



“Describe how sportsmanship inspires leadership in you, your team and your school community.”

This book represents the finalist and honorable mention entries in the 19th Annual MIAA Student Sportsmanship Essay/Multimedia Contest as voted by the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee.

Multimedia Category

First Place

Christopher Cogan – Middleboro High School

Literary Category

First Place

Clarissa Garzon – Fontbonne Academy

Second Place

Akarsh Aurora – Ashland High School

Multimedia Category Finalists

Ronald Butler, Bruce French, Aiden Hobbs, Andrew Hobbs – Maynard High School
Joseph Bermingham, Tyler Kapopoulos, Diego Pinto – Maynard High School
Meghan Boermeester, Emily O’Bannon – Northbridge High School
Brendan Brogna, Steve Fajardo, Marissa Lawton, Judson Norris – Maynard High School
Andrew McGaffigan – Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School

Literary Category Finalists

Ciara Lonergan – East Bridgewater High School
Nuno Mestre – Milford High School
Caroline Connell – Hopkinton High School
Eva Parson – Milford High School
Haley Springman – Smith Academy
Tim Fitzpatrick – Shrewsbury High School
Angie Grabmier – Hopkinton High School
Nicole Miller – Archbishop Williams High School
Julia Kelly – Durfee High School
Audrey Bonacci – Franklin High School
Kassidy Pratt – Dartmouth High School
Kishen Mann – Newton South High School
Emma-Abigail Gachagua – Bay Path RVT High School

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****FIRST PLACE****

19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Clarissa Garzon
Fontbonne Academy

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines sportsmanship as conduct (such as fairness, respect for one's opponent, and graciousness in winning or losing) becoming to one participating in a sport. I believe that it boils down to one word: respect. Sportsmanship is how one acts, not just how they carry themselves, but how they respect others. By playing with sportsmanship, you not only perform at your best, but you display leadership through your example. I have learned this in my play and now as a leader. Sportsmanship gives you the ability to act selflessly and this translates into your performance, and also your interactions with others in the hallways, in the classroom, and in your community.

For the longest time, I equated athletics with competition. At a young age, I remember wanting to play well and win; those were my two sole goals. However, through experience, I realized that athletics was not just about competition, but it was about the community and solidarity that is formed between you, your teammates, your coaches, and everyone involved in the sport. When I realized this, I prided myself on being the player with the best attitude and conduct. I respected the refs and my opponents. I pulled my opponents up. I firmly believe that my ability to display sportsmanship has allowed me to become a leader. It truly inspired me to want to be a leader. I wanted everyone to realize the importance of fairness and respect. Once I realized this, I intentionally, and in some ways unintentionally, began to promote it in my team and even my school community. And, I was encouraged when I saw that my teammates, in turn, began to value sportsmanship just as much as I did. Players that once were upset by referee's calls were now the ones that calmed down another player. Players that once let themselves fall into tensions with opposing players were the ones that helped opponents up. They became leaders because they did what was not easy and inspired others to do the same. This leadership not only translated into their actions on the court, but into our school community as well. I noticed these same players helping a freshman adjust to high school or help someone talk to a teacher respectfully.

Our team culture has always been based around hard work and, more importantly, respect. This fundamental value is what truly represents sportsmanship. I and my teammates play with respect, and this not only inspires us to be leaders on the court but in our communities as well. We want to be the students that act respectfully in the classroom. Our actions reflect our values, and these values hopefully inspire our community to act the same way.

Sportsmanship is defined by respect. It not only inspires me to be a leader, but it inspires my teammates and my community to live with that value, and that is what sportsmanship is really about: acting with respect and inspiring others to do the same.

SECOND PLACE

Sportsmanship and Leadership
Akarsh Aurora
Ashland High School

Acclaimed writer, William Arthur Ward wrote, "*Leadership is based on inspiration, not domination; on cooperation, not intimidation.*" In my mind, Ward's interpretation of leadership is analogous to the definition of sportsmanship. The idea of "*inspiration, not domination*" conveys that a leader motivates his peers to be the best they can be. Likewise, a player who embodies sportsmanship guides the team to its greatest potential through actions that show integrity in the game and empathy for all its participants. I attempt to exhibit this same ethos of the game when I am playing with my team or taking part in my school community.

As a devoted player on the basketball team, I understand that a team's foundation is built around "*cooperation, not intimidation.*" Being on a team is a privilege but it is also a duty. To fulfill my duty, I strive to motivate my teammates and raise them to the ultimate in sport. However, achieving this is not solely about victory, it is also about modelling sportsmanship. The moral imperative of sportsmanship requires that a team wins with humility but more importantly, loses with dignity. Good sportsmanship relates how a team should not rely on lowering self-esteem through intimidation but rather a mutual fellowship for opponents and teammates alike. In my perspective, this means helping up an opposing player that has been injured, sprinting on and off the court, and interacting graciously with game officials. Knowing my team's commitment to these virtues, I can proudly say that the Ashland High School teams vie to treat competition with the utmost respect and fairness. My team's underlying goal is to actively communicate the ethics of how the game should be played. Similarly, leadership within my school community also reflects the values of sportsmanship. For example, the Model United Nations club, which seeks to debate worldly issues and find viable solutions. Membership in this club requires delegates to maintain poise and a diplomatic demeanor even when arguments get heated. Although all of the participants represent distinct, competing political entities, we must effectively cooperate to find a working resolution by virtue of cordial communication. Members of the Model United Nations club serve as leaders displaying true sportsmanship, inspiring the whole community to mirror the school's core values of respect and responsibility. This is proof that sportsmanship goes beyond the game and that it applies to every aspect of life.

The infectious nature of sportsmanship gives it the ability to resonate throughout any community, regardless of its size. Leadership and sportsmanship go hand in hand because leaders are the ones who initiate this chain reaction by demonstrating integrity, humility, dignity, and empathy in their conduct. True sportsmanship is about leading by example and putting the players above the outcome of the game, it is about being the best version of yourself but also improving those around you by raising the standards of play.

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Small Town Sportsmanship
Ciara Lonergan
East Bridgewater High School

Growing up in East Bridgewater, I have to admit there's not a lot to do. We have hidden gems like any small town, like our Movie Theater and Johnny Mac's, our prized Italian restaurant, but the epicenter of East Bridgewater's spirit is around our sports teams. Like any high school in America, East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School treasures its sports teams due to the level of sportsmanship our student athletes possess. Student athletes use the leadership skills their sport provides them with to pursue greatness inside and outside of athletics. Sportsmanship and leadership play major roles in developing a student athlete's ability to not only be a conscientious student and a skilled player, but also to help build even the smallest of towns.

It's my personal experience that allows me to confidently say that leadership and sportsmanship go hand in hand. My tennis team inspires me throughout every practice, every match, and every team bonding night to get better. I'm lucky to play with the most amazing people in my school, and I feel like it's my job to make them proud on and off the tennis court. I have made it my responsibility, as a result of the lessons tennis has taught me, to be a good representative of my team. That's what sportsmanship means to me, and I hope to be a leader in helping others realize that, at the end of the day, it does not matter how well you play but rather how you respect the game. East Bridgewater tennis is already a leader in sportsmanship, having won the league's sportsmanship award for three years in a row, and that makes us leaders within our community.

