

Short essay about sports and education

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The great Duke of Wellington, of Waterloo Victory fame, once saw the boys of Eton public School playing on the field and was moved to say, "There our great battles were won" He meant that young lads acquire on the playground not only physical stamina but discipline, the habit of obedience, the will to win, -and these virtues make them good soldiers when their country calls them to the field of battle. It is good to enjoy the delight of running about in the open field and to 'feel life in every limb'.

But that only makes the lesson that we learn, of discipline, obedience and tenacity, all the more pleasing. To develop character not by arid and dry moral lessons, but in the course of our enjoyment of games, is a privilege which we must set store by. The most important lesson that sports of all kinds teach us is a sense of discipline. A good sportsman must always learn to obey the rules of the games and the orders of the captain. He knows the value of the proverb - "He who knows how to obey will know how to command".

Discipline goes hand in hand with duty. On the playground, each individual has an allotted duty to perform. He has to carry out his share. It is his duty to help in winning games by obeying his captain and maintaining teamwork through concerted movement and display of spirit de corps (team spirit). Another great virtue, which sports help us acquire, is the will to win. Life is a struggle, a constant fight against difficulties. The weak-willed man resigns himself to what he calls his fate. He belongs to the ranks of the defeated.

He is not a sportsman. For a sportsman takes defeats and disappointments as a true part of the game in its stride. Today he is defeated, but he knows that tomorrow he may win. He knows also how to take defeat in a sporting

spirit, and to prepare for a greater fight. The true sportsman knows also the value of unity in action. Look at the rowers in a boat from the coxswain to the helmsman, how harmonious and concerted are their strokes. If one of them misses his rhythm, the harmony is destroyed.

How often have we not seen on the football ground, a splendid opportunity lost by the selfish desire or individualistic effort of one man to score! It is the same in the cricket field; the same everywhere, not individualistic display for record but to play for the team. Sports should teach us another lesson, which is often ignored, to obey the umpire or the referee whether he is right or wrong. In the hard battle of life, we do not always get justice. Often the verdict goes against us through no fault of ours.

A true sportsman takes these 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' as in the course or part of the game. He is not disheartened but prepares for a further effort; for he is not to question why in defiance. So sports of all kinds are not only good for the body, but they are good for the mind and for the moral make-up, i. e. that is, conducive to building the character. The lessons learnt on the playground will make better soldiers of us in the battlefield of life, in our war with adversity, illness, opposition and destiny itself.