

Can an act of Sportsmanship make a difference?

by Alofa Carpenter, St. Andrew's Priory, 12th grade

Sportsmanship is an extremely important part of everyday life, whether it's for sports or not. If you lose a game or fail a test, it is important to think of it as a learning experience that you gain knowledge from rather than a life and death situation that you could never live down. As Henry Ford once said, "Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently", which is completely accurate. Each time you make a mistake you are able to learn from it, and you will be one step closer to achieving your goals.

Another important factor of sportsmanship is having a good attitude. Try to be constructive and helpful, not destructive and hurtful. Also, try not to be too negative about losing – as I mentioned earlier, it's just a learning experience. Not only can a positive and enthusiastic attitude make your experiences more pleasant, it can also lift the spirit of others as well. This type of sportsmanship shown by my volleyball coach was especially encouraging during our long, tiring tournaments. Furthermore, it's also important to respect those around you whether it is in an everyday setting or if it is on your sports team. It's also important to be responsible, which among other factors, can make you a better teammate and person. Being conscious of your attitude and making an effort to always conduct yourself in a sportsmanlike manner can make for a betterment of character, which can be especially important when working on the chemistry and cohesion of your team.

Some more obvious ways to be more sportsmanlike is to be a graceful loser. Be courteous to the opponent that you've lost to (if you're in a game situation), and congratulate them on their win. Try your best, not to be spiteful or rude to their face or even behind their back because it's really distasteful and mean. Sue Wicks, a basketball player in the WNBA once said, "I think sportsmanship is knowing that it is a game, that we are only as good as our opponents, and whether you win or lose always give 100 percent." and I believe everyone should remember the wise words of this woman. In the end just keep in mind that you should work hard and be kind, respectful, and courteous whether you succeed and fail.