

Can an act of Sportsmanship make a difference?

by Kali'inoa Maeva, Saint Louis School, 7th grade

Over the past year, thousands of competitive events have been held for various activities such as a debate or something more athletic like a football game. A very important trait that we must all have when we do these activities is sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is respect for your opponents, teammates, coaches, and officials and overall fair play of the game. Sportsmanship has an immense effect on sports, whether good or bad. As an athlete myself, I firmly believe that an act of sportsmanship has the ability to change the attitude of an event.

An act of sportsmanship can make a huge difference in the game. Whether good or bad, a simple act of sportsmanship can alter the attitude of the players, coaches, fans, and referees in the game. In January, tennis' Hopman Cup was held at the Perth Arena in Australia. A match between America's Jack Sock and Australia's Lleyton Hewitt was nearly finished and the score was 30 - 0, Lleyton was winning. Lleyton served the ball to win the game and the referee called it out. Though it was called out, Jack said to challenge the call because he believed that it was in. To his luck, the call was reversed and Hewitt won the game. This game secured Hewitt the win of the first set against Sock. Though Hewitt walked away the victor, Sock received the respect of the crowd and became the "People's Champ."

Though most acts of sportsmanship come in good forms, there are still bad examples, even in the professional leagues. Just recently the 50th annual NFL Super Bowl was held on February 7th. The game was between the Carolina Panthers and the Denver Broncos. It was a close game, but the Broncos ended up coming out with the win. After the game there was a postgame press conference with Panthers quarterback Cam Newton. Throughout the entire conference, Newton was being disrespectful; he was disrespecting the journalists, responding in one to two word answers, and eventually left before the press conference had finished. Before the press conference, Newton was seen as a good-hearted player, who could be arrogant at times. After the press conference however, everyone's perspective on Newton changed. With one bad act of sportsmanship, Newton's athletic reputation could possibly be changed forever. A big part of being sportsmanlike is being humble when you win, but the other more important part is being gracious in defeat, which Newton was not. Due to one act of unsportsmanlike behavior, everyone's view of Cam Newton could change forever.

As mentioned multiple times, sportsmanship can make a tremendous difference in a competitive event. As the famous quote says, "It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only a bad one to lose it." Good and bad acts of sportsmanship can both make a difference in a competitive event, each of these forms have an effect on everyone around them.