would take the time to seek out and congratulate players who did something worth recognizing that people in general would act better towards each other. My mother has always instilled this in me, in fact she has always been a role model of this behavior. Many of my friends would tease her about being a neutral fan.” As the MIAA says, there is a big difference between being a fan and being a fanatic, and people need to realize that.

In conclusion, I believe that parents should do their best to insure that sportsmanship takes place on and off the field. I understand that there are many rivalries out there, but rivalries have but one place to occur, and that is on the field, or in the gym. There is a lot of room for improvement out there in the aspects of sportsmanship. and we must all relax, understand this, and go from there.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Cynthia Liu
Chicopee High School

No one had caught up to him—yet. That was all. He has successfully eluded all the other competitors until *now*. Someone was close behind him—too close. Matthew Sanders sprinted across the open track field. The wind stung at his cheeks. His parents and sister waited anxiously by the sideline, cheering him with anticipation and excitement. The dark clouds and drizzling rain provided very limited light, but Matthew’s eyes were keener and more adapted for this particular race than most; he could faintly recognize the line of trees and lights that held his destination.

Sanders’ legs pumped, as his destination grew closer. His body was in pain and he was fighting to keep up the pace. The only sound that he could hear was his heavy breathing, and the thunderous thumping of feet pounding the pavement. He had prepared for this moment for more than two weeks now. Nothing could stop him from winning. The line of trees was only meters away, but Matthew was having a hard time now, as his legs were hurting more than ever, his muscles all strained, his energy almost all used up. Flashes of orange passed before him, and he stumbled to the ground. Footsteps echoed intensely in his ear. He saw the bright lights that marked the finish line as he tumbled to the ground. It was too late. Anger gripped his body. He wanted to avenge the runner in front of him for making him trip, but his father’s words flashed through his mind’s eye. “Sportsmanship, son. Sportsmanship is the key to a game. You may lose, but showing sportsmanship will earn you respect.”

The crowd was already on its feet; the noise deafening. From a silent place deep inside him, Matthew found his last breath of strength he had to cross the finish line. It was enough.

“Across the finish line, it’s Charlie Garland, followed by Julian Hopkins and Matthew Sanders.”

It was over. The crowd slowly began to thin out. Matthew’s parents came over to congratulate him. His mom hugged him, and his sister greeted him as if he were a conquering hero; but Matthew was disappointed.

Mr. Sanders put a comforting hand on his son’s shoulders. “Matt, I am *so* proud of you. You did the right thing. You practiced and prepared. You know you tried your best.” Mrs. Sanders nodded in concordance. “Matthew, not only did you *not* push him back, but you were brave also enough to finish the race. You have shown true sportsmanship.”

As the message sank in, Matthew began to feel a lot better. Suddenly the tote board began to flash “Photo Finish”, and beneath that “Inquiry.” The score wasn’t official yet. Several minutes passed and the tension was mounting. The announcer called out, “Matthew Sanders has moved up to second place; because according to photos, Charlie Garland interfered with him in the fog.”

The rain began to clear up. Somewhere off in the distance, arching across the sky, Matthew and his family saw a rainbow. Peace settled over Matthew. Even though he hadn’t won, his parents had taught him the true meaning of winning— sportsmanship.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Vita Canizaro

St. Mary's High School, Lynn

Parents have a lot to do with sportsmanship, especially concerning their own children. Many parents that have a negative effect on the overall sportsmanship of a team don't even realize it. In fact, they probably don't even know that they are affecting the team at all. On the other hand, there are those parents that do everything they can for the team and are always there to root them on. These parents usually teach good sportsmanship by cheering on the players that don't do well and keeping the team's spirits high when things are going bad.

Parents that teach poor sportsmanship are usually the parents that think either their child is the best and doesn't have to be a team player, or they think that their child can never do well enough and therefore need to be "pushed" from the sidelines. Some of these parents or coaches teach the team to cheat without getting caught, to be unkind to the other team, and that it is fine to argue with an official when you don't agree with him or her. There are also parents that will go to every game and holler at the other team players, coaches, and officials. This embarrasses some players, but there are some that learn from this and think that it is all right to act this way. Then there are the parents that argue with other parents and, as a result, get the children to argue with each other.

Parents that teach good sportsmanship are usually there to cheer on the teams but don't say anything negative about them. They cheer for the kids that nobody else will cheer for and, even though they may disagree, they go along with the officials' calls. As coaches some parents play a very positive role. They won't yell at the players that aren't doing well and they won't yell at or disrespect officials. They are the parents that shake the hands of the players on the other team at the end of the game and, win or lose, tell everyone how well they played.

As you can see, parents play a very critical role in team sportsmanship. They are the role models of the players. How the parents act greatly affects how the players act, especially if it is a parent that coaches. If a parent in the stands or on the bench acts a certain way, kind or otherwise, the players learn that that is the way it should be. Many players that have grown up hearing only negative things towards themselves and the other team, will think that it is okay to speak that way towards their opponents and/or coaches. But the teams that have parents that are supportive and are kind to all players will know that it isn't right to yell at or "trash" any player. The team will also learn that while playing sports, the rules are only as good as they are enforced. It is up to the official to make the call, not the team or the parents to argue about it.

What is the Role of Parents in Sportsmanship?

*By Hillary Bartlett
Leominster High School*

What is the role of parents in sportsmanship? Many people think that parents just go and watch the game to cheer on their child, but that is not always the case. As an athlete myself, I can be a primary source, or a first hand account, and can tell you what really happens at some games. Do not confuse my meaning, some parents/guardians do just watch and cheer for their child, but for others the “cheers” turn into jeers or criticism and sometimes even raise their voices to the coach.

The parents who scream and yell at their child’s coach or even official are not helping their children. Quiet the contrary, it is harmful and embarrassing. Their actions could result in taking their son or daughter out of the game or match, whatever the case may be. The youngster may feel really awkward going to their game or practice because of the parent’s behavior and the rest of the team may have hard feelings towards their teammate as well as with the coach. The coach and team may not even want to communicate with their teammate or player. When this it occurs, I think it has gone too far. It is not the child’s fault for the parents acting inappropriately, but sadly the girl or boy has to pay the consequences.

