



“What word best defines sportsmanship, what it means to you, and the role it plays in high school athletics?”

This book represents the finalist and honorable mention entries in the 16th Annual MIAA Student Sportsmanship Essay/Multimedia Contest as voted by the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee.

Multimedia Category

First Place

Katerina Hassapis
North Reading High School

Second Place

Girls Volleyball Team
Lynnfield High School

Literary Category

First Place

Erin Claflin – Newton North High School

Second Place

Elizabeth Wilson – Smith Academy

Multimedia Category Finalists

Frederick Hanna – Mashpee High School
Meghan Howard, Remi Shea, Danielle Shay – Mashpee High School
Narragansett RHS Broadcasting – Narragansett Regional High School
Tehjia Kerr – Boston Public Schools
Peabody Veterans Memorial High School
Olivia Massaro, Jordan Tucker, Alyssa Bourgeois, Yaritza Morales – Maynard High School

Literary Category Finalists

Rebecca Hope – Oxford High School
Matthew Poutre – Oxford High School
Emma Harrington – Stoughton High School
Taylor Coonan – Oxford High School
Alexandra Frontino – Norton High School
Lindsey Nelson – Foxboro High School
Derek Joyce – Monson High School
Chris Curtain – Mashpee High School
Adrian Brogan – Littleton High School
Natalie Bolio – Oxford High School
Lauren Barry – Methuen High School
Rachel Zins – Methuen High School
Rebecca Girshik – Longmeadow High School
Madeline Pupka – Oxford High School
Kiana Kintchen – Oxford High School
Emma Daly – Norton High School
Maia Seetal – Smith Academy
Amanda Lindley – Attleboro High School

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****FIRST PLACE****
16TH ANNUAL STUDENT SPORTSMANSHIP ESSAY

Erin Clafin
Newton North High School

SPORTSMANSHIP, to me goes above and beyond your personal goals or even Team goals as a student athlete. As I reflect on some of the words in your provided Frequency Map, my initial reaction is that a majority of those words are team or even individual specific adjectives which we as athletes hear daily. Sportsmanship encompasses so much more, and should be viewed in a much larger picture.

We as athletes and teammates from the same school, agree during our pre-season preparations to commit to terms like “Teamwork”, “Selflessness”, “Family”, “Spirit”, “Hard work”, and “Leadership”. These are terms that will help OUR TEAM achieve certain and specific goals. One of those goals is to work towards a winning record and advance into a playoff season. Another goal is to learn how to come together as one unit, a team, and make sacrifices for, and rely on, each other. As a High School athlete, I am aware that all my opponents have also committed to similar pre-season Team goals for their school.

As we focus on our Team goals and objectives, sometimes we are distracted away from the larger picture. We as individual athletes and the team that we are a small part of, must be willing to sacrifice everything, including individual accomplishments or acknowledgements, even WINS and LOSSES to make sure we compete in a manner that puts positive Sportsmanship first. There can be no excuse made, or acceptance for lack of overall sportsmanship, even if that means we suffer a loss. Every Team within the MIAA is responsible for achieving this larger picture of good Sportsmanship. Our opponents and rivals included must also be willing to sacrifice wins and losses to achieve this greater good of positive Sportsmanship.

To accomplish this we all must; RESPECT your opponent, their Coaches, trainers, managers, and that opponent’s entire student body. Play with INTEGRITY. Always doing what is right, no matter what the circumstance, score, or outcome. Play FAIR and with CLASS. Never put the results of a game above the CHARACTER and REPUTATION of your school. This must also encompass our interaction with officials and referees.

As in life, this is yet another “life lesson” we as High School athletes can learn through playing sports. Be willing to make sacrifices for our school, team, and teammates. But also recognize that above our school and our team we live in a much larger society. Within that society we need to be good examples. We need to promote, adhere to, and demonstrate positive leadership and good sportsmanship within everything we do.

****SECOND PLACE****

Sportsmanship

Elizabeth Wilson

Smith Academy

The first field hockey practice I ever went to was the most terrifying day of my life. I had just recently learned what the sport was, and was only playing because my best friend was doing it too. I showed up a few minutes after the practice started and I hadn't gone to any of the summer practices. When I got out of my car, the seniors turned to me and told me that I was late. I was horrified that they were going to hate me because I had held up their practice. Throughout the practice I tried my best, but in my mind I was trying to figure out how to tell my mom that I wanted to quit. After the practice was over, one of the girls came over to me and told me that she was glad that I had joined the team. Her kindness encouraged me to come to the next practice, and the practice after that. I looked up to her and watched every hit and play she made. After every game, she would make a point to complement the younger players and encourage us, even if we lost. Without her words, I probably wouldn't play sports. I would be worrying about the score and not how we played. I wouldn't be who I am today. Her leadership and kindness is what I believe to be true sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is not just an idea, it is an action. It is the act of helping, teaching, encouraging, and accepting. A true sportsman has a passion for their sport and compassion towards his or her teammates. They try to help their team succeed through positive actions and words. Sportsmanship in high school athletics is immensely important because teens are frequently exposed to bullying and negativity. This constant negativity from fellow players, coaches, and other teams can really affect how a player performs. The best teams to be are always going to be the ones who show passion and integrity, no matter what their record is like. High school athletics are about developing leadership and positive relationships with others in the school community, therefore sportsmanship is one of the most important aspects of high school athletics.

****FINALIST****

What it means to be a Sportsman

Matthew Poutre

Oxford High School

Sportsmanship can be defined as ethical behavior when participating in a competition, a combination of respect and responsibility. In high schools around the country, student athletes participate in demanding physical activities that aid in building strong character, healthy relationships, and most importantly an expansive sense of respect and responsibility. These two traits best define my perception of sportsmanship, and are the most essential attributes necessary for academics, and the challenges of life itself.

Respect is the admiration of somebody who has superior senses of skill and humility. In all sports, players originate from various backgrounds, with varied playing styles and skill sets. In my four years as a dedicated member of my high school Cross-Country and track teams, I have encountered many athletes from across the state who have also committed vast amounts of time and effort to running. The struggle of the race affects all of us, we all face the same challenge and give our best efforts to conquer it. When crossing the finish line, each runner congratulates each other. After the race, no hard feelings remain, just a sense of respect for each participant who gave complete effort to win the race. Author Lori Myers noted that, "True sportsmanship is knowing that you need your opponent because without him or her there is no game."

Responsibility is synonymous to the words obligation and duty. The brave and triumphant leader Winston Churchill stated, "The price of greatness is responsibility." When students are involved, whether committed to a club, sport, or extracurricular activity, they must learn to manage their time, and take responsibility for their choices. Although balancing relationships, school, athletics, and work requires commitment and responsibility, these meaningful efforts will result in developing not only accountability for mistakes and decisions but also, a reputation of high standing. Joining the Cross-Country team was one of the best decisions I have made. Although a demanding commitment, running taught me that teamwork is a culmination of each member's best efforts to improve themselves and therefore the team. The responsibility I have to my team molded me into the competitive runner I am today and caused me to succeed in my goal of becoming one of the top twenty runners in the league and contribute to the team's goal of winning the league championship.

High School is the first time when students interact with a wide variety of people as they travel and compete around the state or even the country. Sportsmanship gained from rigorous athletics aids in building healthy relationships, and strong character by developing respect and responsibility, the most important attributes for success in high school and in life.

****FINALIST****

Sportsmanship in High School

Rebecca Hope

Oxford High School

A young female athlete looks onto the soccer field. Her memories reveal a place enlightened by dedication, hard work, and even failure, but she is not alone. Alongside the player is her team, a group of athletes she has played beside for four years. Coming together, like gears in a factory, cooperation has united them, on and off the field. However, this scenario is only half of the story. These deep memories, connecting both the coach and team, will endure forever, a lifelong legacy impacted by high school sportsmanship. The team's perseverance and achievements will impact these high school classmates for the rest of their lives.

Despite jobs, school work, Advanced Placement courses, or even extracurricular activities, these athletes were not negatively affected by the daily burdens and distractions because playing soccer was their passion and goal. Blood, sweat, and tears were a part of the process and were totally anticipated and accepted by all. Total commitment to the team was overwhelming and challenging at times, but hard work, along with dedication and management skills paid off in balancing the time consuming aspects, such as academics and sports. Striving for goals meant athletes accomplishing things they needed to achieve and pursue.

Working hard is paramount to success in all aspects of playing soccer. Putting forth one-hundred percent in practices and games results in a team's ultimate success. Pouring out one's heart and soul to everything possible meant being dedicated, no matter what. By testing how hard the team could push fourth allowed skills to advance and be perfected. Every single game was a way for the team to become better, but only if commitment and diligence were visible. In order to achieve, one must know the name of the game. Refinement of necessities have made the athletes what they are now, but working hard made their sportsmanship even stronger.

Memories held together by the glue of team and friendship will bond them eternally. Nobody forgets who their teammates were, especially if the athletes have been together for this long of a time. Through trial and error, victory and loss, teammates who find their assets, skills, and passion together will allow sportsmanship to remain with the entire group for a lifetime. Even the worst recollections of losing or falling apart make the athletes individuals, it is simply a part of being players. The impressions on each other will never be forgotten by the athlete.

