

# **Marion Boys Baseball Sportsmanship**

## **WHAT IS GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP?**

Good sportsmanship occurs when teammates, opponents, coaches, parents, and officials treat each other with respect. Kids learn the basics of sportsmanship from the adults in their lives, especially their parents and their coaches. Kids who see adults behaving in a sportsmanlike way gradually come to understand that the real winners in sports are those who know how to persevere and to behave with dignity—whether they win or lose a game.

Parents and coaches can help their kids understand that good sportsmanship includes both small gestures and heroic efforts. It starts with something as simple as acknowledging good plays made by others and accepting bad calls gracefully.

## **GOOD SPORTS ARE WINNERS**

Ask a young player who won the game, and that child may answer, “I think it was a tie.” It’s likely the question isn’t of any real interest at that stage. Kids may be more eager to talk about the hits they made or the baskets they almost made. But as they get older and more competitive kids become more focused on winning. They often forget to have fun. Without constant reminders and good examples, they may also forget what behavior is appropriate before, during, and after a sporting event.

If a child has a coach who cares only about being in first place and says that anything goes as long as they win, that child picks up the message that it’s OK to be ruthless on the field.

Adults who emphasize good sportsmanship, however, seeing winning as just one of several goals they’d like their kids to achieve. They help young athletes take pride in their accomplishments and in their improving skills, so that the kids see themselves as winners, even if the scoreboard doesn’t show the numbers in their favor.

The best coaches – and parents – encourage their kids to play fair, to have fun, and to concentrate on helping the team while working on improving their own skills.

## **FOSTERING GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP**

Action speaks louder than words. That’s especially true when it comes to teaching your kids the basics of good sportsmanship. Your behavior during practices and games will influence them more than any pep talk or lecture you can give them.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP FOR PARENTS/COACHES**

- Unless you're coaching your child's team, you need to remember that you're the parent. Shout words of encouragement, not directions, from the sidelines (there is a difference!!).
- If you are your kid's coach, don't expect too much out your own child. Don't be harder on him or her than on anyone else on the team, but don't play favorites either.
- If you have more than one child playing remember that they are both separate individuals and they will develop their skills at different rates.
- Keep your comments positive. Don't bad-mouth coaches, players, or game officials.
- When you're talking to your child after a competition, it's important not to dwell on who won or lost. Instead, you might ask your child, "How did you feel you did during the game?" If your child mentions that he or she didn't do well at a particular skill, like throwing or catching, offer to work on these skills with your child before the next game.
- Applaud good plays no matter who makes them.
- Remember that's it's your child, not you, who is playing. Don't push your child into a sport because it's what you enjoyed. As your child gets older, let your child choose the sport he or she wants to play.
- Keep your perspective. It's just a game. Even if your child's team loses every game of the season it's unlikely to ruin his or her life or chances of success.
- Finally, don't forget to have fun. Even if your child isn't the star, enjoy the game while you're thinking of all the benefits your child is gaining - new skills, new friends, and attitudes that can help him or her all through life.

## **ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR**

1. Remember that young people play sports for **THEIR** enjoyment, not to entertain you.
2. Do not have unrealistic expectations and understand that doing one's best is as important as winning. Understand that ridiculing an athlete for making a mistake is not acceptable behavior.
3. Respect the official's decisions and encourage all participants to do the same.
4. Applaud at the end of the contest for performances of all participants.
5. Respect and show appreciation for the coaches and understand that they have given their time to provide sports activities for our young people.
6. **ALWAYS** show good sportsmanship since young people learn best by example.
7. Set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
8. Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship the number one priority.