Some parents on the other hand, are on the reverse side, positively contributing to the game by supporting their child one hundred and ten percent. By stating to the coaches and players that they are doing a fabulous job even when they are losing by 10 points or whatever the case may be. These parents take a lot of stress off the coach and official’s backs, For example, for officials they may not have to worry that a decision they make will inflame a parent. With a coach, they may take a child out of the game to explain something the athlete can do to help his or her game or maybe even have that athlete tell the rest of the team a certain play they should conduct during the next few minutes.

Recently, at my high school I decided to make a survey of student athletes whose parents supported the coach and officials and whose did not. The question I asked was, “Do your parents support the officials and your coach at your athletic events or do they get upset and start yelling at your coach and the officials calls?” I polled twelve students in grades nine through twelve. After everyone was polled and recorded, I analyzed my results. The results were very interesting in my opinion. Everyone polled answered, “no” my parents do not get upset at the coaches and officials, they support my coaches, my team, my officials, and myself one hundred and ten percent! In conclusion, the parents minding their own business in my high school, Leominster High School, consists of the majority of athletes. One of the reasons I conducted this poll was because of my own curiosity. The other reason was because I wanted to add something interesting that averaged people out in my school.

Many athletes I included tend become embarrassed when their parents and coaches argue. When their parents or guardians get upset and cause commotion it may lose the athlete’s concentration on the game because of embarrassment. In my opinion, parents need to just cheer on their athlete and leave the coaching to the coach and the officiating to the official.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Jessica Larson

Salem High School

As an athlete, the role of parents in sportsmanship grows as their athlete children grow. When we are younger and playing in town sports, our parents should be encouraging to all children and not singling out their own. When parents start this practice young, we will grow to respect each individual player for their ability and not compare them to our own. Competition, yet a character builder, is a trait we should learn as we grow. There are too many parents that instill winning at whatever the cost, on such young children, that it sets them up for SPORTSMANSHIP failure.

As we grow, and the intensity of our sport grows, parent's roles should change also. Now we are playing athletes from other towns and sportsmanship becomes ever more important. Referees are to be the authority to control the game. I think that this is a difficult transaction for some parents also. We are taught to respect our Coaches and the referees, as we should. Parents sometimes watch games with blinders on to everything except their own child. It is difficult to be fair under these conditions. Poor sportsmanship from parents reflects on our entire community also. Sports encompass such a large group of people that "the grapevine" travels negative news about a team quickly. It is hard for us to walk on a field and have Coaches and athletes already have a sense of poor sportsmanship situations.

Unfortunately though, parents do not only effect the other teams, they also effect their own children's' team mates. I have heard many parents from my hometown criticize our players. What is the advantage of that!!! Sometimes it is out of jealousy for lack of playing time for their child. The player on the field does not make these decisions. Those are issues that should be dealt with between the coach and athlete. The result from actions such as these can only be detrimental to the play of the team.

On the other hand there are MANY parents that come to support teams no matter what. Win or lose, we walk off the field to cheers of "Great game girls", from most parents. I know that I also hear many of our parents saying the same to the opposing team when they walk off the field also. Those are the times it makes me proud to be an athlete at Salem High School.

The Role Of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Amanda Hood

Springfield Central High School

Our parents teach us to say, “Please” when asking and, “thank you” when receiving. They teach us to share, to be kind to others, and to be courteous. Sportsmanship is a reflection on the way we are taught to behave, act, and react in specific circumstances.

Throughout the many teams I’ve played for throughout my life, I’ve always heard the small group of parents from the sidelines who shout offensive and foul remarks toward their children. However, they do not realize that their negative comments only make children believe that they should play rougher and tougher in order to seek their parents’ approval.

My parents have always been the ones who sit back and enjoy my soccer games, rather than those parents who scream and yell commands at their son/daughter while playing. My parents have been there to encourage me throughout my eleven years of soccer. They enjoy sports and they love a good game but they aren’t very competitive. They are simply just proud that I play a sport and have excelled in it. They have sat in the cold and the rain. They have been there through the losing seasons and the winning ones. They come to these games to watch me play soccer in a tasteful manner rather than an unclean one, which is why I would never embarrass them or myself by playing my game “dirty.” When I walk off the field with the grace of winning or losing I want to be complemented on my talent and ability rather than a deliberate push or shove.

Soccer is a game of skill, technique and physical fitness. The objective isn’t to slide tackle in order hurt someone who may have beaten you to the ball, it’s to score a goal with the intentions to win.

I love soccer and I take pleasure in walking off the field with dignity and class which is what sportsmanship is all about. As my parents say, “Soccer is just a game, so play your best and have fun!”

Special Someone
By Ryan Clark
Bethany Christian Academy

Have you ever had that special someone, who helped you make your dream come true?
Who pushed you so hard, not letting you stop and made you do the things you didn't want to do?

They helped you look farther than the skills you're at now,
And helped you get there some way and some how.

They taught you everything that you know and shared with you the things that you don't,
You were loved by them for trying every time, even those times you told them you won't.

They're the faces you want to see every day at your game,
Even though the cheers they shouted for you were a bit lame!

They are the people you run to after the games that you won,
Even the times that you lose, you're still loved just as much for being their son.

They're the one you hate most when they push you real rough,
But are the shoulder you lean on when times get tough.

This special someone is someone real near,
To your heart, to your mind, to your soul, to your tears.

That special someone has got to be my Dad,
He acts as a father, a coach, a boss, and I'm glad.

To have him there cheering me on,
He is like the backbone of my life, he makes me so strong.

I love him for being there for me in my life,
He knows how important it is to have a fan during those long games at night.

Do you have a special someone who you need by your side?
Maybe you don't or maybe you can't decide.

If you do, then know this, you two will never be apart,
Before each game hold him deep down in your heart.

Know that they love you, you're so special to them,
So go out, do your best and give them a win!

To the Parents of the World

By Dorothy Sebastian

Falmouth High School

To the Parents of the World,

You are our light through darkness, the backbone to our success. You guide us when justice seems cast away, and pull us safely through. You are the hands to help us, and the arms to be our shield. For, like houses, our lives would crumble without your support. But remember, parents, that as foundations, you can only go so far. And the moment you forget what sportsmanship is, is the day our cities will fall.