Sportsmanship may originate with a little game of soccer, but can only develop into a distinguishing personal trait through hard work and dedication. When a devoted person, specifically an athlete, strives towards and successfully achieves a goal, these fond memories will survive far longer intact than their soccer uniform.

****FINALIST****

The Art of Selflessness

Emma Harrington

Stoughton High School

More often than not, I find myself thinking about soccer. Visualizing myself making impossible game winning plays, celebrating a big save, looking into floodlit stands full of cheering fans... Until I return to reality. I am a junior, with one year left on varsity. I am a goalkeeper, I stand at about 5'1". I have been scored on upwards of 30 times since this season's beginning. Each goal let by repeats incessantly in my head, and I wonder where I went wrong. Over time, the answer became clear: Selfishness. At this point in my essay, I have used the pronouns "I" and "my" 11 times, excluding this sentence. 11 times for every girl on the field at the start and end of each game, all of my teammates. That is how many girls it takes to score a goal, allow a goal, and win or lose a game of soccer. Our program consists of 43 girls in all, each I consider a sister. Selfishly thinking I alone felt the pain of each of our losses was my biggest mistake. In truth, our successes and failures fall upon united shoulders, and how we carry the weight determines who we are, as one. If you look carefully, you discover your opponents are also simply team, just like yours, not an indomitable force out to humiliate you. And we, as busily working high school student athletes, share a deep-rooted connection that often goes overlooked: We practice day in and day out with our teammates, our brothers and sisters, to protect them and improve one another, which takes selfless actions. But to respect the brothers and sisters of others as though they are your own, that requires the characteristic of selflessness. The classic image of one offering a hand to a fallen member of the opposite team is the one that comes to mind in attempting to define sportsmanship. The significance of that colloquial gesture, is the physical embodiment of selflessness and compassion; treating opponents as humans first and foremost, with a mutual respect that takes priority over individual glory. Now, I acknowledge my own characteristic flaws, and continue to struggle against negativity daily; but on that same daily basis, I present myself positively on behalf of my team, an optional responsibility to some, but a requirement of great teammates. I advocate for my team, through words and actions, understanding that my name is a piece of OUR collective name, which will not be tarnished by the foul speech or selfish behavior of few— for ours is the name that matters. Accepting ownership of that name and agreeing to carry it with pride is the humble contract of sportsmanship, its parameters meant to be expressed both within your own program and towards opposing programs. When the words "I" and "me" turn into "us" and "we" and you adopt that bonding selflessness, you will cultivate a true sense of pride and togetherness, putting every positive value under the umbrella of sportsmanship into practice gracefully.

****FINALIST****

Team Manager: The Most Important Title Won
Taylor Coonan
Oxford High School

36 years. This is the gap between the last time the boys' basketball team won a district title, to last season, when they earned another. 36 years makes up a new generation; one that plays sports differently than how their parents did.

Sportsmanship, for our high-school generation, is centered around every single word that makes up the Massachusetts frequency map. Each word is connected to the others, and from Massachusetts, because they are what Massachusetts sports are composed of. This wasn't always how sports were played here, however, our association has evolved positively to play that way today. Everyone respects one another, shows kindness and cooperates, has positive attitudes, strong spirit, and burning passions for their games; forming one large family across the Bay State. Since each MIAA athlete is included in these words, "inclusion" is the heart of the way we define sportsmanship, as all athletes are united in the state.

As alluded to, the boys' basketball team was extremely successful this past season, having the best season since the 1979-1980 team; due to the players, coaches and support that was included, as well as the character of each person.

Before the season started, a boy with special needs moved to our school. He had a passion for sports, and adored everyone he met. Since we are such a small school, he was very well-known and everyone was friends with him. His eyes were always a sparkling blue, but he never was. Basketball was a sport he loved, so he tried out for the team. Instead of cutting him, because of having special-needs, the coaches assigned him as the team manager. Instantly, the team and coaches became the most tight-knit unit at our school, and thrived off of their team manager's constant enthusiasm, spirit, happiness, and positivity. He didn't necessarily play on the court, but he was always behind every player, cheering them on. The team as a whole was already a group of best friends, but now they had a new one, and became a family. The players, being so close, went out frequently and spent most of their free time after practices or games hanging out with each other. Their new addition could have been viewed as "different" because he lived with obstacles they didn't, or as just the "team manager"; but he wasn't. He was included in every practice, game, and get-together off the court.

Our boys' team did so well that season, they found themselves competing at the State Finals for the last game they would play. Not once in our school's history had the team ever made it that far, but not once had we had a student in our school like the boys' team manager. Unfortunately, the team lost the game, but they knew they had gained something more. They gained compassion for others, respect for people who were a little different than they were, and the realization of the importance of their inclusion of the manager on the journey of their lives.

****FINALIST****

Respect: The Name of the Game

Alexandra Frontino

Norton High School

After every game you line up on the dusty white foul lines and proceed to say “good game” to the people who were just your enemies for seven innings. You go up to the umpire and thank him, maybe giving him a knuckle touch, too. But why? Some may say they only do it because their coach is telling them they have to. Some may say they’ve just done it their whole life, it’s a habit. Some may think of the word respect. Although the objective of any softball game is to beat the other team, both teams are leaving it all on the field. You have to acknowledge that both teams gave the game everything they had, despite winning or losing. You thank the umpire for sacrificing time from his day, so you could play the game you love.

Your coach is screaming in your face. You can see the vein in his forehead popping, and the saliva from his mouth is hitting you like rain. Sure, you made a mistake, but everyone makes mistakes, right? Your coach doesn’t care. And yet, as you look into his eyes after his angry speech is over, you don’t say anything except, “Yes Coach, I understand.” You don’t talk back, you don’t get just as angry as him. You just take it all in. But why? *Respect*. Your coach wants what is best for you and is helping you to learn. Your coach is volunteering his time and knowledge of the game to help you. You can either disrespect him by ignoring his advice or learn from your mistakes. You can only get better from learning from your mistakes. What do you gain from disrespecting him? Nothing.

You’ve wanted to play shortstop your whole life. You’ve put in hours and hours of blood, sweat, and tears to become the player you are today. By the time tryouts come around, you think you’ve clinched the spot, but then your teammate gets it. You don’t yell at your teammate. You don’t let the team down in other areas of the game. But why? *Respect*. When you’re apart of team, and everyone has to work together to do their job. This involves respecting your teammates and what they bring to the team. They are playing the game they love, just like you.

Respect is the idea behind sportsmanship. It’s the idea that two teams can come together and play the game they love fairly. The morals of sportsmanship are what high school athletic teams build their programs off of. The concept of respecting your teammate, coach, and official helps athletes respect other people who may come into their life such as a boss or professor. High school athletic programs are trying to not only make great players, but great people. And that starts at *respect*.

****FINALIST****
Sportsmanship is Family
Lindsey Nelson
Foxboro High School

Last year, as a freshman cross country runner, I was surprised during two different invitational meets. Both of these meets had one prominent similarity, my teammate, Claire, stopped to help a girl who had fallen during the race due to exhaustion. During the second meet, Claire even finished the race after helping the girl for multiple minutes. After Claire got the attention of medical help, she began to run again. At first, my teammates and I did not know what she was doing. Everyone was long finished with the race, but there was Claire, finishing up the last mile and a half. It was the most heartwarming thing, seeing her run alone on the course after she had given up her race, her time, for someone else. Tapered workouts and countless training runs had prepared Claire for the last few meets of the season, and she was ready to compete. Not to mention, she was a senior, so these meets would be her last because she was not going to run in college. But, she reacted instantaneously to help them.

I would like to say that I would do the same thing, but I'm really not sure. I think I would have to be placed in that exact scenario to see what I would do. I am an extremely competitive person, so I might not have stopped. I might have figured that there are so many people around who could help them, it's not necessary for me to stop and risk a possible personal record.

That's why I believe sportsmanship means family. Sportsmanship is more than being a gracious loser or shaking someone's hand at the end of a race or game. In a real-life family with good dynamics, family members respects each other and their different talents and personalities. Similarly, sportsmanship in athletics means respecting your teammates and opponents, and the skill level that they have. In a home, family members encourage each other to do well in school and other settings. This is equivalent to the support of a team with sportsmanship. Lastly, children abide by the rules of their parents in a family. This is comparable to athletes following the rules of referees with no argument, one important aspect of sportsmanship.

An essential part of sportsmanship is thinking about others in addition to yourself, which Claire demonstrated accordingly. Selflessness and empathy play a big role, because by understanding the feelings of another athlete and the love and appreciation they have for the sport, there'll be a better connection. You will be family.

In high school athletics, sportsmanship is everything. Within a team there needs to be sportsmanship or tensions will emerge and the team will suffer as a whole. To other teams, coaches, and officials, sportsmanship needs to be demonstrated in order for the love and success of the sport to grow. Without sportsmanship, individuals and sports programs alike will be hurt.

To me, sportsmanship means family. The sport that we, athletes, share is our blood.