One particular program that helps student athletes demonstrate and grow the leadership skills they learn in our community is the East Bridgewater Sports Parents. They're the strongest force behind getting EBJSHS athletes what they need to thrive. Whether it be equipment, uniforms, or increased funding, they're on it. Not only do the Sports Parents help student athletes on the field, they help us off the field, too. In exchange for scholarship eligibility, the Sports Parents provide volunteer opportunities for student athletes in town events. Take our annual Whiffle Ball Tournament, for example. The Sports Parents help student athletes hone in on their leadership abilities by giving them various positions in running the Tournament, providing them with the opportunity to become role models for younger athletes. Many movies portray student athletes as brainless jocks, but the Sports Parents look beyond that and see that we are, in fact, future leaders in the making.

The sportsmanship and leadership of EBJSHS student athletes makes East Bridgewater's pocket of Massachusetts so unique. We're proud of our small town, using our sportsmanship to prove our strength on the field and leadership to prove our heart off the field. Sportsmanship provides the fundamentals in building leaders, and East Bridgewater is taking this fact in stride to better our community.

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Sportsmanship Creates Leaders

Nuno Mestre

Milford High School

For so many years, sportsmanship to me simply meant a small act like picking up an opponent up when they got fouled, keeping my teammates happy, and shaking hands at the end of the game. However, in recent years it has proven to mean so much more. While sportsmanship is an essential part of building teamwork, respect, and character as a team, it is important to understand the effects it has on individuals, teams, and communities. Sportsmanship inspires leadership by encouraging communities to accept new members creating the atmosphere of one giant community.

An act of sportsmanship by an individual can be all it takes to inspire the whole team. The decision to include the new kid in a drill at practice, talk to the freshmen, or become friends with the shy kid on the team could drive the rest of the team to do the same. When more people begin to show acts of sportsmanship it becomes a trend. So, more and more athletes will begin to show sportsmanship to their teammates and other teams to fit in. While doing this, they will become a leader themselves and create a positive atmosphere in all athletic competitions. As a result, one simple action by a leader on the team could create the movement to include everyone and build a sense of community on the team.

When a whole team decides to carry out acts of sportsmanship, it will help focus a community's values on providing a fair and honest environment in which all teams compete, while maintaining an equal respect for all participants. In high school, athletics are effective in bringing a community together. For instance, one way my high school shows sportsmanship to bring the community together is by including special needs students and English learners in athletics. Our school takes pride in this, and our Special Olympics team has won national awards and felt a sense of pride to wear a jersey. Similarly, English learners and immigrants were given an opportunity to play sports, despite their lack of English skills, and even helped our soccer team win a league title, something we had failed to do in 20 years. Thus, the decision to lead by example as a team and community to show acts sportsmanship allow more people to be involved, connected, and win games.

As shown, sportsmanship is much more than just going above the game you are playing and giving all players equal respect. Sportsmanship also means inspiring others to build character and treat teammates and opposition with equal respect. By showing acts of sportsmanship, you are a leader by including others who are at a disadvantage, having a mutual respect for all athletes, and helping create a community that values the importance of fairness, honesty, and equality on and off the field.

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What Sportsmanship Means to Me

Caroline Connell

Hopkinton High School

Throughout my life, having important mentors and role models has shaped me into the person that I am today. Each leader I come across leads in their own unique way while still incorporating traits great leaders share. Many of these impactful leaders incorporate traits such as passion, accountability, communication, and the list goes on. However, one trait that gets overshadowed as one of the fundamental pillars of a good leader is sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is defined as fair and generous behavior towards someone, especially throughout sports. I believe this is an integral quality to have in order to be an impactful and inspiring leader. During my freshman year of high school, our varsity basketball team was blessed with two outstanding captains. I will never forget their actions and how they led by example by their understated respect for our team, our school and our community as they led us to the state championship. After each major win, we held our heads high and did not act as if we had won the Super bowl. Although we didn't know exactly what the other team was feeling at that moment, having sportsmanship was instrumental in the way that our team displayed respect and empathy toward our competitors. It is important to me that leadership encompasses other areas in my school life and reflects who I am. I value sportsmanship because it is crucial that you are not just representing yourself when you play, but that you represent your entire community and everything it stands for. We strive to win from as early as I can remember and I believe sportsmanship should be instilled within all of us at a very young age much like competitiveness and the will to win. Sportsmanship is not just acting like the bigger person, but conducting oneself with honor, discipline, character, inclusion, and empathy.

Last spring being involved in Unified Track allowed me to gain a whole new perspective towards sportsmanship. Unified Sports are an inclusive program that unites Special Olympic athletes and their buddies who are their teammates. The Unified track team was a completely different dynamic and it allowed me to step back from the intense competitiveness I am used to. Students from our community were invited to make a long tunnel in order to cheer on our team and the opposing team. The tunnel reflected our ability to show sportsmanship because this exemplified our inclusive and positive attitudes towards both teams. Our team was even honored with the Sportsmanship award at the end of the season which was rewarding considering that this was a goal of ours! The unified program is built on the foundation of sportsmanship and there cannot be a stronger message to promote. Overall, if you can take one thing away from this essay, remember that actions always speak louder than words and it is your behavior on the court, field, etc. that define who you are as a player, person, student, and community member.

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Leadership through Sportsmanship

Eva Parson

Milford High School

There is a banner hanging in the gym of Milford High School that reads “Welcome to Milford High School, where sportsmanship is an expectation, so please let the players play, let the coaches coach, let the officials officiate and let the spectators be positive.” I don’t know exactly who wrote that quote, or who hung the banner, but that message alone has changed the way I act as a leader. Every time I step foot in that gym, I glance at the banner, hung high on the wall for everyone to see, and think about how I represent my town and how I present myself. I have always liked that quote, as it defines sportsmanship for every person at a sporting event.

Sportsmanship is not only an individual effort, but it is the united effort between coaches, players, and spectators that can make athletics so influential in their communities. As a three sport athlete, I see proper sportsmanship appear in many different places like the volleyball court, the swimming pool, and the lacrosse field. I feel that my leadership skills have been influenced by moments I’ve had during each sport. In some sports, some moments have been more profound, while others are smaller or have taken place over time. For example, this past volleyball season, our team travelled to a nearby town for a non- league matchup. The other team was hosting their homecoming game, and therefore they had many fans in the bleachers. The gym we played in did not have enough space for all of their fans, which meant the fans were practically standing on the court. Throughout the match, their fans shouted discouraging statements at us and laughed at our mistakes. After we had lost the game in three sets, the fans rushed onto the court before we had even walked away. This game was an eye opening experience for me, and made me realize how I was never going to act if I was watching a game. These fans did not uphold their town’s high expectations, and they did not conduct themselves as role models. From this, I have become consciously aware of how I act while at other games and my own games, making sure to lead by example. I have learned to model positive sportsmanship while teaching my newest teammates to act with poise and respect. As an upperclassman, I am aware that our younger athletes are always watching what I do, and I want to show them that sportsmanship starts long before they even step foot on the court or the field.