This year I was taught how parents should truly behave. In a time of brawls and bitter tempers, I was given a lesson I will never forget. When my field hockey team was faced with seemingly insurmountable odds, our mothers and fathers rose behind us and stayed by our sides. They never stopped believing in us even when others thought we would fail - and though it was our own hard work that pushed us to success, it was their endless love and guidance that gave us the strength to try. The 2003 season is one I will never forget, but not because of our record, or any awards we might win. This season is unforgettable because it taught me the meaning of desire. It showed me what can happen when twenty-three strangers become twenty-three best friends. It taught me what you, parents, can truly do for a team.

You are the guides we turn to, and never forget this role. In the best of times you should be ready to laugh and understand; in the darkest times, you should be waiting to offer your hand. You should be role models and the assistance we children need. But most of all, you should remember that our lives are not yours to control. We cannot live out your hopes or dreams, and our successes should be enjoyed not needed. You should be there supporting us, but never overstepping your bounds. This, to me, is your role in sportsmanship. As guides, friends, mentors, and parents - you are the backbones of our triumphs. You are the first eyes we see in this world, and the first hands we hold. Please never, by your actions, make us turn away in shame.

Love always,

The Children

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

*By Kelly Treseler
Millis High School*

Good luck to the coaches and other captains, fierce play - not ferocious, helping your opponent up after you are the reason they are lying in the dirt. These are examples of two things; respect and sportsmanship. Not everyone will see it happen. The fans see your goals or kills, your coaches notice the tackles or a successful boxing out, but it is the parents who notice attitude.

As players we go into games striving to succeed to impress our classmates and other fans, satisfy our coaches and scouts, live to the expectations of our classmates, and most of all for the feeling of winning. Sometimes we see winning as the goal and forget who and what it takes to make it there. It takes athleticism and dedication but it also requires sportsmanship. When we walk off the court or field or diamond or track we no longer answer to the fans or coaches or scouts but they will still answer to their parents. Besides being their athlete's number one fan, a parent is also their first and most important teacher. It is they who see us shake our opponents' hands; it is they who see us smile and the success of a teammate, and it is they who see the tears cried at home when it is all over. By instilling the respect needed to be a successful citizen in the arena of life, the parent is creating the foundation of a winner: sportsmanship.

In retrospect of my time as an athlete, winning was only a constant at one time: on teams that showed respect to the game, respect to their teammates, and respect to opponents. During these times, there was one other constant, the presence of parents of the winners on these teams sitting in the stands. In sports, however, respect is what we call sportsmanship, an attitude of dedication and overcoming of adversity and the greatest strength in any game. This strength is not built in gyms or on the rack or in playbooks, it is built in the home with the parents of every successful athlete.

Good Parents Support Good Sportsmanship

*By Liz Mayuri
Medfield High School*

Behind every dedicated athlete is a dedicated parent. If the parent is a good one, they also teach their child about the importance of good sportsmanship in sports. Besides making sure their kids make it to practice and have all the equipment they need, parents also need to teach about fairness, honesty, integrity, team loyalty, respect for self and for others. After all, sports should help to make you a better person as well as a better athlete.

A good parent is there when their child gets frustrated and wants to quit. Here a parent could explain how doing so would let down the team. Also, everybody has an off day. Everybody. Even athletes who make millions of dollars in salary. Such frustrating situations also give parents the opportunity to teach kids about the importance of a positive attitude. The hardest thing to do is to get back up when you've been knocked down by defeat. But that's what winners do - both on and off the field. That lesson is more important than winning a game, a division or a state championship.

A very important way parents support good sportsmanship is by their own conduct at games. They should show respect for their own child's performance, that of his or her teammates, opposing teams as well as officials. Even after the game, in the privacy of their own homes, parents should never cross the line by being grossly disrespectful.

It seems hard to believe that some parents can actually lose control to such a point that they can kill a person they disagree with at a game. Everyone knows that a good performance by a gifted athlete can lead to scholarship opportunities as well as other rewards. But winning really isn't everything. Like the old saying goes, "It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game." Unfortunately, deep down in their hearts, many adults don't really believe this so they don't really teach it to their children.

Another way parents show good sportsmanship is by speaking positively about the performance of players on opposing teams and making sure such visiting teams are treated with the utmost respect. Parents should also support coaches in their decisions even if they feel their own child could be given more playing time, a different position or more visibility.

Let's face it. Parents put a lot of effort into showing up for their kids' game and giving them 100% of their love and support. But real love for a child also includes teaching him or her to be a good human being. And that includes practicing good sportsmanship.

Dear Parent of Student Athlete*By Kristine Ellis**Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School*

Dear Parent of Student Athlete:

Your child has chosen to participate in a fall/winter/spring sport. I would just like to remind you of your role as a parent with a child in sports.

All of our sports programs are aimed to provide benefits for our athletes. In participating on our sports teams all athletes learn sportsmanship, build up self-control, learn time-management abilities, and learn how to keep up with both sports and academics.

As a parent with a child in sports, you have major responsibilities. The biggest role is to be supportive. Being supportive towards your child's decision would not only affect how they play but also how they work with other athletes. Showing your support by going to the home games would enhance your child's confidence. Parents should support the achievement of the child's team and fellow team members. The best way to help children accomplish their goals and lessen the ordinary fear of disappointment is through encouraging support. No one likes to make a mistake. So if your child does make one, keep in mind that he/she is still learning. Support all hard work and point out the things done well. Provided that the child gave his/her finest attempt, you should make him/her feel like a champion.

As a parent you are not a member of the team; your attitude towards the game is often reflected through your child. Please be alert of this while you are watching the game. Particularly be aware of your sportsmanship during games and towards the other team, coaches, and officials. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kristine Ellis
Athletic Director

Dear Mom and Dad
By Stephanie Wash
Notre Dame Academy, Hingham

Dear Mom and Dad,

There are many instances in which I fail to thank you for your many contributions in my life. No matter what I choose to do, you are always right there beside me, encouraging me to excel above and beyond my limitations.

There is one significant value that you have taught me throughout my childhood which I will carry with me for the rest of my life - respect for others. When I am in the classroom, I listen to others and respect their individual opinions. When I am at work, I arrive on time so I do not place a burden on a fellow employee. I say thank you, please, and mam or sir regularly. It is simple things like this that go unnoticed but truly shape my inner being.