****FINALIST****

16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Derek Joyce

Monson High School

To achieve in sports, individuals need to work together. Like parts in a car, if one part isn't working the car may still function, but not at its full potential. A sports team needs to be unified in the pursuit of winning together. Unification is one portion of sportsmanship that defines a productive team in high school sports.

As co-captain of my Junior Varsity baseball team, I know that I have to be a leader for my team, and to be able to unify them to work together. At practices, we run *together*; we stretch *together*; we bat, field, and the row *together*. Now, on the field not everyone can do the same thing at the same time. We each need to play our positions to the best of our ability so we can complete a play together. At the plate we are alone, but we have our team in the dugout cheering us on, wanting us to rip a line drive into the outfield.

All sports require a team to work together. One runner cannot single handedly win a cross-country meet. One forward cannot drive through a team of five on their own. Teams, even if players perform individually, need to have unity to succeed. Outside of student-athletes, towns come together to cheer on teams, especially in the playoffs. Our 2015 State Champions for boys' and girls' soccer were one a float in our Fourth of July parade together. The town gets unified in support of our teams and their accomplishments.

After school is out for the summer, two rival towns are able to come together to form a baseball team. My summer team included high schoolers from both Monson and Palmer and worked wonderfully together. We were so unified in fact, that we finished the regular season undefeated and went on to become the Western Massachusetts Champions. Winning feels great especially when the team works well together to overcome a school sports rivalry.

Unification and togetherness are integral aspects of sportsmanship in high school sports. Teams cannot succeed if they aren't able to work together and make everyone perform at their highest potential. We practice together. We learn together. We play together. And we win. Together.

****FINALIST****

Having Done Something with Passion

Chris Curtain

Mashpee High School

If you put passion into anything you do, don't *ever* let anyone tell you that it's nothing; do not let anyone tell you that it's worthless, and no matter what happens in the end, do not let anyone tell you that it wasn't worth what you put into it, because if you were passionate about something, be it sports, or art, or whatever corner of life you happen to find yourself in, in all likelihood you did it the right way. You did it with respect. You did it with character. You did it with kindness, fairness, integrity, confidence, and selflessness, and you did it with sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is the mark of a good person; it's the mark of a *great* person. Within life, sportsmanship imbues all the positive qualities that should be exemplified by high school athletics.

One of the largest indicators of sportsmanship is respect. Those that show respect to others show their capacity for integrity and fairness. Moreover, they show respect for themselves in doing so. Consequently, those who don't show respect for themselves and others are doing both a disservice; they are going against the backbone of what characterizes high school athletics. Indeed, they are going against sportsmanship. To not show respect is to sacrifice character.

In fact, another massively important building block in sportsmanship is character.

To show sportsmanship to another, to an opponent, one has to exemplify character, and with it respect, integrity, confidence, and selflessness. With integrity, you have a set of values that are important to you, and that you always uphold, and with confidence you show that everything you believe in is worth believing in. With selflessness, you show that you are willing to put others above yourself. In other words, you are willing to show sportsmanship, as you believe the other is more important than the Self.

Finally, the exemplary factor in high school sports: Sportsmanship. Showing sportsmanship means showing respect, kindness, and character. Showing sportsmanship means showing and exemplifying fairness, integrity, confidence, and selflessness. To show sportsmanship is to show the mark of a great person, and to showcase everything that high school sports means: Valuing the opponent as or even above yourself, and in doing so, gaining mutual growth, experience, friendship, and community. So, if you've put passion into something, you've loved something enough to do it the right way: with sportsmanship and with every facet therein, because in spite of everything, you knew what mattered most.

****FINALIST****

For The Love of the Game

Adrian Brogan

Littleton High School

After all the research I conducted on the topic of sportsmanship, I have come to the conclusion that there are actually two types of sportsmanship, and that they are very different, therefore they require different descriptions. The biggest difference between the two types being that one mainly depends upon respect for the rules of the sport, and the other totally relies upon one's ethics.

During my extensive research I watched interviews of coaches and spoke to a head coach at my school, and they all mentioned the first type of sportsmanship as being an obligatory standard that everyone is held to. If a player, coach, or even a diehard fan in the bleachers doesn't respect and comply with the set rules of sportsmanship, they would be penalized. The fact that such a vast majority of professionals involved in sports see this first type of sportsmanship as an expectation, makes it the more common of the two types. In the words of Littleton's head football coach, Mike Lynn, "If you don't meet these expectations of excellence, you don't get to play", and "After safety, proper sportsmanship is the team's highest priority". Clearly this first type of sportsmanship is essential to the game, but what about that kind of sportsmanship that really catches your attention, that kind that gives you goosebumps and makes tears well up in your eyes? Well, that's where the second type of sportsmanship comes into play.

The second type of sportsmanship is what the sport is really all about and can easily be summed up by the word **gratitude**. It relies upon the appreciation people feel for other's love for the sport. Through this type of sportsmanship, people can create incredible, unforgettable moments like that of the instance when the Novi High School Wildcats worked as a team to make the dreams of their hardworking, dedicated water boy Robby Heil and his mother, come true.

Robby wasn't able to play as a member on the team due to his down syndrome, but he loved the game despite this limitation. His mother, Mrs. Heil, shared his dream of him being able to play with the team. As a person suffering from cancer and the mother of a child with such a debilitating condition, Mrs. Heil had a lot on her plate. The Wildcats took this all into consideration and worked to make that dream a reality. They purchased a full uniform for him, and when Friday night was finally there and Robby was able to get suited up for the first time. The team ran out to the field and Robby's mother saw her son with them crying tears of pure happiness. Through gratitudinal sportsmanship, you can create magnificent moments that change people's lives for the better, and give people stories that they can remember for the rest of their lives, which is the real way to win if you ask me.

****FINALIST****

The Hat Trick of Sportsmanship

Natalie Bolio

Oxford High School

In one's lifetime, many strive to find greatness within. This aspiration to stretch one's limits is prominently observed in successful athletes. A fundamental principle, common amongst all such achievers, is the quality of sportsmanship. Superior athletes or role models display the elements of sportsmanship which include attitude, gratitude, and teamwork.

When I was young, I did not fully understand the true meaning of being a teammate. What seemed most important was to score that goal, catch that pass, or to hit that ball and win. However, along with experiencing the euphoria of winning and being labeled an outstanding athlete, my sense of pride expanded with the accolades of displaying exceptional attitude, teammate appreciation, and cooperation.

Exceptional sportsmanship develops character. Traits of sportsmanship include a sound work ethic and utmost respect for coaches, and teammates, as well as opponents and officials. Sportsmanship is winning with class and losing with dignity. Sportsmanship relies on attitude, an attribute Winston Churchill commented on with his adage, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." In my experience, I have always used upperclassmen as examples. I followed under their lead because I wanted to emulate them. Now, embarking on my senior year, I want to be that example to underclassmen by exhibiting a positive attitude. An uplifting attitude produces confidence, and as my Dad always says, "Confidence is key." One positive attitude can begin a chain reaction that sparks extraordinary outcomes.

Attitude ties into the aspect of gratitude. Motivational speaker Brian Tracy advised, "Develop an attitude of gratitude, and give thanks for everything that happens to you, knowing that every step forward is a step toward achieving something bigger and better..." Gratitude is showing appreciation for your opponents because without them, the game wouldn't exist. Gratitude helps the growth of both the player and the person.

Over the course of my high school field hockey career, these positive qualities have been ingrained in me. Scoring a goal meets with not individual congratulations, but team applause. The whole team benefits from the accomplishments of the individual. Winning involves the entire team, no matter if you are a defensive player or an offensive player. Playing as a unit, every member of the team should be recognized for the accomplishments of the team, whether as a forward scoring that goal, or a defensive players blocking a shot.

Many characteristics are required to become a complete student athlete. In the midst of frustration, fatigue, and anxiety, sportsmanship is a crucial quality for all high school students, fans, and athletes alike to possess and develop over a lifetime.

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Passion

Lauren Barry

Methuen High School

“Nothing great in the world has ever been achieved without passion.” -Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. One of the most uniting feelings among teams and athletes is the passion for the sport they play. There is nothing like the feeling of (in my case) stepping on the field, or diving off the block, and working to the absolute limit of your body for your school and team. It is this feeling of passion that unites athletes across the state and within the community of Methuen that drives sportsmanship. Sportsmanship can be a difficult concept for teams to grasp, because for them it is more important to focus on their own strengths and weaknesses than how they treat others and respect the opposing players. However, the passion that athletes have for their sport inspires a fellow respect and understanding. Despite different names, towns, and levels of experience, it is one common factor that unites athletes together: passion for the game. Passion drives the mutual respect players’ gain for each other, as they can understand what it means to each other.

Passion means truly everything to me in my own experiences with swimming and lacrosse. Coming into high school with no previous experience in either sports, it is the passion I've developed for the sports that has inspired me to begin doing both year round to improve my skills, times, and the relationships I have with local players. The love for what I do has allowed me to meet people from many different swim teams, and understanding how other programs instigate the determination to improve. The people I have met and the understanding of their love for lacrosse or swimming has open my eyes as to how they have the same goals. It is the mutual genuine desire for success that has allowed me to respect others during meets and games.

