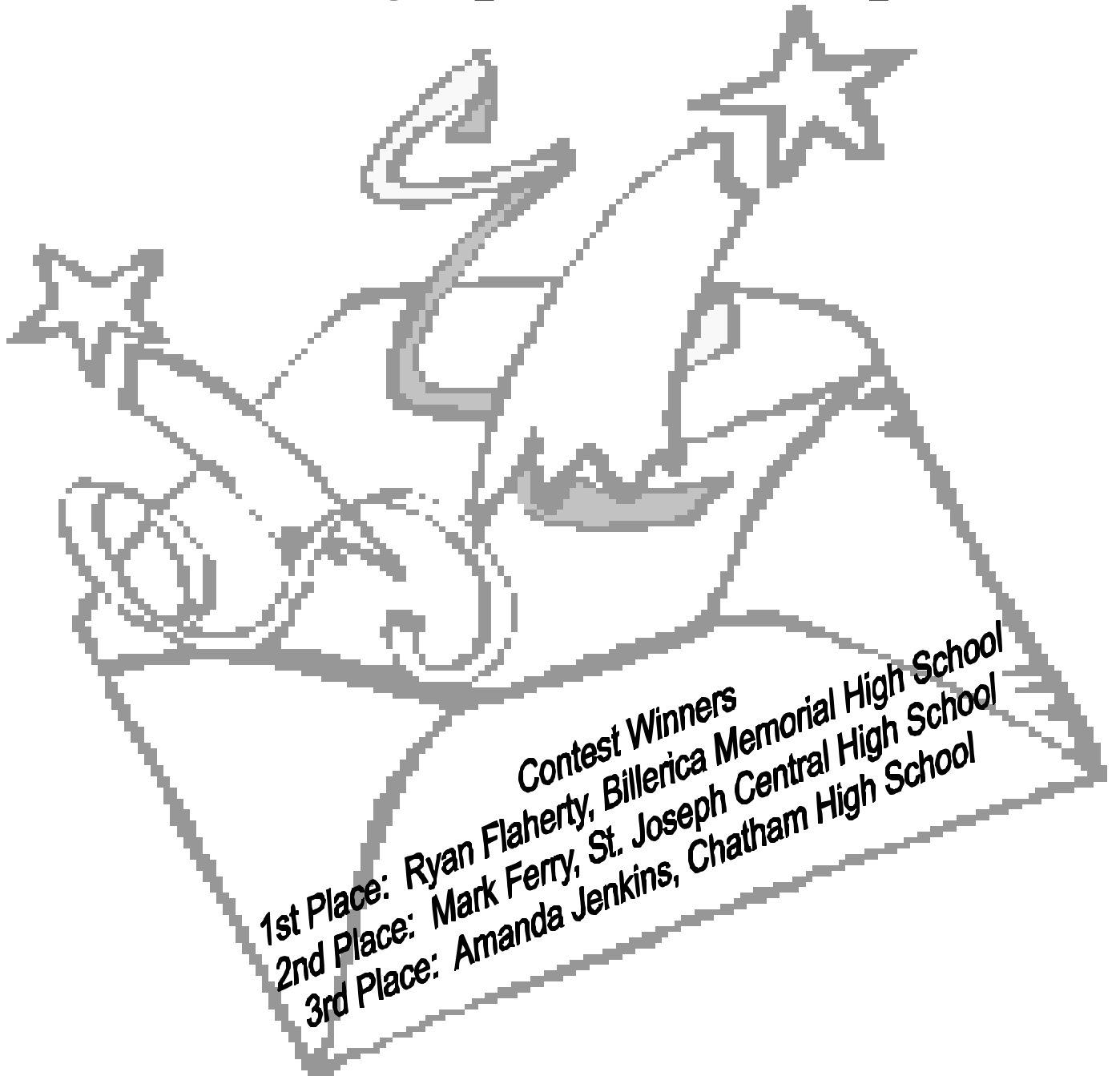


"The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship"



**This book represents the finalists
and honorable mention entries for the
2004 MIAA Sportsmanship Essay Contest.**

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The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Ryan Flaherty

Billerica Memorial High School

The media has a profoundly negative effect on sportsmanship. In this day and age, the media glorifies individuals, violence, and the big play. The good sportsmanship of the majority is overlooked in favor of the negative actions of the minority. The indifference of the media to an athlete's morals on the field is threatening the very existence of proper sportsmanship in the world today.

A true sportsman or woman tries to play a sport in the way that most benefits his or her team, regardless of personal glory. The media does not support this philosophy. The media is in constant search of a hero, wishing to capture viewers or readers with tales of tremendous individual feats. The focus comes to lie on a single athlete's accomplishments rather than the team's. Undoubtedly, there are professional athletes who, though their team has lost a game, can sleep easy knowing that the highlight of their monstrous homerun or flashy goal will be on SportsCenter that night. This is the wrong message for young athletes, who now measure success not in victories but in personal batting average or touchdowns scored. Winning is not everything, but athletes should hold a team victory in higher esteem than a personal one.

Not only does the media downplay good sportsmanship, it actually encourages conduct that is clearly unsportsmanslike. In hockey, rules allow players to fight on the ice without interference from referees. This seemingly strange rule exists to draw television viewers to the sport because, like sex, violence sells. Is it possible to expect a young athlete to act in a dignified manner when that athlete sees professional "role models" brawling on the field of play? Excessive celebrations, taunting, and arguments with officials have become commonplace and are played over and over on networks such as ESPN. If poor sportsmanship continues to be portrayed as acceptable on the national stage there is little hope of good sportsmanship surviving into the next generation.

Overall, the media has done great harm to the integrity of athletics in the United States. By glorifying the individual over the team, the media is breeding a nation of showboats, prioritizing their own image above all else. It would be for the good of all athletes, as well as fans, if this nation's media covered sports as they were meant to be covered, as a contest between two teams, not a showcase of individual players.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Mark Ferry

St. Joseph Central High School

Sportsmanship is defined as the conduct and attitude that is suitable to play sports. Players exhibit good sportsmanship through fair play, courtesy, competitive spirit, and grace in losing. Good sportsmanship makes a sport more enjoyable not only for a player but also for a spectator. Parents, guardians, and coaches strive to teach young players the importance of good sportsmanship in an effort to produce future adult athletes that will lead by example. It is the responsibility of the media to highlight athletes who display good sportsmanship and to expose those who don't and the consequences they face as a result.

Sports media play an enormous role in shaping the way young athletes respond to certain situations on the playing field. These young athletes are easily influenced by the professionals they admire. Coverage by the media pertaining to behavior of professional athletes on and off the field is extremely important. ESPN commentators, for example, discuss daily the issues in today's sports, how the athletes play and work on the field, and interview the athletes in an effort to convey to their viewers how the athletes feel in a given situation. Our young athletes will exhibit sportsmanship when the media understands the importance of their role in promoting it.

Knute Rockne, a former coach of Notre Dame Football stated, "One man practicing sportsmanship is better than a hundred teaching it." If his words are taken to heart, we could all see more acts of good sportsmanship -- a player offering a helping hand to an opponent laying on the ice, a court or field; as striker giving the opposing goalie a pat on the back for a great effort to make a save; overzealous spectators and players not harassing the officials because they made a call that disappointed them; a hockey game with no fighting; spectators of both teams offering applause for a home run, grand slam, no hitter, or any job well done. All this is possible and the media's coverage of it is crucial to promoting more of the same behavior.

Is this all idealistic? Absolutely, but if we strive for this outcome and fall short we've still made a huge impact on the role sportsmanship plays in sports. To go a step further, maybe someday we'd see a good sportsmanship award be considered equally as important as an MVP award. The only way we can make progress in promoting the importance of sportsmanship is for the media to take an active role and highlight athletes who lead by examples.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Amanda Jenkins
Chatham High School*

The media have become an extremely alluring and motivating medium within today's modern society. We find ourselves turning to our television screens, our newspapers and our computers more frequently than ever before. Our eyes glimpse millions of convoluted images of emotion and drama, which are pressed into our psyches.

The media work hard to present many topics of interest to their anxious audience. One of the more highly acknowledged subjects is the world of sports. Sports have become an intimate part of our lives. We pursue our favorite teams with an undying vigor. Who prompted this thirst for athletic support? A reasonable answer to this question is the media.

Sometimes, however, the media do not simply bring to light the glory of the game. The images of fights, brawls, quarrels between teams and screaming parents, all congregate into the media's message. Soon, the seemingly sportsmanlike game becomes a raging battle of vicious fans and unruly teams. What kind of a message is this sending to the public and younger generations?

The violence shown on the television, in pictures, and on the computer screen becomes part of younger athlete's competitions. *Today Magazine* reported in its fall edition that, "The number of abusive, negative and violent incidents in youth sports has risen sharply in the last five years among all age groups and all sports." Sportsmanship is slowly fading into an abyss of violent behavior. The media take these fights and project them to a much larger audience.

Besides revealing these belligerent acts, the media provoke them. Newscasters put relentless stress upon teams, forcing them to work under extreme pressure. This pressure can push teams over the edge when they are challenged by opposing teams. Unable to deal with their built up tension, teams become engrossed in brutal battles, all over a simple game. The unfortunate loss of sportsmanship does not apply to professional sports alone. Likewise, sportsmanship also fades from younger participants.

Young athletes take a mighty blow when the media pushes them too far. High school sports become serious life and death pursuits of glory. Newspapers publish article promoting the victory of certain teams. If the favorite team does not win, it is made to feel like a failure by the blasting of the media. The media thrusts ideas of bitter rivalries into the minds of these young adults. Teen athletes become convinced that they need to win; they need to beat the other team down in order to have a good time. This is a terrible abomination that needs to be stopped.

