

## **Sportsmanship (Second Place 2002)**

*By Dorothy Sebastian*

*Falmouth High School*

There is a feeling unlike any other in the world. In the heaving sea of life, there is just one moment of calm. There is that moment when I stand there, feet still, heart racing, fear and dread combining to form only a well of passion. For once that whistle blows, my world will become my heart. At the same time, however, I also understand that when I do finally step off this field, I am going to leave it all behind. I am going to become once more that same girl who has tried her hardest - sometimes successfully, other times not. This is the only way I know how to live. Sportsmanship is, in some respects, one of the greatest lines in life that I have ever had to walk - and the strongest arms to keep me from falling. For though I sometimes wish that I could feel the way I feel on the field forever, without sportsmanship there to tell me where the game ends and life begins, I would never know how to handle those heartbreaking defeats which to all people must, eventually come.

Perhaps it is true that the absence of victory will always burn, but sometimes one has to sit back and realize that this game is not everything. Win or lose I will still be the same girl I was before. Win or lose, my life will go on. Sometimes we all become too wrapped up in who will start the next game, or who scored that last goal - but being a good sport is about more than that. It is about how hard you cheered when an opposing player walked off the field after a brutal injury, or about how truthfully you applauded for the girl who was put into the game instead of you. Sportsmanship is about seeing not just the moment - which can be so enticing and so gratifying - but also the larger picture, and the life that will still continue, win or lose.

Sportsmanship, to me, is the net that catches me when I forget the boundaries between sports and life. Sportsmanship is the hand I take to remember that trying my hardest does not mean changing myself. Sportsmanship is about giving everything that I have, and still having something left for the rest of the day. For no matter how hard the game is, no matter how sweet the victory or cruel the loss - the sun will still rise tomorrow. Sportsmanship just may be what lets you enjoy the view. In that one moment before the game begins, I am lost in that land of expectation. Yet not all the passion in the world would ever let me savor the game, if there was not the rope of sportsmanship to show me that there is a beauty, too, in the world seen only after the whistle blows. It is up to each of us to find it.