As I continue the rest of my athletic career in high school, I realize that I must continue to be a leader for all. I know that with experience comes great responsibility, and with responsibility comes a duty to teach the future of Milford High School athletics what it means to be a leader.

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Sportsmanship Essay

Haley Springman

Smith Academy

There is one thing that you don't see enough of in life. You may think that I'm talking about a number of different things, ranging between health, and even fantasy. However, I'm talking about sportsmanship. You may not see it now, but sportsmanship can be one of the most inspiring and influential things in life. You also may not realize that you see and are inspired by it every day. It could be from a sports team that you play on, or even at your workplace. Moreover, it has many different jobs, and can inspire in so many different ways. This includes inspiring leadership. This could range from the captain of a sports team, to the boss of your business, but in every way, sportsmanship does inspire leadership.

The majority of my schools community is greatly inspired by sportsmanship. I find that the people who act in a manner of good sportsmanship, tend to be more involved as a leader in the school. This can range from a class president, or even the principal. Almost every day after a school sports game, if our principal was there, he'll complement one of the players on something about the game. Even if he can't make it, he'll ask how the game went, and how both you and the team played as a whole. This shows good sportsmanship, and how having this attitude makes him more respected as a leader.

Secondly, take my sports team for example, you can see the way sportsmanship has affected them. They see people who represent good sportsmanship, who may be upperclassmen, or individuals on opposing teams. This includes clapping as an injured player walks off the field, and being respectful no matter the circumstance. I watch as my team sees this on their own, and aims to be seen at that high standard, while acting with respect. They strive to be like them, to become leaders, and to become inspirations themselves.

Lastly, there's me, an individual who sees the effects of sportsmanship in their everyday life. I see them in me. Whenever I find myself, or any other person being a good sport, I ask myself how I can be more like that every day. My goal is to one day be that person who earns the ability to positively influence their peers. In my opinion, a leader is someone you trust who improves and develops every day. I make every effort to be a person that people can trust, and someone that they can learn from how sportsmanship and leadership can be such an important effect on people, regardless of age, community, or lifestyle.

People can have different opinions on anything and everything in life. But this takes no feat to recognize. There are so many examples, and stories that can prove the importance of sportsmanship, and how it brings leadership into lives. No matter where an individual finds the leadership, and strong inspirational person in their life, the effect should be the same.

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Unified Track
Tim Fitzpatrick
Shrewsbury High School

Although Track and Field is one of the most competitive sports that requires extreme strength and speed, it was not the sport that I was drawn to. For me, the sport that seemed to call my name was Unified Track and Field, an athletic program where special education students compete with partners from their school in both track and field events. Through this program, the experiences I have had, the lessons I have learned, and the bonds I have made with these athletes are invaluable. I never showed up to a practice or to a meet worried about the results of my events; I just always looked forward to helping all my teammates compete and to strengthening my personal bonds with the athletes. Throughout my experiences in the program, the concept of unified sports is exactly what sportsmanship is all about.

One of the most influential experiences I had was my friendship with Rahul. After being partnered with him at the first practice, the connection we had was instantaneous. Rahul has Autism and in addition he suffers from severe allergies to bees as well as specific foods. Ironically, his favorite pastime is to watch the Food Network, especially his favorite host, Guy Fieri. Although Rahul showed up every day just to compete and have fun with his peers and competitors, he unknowingly taught me some of the most valuable lessons about how sportsmanship inspires leadership in the process. Rahul made me understand how to work with people who don't think the same way that I do, and that showing up with a positive attitude and determination are some of the best leadership qualities out there. I can recall a time during the state meet for unified track when Rahul wasn't feeling a hundred percent and was struggling to have a good time. Even with these complications, Rahul kept up his positive attitude and remained with the team, even though his parents kept offering to take him home. In this moment, Rahul displayed the best type of leadership there is and I try to lead the same way he did that day. By staying and keeping up his good sportsmanship, he set a perfect example of how a leader can inspire a whole entire team. Without help from Rahul, leading the Shrewsbury High School Unified Track team to be state semi-finalists would not have been possible. Being friends with Rahul has made me aware of the importance of kindness, patience and understanding, which go into sportsmanship. After two years of Unified Track, I have developed a genuine appreciation for those who are different than me, and I realize that everyone learns at his own pace and uses an individual style. Even though my future success in the business world will be because of my hard work and determination, it will also be motivated by people like Rahul who make me understand and appreciate the importance of sportsmanship and leadership.

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Sportsmanship Inspires Leadership
Angie Grabmeier
Hopkinton High School

My club volleyball team looked at me confused as I told them I looked the opposing team in the eye when saying “good game” after a win or a loss. This interaction has stuck with me for quite some time, and honestly, I am confused as to how they can go through the line of athletes and not look them in the eye.

Ever since I was little, sportsmanship has been heavily preached to me whether being “modest in victory” or “gracious in defeat”. Coach says this to us after every game and although it may not resonate with my teammates after tough matches, I always try to demonstrate these characteristics. Being modest, gracious, or even looking someone in the eyes, shows that I truly mean “good game” when I say it.

I often try to use my influence through sportsmanship to show younger players on my team that it is okay to praise the other team rather than having negative thoughts about them after a loss. I show them that sometimes we need to move on and use that frustration to work harder next time rather than demonstrate it in the moment.

Displaying sportsmanship has not always been easy for me. I always knew that I wanted to be a leader but first I had to evaluate how I could do that. I learned that a leader must be inclusive, hardworking, passionate, and most importantly, a leader must demonstrate good sportsmanship. Over the years, I have looked up to leaders on my teams, some Captains and some not, and I have been able to learn from all how to express good sportsmanship. That ultimately has made me the leader I am today.

Once you are able to demonstrate good sportsmanship as a leader, people will look up to you and follow your example. People (peers, teammates, younger players and community members) are always watching the good and bad so I know I need to not only show good sportsmanship but teach others how to be good sports as well. Teach people to smile when introducing themselves to the other team and to say good luck with sincerity. Soon enough, the whole team is able to demonstrate good sportsmanship.

It’s difficult to be the first one to change, but once you do it, others are more willing to follow. It is also noticeable when a whole team has good sportsmanship. It is no longer one leader, but a team full of leaders. As a member of our school community or any other, it is inspiring to see this. Fans notice the success of the team, and want to bring that to their team, club, or any other group, allowing the players to be the leaders that they truly strive to be.

Sportsmanship can be displayed in a variety of ways but for starters, look the opposing team in the eye when shaking hands, smile, say “good game” and show them that you are a sincere leader.