Sportsmanship is a learned practice of respect for one's self and others. Instead of pressing for perfection, the media should provide strength for those who have shown support and discretion. When the love of the game, the glory of the goal, the joy of the home run and the passion of the competition are lost, then the world finds one less reason to cheer for the power of the human spirit.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Julie Gilbody

Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)

If you happened to turn on the TV and flip to ESPN, there is a good chance that you will be watching the highlights or top plays of last night's game. If the hockey game or baseball game contained a brawl, you are bound to see it played over and over again throughout the highlights of the game. What exactly should be included in the "highlights" of a game? A highlight is defined as "an especially significant or interesting detail or event." I have to agree that watching a fight break out between the umpire and a baseball player over an unfair call can be very interesting. My concern is the other portion of the definition. A highlight should be "an especially significant...detail or event." Is a fight or disagreement displaying a lack of sportsmanship a significant part of the game? Has the media and society come to the conclusion that the most important part of a game is the *lack* of sportsmanship?

I find it difficult to accept that the media only shows the fighting, arguments, and foul language of the athletes, which I believe is always uncalled for. Have you ever seen highlights of a game that include one teammate helping another up off the ground or an athlete showing respect to the opposing team? It will probably take you ten times longer to find an example of good sportsmanship on TV than it is to find a lack of sportsmanship.

One of my main concerns of the media displaying only the negative behavior of the athletes is its affect on the millions of young athletes who look to the professionals as role models. What message is the media sending by saying that the most "significant" highlights from the game were those that showed the athlete acting with a poor attitude? I would hate to see the behavior repeated by the youth in our society. Though I do not hold the media responsible for teaching children sportsmanship, I think the least the media could do is *not* show the behavior that contradicts good sportsmanship.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I think the media is currently doing an insufficient job at promoting sportsmanship. In the future, I hope to see a decrease in the lack of sportsmanship in the media and an increase in the type of sportsmanship expected out of all athletes: from the five year old playing tee-ball to the twenty-five year old in the major leagues.

One Shining, Selfless Moment

*By Shae Fitzpatrick
Lynnfield High School*

In an era where the national media regularly features the brash, trash-talking, outrageous behavior of America's glorified professional athletes, a simple act of selflessness and compassion captured the media's attention for a brief feel-good moment in 2003.

Natalie Gilbert, a thirteen-year-old eighth grade student, with a big, rich voice began to sing our national anthem as the guest soloist in her chance of a lifetime before a packed arena crowd at an NBA playoff game when fate hit her hard. Suddenly, while singing the anthem she knew by heart, the unthinkable struck as she stumbled over the words and then just froze, painfully lost in the spotlight before 20,000 stunned spectators.

As the restless fans began to grumble and Natalie's public humiliation intensified, Maurice Cheeks, a former NBA all-star guard and the coach of the visiting team stepped forward from his bench in the arena's darkness and into Natalie's spotlight. Extending his arm around her shoulder and in his unpracticed voice he began to whisper and then sing the words, Natalie nodded her head and slowly began to sing with Coach Cheeks in a duet. As the coach prompted the crowd with his right hand, the fans' compassion finally clicked in with the 20,000 strong adding their collective voices in deafening harmony and support of young Natalie and the heartfelt coach, now amplifying the anthem in a glorious, redemptive moment.

Every young athlete should see this video clip, which was widely featured on a full range of various media outlets from ESPN SportsCenter to The View and Good Morning America. This one unexpected, unrehearsed moment reinforces how a simple act of compassion and true sportsmanship can redirect our sports focus back to the true meaning of athletics. This moving moment of great sportsmanship, featured in the news through print and video clips across the country exhibited the media's ability to deliver a compelling positive message in contrast to the frequent portrayal of the negative imagery associated with today's professional athletes.

The power of the media to express the positive aspects of competitive athletics is showcased through this great sports moment, invoking great compassion and pride from fans worldwide. The media's opportunity to inspire young athletes through their coverage of strong role models and legendary sports heroes helps to establish a strong foundation for good sportsmanship in athletics and life. Maurice Cheeks' profound act of selflessness epitomizes what professional, collegiate, and high school sports strive to promote through positive interactions in the athletic arena. This remarkable and inspiring sports moment makes each of us proud to call ourselves *athletes*.

Where Is The Sportsmanship?

By Emily Johnson

Gloucester High School

What do you see when you turn on ESPN first thing in the morning? More often than not, you see highlights that include fights, brawls, or heated arguments with game officials. If you ask anyone about the Red Sox facing the Yankees in last year's American League Championship Series, he or she will respond, "Oh, do you remember when Zimmer attacked Pedro? That was insane!" Of course everyone remembers that it was on the front page of every newspaper and the lead sports story on every news channel for the next several days. Where was the picture of Derek Jeter congratulating Johnny Damon? Or the two teams jogging off the field after the game without one taunting phrase or awful glare?

Ask anyone, sports fan or not, to name the most exciting point in a hockey game and they will quickly reply, the moment the gloves are dropped and the fists start flying. A soccer game? The red card waving in the air after an intentional slide tackle from behind. Society feeds off the drama, not the art of the sport itself. When there is no dramatic event, a story is simply exaggerated, and in some cases invented. It should be just as exciting for fans to see an amazing goal or homerun as it is a sneaky push of a smug shirt tug. Instead readers and viewers are often met with stories about certain coaches hating certain players, or players with childhood rivalries. The reason everyone looks forward to all this drama is that the media has promoted it in every way possible.

If you are looking for sportsmanship, it is abundant within interscholastic athletics. More likely than not, on a high school field or court, when someone falls to the ground, a quiet "Sorry" escapes the mouth of the perpetrator and a hand is quickly offered. There is always respect for everyone, whether it is on a field, track, course, court, rink, or diamond. Young people who have been playing sports since they were little kids grow up with the mentality to play hard but respect the other players as you go. Of course there is a little drama here and there, but then again, it wouldn't be considered a sport if it weren't competitive. The bottom line is, sportsmanship makes the game.

The media has a responsibility to deliver one message: sports should be played for the love of the game and nothing else. The wins and losses will fade over time, but the sportsmanship will stay with you forever, both on and off the field. This generation needs to grow up promoting the hand shaking and congratulating rather than the sneers and harassment. Lose the focus on the sensational that is outside the bounds of good sportsmanship, and focus on the true drama that is the essence of the sport.

The Media and Sportsmanship
By Joel Kent
Silver Lake Regional High School

Today's media plays a vital role in sportsmanship. Its impact can be negative, or just as easily positive. The media oftentimes tells us what to view as acceptable behavior on the playing field. In turn, whatever the media harps on and picks apart, is what we view as poor sportsmanship. If an athlete does something that a journalist, reporter, or other member of the media deems unsportsmanlike, we will hear about it. However, just the same, television cameras are usually rolling when professional athletes do not exhibit sportsmanship, and it is passed off as acceptable. When high school athletes see Terrell Owens pull a Sharpie out of his pants and sign a touchdown ball, taunting the other team, they may view this as perfectly normal celebration if telecasters do not point out his behavior as wrong.

A year ago, the Boston Red Sox were playing the Oakland A's in a playoff series. In game 5, Manny Ramirez hit a homerun in a key situation. He casually strolled down the first baseline, watching the trajectory of his homer. Within seconds, play-by-play man Tim McCarver pointed out Ramirez's antics. What otherwise may have passed for acceptable behavior was shown as a slap in the face to the A's. Had McCarver not said anything, 50,000 teenage Manny Ramirez wannabes may have walked down the line as they hit one out in their games. In this case, the media promoted sportsmanship, and showed the error in Manny's actions.

On the other hand, the media can have the opposite impact on sportsmanship. Take for instance the bean ball. Television has completely glorified the act of throwing a baseball at a batter on purpose. It is viewed as a way to stick up for your team, and a way to demonstrate a pitcher's toughness. You will be hard-pressed to find a commentator that will point out the lack of sportsmanship exhibited by the pitcher. When high school athletes see Roger Clemens or Pedro Martinez plunk a batter that was a couple inches too close to the plate, they view it as the right thing to do. When they see a batter crowd the plate a bit: bang, a heater in the back.

Today's media can either expose athletes who act foolishly on the field, or completely ignore them. Much of it is up to the individual journalist or broadcaster, rather than a prescribed, definite role of the media in promoting sportsmanship. Just today, I witnessed a near brawl after two pitchers exchanged hit-batsmen in my fall baseball league. On the other hand, yesterday I noticed a football player on my school's team pull a member of the opposing team off the ground following a hard tackle, a gesture I have seen sportscasters point out in professional games. For the most part, I believe the media does point out when stars do not prove to be sportsmen. They do their best to make known their displeasure at seeing unsportsmanlike behavior, and in turn, such behavior has been minimized in high school athletics.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Sarah Brown

Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)

Newspaper, Sports-radio, talk-shows, and news reports plant the familiar seed of passion for the sport of the season in each and every reader, listener and viewer. Throughout history, propaganda of the time has been a reliable reflection of the society itself. Our society is openly revealed in the media; our interests, priorities, struggles, victories, flaws and defeats all basking in the lime light for all to see.

Sports are everywhere, and with them follow a large and growing population of die-hard fans. The passion and emotion bursting from the “fan” population spreads like fire and ignites all spectators and innocent bystanders that get in the way. This amazing excitement runs deep into the soul and transforms every heartbeat into the pre-game theme song, every heart beating in perfect unison. The media fuels this fire, reporting on games, replaying displays of incredible physical capability and promoting upcoming sporting events. Media’s continuous flow of support in the world of sports plays an important role in portraying sportsmanship and greatly increasing the turnout of the fan population. A remarkable event, encountered only in the sports domain, is the presence and support of people from all walks of life, coming together in rain or shine, to prove their shared devotion and love of the game.

