

# The importance of sportsmanship in educational athletics essay example

[Psychology](#), [Success](#)



I have participated in organized sports from the time I was a child and my understanding of good sportsmanship has developed not from any words or lectures given to me by a coach or parent, but from observing the actions of competitors of all ages. Last summer I watched a friend's little brother play T-ball. In the last inning, a little boy hit the ball almost to the fence and scored a homerun. I could see the smile spread across his little face as he slid into home (sliding not because he was about to get out but because sliding is fun and fun is what T-ball is all about). But the best part was not the little boy's homerun but the reaction of the catcher for the other team who not only helped the little boy up but gave him a hug and celebrated the homerun with him. That incident perfectly illustrates the values of sportsmanship. At 5 and 6 years old, before parents and coaches had a chance to drill into a child the "proper" sports etiquette and the necessity to win, these two little boys were happy for the same reason—one of them had achieved success.

Sportsmanship is a term that gets thrown around a lot by coaches and parents, especially during the early years of a child's sports experience. However not many parents or coaches take the time to actually explain the values and mindset of sportsmanship. Even worse, parents and coaches themselves are often the guiltiest parties of bad sportsmanship. Bad sportsmanship has become too common in today's sports atmosphere where winning seems like the ultimate goal and sportsmanship has become a secondary concern. I am a competitive person and every time I play a game, whether a pickup game of touch football or checkers, I want to win; but wanting to win should not come at the expense of good sportsmanship.

I believe that the values of good sportsmanship extend to academics as well. From a young age, I have always treated academics like a sport where I compete with my classmates and myself. But wanting to do well on an assignment and make good grades does not mean achieving those goals by any means. Just like bad sportsmanship has become more common in sports, so has cheating and sabotage in academics. If I do not outscore my classmates I need to try harder, study longer, take better notes to do better on the next assignment. I do not need to cheat or take actions that will prevent my classmates from doing as well as they can on their assignments. The first definition of sportsmanship I can remember learning was the old adage, " It's not if you win or lose, it's how you play the game." Fair play, abiding by the rules, and respect for your coaches, teammates and competitors are important components of sportsmanship. However I believe that the most important value is the sense of comradery with your teammates and competitors, and respect for the common struggle of those who are trying to achieve personal goals.