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19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Nicole Miller

Archbishop Williams High School

How can sportsmanship be defined? Ask around, and you might find that has varying definitions depending on who you ask. To me, sportsmanship is the show of respect between opponents that build each other's confidence. It's a hard thing to do in the face of a bitter loss in the state championship, or when you get beaten by 20 seconds in the most important race of your life. However, turning to look someone in the eyes, someone who you might not be entirely fond of at the moment, and shaking their hand is the ultimate triumph.

In my own experience, sportsmanship has been essential in keeping with the sport that I love, swimming. The long spent hours in the pool, constantly staring at the same black line, over and over again, would drive some people insane. However, it's not these moments that keep me with the sport. It's those times when I finish a tough race and get to smile at my competitors and say a simple "good job", and the fist bumps my teammates give each other at the end of the main set. It's important to keep doing this because we can never truly know what it took people to do that, the effort both physically and mentally that they felt.

In other sports, this also applies and is frequently exhibited within my school community and others. In all of these places, you never truly know who you're facing. That girl that may have just scored on you during your soccer match might have had a season ending surgery just a year before. The boy that intercepted a ball from your QB, costing your team the game, may suffer from severe performance anxiety. The dude that just tripped your linemen during your hockey game and injured him might have just come off of concussion protocol and isn't too used to skating yet. There is simply no way to tell. The only thing that you can do treat them with respect because once that clock stops, you're no longer competitors, you're just high school students trying to make it through the game.

In the end, nobody will remember the number of goals that you scored, or the records you broke. In fact, they may not even remember the game winning goal that you had in overtime against your school's rival in the championship game. However, they will remember how you treated them and how you made them feel. It is that legacy that is most important above all, whether it be your teammates or competitors, because that defines who you are on and off of the field.

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19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Julia Kelly
Durfee High School

After slipping on my jersey and skirt, sliding my feet through my shin guards, and lacing up my cleats, I pull it up my calf, so it remains just below my knee. It has three stripes of red and white, the latter of which currently looks more like a dull yellow. It smells pretty bad too. My captains' band. Before every game this band pulls me into game mode, awakening the fire, I have before every field hockey game. What it also does, more importantly, is reminds me of my responsibility to my school, my team, and myself to remain sportsmanlike no matter how the game unfolds, good or bad. For me, sportsmanship is defined as a combination of respect and leadership.

Respect. In high school athletic competitions, emotions run sky high. Competitions between rivals create unfounded intensity. As the season winds down, winning becomes more important for teams to advance into the state tournament and as the pressure increases, so does the tension. For seniors especially, the emotions of playing your last games of high school sports could make them reactive and defensive in the face of a bad call or an aggressive opponent. Combatting all of these emotions, however, is sportsmanship. For a player to truly have sportsmanship, they respect themselves, who they represent, and the opponent enough to calm high enthusiasm, channeling it into positive, rather than negative energy, words, or actions. Sportsmanship allows teammates to communicate in a constructive light, no matter the score. My coach once said: "Playing on this team is not a privilege, it is a right." Being respectful on and off the field, court, or rink shows humility in the face of success, acceptance in the face of defeat, and an honor just to be on the team.

Leadership. The three stripes around my leg serve as my reminder that I must set the example of sportsmanship on my team. Sportsmanship is part of the rules to any game. It levels the playing field and is vital to any competition. This leveled field provides the opportunity for anyone to be a leader, no matter if they are a captain or not. The legacy of a graduating class or an entire athletic program often is defined by the behavior of players on and off the field. When a team is lead with leaders that value sportsmanship, the legacy and reputation of everything that team represents, benefits. Being humble, thankful, and obedient creates the positive atmosphere needed to lift team morale, subsequently producing not only wins, but well rounded, level-headed leaders capable of performing in a respectful manner under pressure.

The word sportsmanship is not meant to limit passions, but to enforce a culture of respect and provide an even playing field for people to lead not just with their skills, but with their pride, humility, and passion. Sportsmanship grooms athletes for life after high school athletics, although none of us ever want it to end.

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A Unifying Characteristic
Audrey Bonacci
Franklin High School

Sportsmanship, according to Merriam Webster, is “Conduct (such as fairness, respect for one’s opponent, and graciousness in winning or losing) becoming to one participating in a sport.” Contrary to popular belief, ‘sport’ is not simply an athletic organization. It is defined as “a particular activity so engaged in.” Therefore, the opportunities presented to a member of any given community to demonstrate sportsmanship are much higher than they are perceived to be. Franklin High School presents students with countless opportunities to display such a concept, both through programs and simply through daily occurrences. I have experienced these opportunities first hand in various ways.

One way I have experienced this is through Unified Basketball. Its name highlights the value it embodies. Unity. I have never been part of a program that further displays the true meaning of sportsmanship. The team members are united by the desire to see others succeed. We clap when the other team makes a basket because a kid playing with one arm just drained a three. We go crazy because a teammate made an incredible steal. Sportsmanship pushes us to be the best teammate, the best human that we can possibly be. This is illustrated both on and off the court in this program. It can be seen on the bus, during pasta parties, even just walking into the gym. Such situations have nothing to do with athletics, but need sportsmanship just as much as athletics do. In these situations, there are no cliques, there’s no popularity. There’s simply a group of people brought together as a team, by a common purpose.

I have additionally experienced sportsmanship at FHS through the simple daily task of walking through the halls. There are the slow walkers, who avoid going to class and subsequently make everyone late. There are the fast walkers, who will brush past you in a hurry not even caring if they flat tire you. There are the in-between walkers, who kind of just mimic the person in front of them. Then there are the people who cannot fit into any of these categories. There are those who adapt to the needs of the other walkers around them. They are the people who will walk fast when given the opportunity to help along others’ pace. They are the people who will be patient if you are lost and looking for a class. They will stop to help you, not just hurry by without a backward glance. They are the people that make the school a better and more united place. The people who adapt are rarely recognized, but they are there. They make a difference. Even if in a small and unrecognized way, they embody true sportsmanship.

I am inspired by the various forms that sportsmanship can take. I am inspired by the way it affects my teams, school, and community, where it is so common it can easily be overlooked. Sportsmanship in my community is not only readily accepted, but expected. It unites us.

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19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Kassidy Pratt

Dartmouth High School

There is a wide range of athletes all over the world, but some may wonder, what is the difference between someone who is good at a sport, and someone who is great? To be great at a sport, one should be good both physically and mentally. Athleticism covers the physical portion, and sportsmanship can, in part, cover the mental portion. Sportsmanship is the ability to be fair, have respect towards others, and being gracious when winning or losing when participating in a sport. This conduct leads athletes to be cultivated both on and off the court. In my experience, sportsmanship has inspired me, my teammates, and my school community.

I participate in three sports at my school, volleyball, basketball and softball. Playing these sports has taught me about sportsmanship and leadership, and how sportsmanship plays a big role in creating a leader of a team because it causes someone to be a role model to others. From my experience, I know that entering freshman year, I looked up to all the seniors, and how caring and supportive they were. As I progressed in high school, I hoped to follow in the upperclassmen's footsteps, and be able to have fun in a game whether we were winning or losing. As a senior now, I know that I must display sportsmanship, as I will be captain of the softball team in the spring. The underclassmen will be looking up to me just as I did, and I know that I must have a good attitude in order to lead them to have good sportsmanship as they grow up through high school.