This presence of sports in the media is responsible for a passion that has more influence than increased peanut consumption and painted faces. The same emotion that caused the adoration of a team or “star player” also causes an equal hatred toward the team’s rival and opposing players. The same passion described as a fire igniting love and admiration, takes the form of a plague, an inescapable misery affecting so many in one swift swoop. Sportsmanship is viciously devoured and forgotten in this organized baffle full of hate and resentment. Media strategically presents the “home” team and favorite players as heroes, while the opposing players are the enemy, worthy of only disgust. Rumors, scandals and violence sell, and the media is well aware of this fact. The media is a business, focusing their concern on attracting an audience rather than the maintenance of portraying good sportsmanship, love of the game, and accurate reputations of athletes.

Sportsmanship is undoubtedly present in the undying love for the team, and appreciation between teammates. Media has a great influence in this spectacular adoration; however, media also has a great influence in a growing hostility in sports. Resulting from this influential entertainment, there is a powerful hatred toward hardworking teams, and bashing of reputations of many diligent, amazing athletes, simply because they are members of the “other” team. Sportsmanship must be present between players, teams, and fans. Although media often portrays the passion and love for sports to be incomplete without an equal hatred for all opposition, replacing resentment with appreciation is not impossibility. Media can rob sports of reputation, truth, and deserved appreciation, but media can never steal the soul of sports...Sportsmanship.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Sarah Breunig

Billerica Memorial High School

Every day at my school, we are forced to sit silently while watching “Channel One” on televisions that have been mounted upon all of the walls. While the program may in fact be informative, as it claims to be, it also, taking advantage of its forced audience, is able to ingrain ideas into the minds of teenagers, who are completely oblivious to their vulnerability. One of the ideas that this program has inoculated into our minds is “the power of one.” While it may be a very valuable lesson for teens to learn, the idea that we are capable of anything can also beat down the idea of sportsmanship.

Admittedly, self-worth and self-esteem are very important lessons that people, especially easily swayed and influenced teenagers need to learn. However, I believe that society has become so concerned with teenagers having self confidence, that it has lost complete sight of what may very well be more important: sportsmanship. While media influences, such as Channel One, attempt to teach us something valuable, they may be forcing us to forget the idea of working together as a team. We are constantly fed catch phrases such as “the power of one,” and “*you* can make a difference.” These phrases do in fact contain truths, but they also are causing us to lose sight of other catch phrases, such as “united we stand”, and “there is no I in the word team.” These over used catch phrases contain equally important truths, but it seems that one or the other will be dominant. Thanks to the media, the idea of sportsmanship has been proverbially beaten to a pulp.

The modern media has been completely degraded into a people-pleasing machine. It appears that the only goal of the media is to make money, which can only be done by having people watch the television, read the newspaper, listen to the radio, et cetera. And, the only way to be sure that people will continue doing this is to maintain a feel-good ideology, convincing the impressionable audience that it is important and special. The feel-good ideology does not support the idea of sportsmanship. On the contrary, sportsmanship is the idea that people need people, the belief in the power of numbers and the strength of a close-knit team. Therefore, the media has decided to tell its audience that each and every one of them is special in his or her own way, and that they can do absolutely anything, if they just set their mind to it. Through the media, the idea of sportsmanship has been fundamentally destroyed.

The Media's Role in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Caitlin O'Connell

Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)

As soon as we hit, kick, or shoot our first ball we are taught the value of sportsmanship. While encouraging us to do our best and try to win the game, parents and coaches especially stress the importance of enjoying the game and being gracious whether we win or lose. However, as we grow older and begin to watch more professional athletes play sports, our idea of sportsmanship is altered. Professional players do not line up after a game to shake hands and mutter “Good game” to the opposing team; instead we are shown images of mid-game brawls. These players no longer concentrate on playing for the love of the game; rather we hear of allegations of cheating to help a team to win. With the help of the media, the ideas of sportsmanship that our elders instill in us as children are slowly lost throughout our development.

The media has the potential to teach kids all around the world about the value of being a fair, moral athlete and being gracious to our opponents. However, in need of high ratings, the media focuses on the negative. The media fails to show the professional athletes who talk to opponents and congratulate them on good plays during a game. Rather, the media is quick to highlight a player cursing after losing a game or making derogatory comments about a rivaling team. This negative focus is encouraging children to become too competitive too early and also cultivating future players who may not have respect for others playing the game.

It is our responsibility as athletes to continue to encourage the practice of good sportsmanship. While many believe sportsmanship is worthless and has no place in today’s world, it really does make sports more enjoyable and creates a comfortable environment for children to learn the tricks of the trade. Without sportsmanship the integrity of the game is lost. Besides, who really wants to see fully-grown men making fools of themselves by screaming at one another? Sportsmanship is as important to any game as the stadiums, equipment, coaches, and players themselves. Therefore, we must not let the media grab a hold of today’s youth with the intention of corrupting them with unsportsmanlike conduct. Rather, we must take it upon ourselves to teach children the importance of sportsmanship before the media teaches them its uselessness.

Ratings vs. Respect

*By Joseph Pelletier
Westport High School*

Since early in the 20th century, professional sporting events have been promoted in the media. From radio broadcasts to television programs, people like Barry Bonds, Shaquille O'Neal, and Brett Favre have become famous through media coverage of their "big games." It is not only the amazing athletes that receive coverage while playing, however. Those short-tempered, envious athletes who will do just about anything to win and receive coverage as well. And young children, teenagers, and adults witness every aspect of the game over the airwaves. But are these sporting events good influences on young children and athletes of the future? And furthermore, does the media do the best job it can in promoting sportsmanship?

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, sportsmanship is defined as "the qualities and conduct befitting a man who accepts victory or defeat graciously." Simply put, it is following the rules and playing with a calmed sense of emotion. To be blatantly honest, I do not believe the media is doing its best to promote good sportsmanship. In turn, we see less and less sportsmanlike acts and more ill-tempered, furious athletes fuming about silly calls. Whatever happened to that handshake that occurred between rivals after a close game? Or what happened to opponents giving aid to one another when someone takes a nasty fall? Nowadays, the successful tacklers or defensemen pump their fists into the air, or even do some crazy dance to get attention for their actions. During the NFL season last year, receiver Terrell Owens took out a marker and signed a football after a triumphant touchdown catch. Another time, a few Saints teammates pulled out a hidden cell phone and called a friend after a big score. What happened to modesty and humility in professional sports? Oh, I know....It has gone out the window with that idea of banning fighting in hockey. The good and unassuming acts to help out a fellow athlete have been lost in the big picture of television ratings and radio listeners. Evidently, the media is leaning more on profit, and forgetting about why people watch these events in the first place.

I am certain there are ways that our later generations can learn the good that sports can bring to us, and media is just one. The path of good sportsmanship must begin in the correct direction, and groups like the MIAA are just one arrow leading down the right trail. More and more teenage athletes are being recognized for their conduct in sports, not just their points per game average. Also, essays and contests just like this bring out the true ideas of discipline and self-control in our peers, teammates, and fellow athletes. Now, kids look to become that strong, honest player that will take a win or a loss in stride. The time has come where a select few must take a stand to protect the goodness of athletics, and the media is the perfect medium to do so.

Sports and the Media

By Jen Tilly

Danvers High School

Sports are an important part of life for so many people. Some fans are glued to the television set every Sunday watching the NFL. Others religiously follow a baseball team through their 162 games played in a season. Along with watching for the big plays is the idea of good sportsmanship. The media plays an important role in highlighting this very important factor.

Though it's nice to see the home team win, good sportsmanship really goes much further than that. It's not winning or losing that counts; it's how you play the game. Displaying good sportsmanship would include showing respect to teammates, the officials and the fans. It means not taking a cheap shot and admitting when you make a mistake. No one wants to see a player fuss and cry when he doesn't get his way. He must gracefully go on and be strong while still maintaining a certain level of self-respect. Those are the kind of players who draw the fans in and make a game pleasant to watch. Those are the kind of players who are successful.

However, with as much sportsmanship as a player can show, it could never be seen to others without the media. If a player does something that does not show good sportsmanship, that will be the first thing replayed, the first thing related by the sports casters and the first thing in the morning paper. In a public sporting event, virtually everything is seen by the media. This being so, it can also be an advantage to have the media watching your every move. A player showing good sportsmanship will also be noticed. This player will probably be the first person to be highlighted in a documentary or star in a commercial. These are the players that the people are drawn to and the media will take advantage of that. The media turns these types of players into examples for all, thus promoting good sportsmanship.

Role of Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Margaret Grace

Danvers High School

Magazines, radio, newspapers, television:

Try to teach sportsmanship with extreme precision.

Sometimes promoted to the fullest extent,

Other times contradicted with one small event.

Everyone watches their favorite sports team,

And sportsmanship is shown or so it may seem.

However those teams, they fight and they brawl,

Over who won or an unfair call.

And commentators encourage or laugh at the sight,

Which leads fans to think fighting is quite all right.

What is not shown is how to be nice,

Saying "good game" will completely suffice.

And the reporters whose comments are supposed to be unbiased,

Should stick to the facts and speak only praises of the highest.

The fan's passion for the game drives them into a state,

Of fighting and yelling about which team to hate.

They cannot control the opinions they cream,

Which often offend fans of other teams.

