

Be Nice

Coach Talk:

It's important to be nice because that's who you are – a nice person. Being nice, puts your respect for other into action. It's showing others that you care about them and their feelings.

- Give some examples of ways that you are nice to others?

Being nice in sports is demonstrated by showing good sportsmanship to others.

- Can you give some examples of how you demonstrate good sportsmanship in a soccer match?

Story:

Drew was proud of the way his team had worked hard to improve the entire season. They were not the most skilled team at the beginning but every player had improved and by the end of the season they were playing really good soccer. A few of their matches went right down to the wire and they had won a couple and lost a couple of the close ones. Drew had learned that he could try really hard and give maximum effort to win but still show good sportsmanship to players on the opposing team. If a player was injured during the match the other players on the field would take a knee and when the injured player got up all of the other players and parents would clap to show support for the injured player. Drew also had a habit of helping a player up if he accidentally knocked him down and would ask the player if he was okay and even apologize for the foul if he became a little too aggressive. At the end of matches, both teams would line up and shake hands with each other or give a fist bump. Win or lose, coach always gave the opposing team credit for their good play and never made excuses or blamed the officials for a loss. Drew learned that it's important to give the other team credit for how they played but that you could also learn from your own mistakes and use that information to work harder or smarter.

Parents' Corner:

In our win at all cost sports culture some of the life lessons that can be learned through sports are falling victim to philosophies like "Just Win Baby" or second place is the first loser. Trash talking has become the norm and the highlights shown on sports center are the ones that show in-your-face dunks. Excessive celebrations, once reserved for touchdowns are now common place for making first downs in football. It seems that showing respect and sportsmanship are more of a sign of weakness than strength of character. Little by little we see these celebrations and un-sportsman-like acts creeping into the youngest ages of youth sports. We are all much better served to make sure kids know that there's no place in youth sports for showboating and embarrassing other players. We teach valuable life lessons when we teach that sports is a

sacred place where honesty and integrity are the expectation and every player should show corresponding behaviors like the ones highlighted in this player's guide.