In high school athletics, passion drives entire teams, which is the most important impact it has. One player having passion can do great things, but an entire team that loves what they do and reaches for their goal together is unstoppable. In the Methuen community, this has been apparent many times. The passion the girls on my swim team have has driven them to make state times; the passion the girls’ lacrosse team had last season to make states led them to clinch tight wins that were thought impossible; the passion that the students and athletes of Methuen have for their community has led them to be known on Twitter as, “everyone’s favorite underdog.”

The feeling that passion brings is something that is indescribable unless someone has experienced it. That state of mind where all of a sudden every sweat, tear, and bit of anxiety that has been bothering you all goes away because of the fulfillment of a goal is the best feeling in the world. Winning a tight game against a “good” opponent is an example; “good” meaning a team that didn't play dirty, that showed fairness and grit that makes the win over them even better. Passion is more than just loving what you do. It is caring so much for the sport you love that you are willing to learn from others, work hard in practice, and go the extra mile to fulfill the challenges that this game provided for you.

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16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Rachel Zins

Methuen High School

As I contemplated what word I would use from the map of Massachusetts that best defines sportsmanship, I immediately thought of the famous quote originated by sportswriter Heywood Hale Broun and made famous by UCLA Basketball Coach John Wooden that often crosses my mind during a practice or a game. "Sports doesn't build character, it reveals it" Character is a word that encompasses many of the other words on the map including: respect, teamwork, integrity and leadership.

Participating in high school athletics has taught me so much not only about myself but about others as well. Most athletes participate because they either have a particular talent or who wish to gain that talent. Being a part of a team taught me to respect both types of athletes and to realize everyone has a role on the team. It taught me to respect teams that are more talented than us and more importantly those who are less. As athletes we become role models and showing respect towards coaches, teammates, opponents and officials is the first step in becoming a leader.

Being part of a team and the idea of teamwork is a pretty basic concept, putting that concept into action can be a challenge. It means being part of that team both on and off the field. The bonds and friendships I have developed have been the constant throughout my high school years. I have learned so much about different cultures, backgrounds, and talent levels. As a teammate you put all differences aside and become one. You create a goal and each member has its role, from Most Valuable Player (MVP) to last one to make the team. No one is more important than the other when you work as a team. Buying into that philosophy will always make you a winner on some level.

Integrity is possessing such values as honesty and reliability, a person with integrity walks the walk, says what they mean does what they say. How those values apply to an athlete is demonstrated by showing consistency in everything that they do and say. It means always playing by the rules even when it is possible not to. Integrity will trickle down from administration, coaches and captains. It creates a level of pride that trumps any championship won without it every time! It will attract the right players and increase community participation that was so wonderfully demonstrated with the ongoing athletic complex improvements over the last few years in our city.

All of these characteristics define and develop into leadership. As a four year letterman, now in my final year of high school sports I was humbly selected as Captain of my team. As a leader, I find that the values I strive to possess include respect, teamwork and integrity. I want to impact an underclassman as much as other my former captains have for me. I want to lead by example, both on and off the field. A good leader will expect the best but always be supportive when someone is struggling. A good leader will recognize and encourage hard work and inspire by demonstrating with results. A good leader will never give up.

In summary, having good character will impact every aspect of an athlete's life. It will carry with you throughout all stages of your life from college to career to raising a family. There really is nothing better than gaining the respect of your competitors, coaches and community.

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Spirit

Rebecca Girshik

Longmeadow High School

Spirit is a word that strongly represents sportsmanship.
Weather it is between a single team or between more than one.
Many teams have their own special things,
from old to new traditions.
For me spirit is cheering on and off the field,
Shaking hands after every game,
No matter the outcome.
Win, lose, tie.
Without sportsmanship there would be no fair games,
No outside friendships.
Focusing on winning is important but being fair is too.
Spirit within a team can be,
“digging deep”, “playing till the final whistle”,
And no matter the circumstance always keeping your head up.
High school athletics make a student athlete's high school career.
A huge part of their everyday lives.
Without spirit these days to remember,
Would just be ordinary and nothing special.
The spirit beneath the records, the stats, and titles,
Is what will really dig deep, looking back.

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Defining Sportsmanship

Madeline Pupka

Oxford High School

Sportsmanship teaches respect for one's teammates, one's opponents, and most importantly one's self. The application of sportsmanship, especially in high school athletics, is more difficult to define. However, respect and positivity, in high school athletics, are two traits intrinsically found in sportsmanship. Although these traits are difficult to explain, they create a definite challenge for young adults to develop.

Being respectful indicates maturity on many levels. Respect exudes deep admiration for other individual's or said individual's achievements. Showing respect for one's teammates and opponents alike, boosts the spirits of the team and the game. As famously said by the most influential physicist of the 20th century, Albert Einstein, "I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university." Einstein expresses everyone is treated fairly and justly, a fundamental of respect. Without mutual respect amongst individuals, both the team and the game would be ill-spirited.

Positivity influences an individual and the team on the same level. With the help of positivity portrayed in high school sports, everyone involved feels empowered and up lifted. In the book Cosmic Ordering: You Can Be Successful, author Stephen Richards describes the effects of positivity when stating, "The only time you fail is when you fall down and stay down." Having a negative attitude contributes to failure while positivity can influence one's behavior, and encourage hard work, thus leading to success. While obstacles may arise, my mother always told me the situation can "only get worse before it gets better." Although faced with challenges, an athlete can persevere through keeping a positive attitude.

As a former athlete, both respect and positivity have proven themselves vital in high school sports. In grade 11, while playing volleyball, my coach's main focus was teaching the team the aspect of proper sportsmanship. Coach Cicero taught the team to always stay positive. He warned that should negativity enter into one's head, neither the individual nor the team would play to their potential. Coach also taught the volleyball team to respect our opponents. Not everyone has the same skill level and there is no problem with not being perfect. No matter the situation at hand, it is vital to respect others and remain positive.

Going through the halls of high school for 4 years tends to be a stressful period for the average high school student. In the classroom, students are taught facts from books, but in sports, students are taught the true meaning of sportsmanship. To respect others, no matter who they are, and to stay positive no matter the situation at hand. Through the proper knowledge and application of respect and positivity, one knows the definition of sportsmanship. With the knowledge and application of sportsmanship, one can persevere not only in high school sports, but in life.

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The Road to Sportsmanship

Kiana Kintchen

Oxford High School

Sportsmanship is a universal idea that applies not only to sports, but daily life as well. Whether during a game or practice, athletes are expected to display exemplary sportsmanship. Not only does it reflect on an individual player, but the school and team as well. Winning humbly with pride, losing with dignity, and learning from a loss defines sportsmanship. Which requires respect, leadership, and selflessness.

Displaying sportsmanship to an opposing team requires effort and initiative. Being a high school athlete myself I have encountered teams that do not display sportsmanship, and others that do. Teams known for displaying inadequate sportsmanship towards an opponent or teammate are never talked about highly. As a result, individual attitudes can reflect on the team as a whole

Respect is an attribute that sportsmanship relies on, showing worth and excellence towards others. If a team or individual does not exude respect for the opposing team or players, then there is already no sportsmanship being shown. Respecting others is an ideal that people use on a daily basis, applying to life and sports. Many players give their all and play to the best of their ability, respecting the athletes have put in their finest efforts no matter the result.

Often individuals find themselves in leadership positions, taking on the responsibility of being a role model. Being a leader entails acting as a positive example for others, creating an encouraging environment, and bringing individuals together. Exceptional leadership influences a team's sportsmanship. Individuals lead by others who show commendable respect, and selflessness are likely to display traits of their leader. As a child many are influenced by leaders every day with our first and greatest leaders in our lives, our parents. Many children will mimic the person they look to as a leader. This is a great example of how individuals respond to leadership throughout their whole lives.

Consciousness of others around you and their emotions is very important to sportsmanship. At the end of a game, match, or meet it is not just about the player but everyone involved. Sportsmanship does not consist of one person but multiple individuals together. Should one person display sportsmanship it is astounding but not as effective and gratifying as a body of individuals showing these traits. Selflessness requires the concern and humbleness that many connect to the idea of sportsmanship, the act of being less concerned with yourself and more concerned with the well-being of others. To reiterate a well-known phrase, "Winning humbly with pride, losing with dignity and learning from that loss", humbleness is derived from selflessness and putting others before you.

Student athletes know they are often held to higher standards than others. They are the ones who represent their school, showing competitors, and others how admirable the school is. Exhibiting stupendous sportsmanship makes each individual, team, and school come off exceptionally, generating opportunities for recruitment, scholarships, and certainly much more. Sportsmanship not only makes an individual divine but the school and opportunities as well.

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Humility
Emma Daly
Norton High School

I have played first singles on Norton High School girls' varsity tennis team for two of my three seasons. I have been awarded the team Most Valuable Player award. I was honored to be named team captain at the end of my freshman year.

And my career record is 3 and 50. That's three wins, and fifty losses. Our team record is not much better.