If only the people watching the game,

Could practice sportsmanship in a way that is tame.

When the team plays and fans should support,

So why not show sportsmanship for the entire sport.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Travis Tasker

Tahanto Regional High School

As a 16 year-old boy that plays three sports a year, I pay somewhat close attention to sports media. It's almost a daily thing to turn on SportsCenter, even for just a little bit. The addiction I have is much like many others and their true love for sports. I know though that I am not the only young adult like this. When it comes to how the media portrays sports and their athletes, sportsmanship is not usually a top priority.

When a kid reaches a certain age, many are looking for someone to look up to or be like as it pertains to their own sports and much of the time it is a professional athlete. With becoming a professional athlete, many of them don't realize the responsibility and impact they now have. So when a pro-football player does an outrageous touchdown dance or a Major League Baseball player gets in the face of an umpire, what is a young athlete supposed to think?

The media almost always promotes these unsportsmanlike actions. They figure it makes excellent TV and to matured adults it entertains them. They forget for every taunt or every brawl, there's a whole generation of kids playing that same sport that is watching. In 10 years, many people my age will be those professional athletes and will carry over what they know and have learned.

I think the media needs to show more sportsmanship in sports. We should see two football players hug each other after beating each other up for an entire game or a baseball player shake the hand of a pitcher who struck him out. Things like this not only make the athlete look better (which many seem to strive for the most anyway) but it also sets a good example for today's young athletes.

Therefore, the media should do a better job at promoting sportsmanship. The way an athlete conducts him or herself on and off the field or court also shows just what kind of people they are. When showing poor examples of sportsmanship, the media is making the athlete and the sport look bad. In the big scheme of things, that shouldn't be what the media is after and when it is, you lose the integrity from that athlete or the sport. The youth needs to know sportsmanship and how to demonstrate it starting now. This is the only way they will understand the true meaning of athleticism.

The Speech
By Julie Brander
Haverhill High School

The buzz of the last official press conference of the year was a thick haze of thwarted faith and defeated aspiration. The reporters perched like piranhas were ready and waiting to tear apart the team for yet another losing end to yet another hope slaughtering season. Fashionably late, the coach and his men at arms: the pitcher, catcher and shortstop filed into their seats, a united front of gracious losers. The silent bell rang and the mumbles grew to roars of the age-old questions:

"Does next season have a positive outlook attached to it?"

"Is anyone being traded?"

"Is management rethinking their investments?"

"How do you expect the fans to keep the faith?"

The clean-cut, all-American players bite their tongues and hold their thoughts. The coach has something in store. Acting as judge over his presiding court, the coach calls order to the crowd of irascible reporters. He tries in vain for silence, ignoring the caustic questions of their snapping jaws. Finally the tension peaks and all eyes, mechanical and human: all ears, recording and listening are with him. Struck with stage fright he rises awkwardly trying to escape the confines of his uncomfortable seat. Standing he fumbles with the unyielding stand to his microphone to an extent of embarrassment but it was taken in a stride of nervousness and cast aside for anxiety's sake. Clearing his throat he takes advantage of their attention.

"Thank you all for coming here today and as you all know we have placed last in the league for another consecutive year. I cannot apologize on behalf of this team because we've tried with all we have. And as coach I can ask for no more. Our bats swung and our gloves caught. Our men ran and our baseballs soared. We slid and stole like it was the last game we'd ever play. We tapped our bats and knelt together in the locker room. But overall we lost together. We went out with the same unspoken faith and we came back disappointed and battered but never, ever without hope, without fervor for the next game on the roster. This team gives more out on that diamond than any other in the league. It's easy to win with skill and confidence but to lose and come back and fight and refuse to be stepped on is what makes this team the strongest team I have had the opportunity to work with. I can promise nothing for the next season, no wins or losses with or without new players but I can say that this team will play with everything they have and more."

The silent crowd sat silent, the piranhas were reduced to mere goldfish in a matter of minutes. After the acclaim ceased, the coach tipped his hat and took his leave with his lieutenants at his side. The following day, as the elastic wound papers hit the doors of discouraged fans, the headlines read:

"CLASSY COACH SHOWS SPORTSMANSHIP"

Sportsmanship and the Media

*By Mike Graham
Ludlow High School*

Most attention is brought to those who do not promote sportsmanship,
Even though the majority of athletes do show it.

Daily, we see on the television,

Images of

Athletes charged with crimes,

& those who are

Suspended for attacking others.

Players who should be shown are not; those who are not criminals or rapists.

Others who treat the sport with

Respect, behaving properly within the restraints of the game and the law.

They should be shown,

Shaking hands with their opponents after games,

Making friends with the other teams.

All the time, these players go without recognition,

Nothing is given to them, only to the ones who do not show

Sportsmanship.

However, there is one example of good sportsmanship who should stand out

In all of our minds. His name?

Pat Tillman.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Megan McLaughlin
Billerica Memorial High School*

Portrayed within an image or caption
The hopes and dreams one can only imagine.
A captivating depiction of teamwork to desire,
A portrayal of comradeship to admire.
A challenge of intuition,
To respect competition.
Through loss and win,
And the everlasting friendships that begin,
The essence of teamwork within hearts of devotion,
Displayed through the media is a riveting promotion.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Elly Azizian
Newton South High School*

The cameras flashed
The fans cheered
One stood tall
The other feared
What the media would say
If he did not get his way
If he lost the game
Would he be viewed the same

Would the cheering last,
Or will be become a part of the past
What ever happened to the joy
Of that sports playing little boy
With such volition he played
Back when he loved the game
Before the worry and vexation
The game was about the sensation

All the false facts
With he said this, and she said that
The scandals and debates
All the loves and the hates
But he will pull through
No matter what the TV will do
The game will prevail
And all true athletes will be hailed.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Caitlin McSweeney
Marlborough High School*

The team sprinted out onto the field as the winning touchdown was scored in the final few seconds of the game. The coach watches in amazement remembering the obstacles and adversity the team had to overcome in the last few months. Players with both black and white skin who refused to play on the same field with one another were now treating each others as if they were brothers. Race no longer seemed to make a difference in their lives, or on the field.

This scenario depicts the famous movie 'Remember the Titans.' It promotes both sportsmanship and solidarity on and off the playing field. The media greatly influences society's views of sportsmanship. Movies such as *Remember the Titans*, *Radio*, *The Mighty Ducks*, and *Friday Night Lights* demonstrate teams and individuals working together. Whether win or lose, the players know that they played their hardest and gave everything they had to the team. Movies are one of the most positive forms of media.

Some forms of the media have a negative impact on society. Newspapers, internet, and news channels many times focus on the adversity and rivalry of the teams and lose focus on the actual game. Currently the Red Sox and the Yankee's fans can barely hold back their rage. Although it is normal to favor one team over another, hating the fans of the other team is going too far. The media can be partly blamed for such behavior. The two teams are being portrayed as enemies and one of the teams needs to be 'defeated.' People eat up what they see on television. If the media presented a more positive view when it comes to sportsmanship, the fan's attitudes may also change. Because the media has such a great influence, they should use it to their advantage and create a more positive environment in which people can appreciate the game without the hatred and rivalry that they experience today.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Kristianna DeModena
St. Mary's High School (Lynn)*

Athletes are role models whether they desire it or not. Professional athletes make huge impressions on many people, especially young athletes. The media has the ability to play an important role in either promoting good sportsmanship or highlighting bad behavior by athletes.

Too much emphasis is placed on the negative behavior in sports. Turn on the news coverage of athletic events and you will see examples of poor sportsmanship over and over again. Both television and newspapers glorify these ugly events by repeatedly broadcasting or photographing bench clearing brawls, baseball players attacking fans, hockey players injuring and maiming other players, some deliberately and some not. In any case we are assaulted with headlines on repeated reports on each major news channel between four and five times a day. The penalties and fines never seem to fit the crimes, or receive the same air time or headline attention. Aggressiveness and poor sportsmanship gather more attention and interest than the rarely seen acts of sportsmanship, for example a runner assisting a catcher up after colliding with him.

In stead of skill and sportsmanship being emulated, you see young athletes playing in an aggressive and at times, violent pace. Wanting the win at any cost and making no apologies to anyone hurt along the way.

Perhaps we should see more extensive courage of the camaraderie and respect teams show to each other and less attention to the less desirable events of poor sportsmanship which seem to dominate the airways and newspapers currently. I believe that if more media coverage was shown towards the positive sportsmanship then more people would be interested in the sport.

The majority of the viewers would rather turn on the news and see good things being done by the role models of their children. I would want my son or daughter to turn on the television and be admiring a professional role model for the good things he or she does rather than how many punches he got in on another player, or how hard he threw the other teams coach down on the ground, or the most penalties or fouls in one game.

All in all I think that the media is a great way in promoting many things, some positively and some negatively. Sportsmanship is not one of the many positive things that it promotes. The media plays a very negative role in promoting sportsmanship.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct
By Jack Pierce
Concord-Carlisle High School

Without a doubt the value of sportsmanship has significantly changed over the past decade, and the media has been a huge influence in this change. In the past, athletes who were humble and soft-spoken were held to a higher standard than the rambunctious athletes who enjoyed showing off, and the media depicted the modest athletes in a much more favorable light. Sports and news programs on television today have specific segments dedicated to athletes doing unsportsmanlike actions and the loud mouth athletes reap the benefits with endorsements and extra publicity. Athletes have grown more outgoing and cocky over the years, but the media's depiction of their behavior and attitudes has changed drastically and the result is a negative effect on the value of sportsmanship.