Sportsmanship is like a chain reaction, if one person has a good attitude, then others around them will. This is how sportsmanship spreads throughout a team, and everyone begins to become leaders. When one person is supportive on the team and has a positive attitude such as a captain, others follow, leading the whole team to pick each other up and be respectful. This creates the strong bond on my team, where everyone is inspired by captains and those who have a good attitudes, and we push each other to do our bests.

In my school community, many students have respect towards others and their teachers. Just as in sports where people look up to and are inspired by those who have good attitudes, people in school will do the same. Seeing this respect and appreciation that some students have towards others, leads peers to follow and do the same. My school community is mostly full of kind, hardworking students because people are inspired by other's sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is a conduct that leads people to be fair, respectful and appreciative toward their peers and their environment around them. It has inspired me to be a leader on my teams, as younger athletes will be looking up to me, my team to all be leaders and support each other, and it has inspired my community to follow each other and have respect for all.

****FINALIST****

Sportsmanship Question

Kishen Mann

Newton South High School

To me everyone wants to belong to a cause or community greater than themselves; be part of something everlasting. Sportsmanship-- an idea that promotes morality and ethics over personal gain or loss; grace in losing or humbleness in victory. A leader is someone who can inspire courage within people and collaborate and command them effectively to achieve a goal.

A key part of collaboration is connecting to people with sympathy and empathy. In a team one learns to recognize another's adversity and work with one another to overcome hardships; if a team is to be successful one must resign their personal egos to be part of something much greater and much stronger. The biological definition of community is various members of the same species interacting in a common area. Interactions and conversations between different types of people prove the differences that hold us apart are futile compared to our shared senses and feelings of human emotion. Sportsmanship inspires me to lead and promote unity; those feelings that build human connection and bond that are so strong and everlasting. Those bonds that wipe away all the constructed differences. I will do this because everyone deserves to partake in the truest human experience that they can.

A leader should also inspire courage and grit. Jesse Owens won 4 gold medals in the 1936 Olympics in Germany during a time of racial turmoil and tension. He stood up for what he believed in; he stood up for what's right. Sportsmanship to a large degree inspires me to stand up for what's right; to treat people properly and respectfully; to promote unity even in the face of division.

Lastly sportsmanship inspires me to triumph. Back in the day, the samurai warrior would pray for an opponent to defeat him on the battlefield so he could die honorably. Sportsmanship creates an environment where courage is valued; where honor is respected no matter the outcome. Sportsmanship inspires me to be a man I can be proud of. Sportsmanship-- a game plan for life.

****FINALIST****

Sportsmanship Essay
Emma-Abigail Gachagua
Bay Path RVT High School

I can vividly remember the moment I stepped on the fresh, green field for the first time. I arrived with tremulous hands, tightly gripping onto my brand-new sports bag. It was as if my heart was going a thousand beats per minute, and my now labored breathing was unable to return to normal. It was my first day of soccer tryouts at Bay Path High School as a freshman. Fortunately, my close friend was there with me, which helped my nerves quite a bit. Over 40 girls gathered at the center of the field, their seemingly new cleats gleaming in the sun. A few girls sent friendly smiles towards me, however that couldn't stop the million thoughts racing through my mind. I had thoughts such as; "Will any of them like me? Are they nice? Will I make the team? Am I good enough?" However, the most frequent thought was, would they discriminate against me? My sister told me horror stories about minorities on sports teams being bullied because of their race. Just by taking a quick glance around the field, it was evident I was the only black girl trying out. This only increased my nerves more, and I began panic.

That was until she came to us. This kind, energetic girl had introduced herself and welcomed us to the new school. Throughout the tryouts, Kat would make sure to guide me in the drills, give me advice, and encourage or compliment me. Overall, she did anything she could to provide a safe, fair, and comfortable environment for me. This was my first encounter with true sportsmanship.

I believe this girl's actions had radiated kindness, humility, and sincerity. These are all significant qualities of true sportsmanship. Having the ability to demonstrate this to a stranger or even an opponent, is an essential skill. This skill shows leadership, respectfulness, and maturity. Therefore, the sportsmanship I saw in Kat, on the first day of my tryouts, inspired me to strive for true sportsmanship on and off the field. For example, in my classes I have been inspired to assist more of my classmates with their work. I try to thoroughly explain the work, instead of simply giving the answers. I'll continue encouraging them until they can get the correct answer. Also, I ask my teachers more frequently if they need help with anything. My new endeavors are the result of the example of true sportsmanship, Kat demonstrated to me on my first day. Sportsmanship is a powerful thing. Since I met her, I will always remember the importance of this. By having great sportsmanship, one learns to have leadership, self-control, and respect for others. This is fundamental for becoming a good and successful person. She led by example. In leading by example others can incorporate these behaviors in their own lives, and become the shining example, the inspiration to other students, to teams, and to the school community.

****Honorable Mention****

Sportsmanship Essay

Christian Iacoviello

St. Mary's High School - Lynn

Sportsmanship inspires me no matter where I am. It gives me that drive to keep going and going, whether I am on the field, on the ice, or just going about my regular day through school and home, sportsmanship is what keeps me up and going. How can I have the energy to do what I love to do, when I don't get that respect back? Why will I play whiffle ball with my friends, when one of them will stop the game every second to complain. Bad sportsmanship makes for an extremely unenjoyable moment for me and my friends who are trying to have a good time. Although, when our little pick-up game is played by the rules and nobody is trying to cheat the system, it inspires me to keep playing. Good sportsmanship from both sides inspires me to be the champion, to defeat my friends fair and square. Sportsmanship makes the prize of winning that game so much bigger, the bragging rights become so much more valuable when the game is played smoothly, by the rules, and with fair competition from both sides.

Within my school community, I am inspired greatly by sportsmanship. When it is a big rivalry game between The St. Mary's Spartans and The Bishop Fenwick Crusaders, I do not want to be out there on the ice fighting with the other team, talking trash to them personally, or hear our fan section or their fan section bantering about stuff that will not matter the next day. When I am out there on the ice, I want a good clean hockey game played with respect, integrity from both sides, and sportsmanship because that is what the game is all about. I want my school community who came out to support to watch the game and support our team, without directly targeting someone from the opposing side. The more good sportsmanship I see from my school community, and my team out there on the ice, the more motivated and inspired I am to keep on going and to drive for that win, because in the end all that matters is having fun, and sportsmanship determines that.

****Honorable Mention****

19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Bridget Parsons

Notre Dame Academy

Only thirty seconds left in the game, we are all screaming at the top of our lungs. This is it... “3, 2, 1” and the buzzer goes off. Just like that there are people all around me screaming, and I am jumping up and down in the stands, cheering like I’ve never cheered before. Our school’s lacrosse team has just won the State Championships, and as a student of Notre Dame Academy (NDA), it felt amazing.