My tennis career will not afford me many trophies, but I will take away some long-lasting and valuable lessons, many of which could only come with having experienced these losing seasons. These lessons are largely about sportsmanship, and the word I've chosen to define it: Humility.

It is not easy to go out onto the court day in and day out and face almost certain defeat. It is not easy to captain a team with the record we have. It is not easy to call the newspapers after each match to report the scores, a duty of the captain. Yet that is what I do. Humility is about putting things ahead of yourself – in my case, putting the team, my school, and the sport itself, before my own needs for recognition. Holding my head high regardless of the outcome.

Humility is important in losing. We face the schools in our league multiple times each season. I'm not resigned to losing, and I do compete until the final point is won, but often I know from previous experience that I will be outmatched by the other first singles players I'm facing. I start with a handshake and polite greeting, and I do my best to congratulate good shots and to make fair calls throughout the match. There's no dignity in cheating.

But humility is equally important in winning. I've witnessed girls win with modesty, and others without. It makes all the difference. I rarely remember the details of the points I've won or lost. But I never forget which players and teams have treated us with respect. We have faced arrogant opponents. The over-celebrators. The girls who make questionable line calls when an occasional match is close. That poor sportsmanship is what I remember long after a match ends. It's self-importance outweighing humility.

Following our 2015 season, the Norton High girls' varsity tennis team was honored to receive the Tri-Valley League's Sportsmanship Award. None of us made it to the tournament, and our overall record that year was a losing one. But it was our humble resignation throughout the season in this very competitive league which was honored, and for that reason I look back on that particular season with a great deal of pride. We held our heads high until the end, and it did not go unnoticed. And I'm sure that kind of recognition is paramount.

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Sportsmanship Essay

Maia Seetal

Smith Academy

The word “sportsmanship” is often used to describe a participant’s conduct in any kind of game or sport. Good sportsmanship is held to be one of the most important qualities an athlete or sportsman can have. It is associated with the way a player acts on the field, how they treat their opponents and their teammates alike. But sportsmanship is more than that. Good sportsmanship is a life skill, not just the behavior of an athlete participating in a game or event. It is a quality that is useful for anyone to have, not just people who play sports.

Sportsmanship is best defined by the word respect, because it is the quality of respecting a sport and its participants. It is respect for your teammates, the ability to treat them as equals and recognize that in a sporting event, every other player is just as important as you. It is respect for your opponents, the ability to accept defeat with grace and victory with humility. Sportsmanship is also respect for the sport itself, the ability to accept and follow the rules of the game even when they are against you. Sportsmanship is respect for everything that makes sports fair and worthwhile.

Having good sportsmanship means that I have to be fair and honest in order to show respect for the sport, the participants, and myself. To me, it also means that sometimes I have to step up and show leadership, rather than sitting back and allowing my teammates to play the game for me.

Sportsmanship has a huge role in high school athletics because it is an important life skill for athletes, and all teens, to learn. Teaching teens to have good sportsmanship in high school, whether it is during P.E. class or in extra-curricular sports, helps them develop a sense of respect for the people around them. It also teaches kids to respect the rules and work with others to achieve their goals. Sportsmanship in high school helps to develop humility, leadership, and teamwork in teens that will carry over to the rest of their lives.

Sportsmanship is more than just being polite to the opposing team. It is having respect for your teammates, your coaches, and your opponents, as well as the rules of the game. It is about showing people that you respect them by treating them as equals, and respecting the sport by showing leadership and following the rules. Sportsmanship plays a big role in high school athletics because it teaches kids respect and helps them develop skills that will be useful later on in life. Good sportsmanship is the most important thing we can teach athletes.

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16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Amanda Lindley

Attleboro High School

True sportsmanship, in my opinion, requires a team to be a family. My Attleboro field hockey team is more of a family than any other team I've been a part of. We're constantly lifting each other up; no achievement, big or small, goes unnoticed. We cheer for each other even when we're exhausted, and our lungs are burning and there's barely enough in us to take another step, because seeing a teammate sprint a little faster or smile a little wider is worth it. We train hard and we play hard, not just for ourselves but for every teammate who has put in everything they have to play on the field. Everyone is respected, and everyone knows that they are an important part of the team. We can't go a day without being reminded of that.

Showing respect to both your competitors and your team is an essential component of sportsmanship, and the best way to build respect is first showing it to your own teammates. It's not something that can be completely understood unless put into practice. If a team doesn't respect its own players, it would be nearly impossible for them to demonstrate respect to an opposing team. When a team stays together as a family, respect comes naturally, even when things aren't going as planned. Mistakes are made and games are lost. Families don't dwell on these mistakes; they address them and work to fix them as a team. Players who taunt their own teammates for their mistakes will never be able to respect another team's players in such a competitive setting. Without respect, sportsmanship simply can't exist. Loving your own team is the first step in showing kindness and respect to another team. My family shows respect every single moment we are together, no matter if we're winning or losing. I've never met a group of athletes more determined to win than in any other sport I've played, and I've never once seen an ounce of disrespect on the field. Teams that truly support one another and come together as a family show respect every single day. Sportsmanship comes naturally to those who love the game and the people who play it with them.

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The Most Important Traits of Sportsmanship

Michael Warren

Oxford High School

Sportsmanship is the most important human characteristic, allowing teamwork to be performed in a fast and fluid manner. It is an ethos associated with enjoying an activity for oneself while also keeping others in mind. Sportsmanship cannot be described by one definition, but rather an umbrella of character traits which define human nature. The pool of positive qualities are massive and diverse and two of the most critical traits are respect and leadership. Only when all of these traits combine can true sportsmanship be achieved.

Respect is an integral element of sportsmanship, defined as a feeling of deep admiration for a person based on their abilities, qualities or achievements. If one does not have admiration for a member of a team or opposing team, there simply cannot be sportsmanship. A lack of admiration towards other players leads to pretentiousness and narcissism. Only when everyone respects each other's abilities, can there be true sportsmanship. This key attribute is best shown by Clint Eastwood who stated, "Respect your efforts, and respect yourself. Self-respect leads to self-discipline. When you have both firmly under your belt, that's real power." Essentially, without respect for oneself, one cannot behave in a civilized manner.

In athletics or other competitive events, true respect is a necessary element. When competing, it is important to always admire the opponent and to keep their abilities in mind. Without respect, it becomes too easy for overconfidence to kick in, leading to a possible bitter defeat. When everyone respects one another without underestimating the opponent, the playing field becomes much more competitive and well planned.

Leadership is the attribute which drives work, and keeps everybody involved on the same playing field. Sportsmanship cannot be achieved without a leader to keep everybody in check. Leadership is defined as spearheading a group, people or organization. This is the most important role in an organization. Without leadership, all key elements of sportsmanship fail. John Quincy Adams sums leadership up best by saying, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." Effective leaders motivate others to be role models, behave with respect towards themselves, team members, and opponents.

Imagine sporting events without leaders. The players would have no plan, leaving them clueless as to what their next move will be. A leader is someone who keeps morale up and holds together the plan. Sportsmanship is a group effort and without a leader, the group cannot pull off this task. Leaders encourage players to treat one another as well as the opponents with respect and dignity.

Sportsmanship is not a simple task, it takes a significant effort to drive sportsmanship forward. Sportsmanship is not limited to just respect and leadership, but rather hundreds of positive attributes which moves a team to a large dignified group. It is important for one to utilize all of these traits when competing. Sportsmanship is the key element to any sporting event, because without it, there would be a dirty and unfair competition.

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Setting an Example

Brooke Storey

Oxford High School

As it was once said by Ralph Waldo Emerson, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.” Emerson is talking about morals and maturity within a person. He is attempting to display his thoughts of how people should act not only in sports, but more importantly in life. Sportsmanship is about setting an example for a player's teammates and colleagues. It means being mature in the face of defeat. Sportsmanship is rejecting negativity and taking defeat gracefully. A true sportsman does not complain, blame, or point a finger. Sportsmanship means being mature and respectful towards not only teammates, but opponents too. A true sportsman celebrates hard work put in by the team and keeps moving forward.

If anyone knows sports, they've seen these “end of game” rituals happen. If not seen, maybe even experienced: Football players shaking hands after four quarters of tackling each other. Tennis players jumping over the net to shake hands with their opponents after a hard-fought match. Soccer players exchanging handshakes after an intense game. Boxers touching gloves at the beginning of each round, then hugging after beating each other up for twelve rounds. Competitors in every event, from a simple spelling bee to a grueling hockey game, behave this way and it's all due to having respect for each other. Without respect, the world of sports would be completely different. Imagine losing a game and the other team stands on the other side of the field taunting the losing team instead of shaking hands at the end of the game to say good job. If all sportsmen showed that kind of disrespect at the end of every game there could be a serious issue at hand.

It is the golden rule of sports or in other words, treating the people you play with and against as you'd like to be treated yourself; however maturity and sportsmanship are not just reserved for players on the field. Cheerleaders, fans, and family also need to be aware of how they behave during competition. Sportsmanship is a style and an attitude, and it can have a positive influence on everyone around you, which is why observers and players need to be mature when it comes time to play. When a person is displaying rude and inconsiderate actions towards another team or yells slurs that could be deemed disrespectful, it could be considered as immature and they end up putting a negative feeling on the game. Negativity isn't what people want to feel when they're going to watch their team play ball.

