

AYSO GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP – KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course 75-minute module to help define the sporting behaviors that should be expected of players, coaches, parents, volunteers and referees, as well as training volunteer sportsmanship monitors on how to recognize the positive behaviors of good sportsmanship. The module is suitable for presentation in a Section Conference, Webinar, or regional setting.

Although players, especially older players might benefit from the course, the primary audience is adult parents, volunteers, board members, coaches and referees.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

None.

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

Develop a common understanding of “Good Sportsmanship”

Understanding that Good Sportsmanship is a habit and the sum of a lot of small actions, no one action is determinative yet a single action can be the start of a habit.

Describe the habits and actions that can be taken by coaches, players, referees, and spectators to enhance good sportsmanship

Discuss the role that coaches play in teaching and encouraging sportsmanship, including the expectations for **Positive**, **Instructional** and **Encouraging** behavior on the field.

Introduce the Positive Coaching Alliance’s “ROOTS” model (Respect for **R**ules, **O**fficials, **O**pponents, **T**eammates, **S**elf)

Introduce the National Games sportsmanship checklist as a tool to help coaches, players, spectators and sportsmanship monitors consistently evaluate the level of sportsmanship.

Unit	Time estimate
I. Introduction and purpose	5 minutes
II. What is Sportsmanship?	20 minutes
III. The ROOTS model of Respect	25 minutes
IV. What can you do – observing sporting behaviors	20 minutes
V. Conclusion and wrap up	5 minutes
	Total 75 minutes

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

White board or Easel / Pad with markers.

National Games sportsmanship score sheet

1950 “Good Sportsmanship” Video <http://youtu.be/UDcbo9CuoBM> or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDcbo9CuoBM> (9:30 in total, first 4:00 provides 3 examples of good sportsmanship in a game context; the remainder show examples in life).

CBS News – The Rules of Good Sportsmanship

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/09/29/earlyshow/series/main890850.shtml> (4:59 in total, about parents and coaches working together to teach sportsmanship, includes a few examples of both good and bad sportsmanship).

Sara Tucholsky being carried around the bases

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVIKtI7yd_s (2:09 in total, a beautiful example of a BIG sportsmanship gesture).

CBS news interview with Sara, the opponent who carried her, and her coach.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4062124n> (3:42 in total)

Hugo Bustamante intro and video <http://youtu.be/THov4IzFVY8>, (2:49 in total, the first 1:15 is the story of the Cyclones and the American Eagles, another example of a big act of sportsmanship; the remainder is the establishment of the Bustamante fund, and an example of how treating your opponents with respect encourages them to treat you in the same way).

A couple of videos from the FA’s respect campaign of parents behaving badly:

Parents and Careers Guide Scene 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRcv-ZRMCXI> (1:27 in total; LOTS of things wrong here!)

And, Ray demands respect

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezZ2ZRfSsLY> (1:40)

Bettors and Elders about putting too much pressure (abuse!) on kids
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-6NMMZU1kQ> (1:15). The
Parents and Careers guide, scene 2 does a better job of illustrating
undesirable sideline behavior and how uncomfortable it makes
everyone feel.

COURSE OUTLINE

Key teaching points [Suggested text/speaker notes](#)

I. Introduction (5 Minutes)

Introduce self and co-instructors if any

Reminder about cell phones

Thank participants for coming

Briefly outline the course, for example:

(Title slide)

Thank you for coming today. For the next 75 minutes or so, we're going to be talking about Good Sportsmanship – one of AYSO's core philosophies, along with Everyone Plays, Open Registration, Balanced Teams, Positive Coaching and Player Development. I hope that at the end of today's session, you will have a clearer picture of what Good Sportsmanship means – and what things to look for so that you "know it when you see it" We'll also give you some ideas that you can use to help you evaluate the level of sportsmanship in your regions and teams and set goals for doing even better.

As we will soon discover, many times sportsmanship can be a very personal and subjective concept. Today's session will therefore be an interactive one -- your opinions and discussions will be important, so please be generous with your sharing and respectful of what others have to say.

(Slide 2)

Good Sportsmanship is fully consistent with AYSO's vision [click] of providing world-class youth soccer programs that **enrich children's lives** and its mission [click] to develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which promote a **fun, family environment**. In short – Good Sportsmanship represents the values that we want to pass along to our children, and what helps keep the **game** of soccer **fun** for them. What we'd like to do today is help you figure out how well you're succeeding with these goals for your teams and your regions.

(Slide 3)

Good Sportsmanship is also one of AYSO's core philosophies that define the AYSO brand. All of our other philosophies have programs and processes to guide our actions. We need to build a library of skills for sportsmanship, too!