One place where respect is extremely important is on the track. Because sporting events seemingly emit a sense of rivalry, the constant compliments and "good licks" eradicate most of the competitiveness. Before I get into the starting blocks, I am sure to wish the girls beside me a good race. Even after losing, I have still found myself congratulating fellow athletes. There are times when you wish the girl beside you good luck and she just flips her hair and rolls her eyes at you. And there are also times when the girl will pleasantly and genuinely engage a conversation about how much she loves the 200 meter race. These feelings of camaraderie eliminate all negative feelings about sportsmanship.

At track meets, Mom and Dad, you are constantly cheering on my teammates, competing teams, and I. You have set the example, by graciously complimenting others after a great long jump or an impressive race. Because of you, I have learned to display sportsmanship at all times. Whether now or in my earlier childhood, when I played softball or did cheerleading, you have always taught me to be a courteous and respectful athlete.

I never realized how shocking sportsmanship can be to athletes who rarely experience it. While at an indoor track meet last winter, a girl became extremely sick after a race. I gently patted her on the back, as she was hunched over, congratulating her for winning the race. I noticed she was heaving so I ran and grabbed a garbage barrel for her. I stayed with her until a teammate came over and said to me, "Your really didn't have to do that. Thanks." Even though I did not know the girl, I still rushed at the opportunity to help her, without a second thought.

Sportsmanship is an important factor in any sport. In baseball, the teams shake hands after the game. In football, a large gathering of husky players are seen hugging and shaking hands on the field after the game. In all sports...wrestling, track, basketball...some form of sportsmanship is incorporated. The athletes on the receiving end and I, just want to thank you, Mom and Dad, for instilling sportsmanship in me. Love always, Stephanie.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

*By Kevin Fish
Prouty High School*

I believe that a parent's attitude has a deep impact on the attitude of their child. At a young age children look to their parents and mimic their behaviors. If a parent is rude off of the court or field then most likely the child will exhibit bad behavior off and on the court or field also. There is always one kid on the team who ruins the fun for everyone else. The child who when is supposed to be shaking hands is jeering or taunting. All this childish behavior develops somewhere, and most commonly it originates from parents.

Imagine that you're sitting on the sideline of your child's championship basketball game when he or she is elbowed in the stomach and the referee does not call a foul. Some parents would get up and start yelling about how the ref is lousy. If their child's team lost that game then they would be very disgruntled. That is a case of poor sportsmanship. If the child's team was to win, then the parent would probably drop the case completely. Usually, if a parent has poor sportsmanship then their offspring will also.

A child inherits traits passed down from their parents which form a majority of their appearance and personality. Although the trait may not be favorable there is nothing anyone can do to change it. Sportsmanship can be a favorable or unfavorable trait when speaking about adults. Parents can easily get "heated up" during a game if their own child is involved.

Having a family member to cheer you on is wonderful but sometimes parents become too involved. If a child's parent is always coaching from the sidelines then that child may be very likely to do the same. Coaches do not approve of help from the sideline and that may embarrass the child as well.

My father is very active in voluntarily coaching youth sporting teams. He has been my coach for basketball and many other sports for a long time. Seeing my parent get so involved makes me feel that I should help out as much as I can also. There are times when he gets overwhelmed by a call and gets angry but he has always had amazing conduct. His great sportsmanship has uncontrollably worked itself into my own personality which is portrayed in every game I play.

Parent's sportsmanship definitely plays a role in their child's personality and also goes further than that. The way a parent deals with little conflict on the side of the court can help their children solve their own problems. The way they act can also ensure the way their child will behave under different circumstances. When a child is playing in a game, don't make them embarrassed about what their dad is yelling at the referee, let them enjoy the game and have fun. That is how a game is supposed to be played and that is how children should learn to play.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Nicole DiMassimo

Wahconah Regional High School

Parents are more than just a ride to practice, or support at a game, they're role models on how to react with all the events that come with competing in anything. Parents should be there to support their children in whatever they do and not to take over their lives. Some parents often forget that getting involved doesn't mean taking over the team.

Children learn a lot from how their parents act. If a parent is at a game screaming and yelling at the referee or coach, that will reflect on the kids and make them react in such ways also. Parents are supposed to be there to provide a stable and supportive environment, not to create a hectic one. When a parent starts making cruel comments to the coaches, teammates, officials, or opponents that causes their kids to grow up being cruel to people too.

Some parents think that not being involved is going to reflect badly. That's just the opposite. Sometimes parents are so into the game that they don't notice if their child isn't. Once a parent drills it into a child's head that they need to win all the time, then the child may be afraid to express how they really feel. Children should enjoy what they do and not feel burdened by what their parents think or want.

Though it is good for parents to support their children and become involved, parents need to understand that their actions are shaping who their kids grow up to be. If a child grows up learning that winning is everything, then their life is guaranteed to be more stressful than a person who isn't that concerned with it. So in conclusion, parents can create a positive and negative influence on their kids lives with just the littlest actions. Parents should learn that sportsmanship is taught by them, and the sport is left to the coach.

Family
By Carl Kubler
Mount Greylock Regional High School

“Runners, take your marks,” announced the starter. “Set...” My legs tightened. The gun went off; and the race began. *I was racing in the 2010 Massachusetts Cross Country Running State Championship.*

“C’mon, Charles, you can do it!” shouted my father from the sidelines as I approached Bear Cage Hill. This was the event for which I had been training. I shortened my stride and drove my arms forward, leading the pack of runners as we labored up the hilt.

Every day in the summer, my parents had awakened me at 6:00 in the morning so that I could go running. They had always supported my athletic endeavors and were dedicated to helping me improve. Towards the end of July, Papa even took me on a three-week trip to the Rockies for me to work on mountain running at a higher elevation. In the plane on the way there, he had stressed repeatedly the importance of setting goals and working to achieve them, a powerful philosophy which has brought me success throughout my high school career.

I was still in the lead as I reached the summit. Leaning forward, I opened up my stride, powering my way down the slope. “Show them what you’re made of!” yelled Papa. “Show the world what you can do! Thatta boy!”

“Faster, George!” bellowed another father nearby, cursing at his panting son. “You disgust me! I can tell you’re not even trying, you lazy little wimp!”

My parents grew up working to help support their families in the inner city slums of New York. Although they lacked the time for athletics when they were children, they encouraged me to participate in a variety of sports. They never abused me or tried to injure my feelings. I have been able to foster a strong sense of self-worth through their constant encouragement, continuously improving my grades and contributing to my community in a number of ways.