Without maturity and respect, sportsmanship would not be how it is known today. Maturity is essentially the main point of sportsmanship because it shows character and incorporates respect in its definition. Without maturity and respect there would be no sportsmanship to display. No hands would be shaken, no gloves would be touched, and the fields would be full of taunting. Sportsmanship keeps the sports world turning.

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16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Samantha Borges

Joseph Case High School

It wasn't until my sophomore year that the words attitude, respect, and leadership really made a difference in my life. Growing up, I struggled with my attitude. It was really hard for me to shake off mistakes, because I always strived for perfection, and I was really hard on myself. During my sophomore year, having a positive attitude was a major part of how we ran our program. It was then that I realized attitude is way more than how you react to the mistakes you have made. It has a direct impact on your teammates and their performances too. The day I learned the importance of attitude, I became a better player and teammate. It allowed me to control not only my energy on the court, but others around me too. A bad attitude can act like a disease. Once one person on your team is infected it spreads like a wildfire. Attitude best defines sportsmanship, because it is something way bigger than yourself. If you have a good attitude, your opponents and teammates will have more respect for you.

Attitude is directly correlated to my next two words which are leadership and respect. Respect is a major aspect of sportsmanship, because it has to do with every aspect of your life, on and off the court. A good player respects the abilities of their teammates, coaches, and opponents as well. Respecting your coaches is a major part of sports, because accepting their constructive criticism is how you are going to get better. Respecting your teammates is also important, because once you respect them, you will find it your responsibility to not only accept their constructive criticism, but give them some in return. You will respect them enough to be able to give them your advice on how to improve. You don't need to be a captain to help your teammates improve, because leadership comes from your heart. With a good attitude and respect for the people involved in the game, anyone can be a leader.

Leadership is not only about your respect and attitude; it is how you react when the toughest players want to give up and crumble. A leader steps up in the toughest situations when the team needs them the most. They help their teammates get out of slumps and encourage them whether they mess up or make a perfect play. With practice and a change in mentality from I to we anyone can be a leader. Having the words respect, leadership, and attitude in mind, there is no room for anything but sportsmanship.

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Differing Definitions of Sportsmanship
Sophie DeRepentigny
Methuen High School

When I think of sportsmanship, all of the words listed and more come to my mind. Yes, sportsmanship means family and pride and togetherness but, there are many more implications that follow. I believe the word sportsmanship has no definition because, part of being an athlete means you get to define the word with how it relates to you and everyone has different interpretations. Out of the words that fill up the state of Massachusetts, the words selflessness, class, and support represent my definition of sportsmanship the most.

As cliché as the saying goes, there truly is no “I” in team. This is why selflessness is an important concept in sports. Sportsmanship means being a part of a team but, also making the team a priority. Once you are committed there can be no more “I” talk. Everything turns into “we”. We played well, we lost the game, and much more. When a single player is mentioned over the team it can make the other players feel insignificant. Selflessness describes my definition of sportsmanship because it can show others that you understand how to benefit yourself but you're more focused on the team which will help the team feel closer to one another.

“Win with class, lose with no excuses.” This quote has been hammered into my mind by my coach and I truly believe this quote represents sportsmanship. I think it's good to remain humble after a win but I think it's more important to accept the loss with heads held high. I'll admit some teams might be a little bit more than aggressive but, thanks to this quote, I know that refusing to succumb to the levels of other teams is what sportsmanship is all about. It's always a beneficial idea to have class on and off the field. Every player on the team should be role models on and off the field regardless of age. In high school, a freshman can learn from a senior just as much as a senior can learn from a freshman. I think it's important for everyone to have this sense of class to help to develop the team as a whole. Class adds to my definition of sportsmanship because it shows the people around you that the team is respectable and is willing to remain humble creating a positive outlook on the team.

Support is always important. To be supportive of your team means that you always have each other's back. Whether you're supporting a teammate on the field or supporting them with personal problems, support is support. I believe it is important to stick together because it shows a sense of pride. “This is my team and I'll support them no matter what.” It's also good to support athletes from other teams. This is shown when a team shakes hands with other players or says a polite good game after a win or loss. Regardless of the outcome of a meet or game, it's always polite to say good job or show the other athletes that you're supportive of them and respectable. Support finalizes my idea of sportsmanship because it allows athletes to interact and lets teammates know someone is there when needed.

Overall, the words selflessness, class, and support help to create my definition of sportsmanship. My definition as a whole can be summed up by saying that sportsmanship shows the true nature of what it means to be an athlete by possessing the qualities that can benefit the team including the qualities I listed and many more. Sportsmanship has many meanings and applies differently to many people but, I believe that everyone has developed their own definitions through their experiences with athletics.

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16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Carly Kingston

Longmeadow High School

No matter what sport you play, your teammates define sportsmanship. The ideals of sportsmanship are upheld and displayed by participants representing your school and program. To me sportsmanship displays kindness, integrity, and respect, not only for yourself but the sport you play and others who play it. Sportsmanship illustrates character and cooperation between teammates and opponents.

It is not a winning record or outstanding talent but integrity to sportsmanship that defines each player and coach. Integrity from the very start is the foundation for a program's success. But without players dedicated to the values of honor and kindness, success is impossible. Often we see success as winning and your record is everything; losing can seem like the end of the world. However, without integrity, hard work, effort, and resilience winning doesn't matter.

“Winning is respecting the game enough to fight for every inch it allows and respecting your opponent enough to hold nothing back.” Respect for the game you play, your opponent, and yourself is the unwritten rule of sportsmanship. Without respect what good is winning? Playing without honor, heart or kindness in a certain game completely takes away the joy of winning. We play these games and compete for a sense of accomplishment, and sometimes it's coupled with the title of “winner”. Sometimes that accomplishment comes with knowing you and your teammates did everything you possibly could and played with the highest regard for the game you love.

Teamwork: a skill so many athletes need and have not yet mastered. As part of a group teamwork requires communicating ideas, responsibilities and expectations. Integrity, kindness and respect make up a good teammate and in turn a good sport. Each individual's strengths and weaknesses add to an overall atmosphere conducive to sportsmanship. Finally, all these qualities determines character. Perhaps the most important aspect of sportsmanship, character defines individuals that make up a team and therefore the team itself. As John Wooden, “Be more concerned with your character than your reputation”. A team's work ethic, character, personality portrays what its program represents. Without each player's integrity and each player understanding the importance of character sportsmanship cannot be conveyed.

High school athletics teach sportsmanship, integrity, character, kindness and teamwork. Student athletes should participate in programs that teach these ideals and help them grow into young adults. Presenting yourself and your program to opponents with the utmost honor, kindness and respect showcases your integrity. Competition in the purest form can create friendships, teach athletes cooperation, and bring recognition to your school.

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Sportsmanship
Brian Reynolds
Mashpee High School

Being respectful and having a good attitude towards the game and others are the two most important parts of having good sportsmanship. Without either, there is no chance of being a good team player and having great sportsmanship.

Out of the two, having a good attitude is the absolute most important. You know someone doesn't have a good attitude when they are losing. It's easy for everyone to have a great attitude when winning; it is when you're losing that you see who truly has good sportsmanship. The people with good sportsmanship are trying to pump everyone up and keep them from getting discouraged. They are not the ones who get angry and start bad-mouthing the other team because they're winning.

Having respect not only for yourself but your other teammates, coaches, and officials as well, is almost as important as having a good attitude. Being respectful is very much like having a good attitude. They both involve not bad-mouthing others. When a team starts losing, some of the players start blaming the other team. They either say they are playing dirty, or the officials are being biased. Being respectful is also shaking hands and saying good game, regardless if you lost or if their pitcher hit you. When you acknowledge that the other team may be better, or played a better game, that is what being respectful is.

Both having a good attitude, and having respect, go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other because they both involve having a positive outlook. Without respect, you can't have a good attitude, because you'll always blame others for their mistakes. Without a good attitude, you lose any respect when you start blaming others for the loss.

Good sportsmanship involves many different characteristics, but the two most important are respect and the right attitude. Without those, you don't have sportsmanship.

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An Athlete's Bars

Gabriel Bueno

Lynn Vocational Technical Institute

Athletics mean the world to me, sports make my heart beat. Working together literally makes me want to sing, so I wrote my submission in lyrical form.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T: I know what it means to me. What does it mean to you?

Hopefully never to be rude and crude after you lose. It's up to you to you to choose. A loss heals quickly like a bruise. This is the time to be the bigger man; there will always another game so change the plan.

This is 2016 – we can change and re-arrange! We can make a new game a new fashion we all have that power to do it – that is called passion. Fly free, be who you want to be, you have the talents to succeed. Its okay to differ from the pack it just shows you don't lack. You'll exceed expectations. A dove in a pile of pigeons who won't listen. Anything isn't as strong as the man above but remember to do it with love. Who helps you up when you've had enough? Who makes you strong? The game known as life makes you tough.