So, let's dive right in and see if we can come up with a good working definition of sportsmanship.

II. What is Good Sportsmanship? (20 minutes)

As I said before, Good Sportsmanship is one of AYSO's 6 core Philosophies, but what do you think it *means*. ? We're looking for broad concepts here, and then we'll talk about how specific examples fit into our concepts. Can I get a volunteer to keep track of some of the ideas?

- A. Ask for audience input – collect ideas – try to get the following ideas out: by guided participation, follow up questions, etc. It is important to get the audience talking. If you get specific examples, praise the effort, but put them on a separate sheet for later discussion. For example, “Thank, you, that’s an excellent “specific example” of good sportsmanship. Let’s write that down and save it for later in the session. Could you expand on that particular action and tell us the bigger concept you were trying to illustrate? Encourage and solicit responses such as:
- 1) Mutual respect
 - 2) How we play the game – not “win at all costs”
 - 3) What we want to teach our children
 - 4) A lifetime habit – a way of approaching life (and the game of soccer)
 - 5) Combined with fair play, what keeps the game “fun”
 - 6) What sport teaches us
 - 7) Fair play
 - 8) The total of many small actions (and sometimes some really big ones – e.g. the Hugo Bustamante story or other anecdote of above-and-beyond sporting gestures – some may be available on the internet – could be added) – Goal is to create habits of doing the small things right so that the big things come automatically.
 - 9) “I know it when I see it”
- B. Next, solicit specific examples of good sportsmanship and ask where they might fit in with the concepts provided. Be sure to utilize and specific examples that may have come up from the previous exercise. (Don’t spend to

much time on examples at this point ... record a few ideas quickly and return to them in unit IV) Look for things like:

- 1) Helping up an opponent
- 2) Getting the ball for them if you are near it
- 3) Complimenting good play
- 4) Parents cheering for both teams
- 5) Etc.

C. Defining Sportsmanship (slide 4)

These are all great ideas – and might well be summarized by the dictionary definition of sportsmanship, “the conduct (as fairness, respect for ones’ opponent, and graciousness in winning or losing becoming to one participating in a sport.

Specifically we are going to focus on two key parts of this definition: *Conduct* or behavior that demonstrates *respect*.

Let me be clear that we’re talking about a pattern of behavior – the sum total of all the small actions and gestures that occur during the game. We can evaluate our kids’ soccer skills by looking for consistent patterns over all of the touches and opportunities in the game. Similarly, we’re looking the overall patterns of behavior – how well the sportsmanship ideal has become ingrained into who the players are and how the game is played. This is how we enrich our children’s lives – and keep participation in AYSO soccer fun.

If a team is getting it right, your reaction at the end of the game (win or lose!) should be, “Wow! I really enjoyed coaching / playing / watching reffing that team.”

Ask: When we talk about sporting behavior a pattern of conduct that shows respect, whom are we talking about? Have a brief discussion before revealing the next slide, and try to get players, coaches, spectators and referees out before doing so.

(Slide 5)

- D. Who can demonstrate sportsmanship and respect? Answers should include Coaches, Parents, Players, and Officials [Click to start animation, have audience say the words as they appear]

That’s right. When we talk about sportsmanship, everyone on the AYSO team has a role – and an opportunity to demonstrate sporting

behaviors that show respect. PCA (Positive Coaching Alliance) calls this “Honoring the Game.” FIFA calls it “Fair Play.” The FA calls it “Respect.”

And, in AYSO we call it “Good Sportsmanship.” Whether you a player, coach, spectator or referee, you have something to offer and a lesson to teach. And like we’ve said before, good sportsmanship starts by getting into the habit of doing all the little things right so that when the opportunity presents itself for a big show of sportsmanship, you do it automatically without thinking.

E. Role of Coaches:

But even though every one plays a part, coaches have a special role to define expectations for the team – players and spectators will follow the coach’s lead. As a coach, what you teach your players matters. The expectations you set for your parent’s matters. The examples that you set – and how you react to player and parent behavior matters. What kind of coach do you want to be? What kind of coach do you want your child to have? What kind of coach do you want as a player?

F. Role of Parents:

Encourage fair play with your player. Help them understand that they should strive to play by the rules, even when others may not. Help them build character and become stronger individuals for their future. Parents and spectators are role models, and critical to developing good sportsmanship behaviors in young players.

G. Role of Players:

This will be defined more as we explore the ROOTS model

H. Role of Officials:

Respect the players, as you would have them respect you. Compliment good play and establish a positive rapport with the players.