As my schools “NDA super fan” I truly believe that there is nothing like cheering on your school’s sports teams, and as a three-season athlete I can attest that the cheers feel incredible and fuel your fight while competing. I love all things athletics, as a cross country runner, an alpine ski racer, and a track hurdler, my sports teams have had an immense part in shaping me into the leader I am.

When I entered a new high school, I was incredibly shy and quiet. I tried out for and made the JV field hockey team. My eyes were opened to the amazing nature of sports teams; this was a family, it was our family, our sisterhood, and working together to achieve a common goal and have fun while doing it. Playing my different sports, I saw progress on each team as the years went on. It was remarkable when girls broke out of their shells, were inspired by the sportsmanship, and emerged as leaders, some of them, including myself emerging as captains.

As the years went on, I learned the importance of being encouraging and enthusiastic with the all members of my team, and I grew into an influential leader on and off the field. I maintained the mindset that sportsmanship and friendships were more important than any win. I supported my own teams, opponents and other sports teams, resulting in my twin’s sister and my role of the “NDA super fans.” Through super fans we cheer on all our schools’ sports teams, encourage others to attend events and capture games and unforgettable moments on an Instagram account. I have learned that positivity grows. The sportsmanship I displayed turned into the sportsmanship within my teams which spread to sportsmanship and positivity throughout the school and community.

I go back and think about the lacrosse state championship, the sportsmanship I witnessed on the field and in the stands was motivating. Our school community was so proud of the goal we achieved. The way we support one another at my school, has turned us into successful leaders of our community. We worked together to achieve so many different accomplishments throughout my time at NDA. For example, our school donated enough shoes to a community shoe drive winning a private concert, and we raised over \$5000 to our Lenten campaign last year donating money to women in Africa. When we support each other on and off the field we have the power to take that support and work together to achieve a common goal.

****Honorable Mention****

Smile in the Face of Adversity
Lindsay Marjanski
South Hadley High School

Sportsmanship—a key component to any team’s success or an attribution to their failure. Characteristics of a team’s sportsmanship go well beyond the superficial surface of a score. It can be defined through behavior, body language, and interaction among teammates and even opponents. Sportsmanship propels athletes to stand out on their team, whether they are the superstar or a benchwarmer.

For me, sportsmanship has been a driving factor in gaining confidence and becoming a leader. Ironically, I learned this skill from my opponents. My sophomore year, during a varsity soccer game, my team was winning by five goals. The opposing goalie who was perpetually tested, shot after shot, wasn’t frustrated or screaming at her team; this intrigued me. Typically, whenever we beat a team to this degree, they would crumple and turn on each other, yelling and rolling their eyes. As I further analyzed her behavior throughout the game, I realized that she smiled when she leapt into the air to save a high shot and even went as far as to congratulate us after we scored additional goals. She was having fun and showing the rest of us on the field to view the game through an optimistic lens. She didn’t let her experience on the field be defined by the number of goals that slid by her. After the game, I made the executive decision to carry myself in a manner that will allow others to feel the same way about me. I wanted to be a leader.

From that moment on, I made sure to integrate this into my play. Whether I was shaking the hands of the girls I raced against on the track, or wishing the opposing soccer team good luck with the rest of their season, I was setting a good example for my younger—and even older—teammates to follow. It is very important to have this quality because a negative image is painted in people’s minds if you disobey the unwritten rules of sportsmanship. Those who focus on dragging their opponents down are those who are given the short-hand of the stick. The referee isn’t going to give any calls in their favor or they aren’t going to be desired by collegiate coaches. These players never make it to the next level and are often forgotten. It is the players who stand out through their positive words of encouragement, those who keep their head held high in the face of frustration and anger, it is those players who are remembered. They are remembered for their contribution to the game; they are the reason that referees enjoy their jobs. They are more likely to be given credit by their coaches. They set an example for their team to follow. They are the leaders. I hope that my teammates and my opponents think that I embody these qualities both on the soccer field and the track, for I have made it a priority to exhibit exemplary sportsmanship every time I put my uniform on.

****Honorable Mention****

19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Brigid Bonner

Scituate High School

From a young age, our parents involved us in sports, whether it was soccer, basketball, lacrosse, or football. This was not because they wanted us to be the star player of the U-5 league, but it was because they wanted us to gain some of the most critical skills to live including sportsmanship, teamwork, support, perseverance, and the understanding of losing. In 2017, I was chosen to play at a high-level soccer team, the Elite Club National Level, or ECNL. This was a new journey for my soccer career, and an opportunity to play all over the country from North Carolina to Florida, to Nationals in Seattle, Washington. I was over the moon to play at this level, as I furthered my love for the sport and expanded my opportunity for colleges to watch me play. I had big dreams on this team. I thought, maybe this is the year I will commit to a college, or this is the team that is going to win Nationals. Instead, this is the team where I began to lose the passion for the sport I love most, and overall lost my confidence in ever playing college soccer. I constantly was told I sucked, or I would never be good enough. One game, I was playing out of my usual position, filling in as a defense. After the opposing team scored a goal, my teammate turned to me, looked me in the eyes, and said, "Why are you so bad? Can you please try harder?" Our parents didn't involve us in athletics, to learn how to swear at our teammate, the other team, even the refs. My parents have always repeated to me, "You can be the best player on the team, but if your attitude doesn't match your level of playing, colleges are going to overlook you." Sportsmanship is one of the most essential aspects of every sport. You need to respect your teammates, your opponents, the refs, and the rules to the game. Give that player you bodied a hand to help them up, thank the refs after the game despite the outcome or how much you opposed their calls. All these actions make you a better player. This year, I am the captain of the Scituate High School Girls Varsity Soccer team. This title is not only an accomplishment, but it is a huge responsibility. As a captain, I am taking the lessons that I learned from a team that tore me down to ensure that I create a positive environment on and off the field for my high school team. I make it my top priority to encourage my teammates, respect my opponents, and play a fair game. Sports teach us the toughest lessons in life, but no lesson learned comes without integrity. As I move through life, I will take these lessons I have learned from my last 13 years on the field, and always have sportsmanship in my back pocket.

****Honorable Mention****

How Sportsmanship Becomes Leadership

Kathryn Blake

Medfield High School

Through my experience with sports, I have learned that sportsmanship is contagious. It can be spread by example, by simply treating everyone fairly and with encouragement. For the past several years, I have helped coach lacrosse clinics for young girls in my community. Having been one of those little girls at that same clinic many years ago, it is hard to imagine that I could have ever been as young as them. I try to constantly display sportsmanship to the girls. I hope that through my sportsmanship, I display values of loyalty and integrity. I hope to not only inspire leadership in myself by becoming a role model to the little girls that remind me of who I once was, but also install that same sportsmanship into those girls. Hopefully, one day, these aspiring lacrosse players will become leaders and coach at a clinic, like I did, and become a role model for the next generation of lacrosse players so they will adopt the same leadership.