Time to go to work with the team to accomplish and live out your dreams. Even when you're focused on yourself, there is nothing more important than teamwork. Hit home runs? That's already been done. Put a goal in front of you, work with your team, and embed it in your soul. We don't win just to show the world we're the best. We can all tell champions share a championship quality, and that is selflessness. I was always that kid who loves rough sports of any sort. When my friends and family started to worry, thinking I would get hurt or injured on the gridiron, I didn't hurry or scurry. I played football, and then came lacrosse I wanted to stand tall be a boss. I felt sick whenever someone else quit. My credo is never give up, and everyone I play with knows what's up. My motto, "Try till I die," proves that hard work is the real root of success, and that is no lie. Now it's time to show my city I'm no average guy!

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Sportsmanship

Alex Wood

Mashpee High School

Sportsmanship is the pillar of a game that should be played, it is the basis of fair sports. The basic definition of sportsmanship is that the sport in question will be played for the sake of the game with fairness, ethics, respect and fellowship with one's competitors; but it means much more than that. Sportsmanship is an umbrella of a word leading into many more definitions of words all strung together. Respect, leadership, kindness and many other words all fall under the word sportsmanship and what it means to be a good sport.

To have sportsmanship you must have respect: respect for the game, for yourself, for others and for the rules. If you don't have respect for anything, then you most likely act like a child who hasn't grown up yet and no one likes that when they are playing a sport they love. You've probably heard the saying treat others the way you want to be treated, which transfers to respect others. I believe that respecting yourself is as or even more important than respecting others and treating your opponent with the same respect you want to be shown for yourself.

Leadership is another main part of what it is to have good sportsmanship. To lead your team through victory and defeat you must have a good sense of how to lead if you want to be effective on and off the court. Anyone can lead a team but if you want the respect of others and especially your teammates, you have to show the world that you can lead. Leadership within sportsmanship is like the milk in cereal; you don't have to have it but it sure does taste better if you do.

Kindness is a definitely good trait and quality to have within sportsmanship. Being ruthless and playing aggressive is great sometimes, but other times, to show compassion and mercy to your opponent is worth more than any victories because it judges you as a person not as a player. Would you rather be known as a great person or as a great player? Well good thing you can be both because that's a hard question. But being both is not easy, not at all.

Respect, leadership and kindness all go with sportsmanship in their own way and without them sportsmanship would mean nothing. The term sportsmanship is a web for many words that define who we all want to be in life. Respecting the opponent, leading by example, and showing mercy are the key aspects of what it means to be a good sport.

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Character

Sarah Jalowy

Mashpee High School

Character is the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. When thinking of sportsmanship, character is a trait that strongly influences who you are on and off the field, court, etc. It strongly influences everyone around you, as well as the way you carry yourself. I would rather have someone respect my character and what I believe in than my social standing in life. Character is something you carry throughout your life, it doesn't go away.

Your character is built by who you surround yourself with and who influences you the most. It is based on your morals, and what you believe is correct in life. If you go onto the field with the intentions of starting trouble, chances are your character isn't as important to you as starting trouble is. Your parents and how you are raised are something that dramatically affect who you are. Character is the backbone to your personality, it is going to derive how you act, and how people perceive you. How you carry yourself is so important because it's the first thing everyone sees.

On the field, character is important because it affects you when you're playing; it shows others how you act when it comes to any situation a game can throw at you. Character is one of the hardest things to keep composure of when a situation affects you. If you "blow up", you're going to be seen as immature and that you don't have any sportsmanship. If you congratulate a team after you lose, then you seem like the bigger person and coaches and other teams will have so much more respect for you. I think that is one of the most important things to remember, that you can't win everything and if the other team gave you a good fight and were respectful to you, that you should be happy from them. Being the bigger person is always the best way to go in any situation. Your actions depict your character, and how parents, coaches and other players see how you carry yourself. Everyone sees your character.

Therefore, character is something that not only affects you on the field, but also off of the field. It affects you wherever you go, and it is going to stay with you forever. People remember you for your character, it is your legacy that you leave behind, and what you do with your character, is up to you.

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16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Jillian Cosgrove

Duxbury High School

If the measure of an athlete is his or her ability to dedicate hours to their sport, sacrificing their time, enduring endless blisters, aches and pains, then by these standards, sportsmanship is all about commitment. If the measure of an athlete is his or her ability to work together for a common goal, putting aside any personal differences for the good of the team, then by these standards, sportsmanship is all about teamwork. If the measure of an athlete is his or her ability to stay positive when the score is not in their favor or smiling when crying is really what they want to do, then by these standards, sportsmanship is all about attitude. Sportsmanship has so many faces, and a good sportsman will wear many of them. Sportsmanship, to me, is all these attributes but the most important one, I believe, is character.

Our characters embody the traits that define how we conduct ourselves. Some of these character traits could include graciousness, humbleness, honesty, persistence, courage, self-control and happiness. We all have the choice to act a certain way. Athletes are asked on a daily basis, whether on the field or off, to conduct themselves in such a way as to be a representation of the person they are or are striving to be and of the team they represent. Athletes who choose to act in a positive way, are those that display the qualities of a true sportsman.

Winning and losing are part of sports. The way we accept our thrilling victory or our agonizing defeat is a sign of our character. Sportsmanship means to always be humble in your victory and gracious in your defeat. An athlete should always try and put themselves in the sneakers, skates or cleats of the other team. That is good sportsmanship.

Playing time is part of sports. Every member of the team works day in and day out in practice. The ultimate goal for any athlete is to play. Everyone wants to get out on that field, court or rink and be part of the game. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. A good sportsman keeps their head up and cheers for their teammates, working even harder next practice.

Coaches are part of sports. There are some we love and some we love to hate. Whatever the case may be, the coach deserves to be listened to and respected. An athlete must exhibit self-control and always remember they play because they love their sport. A good sportsman will recognize that and chooses to work hard and be persistent, putting personal differences and philosophies aside.

Ultimately, sportsmanship plays a huge role in high school athletics. Teams, as well as individual athletes, should always be positive role models in their communities and outside them. I want to be remembered as a teammate with drive, compassion, humility, kindness, acceptance and positivity. In the end, these character traits are what we carry with us in our lives long after high school.

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Contagion
Cassie Scheirer
Newton North High School

It's raining. My nose is cold. My hands are shaking. Suddenly I'm scooping the ball, but I overthrow it—the third time this game. As I watch the softball soar over the first-baseman, I'm furious. I try to hide it, but a deep frown, gritted teeth, and a bad attitude tell it all.

I've always struggled with positivity. Whether its sports, academics, or my personal life, I find it difficult to smile when things don't go well. I know this is because I am an overachiever; I try *so* hard to perfect myself and everything I do that I become discouraged if things aren't perfect. I hold myself to such high standards that I cannot stand to see myself fail—an unhealthy perspective I have been working toward overcoming for years, especially when it comes to softball, and especially now that I have become captain.

When I was chosen to be captain of the 2016 JV softball team, I was ecstatic. This title wielded a power that brought with it many new responsibilities: being a model player, acting as a leader, and serving as a representative of my team and my school. All of this pleased me, but I knew it didn't automatically grant me the stats of best player. As the varsity coach began to recruit some of my younger teammates, I became jealous. I thought it was unfair, and at times, I showed that. Nevertheless, I was expected to remain positive, even if I wasn't on the inside. That truly was difficult. But the girls looked up to me, and my new responsibilities gave me a new perspective.

Positivity is contagious, and so is the lack of it. When the girls were visibly unhappy, our unity was affected: we were mean, our energy died, and we lost sportsmanship. But by encouraging them through positive reinforcement—smiling, cheering, and offering advice—I turned that energy around and united us in playing well and staying positive.

In our last game, the centerfielder and I made an amazing play at third. However, the runner slid into my hand, resulting in a bad fracture. I couldn't continue at third, as I was in too much pain to wear my glove. Still, I wasn't going to let my negative emotions get the best of me because I wanted to end the season strongly. With a broken hand, I stood at the plate with tears in my eyes and pulled off two bunts for hits and a pop-fly to centerfield. I felt like I had achieved the impossible.

After, in the last moments of our season, we made our final, yet habitual, game-summarizing huddle in leftfield. Although we had lost, smiles split across our faces as we laughed together in reminiscence of the fun we had had during the season. We were about to do our final cheer when I said to the girls, "You guys better make this the loudest cheer we've done all year." I still hear it resonating in my head.

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Humility

Leora Levitt

Sharon High School

I currently play field hockey as a junior. My teammate recently pointed out that she thinks we are one of the few field hockey teams that does a cheer at the end of each game saying good game to the other team, thank you to the officials, and then our team name. Some of my teammates always say, “Ugh, why do we have to do this cheer.” Even though I also get frustrated by being on a “losing” team, I am proud that in the end we can congratulate the other team and unite as our own team all in one cheer.

Acting with complete humility is an ideal that is difficult to achieve. In order to be completely humble, one must be selfless. Because this task is not easy, it should be the greatest goal to strive for. I believe that sportsmanship is defined by humility. A good atmosphere is created when everyone playing the game is selfless. A player who is completely humble can be happy not only for their own teammate, but for their competitor. When players are humble, they put the game on a higher level than they put their own goals or interests. A team should see their competitors simply as who they are; competitors. The other team is not defined by the town they live in, what they look like, or even their ability to play the sport. They are defined by what they are doing here and now in the game. For those minutes on the field, court, track, or even in the pool, everyone’s focus is the competition.

