



MONTH OF MAY

Sportsmanship

from

VARA Youth Coordinator, Alex Krebs



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As we move into warmer weather and new sports activities it will be important to remember this email and its message. Sportsmanship, good and bad, can and will make a lasting impression. Following the guidelines outlined by Alex below as you navigate through your summer activities and, in preparation for your 2020 race season, will help you make the best choices.

#varaproud

Julie Woodworth - VARA Executive Director

SPORTSMANSHIP



Youth sports are a great opportunity for kids to build self-esteem and learn the essentials of playing a game. It's also an opportunity for parents and coaches to teach the importance of good sportsmanship.

There is much more to be gained from youth sports than winning. When children are involved in sports, they are able to learn and put into practice values that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Good sportsmanship may seem hard to define, but its hallmarks include being able to win without gloating, respecting one's opponents, and being able to lose gracefully. Here are some important principles to instill with young athletes:

- If you lose, don't make up excuses.
- Gloating when you win is poor sportsmanship.
- Learn from mistakes and get back in the game.

- Always do your best.
- If someone else makes a mistake, remain encouraging and avoid criticizing.
- Show respect for yourself, your team, and the officials of the game.

Parents are important role models, so let your children see you upholding these principles, whether you play a sport yourself or root for your child's team from the sidelines.

Tips for teaching good sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship includes following certain guidelines for good behavior. Share these concepts with your athletes:

- **Avoid arguing.** Stay focused on the event instead of giving in to anger with teammates, coaches, or referees. Officials are charged with making difficult decisions about plays in the game or race.
- **Follow directions.** Emphasize the importance of listening to coaches and referees and following their directions while on the field and involved in team activities.
- **Respect the other team.** Whether your team wins or loses, it's important to show respect for the effort of the other team, teammate or opponent. If the other team wins, accept defeat, acknowledge their abilities, and move on. Lose gracefully. In any sport, there will be winners and losers. And sometimes you're going to be on the losing side of the equation. The sooner you accept this fact, the easier it will be to handle a loss.
- **Win with class.** If your team, teammate or opponent wins, resist bragging-that's what it means to be a gracious winner. If you find yourself in the winner's circle, remember to show some class. Don't gloat or put down the other team after your win. Let your performance speak for itself. After the game or race, make sure to tell the other team "good game or good race." Offer some compliments to the opposing athletes.
- **End with a handshake.** Good sports people enjoy sports and know how to end a game on a positive note, whether or not they won. Show leadership after the game by rounding up your team and offering them a pep talk. Point out what people did well, but also what needs to be worked on.



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