Sports highlight shows are a major factor when promoting or ignoring good sportsmanship. On any given day one can tune to ESPN and view the greatest plays and most exciting moments of the week in sports. Usually these highlights are accompanied by replays of excessive celebrations and unsportsmanlike conduct. On Monday Night Countdown, a weekly show preceding Monday Night Football, there is a segment dedicated to the biggest hits of the week, titled "Jacked Up." This segment encourages unorthodox, reckless, and dangerous tackles that usually end up with an injury. Instead of a segment about the best form tackles of the week or the best executed plays of the week, players who risk injury are given fame and attention for their irresponsible play.

Endorsements also play a part in the relationship between the media and sportsmanship. It is no longer enough to be a great player in a popular sport to receive endorsements, players now have to be very popular and receive a lot of attention. Athletes are looking for money and will do ridiculous things to get media attention, such as Terrell Owens signing a ball with a Sharpie pen after scoring a touchdown. Owens later received an endorsement from Sharpie and was rewarded for his unnecessary and unsportsmanlike behavior, Marvin Harrison, a very humble player, has caught more passes, scored more touchdowns, and won more games than Owens in the past few years, but he has few endorsements. The media chooses which athletes to support financially and the “good sports” are usually not favored.

When someone turns on the television to watch a sports show, they are expecting to see great athletic feats, analysis of the biggest games, and recently, the best celebrations and wackiest antics of the day. In a 2003 regular season game LaDainian Tomlinson broke a seventy yard run on his way to two hundred yards rushing for the day, and calmly handed the ball to the referee after each of his touchdowns. Clinton Portis had a big game the same season, and after the game he paraded around the sidelines in a WWE-style championship belt. It is not difficult to figure out which story received more media attention, and which athlete is probably more looked up to and emulated. It is not that good sportsmanship has disappeared from the games, it is the media which makes it appear that way, and in turn the value of sportsmanship plummets. Without the media promoting good sportsmanship, eventually it *will* disappear as athletes continue to be awarded for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Press Promoted Proprieties

*By Justine Marie DeCamillis
Littleton High School*

Sportsmanship: “conduct considered fitting for a sportsperson including the observance of fair play, respect for others, and graciousness in losing.”

Media: “the various means of mass communication thought of as a whole, including television, radio, magazines, and newspapers, together with the people involved in their production” (Encarta Dictionary: English).

From Little League T-Ball to the Olympic Games, sportsmanship is the first and foremost rule when competing, especially when there is a reporter there with a camera close at hand. If this is the case, then not only will your actions be viewed by referees, teammates and coaches but by the public as well. The part the media plays in the promotion of sportsmanship is that of a neutral and unbiased spectator but a highly influential one. They can make or break a reputation and shape our opinions about athletes.

As a freshman athlete at Littleton Public High School, I’ve already experienced my fair share of unsportsmanlike conduct during and after sporting events. Not only have I seen some players intentionally commit foul play and use profanity, they sometimes even cheat. Would an impartial journalist writing about a team, composed of such competitors as these, cast them into a favorable light? Or would the columnist communicate the good proprieties of the opposing team who maintained a polite countenance even though they lost? The media wouldn’t congratulate a team if their victory or defeat was gained unscrupulously.

The media’s role in promoting sportsmanship is displayed through their published work, radio updates

and televised news reports. Even their presence on a game field will incite most players to do their best and act their best. The media elevates athletes with good morals and ethics above the rest because, in the heat of battle, the few, true competitors restrain their tempers and channel that energy into doing the best they possibly can to achieve excellence.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Anne Marie Curtin
Georgetown High School*

Once upon a time there was a ten-year-old boy named Kyle. Kyle was your typical ten-year-old; he loved playing outside and being with his older brother. But most of all, Kyle loved sports. He idolized professional athletes and the only time he was not watching them on television was when he was at one of his little league baseball games. Kyle always tried to act like a professional baseball player. It was a harmless game; until one day when he took it too far.

It was October, which meant the baseball playoffs were on television. Kyle's favorite team, the Boston Red Sox, was pitted against their arch enemies, the New York Yankees. During one of the games, a Red Sox player was hit by a pitch, and the result was a bench-clearing brawl. At first Kyle thought nothing of it, and when the game ended he went to bed without a care in the world.

When he woke up in the morning he was just in time to catch ESPN's highlights of the game, which centered on the fight. When the highlights were done, he went downstairs to eat breakfast. His mom was watching the morning news, which also had highlights of the game. Again, the brawl was the main focus. On the way to school, Kyle heard the broadcaster on the radio talking about the fight. At school, all the older kids were talking about the fight. By the end of the day, Kyle could think of nothing but the fight. He began to believe that anything professional athletes did was ok, even if it was a fight.

Kyle's little league team was also in the championship which, although far from the World Series, was very important to him. He tried to show everyone he could act like the baseball players on television. In the bottom of the ninth, Kyle got up to bat with a chance to win it for his team. The bases were loaded and there were two outs. The other team's pitcher was getting tired, and it was starting to show. He brought the count up to 3-0 before finally getting a strike. But the next pitch was wild, and it hit Kyle. But instead of taking his base, he charged the mound. He tried to start a fight like he had seen on television, because if he saw it on television then he thought it was okay.

Luckily for Kyle, he was pulled off the pitcher before he could seriously hurt him. But Kyle paid a hefty price for "being cool." His team was disqualified from the championship and he was suspended from little league. It may not seem like much, but to Kyle it was almost the end of the world. The championship meant everything to him and his team, and he lost it for them. Kyle eventually got over it and got to play again, but he had learned the hard way that everything you see on television isn't alright.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Caitlin Kelliher

St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School

Broadcasters “ooh” and “aah” over a vicious hit in a Monday Night NFL game, replaying it repeatedly, despite the fact the hit drew a 15-yard penalty. At a recent Red Sox/Yankee ALCS game, the home crowd violently throws baseballs onto the field in response to their player being called out after knocking the ball from the pitcher’s arm -- this draws the police out to prevent a potential riot. At Wimbledon, a tennis player verbally spars with the line judge over a call, eventually throwing her racket. Instances like these, along with the never-ending “in your face” trash talk and excessive celebrations upon success, are becoming increasingly commonplace throughout sports.

Reversing this trend will require a “team effort” by everyone involved in sports. Schools must set clear policy for sportsmanship. Coaches must define a strict set of specific rules of play, and players must be disciplined to play by them. Stadiums and facilities must prominently display posters of acceptable fan behavior. The sports themselves have clearly defined penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct, and referees must be prepared to enforce these penalties. As unfortunate as it is, fans must be provided the necessary guidance to behave properly in the heat of competitive battle. The media must provide much of this guidance, because they wield the most public influence. The media are the ones whose job is to convey messages, and they’re the ones most likely to affect our behavior and culture.

National and local media must work together jointly to make sure the messages around sportsmanship are consistent. Radio and television media need to educate the listening and viewing public that different sports have different levels of sportsmanship behavior. For example, while it’s okay, and even encouraged, to play violently in the heavy contact sports like hockey and football, and that while it’s okay in partial contact sports like basketball and soccer to be “physical” but not violent, it’s never okay to be violent or even physical in non-contact sports like baseball, tennis, or golf. Television media might consider using time delays when they suspect an intense rivalry heating up. For instance, when a pitcher throws at an opposing batter’s head, we all know a bench-clearing brawl is about to occur. It’s up to the media not to show the brawl, and to verbally condemn it while it’s taking place.

The print media can guide us by publishing a “Sportsmanship Standard” that outlines sportsmanship requirements and expected behavior across all sports for everyone involved from a media standpoint. This standard would include both discouraged and encouraged behavior, and it could be supported by creating a new, prestigious, annual “Sportsmanship Excellence Award”. This award could be much like the NCAA Sportsmanship Award, recognizing the one player or team who best exemplifies the qualities of fairness, honesty, respect, civility, unselfishness, and responsibility.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Rachel Morrison

Academy of Notre Dame (Tyngsborough)

To Whom It May Concern:

Media action has helped precipitate the disintegration of sportsmanship. Witness the planned hockey fight night to be held at the Tsongas Arena in Lowell, a proposed evening of staged "hockey" fights between willing participants. The media, and the local newspaper in particular, have done a tremendous job of hyping this proposed event. The goal is to attract consumers, and attract it will, if the fight night plays out as proposed. What the media has been blind to is the event's inherent brutality and pointlessness. When level-minded people object, they are more often than not labeled as self-righteous do-gooders. However, the proponents and promoter of such events are the ones who have missed the boat on public decency.

We have been desensitized to the point where violence, instead of horrifying us, serves as mindless amusement. Apparently the fights that regularly erupt during an average hockey game aren't enough to satisfy the public's thirst for physical conflict. By endorsing and promoting such public spectacles, the media have made it cool to curse, to crave the fight, to attack. Witness what happens when violent fits of rage supersede sportsmanship. Witness the numerous incidents involving sometimes life-threatening physical conflicts between overzealous parents and coaches. What is aggressive, injurious, malicious behavior doing in the sporting world *among spectators*? Is this not the antithesis of sportsmanship? What are the children being taught, the sons and daughters and athletes of the parents and coaches who are injured or do the injuring? To some extent this is a matter of personal responsibility, but the media must be held accountable for the excessive promulgation of violence.

There is absolutely nothing sportsmanlike about violent physical conflict, whether the altercation is an aggressive disagreement between parents and coach or a scripted series of on-ice brawls. The flood of violence into the sporting world must be stanchd and the media remonstrated before we devolve any further.