Focusing on the game is ideal, but teams still need to remember that sportsmanship is important both on and off the field. At school, players should talk positively about their own team, and not focus on other teams’ reputations. On the sideline, players should see their own teammates as small pieces working together to create a larger sculpture. Everyone has the same goal; even the other team has their own sculpture to build. The officials and the coaches are both vital pieces in creating the sculpture. If before, during, and after the competition players can think in the big picture, they will be more supportive of each other and respectful of the other team.

In high school, student athletes often have many other aspects of their lives. A team sport is a place where athletes should be able to forget about rumors they heard, or teammates they despise. Instead of thinking of those negative thoughts, athletes should remember that everyone on their team has the same goal they do. Captains and coaches are there to lead the team as one team with one goal. The opposing team should be seen and talked about as a challenge that the team will face together. A positive, competitive atmosphere is created when teammates are encouraging their own team, respecting the other team, and accepting the coach’s and referees’ decisions.

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16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Taylor Rose

Mashpee High School

Some words that I think define “sportsmanship” are respect, positivity, dignity, and fairness. All four of these words have a connection with sportsmanship. The definition of the word sportsmanship is “to show fair and polite behavior while participating in a sports event”. If you do not have good sportsmanship, then many people will see you as a poor sport. This takes a very large part in high school athletics.

To me, four words that I think best defines “sportsmanship” are respect, positivity, dignity, and fairness. The word respect has to do with sportsmanship because you have to respect yourself and others. If you were to lose a game, it is important that you show respect towards the referees, coaches, the other team, your teammates, and most importantly, yourself. The second word that defines sportsmanship is positivity. It is never good to think negatively, so you should always stay positive. You should have positive thoughts towards yourself and your peers/teammates. The word dignity also defines sportsmanship. It is important to keep your dignity so you don’t lose self-respect and stay humble. Keeping your dignity will allow you to be worthy of respect and honor. One last word that I think defines sportsmanship is fairness. If you have good sportsmanship then you will always be fair and never cheat. It is also important that you treat everyone equally.

To me, sportsmanship means to be kind, stay humble, and treat people with equality. When you have good sportsmanship it means that you do not cheat, and you stay positive. It is good to stay positive, even if you do not succeed in what you are doing. It is important to take the loss and come back stronger next time.

Sportsmanship is extremely important in high school athletics. If you do not have good sportsmanship, then people will most likely think that you are a poor sport. It is important that you stay positive and congratulate the other team. Even though you may be angry, you have to respect the other team.

Sportsmanship plays a big role in life as well, although extremely important in sports especially. Sportsmanship is good for the practice of self-respect as well as respect for others. It will also keep you positive and humble. It can teach athletes to have good behavior and etiquette as it can carry on to their everyday life.

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Unraveling the Meaning of Sportsmanship

Cayce Pappas
Oxford High School

“Be fearless in the pursuit of what sets your soul on fire”, (Andrea Bolduc) has been the motto of the girls’ basketball team for the past year. During those twelve months, the team found their passion for the game. The team had previously been winning game after game, resulting in multiple inflamed egos. After being introduced to a new coach, the girls were faced with their first loss of the season. However, this also resulted in them understanding what it meant to be a family. They realized that sportsmanship was the heart of not only respect for opponents, but also for your teammates. The most important aspect of any sport is not learning how to win, but learning how to lose with reverence.

It was a brisk night on January 10th, the most imperative game of the season was on the line, and the crowd was restless. In their minds, losing was not an option. Three days prior, when Coach Jackson became head coach of the team, he decided that teaching his kids dignity was more important than having them brag over yet another win. He wanted his team to discover the passion of the game again, focusing less on being the best and more about being perceived as honorable and respectable. The loss of a game would only strengthen the drive to try harder in every other game that was held. He was not planning on his players losing a sense of character. He didn’t give up on his kids; he instead chose to stand his ground because as Travis Best once said “Behind every fearless player is a fearless coach who refused to let them be anything but the best they can be”. All of the players felt dejected; one loss seemed to be the ultimate downfall. That was, until one day, when the team walked into the gym and saw “What you are as a person is far more important than what you are as a basketball player” (John Wooden) written on the blackboard. This was all the team needed to realize that Coach Jackson was in fact right; defeat shouldn’t break a player, instead it should empower one to try harder and watch everyone succeed. In a time span of a week, the girls’ basketball team unraveled the meaning of family, dignity, and most importantly sportsmanship

A week later, Coach Jackson and his girls earned a second chance at winning the game they loved. The team stepped onto the court, reflecting on their coach’s advice, “Gratitude turns what we have into enough” (Melody Beattie). These inspiring last words were delivered to help the girls reflect on the fact that neither winning or losing defines the team, rather it is how they conduct themselves with either result.

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16th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Michelle Hambly
Mashpee High School

Imagine scoring a goal, touchdown, or basket and having none of your teammates cheer for you. Having everyone in the stands sit down and have a straight face. This situation rarely happens that being because in order to be a successful team you have to have sportsmanship within your teammates, fans, and opponents. Two words that describe the way to having a successful sportsmanship based team everyone must have respect and spirit.

When playing on a high school or major league sports team having respect is the main key to having a successful team. Respecting your teammates is the most important part of sportsmanship in my opinion. With no respect to your teammates there is no way of performing to the best of the team's ability. Even after a bad lose and you are angry at the other team for pulling the win it is very un-sportsman like to cuss or disrespect the other team. No team enjoys playing another team when they play with a bad attitude. Lashing out at the coach doesn't help anything either. All that will do is give you a nice spot on the bench. Disrespecting your coach for your own fault in a game is by far one of the worst things to do when they take time out of their own day to help you become a better player.

Spirit for your school, town, or state makes the sportsmanship of your team even better. If you have spirit then you have pride in your school or state. And with the pride you don't want people to look down on wherever you are from and that is where the respect aspect comes in. The more respect and spirit you show the more fans, and scouts will enjoy watching the game. Also having spirit encourages your teammates and makes them perform better. When one of your teammates is having a bad day or game having spirit pumps them up and getting excited for the game.

Sportsmanship means something different to everyone that is an athlete. However, to me it means encouraging your teammates and having respect for your coaches, officials, and surroundings. As long as you have sportsmanship your team will be successful at some point. It's amazing how the process works.

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Sportsmanship
Tre' Sorrell
Mashpee High School

When people think of Sportsmanship they tend to think of a person who is a “good loser”. It’s defined as ethical, appropriate, polite and fair behavior while practicing or playing in an athletic event. Having sportsmanship gives people an idea on how your character is view to society. Two words that best define sportsmanship are respect and integrity.

First, integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. When a sport involves integrity, it can often be recognized as being honest and genuine in the event. A sport generally displays integrity as a level of community, trust, and support behind it. When I played football and still do, integrity helps increase participation along with loyalty and attractions from my fellow teammates. Integrity can take you far especially with financial viability through attraction of sponsors and funding grants. Success on the field plays a big part with integrity. A person with good sportsmanship can be trusted because he or she never veers from their responsibility, beliefs and principles.

Second, respect is a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements. You should show high regard for coaches, officials, fans, administration, self, team and the school you are representing. When playing with respect such as in football, you should win and lose with dignity. No one likes a show off or be a cry baby. Start and finish the game with a good attitude and firm handshake. This shows that you are respectful person and people tend to like you more with loyalty and fairness. Respect in sportsmanship for your opponent is a quality that is inherent to the way football or any sport. We were taught at young levels and should not get lost in the desire to win.

Furthermore, sportsmanship is a model that demonstrates and encourages character development, which then influences the player’s character to become a better athlete. All athletes should show respect and integrity for teammates, opponents, coaches and officials. Honor your sport with your best efforts and conduct. Respectfully participate in pre and post-game rituals. Win with humility and lose with dignity. The sportsmanship core value is a matter of being good and doing right in sports. When having respect and integrity you tend to get farther in life. Thus, sportsmanship means conducting athletics while adhering to the highest principles such as respect and integrity.



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Advanced Math & Science Academy	Medford High School
Belmont High School	Millis High School
Billerica Memorial High School	Monson High School
Boston Public Schools	Narragansett Regional High School
Bromfield School	Newton North High School
Clinton High School	North Reading High School
Dover-Sherborn High School	Norton High School
Duxbury High School	Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)
Foxboro High School	Oxford High School
Greater Lawrence Technical School	Peabody Veterans Memorial High School
Hanover High School	Plymouth South High School
Hingham High School	Pope Francis High School
Hopedale High School	Sandwich High School
Hopkinton High School	Sandwich High School
Joseph Case High School	Sharon High School
Littleton High School	Smith Academy
Longmeadow High School	Stoughton High School
Lynn Vocational Technical Institute	Sutton High School
Lynnfield High School	Ursuline Academy
Marian High School	Walpole High School
Mashpee High School	Wayland High School
Maynard High School	