I. Summarize and bridge to next lesson – focus on respect

Now that we have defined Sportsmanship as a pattern of *behavior* – from all the participants in an AYSO game – that demonstrates *respect*, let’s talk about the kinds of behavior and respect that we’re talking about.

III. The ROOTS model of respect (25 minutes)

- A. Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) teaches that mutual respect is fundamental to good sportsmanship (slide 6)

Fun and fairness in soccer are built on a foundation of mutual respect – for ourselves, our teammates, our opponents and the game itself. The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) uses the acronym “ROOTS” to define the five key areas that all participants need to respect – the Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and Self. Whether you’re playing, coaching, refereeing or just watching the game you should be asking yourself, “Am I behaving in a way that respects the ROOTS of the game? Am I being a good example to others? Are others respecting the ROOTS of the game?”

We’re looking to see how many positive, sporting behaviors a team can exhibit during a game – not whether one team is better than another. For sportsmanship, a perfect game – regardless of the score – means that both teams routinely show positive sporting behavior in all these areas.

- B. Who / What do we respect? (Talk about a variety of behaviors that demonstrate respect or lack of respect for the following: - before, during and after the game [More detail to be provided])
- 1) **Rules** – both LOTG and the “competition authority”

(Slide 7)¹

“We obey the rules even if we can get away with bending them, and even if our opponents don’t.”

Let’s talk about what we mean by respecting the rules of the game.

Ask: By a show of hands, how many of you here consider lying or cheating as respecting the rules?

Would any of you teach your players to lie or cheat?

Let’s define cheating as “deliberately violating the laws of the game in order to gain an advantage.” [If we are going to avoid teaching our players to violate the laws of the game we had better know what the laws are.]

¹ The material for this slide is adapted from *Coaching the AYSO Way (Applying the AYSO Philosophies) [workshop](#)* from the 2012 Section Conferences, coaching track.

Here are some situations, lets see who thinks this is cheating or for those who would like a more delicate term, *unsporting behavior*

1. A player spits in the face of another player to make her mad. Okay, we can agree that this is not fair play. That was easy.

2. A player on the red team grabs the jersey of a blue player and holds her back.

A clear violation of the laws of the game.

Do we respond differently if the player did it deliberately and often to gain an advantage as opposed to doing it rarely and impulsively?

In either situation there is an infraction. But in terms of fair play there is a difference between the deliberate action calmly entered into and the impulsive action the player may not even be aware of.

What if the ref does not see it?

Is it okay to cheat if the ref does not see it?

[The philosophy is that fair play does not depend on getting caught.]

Is it okay to violate the laws if the ref fails to enforce them?

What if it was a poor ref who had lost control of the match?

What if this were a friendly scrimmage between two teams at practice and there was no referee? Should the players still abide by the laws of the game?

[The philosophy is that weak enforcement does not excuse unfair action.]

What if the Blue player had been pulling the jersey of Red players and the Red player retaliated?

Is it okay to cheat if the other team is doing it too?

[The philosophy is that because others cheat does not give us license to cheat.]

What if the Blue player was about to break free and score the winning goal?

Is it okay to cheat if the game is on the line?

[The philosophy is that the benefit does not justify the bad conduct.]

Let's consider another situation.

Ask: How many coaches train their players to yield ten yards on a free kick only when the referee asks them to do so?

Ask: What does the law say about this?

It says that all opponents must be at least 10 yards away in all directions from the location of the free kick, without being asked to do so by the referee.

Ask: So why would a coach teach players to deliberately violate the laws of the game?

Why would a coach train players to cheat?

Because the referee is rarely going to punish this infraction?

Because other teams do it?

Because it could prevent a score and thus possibly mean winning?

Do we really want to be coaches who tell our players that it is okay to cheat if there is little or no punishment, everyone does it, and we get something for it?

2) **Opponents –**

(Slide 8)

“A worthy opponent helps us get better. We want to play our best but never think of them as enemies or not respect that they’re trying to play their best, too.”

Usually, when we hear about outstanding examples of sportsmanship, it is players showing respect for the excellence of their opponents – whether it’s Hugo Bustamante’s Cyclones raising money so that the team that beat them in a regional championship could afford to go to the state event, or the Central Washington softball team carrying Western Oregon’s Sara Tucholsky around the bases after her knee gave out rounding first base on her first ever home run. [Optional – show excerpts from one or both videos]

These are big actions, but the small things count too!

Competition – against an opponent (!) involves winners and losers, but it also involves a chance for development and excellence. The opponents’ attempt to excel gives you a chance to learn and excel; and vice versa. Opponents need (and should be thankful for) each other.

Without opponents, there is no game. Play with skill and not force; applaud the efforts of the other team.