Nonviolently,

Rachel Morrison

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Sunanda Katragadda
Belmont High School

Dear Mitsubishi Head of Advertising,

This letter is in response to a recent advertisement that your company aired. It featured other companies' cars being hurled at a Mitsubishi. The Mitsubishi dodges these other cars and they end up crashing into each other. This sends a bad message to its viewers. It forsakes the promotion of the positive message of sportsmanship for the negative message that one should destroy the enemy. But do not worry, your company is not the only one doing it. You see, sportsmanship is taught to children at an early age and it is taken for granted that they remember it as they grow up because as they do, the message appears less and less in their surroundings. These surroundings include school, society and especially the media. Media for younger people serves as an effective way of giving good advice. However, as people grow older, the media starts to communicate more negative messages. For instance, young children are taught by the media to show good manners and sportsmanship. However, as they grow older, the message being sent shifts to "destroy the enemy." Media suited for less mature people encourages sportsmanship more than the victory-obsessed media targeted at more mature audiences.

When children are young, they watch shows such as *Arthur* and *Clifford* which teach them the value of sportsmanship. Adults, on the other hand, are bombarded with unsportsmanlike advertisements of products that put down their competition and claim to be the best. Your commercial, for instance, by crashing those two cars into each other, promotes a message that destruction of the opponent is okay. This message could affect all the aspects of one's life, including their attitude towards sports.

Being more mature, you may think that adults can tune out the negative messages presented by the media or at least take them lightly. However, they do not always do that. Take the Red Sox game brawl last year which started when Pedro Martinez threw a ball at a Yankee player's head and ended up with Martinez throwing 72-year-old Don Zimmer to the ground. These were people who had taken the message that winning was everything and that the enemy should be destroyed to heart and let the competitiveness get at them until they snapped. Ignoring the negative messages given by the media takes practice and awareness. Adolescents exposed to the media have to learn before it is too late that learning that conducting themselves properly regardless of whether they win or lose a game is just as important as trying to win the game. You can help promote this message of sportsmanship. You can help them learn to avoid the negative messages presented by the media and use good judgment as to which messages they will listen to. It is important that viewers remember that losing a game does not make someone a loser, but winning a game and hurting the opponent will. I hope you take this letter into consideration.

Sincerely,

Sunanda Katragadda

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Nora Sugermeyer
Harwich High School*

"Hey did you see the game last night?"

"Ya, that bench clearing was awesome!"

"I know."

For the most part, this is what everyone who watches the game talks about the next day. After seeing a game you never hear, "that was good sportsmanship did you see them shake hands after?" What goes on in the media affects how adults and kids view a game. When people see bad sportsmanship in the pros or a movie, they may think it is ok, or even funny. There is nothing funny about bad sportsmanship. From personal experience of playing sport in high school and also outside of high school, it is always nicer to play against someone who has good sportsmanship.

Most athletes get the impression from the media that if you don't have good sportsmanship you will receive more attention. For example, when the media replay the fights such as the Yankees and Red Sox and not the pats on the back, shaking of hand, or helping your opponent up after a play, it sends the message that what has just happened is fine.

When the media shows the fight in the pros no one ever gets hurt, this is because so many people are there to stop it. When a fight breaks out in public at sporting events or even on the field, it seems like someone always get hurt. This was apparent a couple of years ago when the two fathers got into a fight at their little boys' hockey game and one ended up killing the other. These events of poor sportsmanship seem to have an effect for a while but not long enough to prevent them from happening again.

Media is not all about bad sportsmanship, there is a lot of good sportsmanship also. This good sportsmanship just doesn't get as much attention; if it did there might be less negative sportsmanship from parents, pros, and student-athletes. Having the media show good sportsmanship is important because when you see something you are more apt to do as you see. An event that shows good sportsmanship doesn't always get much recognition such as the outfielder from the Cardinals, Larry Walker, came up with the idea to shake hands after the Cardinals and Dodgers playoff series. Many views and sportswriters saw this as a way to show good sportsmanship, people talked about wanting to see more of this; the only problem was it didn't get as much recognition as it should have (Oct. 13, 2004 MLB.com). If the media could show viewers more things like this, it might help people to have good sportsmanship.

Since it is said "A picture is worth a thousand words," if the media was to show more emphasis on good sportsmanship instead of bad, it would help to improve all people's attitudes. This would make a great difference in the way people represent themselves on and off the field as well as make a great experience for all high school athletes, other athletes, and parents.

Role of Sportsmanship in the Media

*By Emily Rodenhiser
Danvers High School*

In today's world of high speed internet, satellite radio, and tivo, the media plays an important role in spreading a positive message about sportsmanship. Not only do the media sometimes influence young children negatively without knowing it, they sometimes send unsportsmanlike messages with the knowledge that they are doing so. It is not always the responsibility of the professional athlete to hold in their anger after they loose a game or a match, but it is always the responsibility of the network they are on to make sure that the public knows these displays are wrong. If the media does not enforce this message children will grow up acting like Neanderthals every time they do not get their way, not only in sports but in every aspect of life.

It is crucial to the healthy growth of children that they are constantly reminded of what is right and what is wrong. If the media does not help out with this they are guilty of making this country into a more cynical place. Sports are a really good thing for children to get involved in because it helps them to develop self esteem and it causes them to have to work with others. When children play sports they also tend to look up to professionals who play the same sport as them. If they see Sammy Sosa or Tom Brady on the television making a scene because they got a bad call or they lost, they will mimic them because that is a major influence in their life. To avoid children doing what their idol has done, the media has to try and censor what is being put on television. Also, the media, along with the child's parents, need to encourage good sportsmanship.

In addition to the changes that need to be made by the media, sports "heros" need to be reprimanded more for their negative actions. If a player in the NBA is fine 10,000 dollars for saying a curse on national television, this is not going to stop them from doing it again. These men and women make millions of dollars a year and 10,000 dollars would not do enough to even make them stop and think about what they have done and why it is wrong. The professional athletes need to get a heftier fine so that they can stop and think about what they are doing and who it had potentially hurt.

Some changes are already being made so that people will get along better in sports. For example, people are being rewarded for their positive contributions to the cause of sportsmanship. My basketball team two years ago won the sportsmanship award for the North Eastern Conference (NEC). This made us happy because we were not necessarily the best team in the conference, but we always tried hard and showed the other teams the respect we would have liked to receive. If children and even adults can be rewarded for their actions they would most likely make more of an effort to act nicer toward people and think more before they act.

The message is not that people should be rewarded every time they say nice shot or good block to a member of the opposing team. It is just that if everybody thought about the things they said, especially the media, then they would say more positive things and the world really would become a better, more livable place where the message is that it is not whether you win or lose, it is how you played the game.

Role of Media Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Eric Oxford
Danvers High School*

The media plays a major role in sports. They broadcast sports games and highlights to audiences worldwide. They continuously interview the athletes after games and events. Because they have such a big impact on audiences in the sports world, the media plays a large role in promoting sportsmanship. The media even can even affect sportsmanship in youth sports by what they decide to communicate to the public. The media has, and hopefully will continue to do a great job in promoting sportsmanship.

Every year, ESPN hosts the ESPY Awards, which is a sports version of the Academy or Grammy Awards. Even though there is much competition between athletes, there is always great sportsmanship between athletes whenever the winner is announced. Hand shakes and hugs are always popular at the ESPY Awards. Win or lose, each athlete always seems to be extremely happy for the winner. Also, in the National Hockey League, the Lady Bing Trophy is given out every year. The winner of this trophy is the player with the best sportsmanship throughout the hockey season. It is not mandatory for the media to broadcast these events or acknowledge the person with the best sportsmanship, but they do it to promote sportsmanship.

Secondly, during sports games, commentators constantly emphasize on an athlete's sportsmanship during the game. They will also mention to the audience if an athlete is not showing signs of sportsmanship during a game. This is crucial, especially to young audiences, because it could help them decide on who their role model or favorite player is. Sports radio and television broadcasters seem to focus on opposing teams shaking hands and congratulating one another after a game is completed. This shows good sportsmanship between two competitive teams.

In the rare occasions when there may be arguments or scuffles after games, the camera does not usually show what is going on. It is a smart idea because if the fights were shown, people could identify who were involved, and what athletes cause trouble. During sports events and games, the media does a great job in promoting sportsmanship and demoting anything that does not benefit the game.

In summary, the media in sports do a great job in promoting sportsmanship in athletes and coaches. They repeatedly report or announce awards for great sportsmanship. They always focus on sportsmanship during and after games, and demote anything that is not sportsmanlike. The media has an important task of providing all sports games, highlights, and interviews for the sports audience. The media has always done a great job of promoting sportsmanship by effectively communicating it to the public by way of live radio and television broadcasts or newspaper articles. In years to come, if the media continues to promote sportsmanship, it will hopefully become the instinct of collegiate and professional athletes to work hard and know that it is right to show good sportsmanship.

Hope

*By Alyssa Puzzo
Ludlow High School*

Turn on the T.V., what do I see
Athletes like you and me
One day I'll be like them
You cannot set limits or condemn.

These heroes on my screen
Show me what victory really means
Working together to achieve a goal
Giving 100% heart and soul

It was once said, "I wanna be like Mike"
By basketball lovers all alike
A role model to children worldwide
With interviews and papers as a guide.

And the women soccer fans
Who bellowed and cheered for Mia Hamm
As she scored her 108th goal which made her the best
By viewing that moment on T.V., we were blessed.

The media was there for Mary Lou Retton when she made her perfect vault
And became the first gold medal American woman gymnast with exalt
At only age sixteen
She awed us with her routine

The media are there to give us our dreams
By showing us the profound moments of our favorite teams
You can do anything you put your mind to
Everyone has talent special and true.