I felt wonderful, carried forward by the adrenaline built up from weeks of sleeplessness and nervous anticipation. Bit by bit, I began pulling away from the pack. Only two runners came with me.

“You’re looking great,” said my mother. “Just one kilometer left!”

Sports have taught me not only responsibility to myself but also responsibility towards others. As team captain, I organize team practices and take care of the younger runners. I have learned many lessons from these experiences. And throughout it all, my parents have been willing to carpool, help organize meets, and perform a multitude of other vital tasks.

The finish line in sight, I started my kick. I was going to win! The crowd roared. Twenty meters... ten... five.... Suddenly, someone passed me in the finish chute, crossing the line a bare stride ahead of me. I stood stunned. The race was over. I had not won. “It’s okay, son. There’s always next year,” my father said. “You were great,” consoled my mother. Together, as a family, arms around each other, we walked off into the distance.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

*By Kathryn McMillan
Sturgis Charter School*

It's morning and my mother chants her routine phrase, "Good luck! Play hard! Be aggressive! Have fun! Duck!" Out the front door I run as I'm struggling to race to my car before school on game days. My back pack is hopping up and do on my shoulders my hand-me-down stick bag is draped somewhere back there too, my gym bag is difficult to grasp because I also have my purse and water bottle to lug with me. And this year I also so have to carry with me the responsibility of co-captain of the varsity field hockey team, the anxiety of senior year, and oh yeah college application essays. But today, as I hope my car starts and I think about finishing this essay too, I realize how much my parents encouragement means to me as they say, "Good luck! Play Hard! Be aggressive! Have fun! Duck!"

My mom and dad make it a priority of theirs to be there on the sidelines cheering me on in whatever sport I may be playing. I'm now beginning to realize the sacrifices they have to make in order to watch my games. Although it may take hours for them to thaw from the frigid, damp air at the games, they hardly complain because they love to watch my team give 100% and have fun at the same time. When they aren't able to come to a game, they're fully committed to finding out how everything went. They never ask me just about the score of the game, because they're more concerned with how I thought I played, how well my teammates did, and what I could do next time to improve. My parents have taught me what it means to be a team player, and my mother constantly reminds me the key to true sportsmanship in her brief chant.

Sportsmanship
By Marie Garcia
Medford High School

Parents and Sportsmanship get along just fine.
They provide positive or negative management to your time.
If parents influence you to do well you will succeed.
But they also must provide the punishment you need.

Sportsmanship can either be performed proper or poor.
But this is what influence of parents is for.
Sportsmanship can be used in work or for play.
But if performed poorly you'll have a bad day.

Sportsmanship can be when you congratulate a peer.
Or it also can be just when parents are there.
Sportsmanship is ethics, integrity and such.
It also can bring out the best in us.

Sportsmanship is important in the MIAA.
It is necessary to use in all the sports that you play.
Sportsmanship is a game plan for life,
And parents help out which make it nice.

Sportsmanship brings out the teamwork in us.
And parents teach this without a fuss.
So please make the best of what parents provide.
Because sportsmanship gives us the necessities to survive.

Sportsmanship Essay
By Meaghan Casey
Bishop Feehan High School

Some eat hills for breakfast. Others consider pain French bread. They sweat purple hydration liquid and eat their Wheaties to get prepared. They like the taste of blood and consider body odor perfume. Dirt between their nails is a manicure, and for twice the effort, a pedicure is included. Their never-washed gym socks are their best friends, and their sweatbands their good luck charms. They are true competitors.

It has never failed spectators to marvel at the unique culture of athletes. One must admit that the rituals and preparations of an athlete are, indeed, comically entertaining. The excitement only increases when they step on the field to compete. Others argue, however, that off the field is where the action is at, on the sidelines.

When thinking back on this riotous zone, one is impelled to immediately picture parents. The sideline is the bullpen where the real competition is between two parents to assimilate who has the louder, higher pitched voice with the most convincing words. One only knows that as organized sports have become more competitive, the sidelines have grown with more parents who believe that they are the actual ones on the field. Screaming has been elevated to punching, and over time, the parents have made themselves poor examples of sportsmanship.

It is not only on the fields, however, where the parents have begun to fail. It is in their actions throughout daily life that have suggested poor sportsmanship. Virtues such as fortitude and perseverance have so often been abused in home life situations, that team life situations have followed in these footsteps.

It is not to say that a parent should not be involved in their child's sports. Rather, it is to encourage the teaching of one's kids how to harness the aggression inside of them to use it for the game. It is to teach them to "respect their opponent but fear no one." It is to teach them confidence, playing to win but learning to lose.

Parents play a crucial role in their child's outlook on sports, which ultimately plays a part on their outlook on life. Lance Armstrong, five-time winner of the Tour de France, comments that his mother, "...wanted (me) to become something certainly. But she didn't care if I was the world's best surgeon, or the world's best bike racer." As Michael Wu expresses in his article on Armstrong, Armstrong's mother, "learned to rely on herself and instilled similar values in her son."

Whether passionately wanting their own child to become a professional or not, the parent is responsible for instilling in their children the values of sportsmanship through their own direction and example. As Fred Northup expressed: "The One Great Scorer wants to know what kind of people we are, what kind of example we set, what the values are that have formed our sporting life." The future will only become brighter when the parent realizes this and goes a step farther to make others realize it too.

Sportsmanship and the Role Parents Play

*By Josh Jalbert
Chatham High School*

“Let the coaches coach, the players play, and the officials officiate.” This is the banner that is hung in my high school gym. It is the bottom line that all spectators of the game should follow. Even though this is a proper way to act some parents can get out of control during the course of the game. If they see their child being hit from behind or a bad call made, then they have the tendency to yell out or make a comment towards the official. This is the worst thing for parents to do because this sets a bad example for the kids that are playing the sports. Parents are the ones that should be good role models so the players have some guidance.

Children model the behavior of adults they admire, and parents are generally number one on that list. So make sure your own sportsmanship is impeccable. Don't just cheer for the home team. Show your appreciation when the opposing team makes a good play. After the game, whether your child's team has won or lost, congratulate the opposing team for playing well, and shake hands with the coach. If a call goes in favor of your child's team but you see the call was wrong, speak up, but never say anything derogatory about a coach, player, or official; kids learn to criticize from adults.