[Ask] What do we learn from sports? (Value of hard work, working as a team, overcoming obstacles).

[Ask] How do you feel about a winning is everything coach who says, *“Respect opponents? Getting into an opponent’s head is just part of the game. Maybe it was OK to be nice in the olden days, but nowadays kids see that stuff all the time on TV, so it is expected.”*

- Human excellence is worthy of respect—if you are trying to achieve excellence, you should respect it in others who are also attempting to do so.
- Show respect by giving best effort; doesn’t mean being nice, but being civil; must try hard to have mutual striving for excellence by both sides trying to win
- Avoid displays of disrespect
- Refrain from improper gamesmanship (attempt to get psychological advantage by act that is legal, but inappropriate); shows disrespect for spirit of fair play; acceptable ploys are those that are “part of the game”; improper gamesmanship means doing those that aren’t; to draw line must know traditions and nature of the sport being played
- Celebrate victory respectfully
- Rituals of respect—don’t overlook importance of rituals in showing respect

If an opponent outperforms you or your child – accept it, learn from it, congratulate them on their victory and move on.

If you outperform an opponent, congratulations – enjoy the victory, but never boast, mock or minimize the opponent’s effort and skill.

3) **Officials** – Referees, Coaches and other authorities

(Slide 9)

“We respect the officials even when calls go against us, and even if we think we are being treated unfairly.”

Officials primarily means the referees, obviously, but there are other games officials like field monitors, regional board members, and even coaches. Everybody has a role to play – In an AYSO Kids Zone, The player’s play, Fans only cheer, and only coach’s coach, And we should respect the volunteer referees

And the referees and other officials are doing their best to make the game safe, fair and fun.

Does gamesmanship respect the game or the officials?

When a player signals his team gets the throw-in when he clearly knows possession belongs to the other side, is lying acceptable? [Ask for audience input].

How far should a player take it? If it is clear the Blue team kicked the ball out of play but the referee gives the restart to the Blue, should the Blue player send the ball out of play in order to give the restart to the Red team?

The game goes best if all the participants focus on their job – and don't try to do someone else's (especially the referees!).

4) **Teammates**

(Slide 10) - "We support our teammates, encourage them to show good sportsmanship, and don't do anything to embarrass them, either on or off the field."

Share in the responsibilities of the team. Encourage and support less talented players. Praise your teammates' efforts – during both successes and setbacks.

Focus on team efforts – and team results. What happens on the field – for good or bad – is the result of how the players (and coaches and parents) work together as a team.

Let the players play – and find their own creative solutions to game problems.

5) **Self**

(Slide 11) - "Be a good sport because you want to, not because I tell you. We live up to our own standards even if our opponent doesn't."

Developing players – whole players – and enriching children's lives means that we want our players to take the lessons of sportsmanship seriously in their lives – both on and off the field.

From the AYSO's player code of conduct [Select key items that are the most appropriate]

Player's Code

- Play for the fun of it, not just to please your parents or coach.
- Play by the Laws of the Game.
- Never argue with or complain about referees' calls or decisions.
- Control your temper. Most of all, resist the temptation to retaliate when you feel you have been wronged.
- Concentrate on playing soccer with your best efforts. Work equally hard for your team as for yourself.
- Be a good sport by cheering all good plays, whether it is your team's or your opponent's.
- Treat all players as you would like to be treated.
- Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve skills and feel good. Don't be a showoff or a ball hog.
- Cooperate with your coaches, teammates, opponents and the referees.

- C. What can players, coaches and spectators do to enhance sportsmanship? Now that we have a working definition of what sportsmanship means, can we identify some specific behaviors that exemplify good sportsmanship? If we observe a consistent pattern of these behaviors from a team as it plays its games, would we agree that was worthy of being called "Good Sports"?

IV. What you can do to set expectations and get better?

(20 minutes)

A. Basic theory (slide 12)

- 1) Teams are competing against a fixed standard, not each other.

Can more than one team "win" at sportsmanship? Absolutely. Teams are rewarded for what they do against a fixed standard – just like getting an 'A' in school. If you show an 'A' level of quality in the number and consistency of your sporting behaviors, you deserve an 'A' level sporting score. As we said at the beginning of today's session, sportsmanship is about more than just one gesture – like shaking hands at the end of the game – it's a pattern of behavior, the sum of a lot of small things, the good habits that we all bring to our matches.

A team that exhibits all the behaviors all the time should be universally recognized as good sports and fun to play – even when they defeat you

2) How to score

At every game have a Sportsmanship monitor (or referee or both) ask how many positive behaviors are seen – and how often (mostly, sometimes, rarely)? The goal is to catch people doing something right, not mark them off for doing something wrong;

- B. Discuss the behaviors on the scoring checklist. Get audience input on other things or how they might recognize the presence of certain positive behaviors.