Sportsmanship taught to all
Is applicable to short and tall
It doesn't matter who you are
The media make you shoot for the stars.

To triumph and hear your name on T.V.
And have the whole world able to see
Is a dream that starts young and dies old
The media demonstrate no dream is too bold.

Athletes become an example of how to act and what to say
And teach kids each and every day
The media are there to show us how
To be the adults we are now.

The passion of one sport
Spread by the media's support
Brings us together as one,
Since the time when our lives had first begun.

A simple little handshake goes a long way
And brightens up an opponents day
Things don't always have to be hate
And the media open up that gate

The Role of Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Haley Trenholm
Turners Falls High School*

The media has a great influence on our American society. It has the power to publicize what star icons wear, read and how they act in a way that make people want to do the same. Young adults are the easiest target because they are the most impressionable and can be easily swayed. Large companies are only concerned with making money and the media is used as a way to do this. No time is spent to think about what influence this is having on young adults. Sportsmanship becomes lost in the haze of media promotion. Television, magazines, radio broadcasting and star icons take advantage of promoting negative influences in hopes of enhancing their performance and ratings. Thus, it is the responsibility of siblings, friends, family members, coaches and most importantly the media to provide a positive model for young children to learn from.

True sportsmanship is built on values, values that apply to everyday situations. With no promotion of values in relation to sports, these ideals become lost. Star athletes have the power to address a referee using inappropriate language with no respect but still not be penalized. When a young athlete witnesses a situation such as this, they contemplate the professionals' action as being expectable, therefore allowing themselves to do the same. Knowing the effect an unrealistic view can have on adolescences, the media should reverse the message. However because future athletes perspectives are not their focal point, they bypass the issue.

Star athletes who run the show throughout a game soon become an exemplar to young athletes. The media puts an icon high on a pedestal; making adolescences want to resemble them so passionately to the point where any action will be taken. With this standpoint in mind young athletes' values are corrupted and the meaning of teamwork becomes lost. With this state of mind winning and values become a competition. In order to be that superstar player teenagers will do anything and like the old pastime phrase says "If you're not cheating, you're not winning." With this as just a small fraction of the messages the media sends to young athletes today, many modifications need to be made.

Instead, the media should strive to promote positive examples for athletes. Influences of playing with self dignity and taking responsibility for your actions need to be made. Having respect for the opponents you face and working together as a team. No one person has the capacity to hold the weight of umpteenth other players on their shoulders. Most importantly the media should teach playing for the love of the game, to soothe nothing but your own soul. At the end of the day, the pure hard worked perspiration running off your forehead will be what fulfills you. Not whether you won or lost a state championship or how many points were scored. Nothing will compare to the solid effort that was put forth in an athlete who played a fair game.

The media bestows the power to influence young adults. When it promotes morally wrong and negative choices through athletics, adolescence are corrupted to a belief which makes these choices acceptable. Without a positive exemplar to demonstrate the benefits of friendly sportsmanship, our

country's future athletes will create a substandard society and have unrealistic views on sports and life. This will inhibit young people from true exploration and determination in order to achieve goals. Thus substantiating the media's importance to promote a positive role for children to follow as they act through sportsmanship.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Jamie Pelletier
Marlborough High School*

There are many ways in which the media promotes or in some cases doesn't promote sportsmanship. On the news channels there is a much more negative approach to what the game is based on. In the movies; however, it is seen in a much more positive light. I think this affects people's behavior towards other teams, as well as their actions in day to day life.

Media today is all about sales. What's going to sell? What would be a good pitch to the people? These are things that papers and news anchors base their stories on. Such as with the ongoing rivalry between the Red Sox and the Yankees. Their stories are no longer about the game and what is going on, it's now become more about whose fighting with who. With promoting these obscure stories it reflects on our younger generations. Due to the fact that children tend to base their actions and attitudes on what they see and hear.

On the other hand the movies are very good at encouraging a positive side to sportsmanship. It's usually directed towards a younger generation, but promotes such fabulous areas of the game such as unity, equality, and optimism. Usually starting out with a group of young kids that love a certain sport but are not spectacular at playing it. While starting up this team and going through many games they go through a lot of highs and lows, victories and losses. All this only makes their team that much more stronger. These movies that promote good communication and hard work can help you succeed in any sports environment.

Although there are two sides to the media, it all should become balanced. One side is a more negative and in your face view of how sportsmanship is crafted. While the movies promote a more positive, uplifting feel to the game. I think that both sides of the media is needed. I believe that the negative side does keep people interested as well as guide them as to what is not okay. I also believe that the positive side is needed to improve attributes of players on a team. To help them realize what characteristics are needed in becoming a team of one. Sportsmanship is a key point in promoting good team players and a healthy positive attitude towards the game.

Sportsmanship

*By Heather Mortell
Bartlett High School*

Although many athletes donut realize it
They are looked up to by all.
They show us what hard work means
And how to stand strong and tall.

But Sometimes even the best athletes
Get caught up in the heat of an intense game.
They loose their temper quickly
And try to find someone else to blame.

But it's important to keep control of your attitude
Because it is reflected in the way you play.
You never know who may be watching.
It could be someone who looks up to you day to day.

Even though in the past
The media seemed to promote bad sportsmanship more.
Those thoughts have now been reversed
And respect for everyone is now the core,

Athletes play hard for the love of the game
And never quit until the very end.
But they must be careful how they present themselves
And the type of message that they send.

They exemplify sportsmanlike conduct
And know it doesn't matter whether they win or lose.
They donut play for anyone but themselves
They play because ifs something they love and choose.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Brett Wilkes

Billerica Memorial High School

To Whom it May Concern:

Do you remember that commercial on TV a few years ago that featured Michael Jordan and Mia Hamm competing against each other, each taunting the other that "Anything you can do, I can do better; I can do anything better than you,?" As I look back on that advertisement I realize that the company paying to have it broadcast nationwide was promoting a very poor example of sportsmanship to the people (especially the children) who saw this commercial. This company, a leading manufacturer of products in America, obviously did not carefully consider the impact it could have on the people of this nation. Another example of the bad promotion of sportsmanship by the media is that fights in sports such as hockey and baseball are continually played and replayed on TV, signifying to young people that it is okay for one to fight during a game when he or she is mad. This just proves that fact that the media has a negative effect on the development of good sportsmanship in the people who see their productions.

This lack of good sportsmanship in the past few years has not been hidden. A number of my friends have told me that they believe there has been a decreased rate of good sportsmanship in the past few years. One especially insightful friend specifically told me that as pressure is applied for scholarships and things of that manner, people are less likely to be good sports. We need to realize that people notice this decrease in sportsmanship and that we need to help fight it.

Of course, sportsmanship does not just have to do with sports. One can be a good sport at many activities besides sports. For example, the other day I was playing a video game with one of my friends, and he was beating me at every game. I was pretty aggravated because each time I made a comeback, but he still beat me. I was struggling with being a good sport and with getting mad at my friend and at myself I knew, from what I have been taught of God's wisdom, that it would not help to release my anger. Fortunately, I cooled down after a few minutes and never let out my anger in words. This has happened to me on plenty of other occasions as well.

So what can we do to increase good sportsmanship? Really, the only thing we can do to show others that good sportsmanship is not boring and stupid is to start with ourselves. We need to be examples of good sportsmanship. When people see that we do not throw a fit if we lose a game they will want to know why. We can tell them simply that being a good sport is better and more fulfilling than being a bad sport. Hopefully, this will be used to help them become better sports.

Thank you for your time spent reading this letter. I hope it has encouraged you in your quest to be a better sport and help others to be better sports. Be sure to write me back and tell me how it is going. God Bless!

Sincerely,

Brett Wilkes

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Lindsay Edwards

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School

An image can be twisted
Showing the photographer's point of view.
Smiles can be faked
Seen in different tints and hues.

Each color of the photograph
Every pigment and every shade
Can be redone over and over again
Until that smile starts to fade.

A small, simple handshake
Between rival teams
Can be all that is necessary
To show what sportsmanship means.

A photograph can capture
All the colors of the rainbow
But is the handshake from the heart?
This is what we'll never know

But if the camera angle changes
And a mirror image shows more,
You can now see the other side
Something that wasn't there before.

Intertwined with a child-like secrecy,
Her fingers are crossed behind her back
Showing that the handshake means nothing.
Truly sportsmanship is what she lacks.

But the audience cannot see
What is in the photographer's mind.
They only see a friendly handshake
One that looks respectable and kind.

The audience has been tricked.
They were fooled with out their knowing.
They saw the newspaper's image,
And their just kept going.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

By Emily Browning

Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School

I stepped nervously onto the court in my high-tech high-tops, wishing desperately to fit into my oversized team jersey. This was my first basketball game ever, and all I knew was that it involved an orange ball and a hoop that seemed hopelessly small in diameter. It was a co-ed league, so the boys hogged the ball for most of the game, believing the girls lacked any talent or skill. Finally, with the time winding down, I received an unexpected pass. “Shoot! Shoot!” my teammates yelled. I pushed with all my tiny elementary-school muscles, hurling the ball toward the distant basket. There was a “swoosh” sound followed by screams of excitement. “You got the winning basket!” my teammates exclaimed, enveloping me with hugs and high-five's. The future was clear in my eight-year-old mind: I would become the greatest basketball player of all time.

I knew very little about sportsmanship in second grade. My images of what sports were all about came from the media, mainly television. I took very seriously the exhortation on TV to “be like Mike.” So I would be a superstar, finding wealth and celebrity, just like Mike. Within weeks, I owned every piece of Michael Jordan memorabilia I could lay my hands on, including jerseys, posters, action figures, even a life-size cardboard cutout of the man himself that I placed adoringly close to my bed. Meanwhile, I was obsessed with basketball, practicing endlessly to reach my goal of stardom.