There are several ways that a parent can help their child with good sportsmanship off the field as well. Teach your child that hard work and an honest effort are often more important than victory, that way your child will always be a winner despite the outcome of the game. Remember that your child is the one playing the sport, not you. It's very important to let children establish their own goals, and to play the game for themselves. Take care not to impose your own standards and goals on them. Don't put too heavy a burden on your child to win games.

Even though you may think that you are helping your child by arguing at the official, you are really not. This will teach your child bad habits. If you just follow some of the helpful suggestions that I have offered it may make your child's sport career more enjoyable for the both of you.

Parents and Sports Don't Mix

By Amanda O'Donnell

Douglas High School

Where do I stand?
 Where do I fall?
 Do you even notice I'm there at all?
 The pressure is on,
 You call my name,
 Every time you act the same.
 Stop pushing, stop shoving,
 I'm trying my best,
 It's impossible for me to pass your test.
 Where is the confidence?
 I need some support,
 I feel like I'm battling in a court.
 No matter how many goals I score
 How many games I win,
 Every move I make becomes a sin.
 Every parent should be what you are not,
 Be loving, caring, and cheering me on a lot.
 How could you be so heartless?
 How could you be so cold?
 All you do is yell, discourage, and scold.
 The tension in your voice,
 The sparks forming in your eyes,
 Your heart begins to shrink into a smaller size.
 A familiar sensation comes back to me,
 Mad, sad, and all,
 And now the time has finally come, the rain begins to fall.
 The darkness falls upon me,
 I want this all to end,
 But as time travels on my confidence begins to bend.
 Drip drop goes my tears,
 I've had to deal with this for all these years.

Will my dreams ever come true?
 This is the way I imagine you,
 Bitter sweetness is in your voice,
 Whether I did good or bad is my choice.
 Every game you're there cheering me on,
 The fear in me I find is gone.
 "Good job honey, I love you so,"
 These are things you let me know.
 Your gentle touch,
 Your angel eyes,
 The love you share is like sweet apple pies.

I can sense your presence,
 It's so welcoming and warm,
 The tenderness in your voice starts to swarm.
 "Do what you want,"
 "Just follow your heart,"
 "I believe in you, I know you're smart."

The words I hear,
The more my spirit soars
I find myself making so many more scores.
I am no longer afraid,
My pride is on top,
I am so compelled with energy I cannot stop.
Then it hits me like the sting of a bee,
Reality has found my mind's key.
I'm sitting in terror just like the rest,
I can hear my heart thumping inside my chest.
Now I realize I am not alone,
This anger lies in all parents' tones.
You have to be the best,
Every single child is just a little pest.

What happened to play time?
Where did all the fun go?
The way that we are treated is really very low.
We have gone from all fun and games
To rough, tough, and lots of shame.

And so you ask me what a parent should be?
Well, listen closely and you will see.
A parent should not be strict and extreme,
They should be the shoulders on which their child can lean.
Reward them for the accomplishments they have made,
Instead of scolding and causing a crusade.
Be loving, caring, and show your support,
Encourage your child to play any sport.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Sharley Raymond

Lowell Catholic High School

At a very young age, we often begin watching sports. By the time we are in the first grade, we have already participated in some kind of athletic activity. When we are young our parents try to instill in us that it is okay if we don't win, as long as we try our best. However, this is not how all parents feel.

As the years pass and our athleticism increases, so does the level of competition. Many times we forget the first things are parents taught us, and we let competition go too far. However, it is not only the players who compete, it is also the parents. It is encouraging to see our parents getting involved, cheering us on from the sidelines and pushing us to try our best. Although sometimes parents take competition too far. Parents get defensive and sometimes violent, when it concerns their child. In recent years, we have seen many cases of violence concerning children's sports. Parents have attacked referees, coaches, players, and other parents.

I am blessed enough to have a parent who has taught and instilled in me, that it is okay if I don't win. You don't always have to win in order to know that you have tried your best. As long as you tried hard and you played a good game, it is all that matters. If you win, it's just the cherry on top of a sundae.

Some parents sugarcoat their child's loss, others use aggression, and there are those who encourage and give their child pointers on how to improve their game. I participated for many years on a swim team. Sure, I didn't win every competition, but I always tried my best. After a swim meet, my mom would point out how to improve my strokes. As I heeded her advice, steadily my time dropped.

At such instances like this I must thank my mom. If it had not been for her constant support and encouragement I would have probably given up altogether. I feel that parents' role in sportsmanship should always be encouragement and support. We learn through our parents how to be better people. If our parents are there standing by us, then we know they care. Sometimes you meet opposing players and their attitude is very aggressive. You see and assume where it is generated. They see and hear their parent's transgression. We must understand that our attitude towards our game is generated from our parents. If our parents show positivity towards our game and sportsmanship, then we too show positivity. It is up to us to decide how to use good sportsmanship on the field, but our parents set the potential of our sportsmanship.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Jacqueline Lynch

Mount Saint Joseph Academy

Playing sports in high school is very common and enjoyable to many students. It allows them to brush up on their skills, and learn new skills. It also teaches students how to learn from their mistakes and work as a team. Playing at a high school level can be overwhelming and challenging to some people, but the overall goal is to have fun. As a junior at Mount Saint Joseph Academy, I find that playing Varsity soccer is a great experience and spectacular way to stay in shape.

When playing any sport on the Junior Varsity or Varsity team, keeping a positive attitude and showing respect to each other is vital. Communication is also another factor that plays a huge role in sports. Communication, a positive attitude, and respect are all very important because they allow students to work with each other and build on their skills. It also allows them to promote high team spirit. Team spirit leads to the role of parents in sportsmanship.

The role of parents in sportsmanship is often neglected, but can be improved easily. Parents are there to give support and assistance to those on their team as well as the other team. In order to promote sportsmanship, parents need to remain calm when they are angry and not treat their child as though they are the worst, if they make a mistake. When playing a game, most parents see it as a major competition, but the true reason both teams are there is to have fun showing people what they are good at.

Not only do parents have to keep positive attitudes, but they also have to tell their child and team, that playing to the best of their ability is what matters most. I know that it is not easy to walk into a game and know that everything you do will be right, but you need to learn from the mistakes you make. Failing to do something right is not the end of the world, in reality it prepares you to become better and share the learning experience with others.