Let's take a look at some examples of sporting behaviors (these will be used at the National Games to evaluate sportsmanship) **[hand out copies]** to see how you can recognize these principles in real life games.

(Slide 13)

Some positive, sporting behaviors you can look for in players include:

- Acknowledging good plays and sporting gestures, before, during and after game.
- Playing with skill and not force.
- Winning with humility and grace/accepting defeat with dignity
- Respecting referee calls and decisions
- Knowing and plays by the Laws of the Game

(slide 14)

- Being on time and properly equipped.
- Cooperating with teammates and coaches
- Concentrating on best efforts, team play and encouraging teammates

Do you have questions about any behavior?

Do you disagree with any of the examples? Let's discuss

Can you think of other examples of behavior in the various categories?

(Slide 15)

... and from coaches

- ONLY positive, instructional and encouraging comments

- Allow players to play and think for themselves
- Maximize playing time for all
- Encourage self-control and fair play of players and spectators
- Respect referee calls and decisions

(slide 16)

- Players are organized and ready to play
- Acknowledge opponents' good plays
- Win with humility and grace/accept defeat with dignity

Do you have questions about any behavior?
Do you disagree with any of the examples? Let's discuss
Can you think of other examples of behavior in the various categories?

(Slide 17)

The referee members of the AYSO team also have a role in teaching and modeling good sportsmanship, for example, referees should:

- Be prepared, arrive on time, professional appearance and demeanor, introduce yourself, set the right tone
- Be approachable and open to questions
- Explain decisions when needed
- Always be fair -- don't change a call to "make up" for an earlier one
- Be aware of on- and off-pitch actions, and respond appropriately
- Compliment examples of skilled play and sporting behavior, and control unsporting behavior early

(Slide 18)

... and finally, from parents and spectators, who have a key role in modeling sporting behaviors and teaching our players to make good sportsmanship a life-long habit.

- Cheer positively for efforts of both team
- Encourage teamwork and fair play at all times
- Support coach decisions with silence or positive comments. (Let the coaches coach)
- Respect referee calls and decisions

(slide 19)

- Remain in designated spectator areas

- Maintain self control and decorum at all times
- Acknowledge that soccer is a GAME and that best efforts of all are to be applauded
- Learn the Laws of the Game for better enjoyment

Don't be like the parent or teammates in this video, from the FA's *Respect* campaign. [FA Respect – Parents and Careers Guide Scene 2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRcv-ZRMCXI>] (1:27 in total; LOTS of things wrong here!)

Do you have questions about any behavior?
Do you disagree with any of the examples? Let's discuss
Can you think of other examples of behavior in the various categories?

- C. If there were video examples of certain situations – preferably in AYSO games, that would be really helpful – participants could then discuss what they saw or didn't see.

V. Summary, conclusion and course evaluation (5 minutes) (Slide 20)

Thank you all for coming today. We've covered a lot of ground, from defining sportsmanship to giving you some suggestions for specific behaviors to look for on game day. Now, when you see examples – no matter how small – you know and can recognize good sportsmanship. And when you see it; please give the positive reinforcement of praise and reward. If you don't see it – remind your players, coaches and volunteers about good sportsmanship. Perhaps choose one or two specific behaviors to add to your repertoire each week. Keep track of how well you do – and how well the other teams in your region do. Can you show all the behaviors, all the time, even outside the pitch?

(Slide 21)

Why are we asking you to do this? Because, in short, by recognizing and rewarding the best that AYSO has to offer, you are providing excellent customer service to your region's parents, players, volunteers and the Community at large.

You've participated in this workshop today because you care about making the AYSO program the best it can be, and we can't thank you enough for that. So I'd like to emphasize a few final thoughts on just how important you are to the AYSO program.

The way all volunteers interact with our families and players and each other really matters. Good personal impressions lead to good word-of-mouth.

In effect, each one of you is an ambassador for AYSO – and our mission, vision and core philosophies including good sportsmanship. You can help by setting a good example and a positive good, sporting tone for your children’s matches. Like we said on the previous slide – recognize good sportsmanship, reward it with praise, and remind others to do the same. And remember your thank-yous -- to the coach who runs a great game and actively encourages good sportsmanship, to the players themselves for being great sportsmen/women, and to the parents for being the kind of spectators we want. “Thank-you” reinforces the good behavior and helps reinforce the message of good sportsmanship that completes the package of excellent service that you provide to our customers and communities.

Are there any questions or final thoughts?