



## Enjoy the Game Training

- Negative emotions and improper behavior from coaches, parents, players and fans can ruin a youth sporting event by creating a tense, unhealthy atmosphere.
- Purpose of Enjoy the Game ... to educate coaches, parents, players and fans on their individual roles in the youth sporting events they attend and hold each other accountable to these roles in order to ensure everyone truly enjoys the experience.
- Key roles played by each participant at the sporting event . . .
  - Coaches – Coach
  - Parents/Fans – Spectate
  - Players – Play
  - Officials – Officiate
- Conflict and problems surface when someone “crosses-over” and decides to play somebody else’s role.
- To maintain a positive and encouraging environment it’s critical that everyone stay in their lane and control what they can control.

## Beware of the Poor Sportsmanship Traps



### 1. Coaches Will Make Tough Decisions

- a. In every game coaches will have to make tough decisions that they hope will help their team succeed.
- b. Not every player, parent or fan will agree with the decisions of their coach.
- c. If you disagree with the coach, you really only have two proper actions . . .
  - i. Trust the coach while encouraging the players to move on and do their best.
  - ii. Find the right time and the right place after the game – away from the kids – to have a calm talk with the coach to understand their decision.
- d. Verbal attacks, physical confrontations and gossipy, pity parties are not acceptable behaviors under any circumstances.



## 2. Players Will Not Be Perfect



- a. Success does not happen without failure ... especially in youth sports. In fact, failure frequently results in teachable moments leading to improvement.
- b. Coaches, teammates and fans need to encourage players who are having a tough day to stay positive and be focused on expecting good things to begin to happen.
- c. The last thing you want to do is make a player feel worse than they already do about their performance by yelling at or criticizing them. Remember, no one plays badly or makes mistakes on purpose.
- d. If you're the player having a tough day ... don't get down on yourself. It's fine to be dissatisfied with your performance, but make it a "Healthy Dissatisfaction". Keep your emotions in check during the game and then plan to work hard in practice to correct those areas that you are not happy with.

## 3. Officials Must Deal With Controversy

- a. A competitive sporting event is by nature controversial long before officials actually get involved.
- b. Officials work hard to administer the rules of the game fairly and accurately, as they see them, in an unbiased manner. Like it or not, officials have the final say and authority in the games they officiate.
- c. When an official makes a call you need to respect it and move on.
- d. Getting caught up in the officiating of a game will only cause you to lose focus on your role as a coach, player or spectator possibly leading to a negative outcome.
- e. Expressed anger and threats toward an official you may disagree with will do nothing but negatively impact the enjoyment of the event for everyone.

## 4. All Adult Comments Should Be Positive & Encouraging

- a. Enjoy the Game's position is that adults attending youth sporting events will dictate the atmosphere...either positively or negatively.
- b. Young impressionable eyes are watching your every move and they may conclude that rude/disrespectful actions toward authority are acceptable behaviors.
- c. Remember that those you are yelling at are real people. You wouldn't want to be the target of verbal abuse, nor would you want your son or daughter to receive such treatment.
- d. Be a good role model by demonstrating self-control and restraint... recognize that this is only a game and the kids that are playing it are there to learn the life lessons sports teaches ... to **Work Hard, Have Fun.. Enjoy the Game.**