I think that parents play a huge role in sportsmanship because they're always there to cheer the team on and visualize the players' skills. When parents attend games it allows the team to feel special and worthwhile. From my experience of sports, when parents give negative feedback and criticize others, the players feel inferior and worthless. This is a major problem because the student could end up taking risks that could affect her overall health. Parents being involved in sports brings about a joyful environment and high self esteem. My parent's role in sportsmanship has a huge impact on me because it allows me to feel satisfied. My parents taught me to work to my potential and give my best, which shapes the person I am, as well as my self-esteem. Due to all of this, I have learned the true meaning of sportsmanship.

Influence of Parents

*By Daniel Martinez
Brockton High School*

Conduct and attitude considered as befitting participants in sports, especially fair play, courtesy, striving spirit, and grace in losing. This is the definition of sportsmanship. While children would love to claim responsibility for their ability to act in this manner, it is important to realize that they have adopted this trait from the teachings of their parents. Sportsmanship is an integral part of being a good athlete. Nobody will care how well you perform on the field or court, if you display a deplorable demeanor or cannot handle yourself when things are not going your way. This is not an innate ability that one is born with; this talent is one that must be developed over many years of personal experience, and parental guidance. The role of a parent is to illustrate to their children the importance of this behavior. This must be done by being willing to punish one's child when they act in a manner contrary to this. When a parent realizes that their child is acting out of line, they must be willing to reprimand that child in a reasonable manner. They must also be relentless in educating their children in the possible outcomes of their positive and negative behavior. Parents must provide a strong personal example in their own behavior, for their children to follow. These examples must be shown in their workplace, at home and now more than ever, at their children's sporting events. With the recent incidents that parents have been involved in at their kid's games, it is evermore essential for a parent to show that they too can comport themselves in a reasonable manner, even if they are not the one's playing. The parent's role in developing an athlete that will be a good sportsman is critical. This way of behaving will not only assist their kids in becoming better and more likable athletes, but also better and more respectable human beings. Parents must implore this attitude from their children, and if they have shown their children this behavior through their own actions, it is quite likely they can expect the same from their kids.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Meghan Murray

Prouty High School

“We reveal our true selves through sports. And like it or not, our kids are watching us...looking to us as role models of good sportsmanship.” How involved should parents be in their child’s sports career? Youth sports are supposedly an avenue to teach values to kids. These values include hard work, practice, learning from mistakes and developing confidence. Even though parents don’t participate on their child’s team, they do play a part in the success experienced by the child and his/her team. Parents’ attitudes are often copied by their children. Parents should be aware of this and strive to be positive models and show good sportsmanship at all times. However, this is not always the case.

Rather than be a positive influence, some parents are more likely to humiliate their children as they watch them play sports. These parents can be threatening, even violent to referees and coaches when they feel their child’s game isn’t going their way. When this happens parents are taking the fun out of children’s sports and replacing it with violence and poor sportsmanship. Kids are learning that it’s okay to scream, curse, hit, and even murder when playing a game. For example, a violent murder was committed by a New England father of another father at a local hockey rink during ice hockey practice for 10-year-old boys.

There are several signs of a parent with an attitude which may put too much pressure on the child. One sign is a parent who wants to win more than the child. Also, a parent that shows disappointment if the child or his/her team has a poor result. Furthermore, a parent that voices their complaints about the way their child’s game was coached. Additionally, a parent that indicates the feeling that winning is everything to the child. Finally, a parent that provides material rewards for success may be sending the wrong message to the child.

“Be a fan.,,not a fanatic.” The role parents take in sportsmanship will help influence a child for years to come. Tips for successful parenting include letting the child’s coach do the coaching. As important as it is for parents to support their child, they need to remember that their children already have a coach. A parent should never compare one child’s performance to another. Always give support and emphasize teamwork in team sports. A parent should stress the importance of the child working to improve their skill and attitude while enjoying the thrill of competition. Parents should urge their children to do their best, have fun, and not to be afraid of failure.

In conclusion, integrity, fairness, and respect are lifetime values taught through athletics, These are the principles of good sportsmanship. With them a child will learn that win or lose, the outcome of the game doesn’t matter, as long as they tried their hardest and had fun.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Rachel McNeil

St. Mary's High School, Lynn

Parents lead by example and teach many life lessons through discipline and tough love. Most children admire their parents and imitate their actions. Therefore, the behavior of a parent can easily influence the manner in which a child behaves. The impact of a parent can be either a positive or negative one.

This is true for sportsmanship. If parents allow their children to see them act out at a sporting event, they will accept it as ordinary. By simply following in the footsteps of their parents, they too will act inappropriately. On a positive note, parents can also provide their children with a good example of sportsmanship by cheering on all players and remaining rational at all times during a game. A parent should always encourage their child to be persistent and never give up. Young players should never feel as if they are a failure or not good enough. However, too much encouragement can be a bad thing. A parent who boasts about his/her child may cause the player to become arrogant and cocky. By revealing the good qualities of sportsmanship to a player at a young age, he/she will learn the proper manner in which to behave.

Parents can prevent some kinds of negative sportsmanship. Fighting and swearing are examples of these. It is a parent's responsibility to step in when their child acts in ways such as these. A parent must talk to the player or reprimand them in their own way. Acknowledging that this type of behavior is unacceptable, is a necessity.

Parents, sometimes unintentionally, live by the saying "Do as I say, not as I do." Children do not comprehend why they can not act in the same manner as their parents. This is why it is imperative for them to set a good example. When a player does act inappropriately, discipline is a must. Parents play a major role in sportsmanship.

To Whom It May Concern

By Alyssa Burstyn

Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School

To whom it may concern,

Whether it is as simple as watching their children participating in a game or taking on the position of coach, parents have started to get out of hand at many sporting events. So out of hand in fact, that fights have broken out and people have even been killed due to unsportsmanlike mannerisms. Kids practice good sportsmanship when they treat their teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials with respect and learn the basics of sportsmanship from the adults in their lives especially their parents and their coaches.

The effects of poor sportsmanship don't just reflect the parent who is demonstrating the poor conduct, it also affects the young child who is learning this behavior. Good sportsmanship isn't just a quality that is kept on the playing field, in the "real world" good sportsmanship comes into play on a daily basis learning to get along with people who have different ideas and ways of doing things is a reality that many people must face, and the way they face those challenges is a true test of their characters.