A common misconception that is made about sportsmanship is that it must be shown between two teams. However, this could not be more false. Sportsmanship is something that needs to be shown to one's own teammates just as much as their opponents. I do my very best every game, practice, and team activity to treat each and every one of my teammates with the same high level of respect. When I show sportsmanship to teammates, I become someone who they can talk to about personal matters, not just athletics. It allows me to become a person that my teammates can trust, and in turn I trust my teammates as well. This allows my teammates and I to become leaders on and off the field. We are connected mentally and emotionally, causing us to inspire each other to take on leadership roles in and out of an athletic setting.

In the big picture, no one plays a sport because they want to win. There is something deeper than competition inside all athletes: the love for the sport itself. No matter what school is represented during a game, we are ultimately all one "team" - a group of individuals who share the same passions and hobbies. When I display sportsmanship to other teams, whether I shake hands with an opponent after a game or help someone up after they fall, it unites two separate "teams", creating an environment where there are no "teams". We all share the same love of competition and athletics, allowing us to bond over the sport. Sportsmanship allows me to become a leader by displaying this concept to others and showing them that just because we represent two different schools, we have similarities. Hopefully, through my acts of sportsmanship by showing opponents that we are all on the same team, I have inspired another athlete to display that kindness to another girl, spreading sportsmanship that will be passed on to inspire a leader in another athlete like me.

****Honorable Mention****

Not Only the Spotlight Shines

Isabella Nevard

Leominster High School

It is easy to say you have “good sportsmanship”. As a student-athlete, it is easy to shake hands at the end of the game with that fake smile coach forced upon your face. It is human nature to stress politeness in moments of distress and humbleness in moments of victory; however, there is a fine line between a human and an athlete.

Moments will come in high school sports when you are forced to choose between your own pride and your team and school. High school sports unquestionably showcases this concept. The quality of competition is something most high school athletes crave, and even need. It truly manages to bring out the most in those who wish to undertake it. However, we often forget competition was made to be healthy, and competitors were made to be respected. Sports come with victories and failures. If all athletes understood this, sportsmanship would come effortlessly. In the heart of the most competitive rivalries, sportsmanship can be contagious: having your school, your community, and your family support is the essence of athletics. Sportsmanship inspires leadership in your team and community when you choose to respect the game.

High school sports turn humans into leaders. Recently, I was told by a coach that not everything is about me. I was told that if I chose to be selfless, I would find success. A true leader is not one who dominates a crowd, but one who enlightens it. We see this demonstrated most when we pick up that teammate that just plummeted to the court after missing the rebound. We see this most when we calm down that teammate that seems to be a dropped fly ball away from giving up. We see this most when we shout from the rooftops for that teammate that can't seem to serve the ball the way they always do. We see sportsmanship at its greatest impact when we witness the formation of a leader and the maturity of a teammate or competitor.

We all play for a reason. Whether it's for entertainment, for personal growth, whatever the cause, we play with a purpose. It is important to never lose your sense of pride, because with this comes your quality of sportsmanship. It is important to remember that it is not just biting your tongue when things go wrong, or holding back boasts when things go right. It is what you take with you when those moments don't matter anymore. Sportsmanship is more than what you see from the bleachers. It inspires leadership in the crowd standing behind you, the people standing with you, and the passion within you.

****Honorable Mention****

Sportsmanship
Keene Jeffress
Smith Academy

Being on a team is more than just participating in practices and attending the games. Being part of a team is all about putting in one hundred and ten percent always, and striving to be a leader. Whether you are the best player on the team or it's your first year, you have to play alongside your teammates and give it your all. Encouraging others while staying positive is the best way to improve the success of your whole team, class or school community. Sportsmanship requires players to set aside their egos and strive to succeed as a team. Sportsmanship inspires leadership not only in me, but in my school community as well.

Sportsmanship is defined as fair and generous behavior and treatment of others. Believing in being genuinely kind to others is an important value to me. As an athlete, I encourage teammates to do their best even when they don't succeed in their first or second attempt. In doing so you improve your team while bringing people up instead of tearing them down. Supporting a teammate even when they feel like they aren't doing their best positively affects any team. No matter what sport you play a little kindness goes a long way.

Sportsmanship inspires leadership in me in many ways. Sportsmanship inspires me to keep a positive attitude in classes or on the field. When I have to face more and more obstacles in my path it's always easier when I stay positive. If you go into a game with the mindset that your team is going to lose that will negatively affect your team's performance even if it turns out that the game wasn't as hard as you thought. This goes the same for performance in school as well. During a game it is easy to get down on yourself or others for making a mistake. At these times a good leader keeps a positive mindset no matter the situation.

Finally, each player on a team plays a different roll. If you are the top scorer or the best defender there are times where a celebration is called for, but too much boasting can discourage others around you. Sportsmanship inspires leadership in players, helping them set aside their ego and understand that their success is a result of the entire team working together. Sometimes the best decision isn't to go for the glory but to help others succeed.

In conclusion sportsmanship inspires leadership within me in many ways, whether it be by keeping a positive mindset or by being genuine and kind to others. Leadership is necessary for the success of a team, or school community.

****Honorable Mention****

Sportsmanship Essay

Story Goldman

Smith Academy

Sportsmanship is the act of having fair and generous behavior or treatment to others, particularly in sports, a trait many student athletes try to exemplify. But sportsmanship doesn't only represent being civil to others but inspires leadership. When you demonstrate sportsmanship it not only shows that you are respectful, humble, or a good sport, but it teaches upcoming student athletes to embody the same principles causing you to be a leader and have leadership. Even though sportsmanship can inspire you as an individual to be a leader it can also inspire your team and your school as a whole.

For me personally the people that inspire me to be a leader aren't particularly the best players on the team but the players that demonstrate the most sportsmanship. These leaders inspire me to want to follow in their footsteps by practicing good sportsmanship and to be a leader for other student athletes, to keep the legacy going. On my team one of those leaders had been a sophomore, at the time she wasn't the best on the team but when she did play she embodied the utter most sportsmanship. One time, she had been playing defense and accidentally bodied a girl down, immediately she ran over and helped the girl up and made sure she was okay. This action of sportsmanship made her not only a leader to me but a role model as well.

Not only have the leaders inspired me but my fellow teammates as well. This has caused our team as a whole to always practice good sportsmanship on and off the field. An example of this is how we clap for the other sports teams of our school when they come onto the field, wishing opposing teams' good luck with the rest of their season no matter if you won or lost the game and shaking hands and saying good game to all players and coaches. These behaviors of our team then reflect onto our school causing our school to demonstrate sportsmanship and inspire leadership.

With this said, the qualities of sportsmanship causes a domino effect between players, teams, and schools due to sportsmanship inspiring leadership, making all three become leaders in the community. So all in all sportsmanship and leadership go hand in hand when being part of a team, a school and a school community.

****Honorable Mention****

MIAA Sportsmanship Essay
Timothy Ryan Gerrish
Southwick Regional High School

Less than 10% of high school athletes will continue on to play in college and only .01% will play a professional sport. So why do I play sports? Do I play because my parents made me? Do I play for dreams of fame and money? Do I play to socialize? Ultimately, I play for the love of the game.