But stardom is not so easy to attain. Over the years, school became more demanding; new interests captured my attention. Reality began to intrude. Sure I was a good, solid player, but it was becoming painfully clear that I would never be the female equivalent of Michael Jordan. As torturous as this realization was, another, different kind of awareness was growing within me: I loved being part of a team. With my teammates, I was learning how to compete intensely and respect my opponent at the same time, how to accept loss when you've given the game your best effort, how to support your teammates when they're having a bad night. I was discovering the power of being part of an effort larger than myself. In the process, I was also remembering and recovering the passion of the little girl in the high tops and oversized jersey.

These everyday experiences my teammates and I were having, these stories about the values and lessons of sportsmanship, may be difficult for the media to tell. They are not particularly glamorous or glitzy; they may not sell as well as tales about the rich and famous. But they are stories that matter, and they are stories that need to be told.

The Role of Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Mollie Lauterback
Newton North High School*

In a country where every state seems to have a predominant spectator sport, it's no wonder that the media promotes sports events to create more of a following. As more children in the United States are exposed to sports through television, newspapers or photographs, the greater the influence media can have on promoting sportsmanship. The way the media captures a sporting event can help shape a child's play in a soccer game, tennis match or track meet. Therefore, the media has the ability to promote good sportsmanship in athletics to act as a good example for children.

My symbols of sportsmanship in sporting events are common sights. The shaking of an opponents hand, the congratulatory hi-fives given to a team member the act of saluting the crowd and other actions are all regularly seen. To many this may seem insignificant but the media does advertise more poignant acts of sportsmanship between athletes off the field as well. Last year, when Nomar Garciaparra was the shortstop for the Boston Red Sox, he was featured in an ad for Fleet Bank alongside the New York Yankees shortstop, Derek Jeter. The two teams are notorious rivals in the sport of baseball but for this commercial, Derek Jeter and Nomar Garciaparra were pleasant together and even appeared to be friends. The media aired this ad to show that sportsmanship extends beyond a baseball game. Even though this one commercial couldn't bridge a gap between a rivalry which has lasted over a century, it allowed for everyone, especially children, to see that being polite and respectful to your fellow opponent is an important attribute for being an athlete.

The media has a strong voice in the broadcasting of sports events. The media controls what gets on the air, which interviews to show, and even which fights between athletes are highlighted. Quite often sports highlights are more powerful than a whole game or event. If the media chooses to focus on highlights that show a particularly captivating moment of sportsmanship, the sporting event may be associated with that act. In the Summer Olympics of 2004, Paul Hamm, the best American gymnast was asked to voluntarily give back his gold medal on account of a scoring error made by the judges. How Hamm performed during his routines grew less significant and how he handled the judges error grew to be the more prominent news in the Olympics. Hamm didn't give up his medal because he believed that he truly deserved the Gold. This event, however, led to talks about sportsmanship all over the world and allowed for everyone to form their own opinions about how to be respectful while still valuing your performance -the definition of sportsmanship. The only way to preserve the importance of sportsmanship is constant exposure between athletes. Athletes are role models and their actions, shown through the media, are influencing the sportsmanship of our future athletes.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Erica Solari
Hoosac Valley High School*

What is one of the main causes for the poor sportsmanship that people encounter at almost all athletic events? The answer to this question is relatively simple: the media. Practically everybody watches or listens to the news or reads a newspaper on a regular basis. Even kids who tend to only read the comic sections of newspapers may see pictures that show bad behavior at one sporting event or another. Kids grow up with the media all around them. Constantly being exposed to the media, which projects the poor sportsmanship and the feeling that it's okay to act that way, causes the kids to grow up thinking it's fine to act the same way as the pros. The media can be a wonderful thing, giving people all the information they may want, but when it comes do to it, sportsmanship is one thing that's poorly represented by it.

When you were a kid, did you have a favorite sport, and along with it a sports hero? Most likely, you did. Kids today are the same way they were twenty years ago. The problem today, however, is that the people the kids look up to, which could be either their sports hero or their parents, are displaying bad behavior, and getting recognized for it. Rarely, if ever, are people commended for good sportsmanship at a game. The kids, therefore, are constantly being introduced to behavior that they shouldn't be. They grow up believing that it's okay to act the way the people they look up to do, and if they do act that way, and they do it often enough, there is a chance that they will make headlines, which to some kids, will make their world. This makes the kids start to show bad sportsmanship, partially because they will get attention for it. If the media showed the good behavior, and not the bad, kids and adults alike would act more responsibly because they'd know that they would be recognized for this behavior instead of the negative.

The media doesn't just affect the way kids act during sporting events, but also the adults. Everybody's kid has to be the best, and a bad call can't be made against their child. Their behavior, which is caused by the media, may influence their kids, and then their kids will start to show bad sportsmanship. If you go back to the source of this problem, it's always the media.

If you're showing them bad sportsmanship, as the media recognizes, they are going to show the same type of behavior. Good behavior isn't promoted as often as the bad behavior, so naturally, kids are going to go and do the stuff that's going to get them recognized. The media gives a greater amount of attention to negative sportsmanship, and that in return has a negative effect on the people in today's world. The result is bad sportsmanship in almost every sport.

Media and the Loss of Sportsmanship

*By Brian DePasquale
Chatham High School*

Media play a vital role in the lives of many in today's society. However, in today's age of athletics the function of sport is based upon the tangible aspects of competition rather than the characteristics that one might deem important, such as sportsmanship. Today's society is based on winners and losers, coverage of negative moments in sporting events, and undependable sports role models. This is a major problem that shows no signs of being changed.

As sports coverage has become more accessible with recent technology, the problems over what should be covered and how it should be covered is lost amidst the abyss of dramatic journalism. Our culture is based on winning and losing. During the American Revolution, we were considered the underdog, with the British monarchy being the evil enemy. Today, parallels can be drawn between that and the Boston Red Sox/New York Yankees rivalry. Within Massachusetts, the Red Sox are considered to be the good guys and the Yankees are deemed "the evil empire". Media coverage is so set on the outcome of the games played, that the concept of sportsmanship is lost. In highlight reels of golf tournaments, the final cuts present the image of the winner making a crucial putt to win. The image of the player then shaking his opponent's hand is lost. Here, an unhealthy message is being established about what's important in athletics.

This problem is also fostered by media coverage of the negative images such as fights and negative quotations. A game in baseball that involves a bench clearing brawl is more likely to get media attention than a simple game. With the growth of sex and violence in television, film, and music, society has become less and less interested in wholesome actions. Consider the World Series of Poker championships, broadcast weekly on ESPN, in which players blatantly display their victories and defeats over the cards they are dealt. If the media is focused so much on negativity, how can they possibly showcase the positive aspects of genuine sportsmanship?

America's major sports are overrun with players who continually break the law or the rules within their sport. Consider the issue of steroids in baseball. Many players state that about half of their peers use some sort of illegal supplement to enhance their performance on the field. Allen Iverson's "It's just practice" fiasco teaches youth that teamwork isn't important. Kobe Bryant's scandal, as well as countless others raises many questions about whether athletes are more focused on helping their teams win or diversions into other aspects of life.

The media can have a positive and negative affects on a society. However, within the field of sports, the media focus too much on the negative and therefore exclude the issue of sportsmanship. With the importance of winning and losing, negative coverage, and bad role models, the positive things about sport are lost. The concept of sportsmanship will vanish if these fundamental aspects of athletics are not showcased on a daily basis for our youth.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship

*By Andrea Dupre
Billerica Memorial High School*

Over the past few decades, the media's role in how people view sporting commentaries has dramatically changed. In the beginning, a person could get scores and maybe a highlight or two from the nightly news. Today, we can view games live and have minute by minute analysis by highly respected professionals. The media now has the power to educate a large, diverse audience about the rules in any given sport, about the skills required to succeed in a certain sport, and even about how a player should behave on and off the court or field. With this new found power, the media has a chance to promote sportsmanship such as a congratulations to the winning team or a simple level of respect for the officials. The media, in turn, plays a major role in the promoting of sportsmanship by showing players obeying calls by the officials even after they are disputed against and by emphasizing the value of teamwork.

Players of major league teams or any other team, have to listen to the calls given by the referees or officials of the sporting event. Although the players and coaches are entitled to their opinion and can argue the call, what the official says is final. The media plays a major role in this and promotes this aspect of the game by exposing the world to the respect of authority any person involved in the game pays to the officials. It could be the starting pitcher of the Red Sox, or the Patriot's field goal kicker playing second to Vinatieri who refutes the call, but the only one who can make a call is the official and the media does a great job displaying that.

The media also does a great job displaying teamwork and focusing on the significance of it. Commentaries on any sporting event these days discuss the group effort put into any sport, whether it be trainers or teammates. The media never fails to recognize the man behind the scenes who makes any success possible. Its not just the star player getting credit but also the team they rely on to be able to perform to their best ability. A win is no longer the sole success of the man who drove in the winning run, but also to the man who sat on the bench rooting on his teammates. Every person on a team has a job to do and the media does a great job emphasizing the importance of even the simplest tasks before or during the game that made that success possible.

The media may not always be neutral; it may not always give your favorite soccer team enough credit or film your favorite basketball player enough. It does, however, carry a large amount of influence over the way we conduct ourselves at a sporting event, in the stands or on the field. The media promotes sportsmanship in any type of situation by what they choose to expose audiences to such as teamwork and cooperation.