Furthermore it has gotten so bad that at many sporting events, lollipops were given to parents in hopes that they wouldn't open their mouths to complain. What has the world come to when parents are forced to eat candy in order for the game to be a success? Parents really need to evaluate what is more important to them, their children or letting their voices be known about more often then not, ridiculous calls. Stricter laws may need to be enforced if this keeps getting out of hand because children just want to play the sport they love and be with their friends, not get all dressed in uniform and have to hear and watch parents fight with one another, good sportsmanship is a trait that is a necessity in life as well as on the playing field, without it many problems erupt so before another game can get underway parents, coaches, and other fans need to realize the real reason they are at that specific event, to see their children play!

It is the duty of the parent to make sure that their children have the chance to explore many activities during their youth, but at the same time it is also their job to ensure that their children nor themselves are harming anyone else at the same time. Poor sportsmanship by a parent can cause a lot of problems for the child, loss of playing time, loss of friends and even the shame and embarrassment that comes along with knowing that your parent is getting thrown out of every game. Parents play a key role in most everything their children take part in, so instead of sending the wrong message to their children from the start, parents should think twice before opening their mouths at a soccer game to veto the refs call or at a hockey game to complain about their child's playing time.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Burstyn

Tri-County RVTHS Senior

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

*By Aaron Jamous
Harwich High School*

During the course of a child's life, parents play a large roll in not only raising the child, but also teaching them important lessons in life. For example, parents teach their children about the importance of sportsmanship. My parents taught me never to be a poor sport. "Winning is not everything" they would tell me. They told me as long as I persevered and did my best, that is what counted. It is true what they said, and I believe that I reflect what they told me. Win or lose, I have the same attitude, and treat others the same way. I do not believe in "rubbing it in" to another team, I dislike it when they do it to us, so I don't do it to them. Life is like sports, you win some, and you lose some. No matter what the outcome, you always work hard, and give it your all. Just like in sports, in life sometimes you must take one step back, to take two steps forward. Also if you fail, the worst thing to do is to quit. My parents taught me to keep giving it my all and never to quit. "You must earn your playing time, and your respect," my dad told me. "Nothing is given to you in life." The harder you work, the more rewarding success is. The process/route that one takes is just as important as the outcome. What parents must realize is that the importance of sports is not about winning, but it is about the values and lessons that their children learn. My mother said to me; "The most valued value, is not winning, but is how you played the game."

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Casey Amaral

Bishop Stang High School

A very important aspect in any game, from football to field hockey, is the act of displaying sportsmanship. Any athlete, young or old, big or small, needs to compete with class and respect. All sports are meant to be strenuous competition, some can even be quite violent at times, but every player should be able to compete with a true sense of sportsmanship. There are many aspects that affect the attitude a player has; one of the most influential is what the athletes parents or other family members have taught them concerning respect for others. Kids do not realize how closely they act like their parents, even when they really do not intend to, their actions are very similar to that of their parents. A parent, or other family member, can definitely influence a player's attitude in both positive and negative ways. Parents need to realize the huge role they have in their children's lives; they need to act respectfully and properly at all times so their children are able to acquire a proper and respectable attitude, be able to execute that attitude at the game, and, most of all, be able to exercise it throughout their lifetime.

It is easy to distinguish an opponent with good sportsmanship from all of his or her teammates. A good opponent is a person who challenges you to their best ability, but also treats you respectfully. A good opponent is one who pats you on the back and says, "Good try," or one who can shake your hand at the end of the game and say, "Good Luck." A respectable opponent is one who realizes that everyone is there to have fun, and not to get revenge on a person from another team. Finally, a good opponent, in most cases, is a person who has been taught the virtues of class and respect by their parents and family members.

On the other hand, a bad opponent is also very easily set apart from his or her teammates. A bad opponent is one who takes "cheap" shots and does not abide by the rules. A bad opponent is one who talks "trash" about you in an effort to instigate you to do the same. It is clear that an athlete who does not act in a sportsmanlike manner has not been taught the virtues of respect and class by their parents or other family members.

In conclusion, parental influence is a very important factor in the attitude that an athlete has. There is a saying, "*We are what we come from.*" Every child is born with no knowledge of respect or disrespect; these values are taught to children by parents and other family members they grow up around. Parents need to realize the impact they have on their children's actions, and they always need to act in the way they would expect their children to, both on and off the field.

The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship

By Robert Paulo

Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational Technical High School

Honestly, it is the intuitive nature of my parents, and the fact that they listened to me and their own hearts, that sportsmanship is an integral part of my life.

Growing up, my mom would tell the story of how she only heard the swishing of my diaper running down the hallway, and how I loved to be chased. It was her attentiveness that noticed my love to run. My parents were playful themselves and instrumental in introducing me to every sport. At T-ball I cried, I didn't want to go, so that ended quickly. We started ice skating, but I was only interested in the frozen candy at the snack bar, so that ended. Then in middle school, sports became enjoyable. The sport of track and field itself has taught me that I can achieve nothing alone. I may run the 200-meter dash and win it or lose it alone, but I got there with some sense of my own natural talent bestowed on me from my parents.

My parents always taught me that I could do anything I put my heart and mind to. Also, I learned a little tough love from them, in that I have to fall a few times before I can run all way. They only wanted me to be strong of mind and character. My gym teacher, a parent himself, saw in me a love to run, and encouraged me to do so. My track coach, a dad, taught me the rules and love of the sport. My friend's parents, taught them to open their hearts, who in turn taught me the value of camaraderie and friendship. I practiced to get on a team, which gave me a sense of accomplishment. Here, I felt the thrill, yet the pressure of competition. I now learned fair play. Then I was just having a great time. This is where I learned sportsmanship.

I have been surrounded by awesome parents in my life, not just my own. They taught me in unspoken words, it is my responsibility to help others to their own station in life, as they did to me. I have learned to be much more aware of how my personal performance affects the overall success of my life. And how my attitude toward sportsmanship is an overall reflection of how I should live my life:

-To accept the attainment of my goals graciously

-To accept my defeat with understanding

-To be earnest with respect to myself and others

-And to appreciate the opportunity afforded to be as a United States Citizen, to be able to freely participate in the sports of my choice.

Because of parental influences, acquiring these traits has molded me into the man I will become. An achiever, a leader, and a future understanding parent.