I began playing sports at the budding age of five. I remember my mom, would tie my fresh new cleats, dress me in my crisp new colored t-shirt, smile and say “go have fun”. Who knew that all this time playing sports and having fun I was unknowingly being taught valuable life lessons. Be respectful, be responsible, and be a good sport are the pillars for the foundation that gave me a game plan on how to succeed in life. As I got older and began setting goals for my future I realized the significance of the coaching and direction I have received. Playing sports not only became a valuable resource that supported my hard work and dedication but it also provided me the coping skills to learn from my failures and lose with dignity. Respect the game, respect the players, respect the officials, and above all respect myself, these are the cornerstones that sportsmanship is built on. Sportsmanship is a reflection of how we react to not only winning and losing but how we react when faced with a difficult situation. The bad call, the cheap shot taken by an opponent or unkind words said by our own coach or an opposing one are all examples of poor sportsmanship. Unfortunately, I have learned that not all athletes, parents, and coaches are good sports. I personally take these situations as challenges and use it as an opportunity to not only learn from it but to lead by example.

Does good sportsmanship inspire others to become good leaders? I have been personally motivated by the actions of others and their good sportsmanship. I believe that leadership comes with great responsibility and with even greater scrutiny. Good leaders influence others to be good sports and humbly acknowledge that individually we are strong but together we can be unbreakable. Sportsmanship is my teams’ collaboration to lead each other with integrity and loyalty, and to not only inspire others but to inspire each other to always strive to improve and learn from every opportunity. I have been fortunate to have an amazing family, community, and school to inspire me, and this has given me the personal courage to continue to grow and mature as a person and to push myself forward towards achieving my goals. I am grateful to all that have coached, played, refereed, and supported me as I discover who I am and what I can become. To close out my essay I would like say that sportsmanship is the foundation that my leadership is based on and I hope that one day I can inspire others to follow the same values I have been taught.

****Honorable Mention****

19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Erielle Amboy

Abington High School

Throughout sports, sportsmanship is a key item, it's the factor that lets teams keep playing with each other competitively and equally. Throughout time, sportsmanship may be forgotten, because it makes up the little things, like simple handshakes before the games, wishing good luck, cheering on your teammates, or even exchanging smiles and kind gestures. Not only do these actions promote a stable, happy playing field, they inspire leadership.

Sportsmanship inspires leadership in me by encouraging me to be a team player. Being a team player inspires me to have good leadership and be a good role model to everyone else. Making sure I present good leadership aligns my goals to be a better leader for my team.

As this vital trait influences me, it also inspires leadership in my team, by playing fair, avoiding cheating or trying to undermine the other team. It lets my team and I establish mutual respect among other teammates and opponents. Furthermore, it prevents unwanted tension among players. Sportsmanship allows players like me and my team to have a healthy, competitive relationship with the rest of the teams in the league.

Hardships happen to everyone, not just in sports. And for sportsmanship, we apply positivity every day in order to be the positive role in each other's lives. Every student has emotional baggage. But as a community, sportsmanship enables us to respect everyone's background and stories. It keeps the community close-knit and supporting of each other.

In my video, students shared a few words about their losses or struggles within their families due to cancer. This showed athletes to treat everyone equally, because they never know what goes on in someone else's lives. It inspired people to cheer each other on, no matter the team or town. Throughout the video, you see athletes playing with a positive attitude for others, no trash talking, or rudeness shown to their teammates or opponents. Though the teams seemed like they won, they lost at the end of the games/matches, but they did it like champions. They kept their heads high, and in the end, they made sure everyone had fun at the blackout cancer awareness games.

Sportsmanship helps maintain a peace of mind within me, my team and the community. With that, it inspires leadership by providing an initiative within everyone to take care of others and to be kind to anyone they play with, against or even just anyone they meet. It's a step toward a better future and a happier world.

****Honorable Mention****

Leadership is Everywhere
Bridgette Martin
Belmont High School

I am a Goalie for Belmont girls' varsity Soccer. Being a goalkeeper can be an invigorating but sometimes a challenging role on the team. When an opponent's goal slips by and we lose by one point, I can't help but feel responsible for the teams' failure. I've been playing goalie since I was 6 years old, and I've learned the benefits of being a good sport. These lessons have inspired leadership qualities in me, my team, and the community.

Some of the sportsman and leadership qualities I practice are having a positive attitude and giving my best effort even when a game isn't going my way. I feel strongly about portraying myself in a respectful and positive way because I'm required to be a leader to be successful. My team looks to me to stay positive, encouraged and hopeful throughout our games. I constantly am cheering on my teammates with "good shot", "you got this", and "Let's go Belmont!" in addition to positive reinforcement. I also try my best to respect my opponents, by helping a player up when they have fallen, shaking hands with everyone after the game, and even pointing out an injury to the referees to make sure a player is okay.

Within my school, I always make an effort to help out people who are having a hard time. I think we all struggle sometimes, but helping each other will create improvement. A lot of leadership is shown by students by presenting to a class. Personally, I'm very outgoing but when I go to present I get very nervous. The one thing that makes me feel okay is knowing my colleagues have my back and won't make fun of me if I stutter on a word. My friends also inspire me a lot, seeing them participate in class and clubs makes me want to strive to be better because we are all in this together.

Finally, I feel I have demonstrated sportsmanship qualities in my town community as well. Last summer I volunteered at Champion Soccer School which helps youth kids participate in soccer. I worked with kindergarteners to 4th graders sharing my knowledge and experiences. There were many incidents where they actually taught me, just by watching some of these kids interact I realized the true importance of sportsmanship.

I was excited to share my experiences of sportsmanship and leadership in this essay because they are two of my strongest values. I aim to continue and improve my practice of these values to help me, my team, and my community to continue to grow in positive ways.

****Honorable Mention****

19th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay

Kyle Lancaster

Dartmouth High School

When I was twelve years old, I learned one of the most valuable lessons of my life. I had played baseball since the age of five and I absolutely loved it! I was pretty good at it, so that sometimes meant that the coaches and my teammates expected a lot out of me. In my final year of little league, I hit a bit of a hitting slump. I believe that part of the reason for this slump was because of the pressure that I was putting on myself to live up to what I thought everyone's expectations were. These expectations included getting us to the championship and winning the big trophy for the team. At the time I felt that this was my responsibility. In most games I would go up to the plate with one goal in mind...to hit a home run! The harder I tried to do that, the more I would strike out. In a game that I felt like we needed to win and that I needed to prove myself to the team, I struck out THREE times! I was beyond frustrated – so frustrated that on the third strikeout I decided to give the umpire some of my “words of frustration”. My disrespect caused me to be ejected from the game. I left the field both embarrassed and upset at what I had done. When I got home that night, I honestly thought my baseball career was over. At that moment I never wanted to step foot on a baseball field again. After I cooled off a bit and thought about how I acted and realized how much I loved the game and team feel, I asked my parents to drive me to the field, so I could speak to the umpire. I saw him standing in the parking lot when we pulled up and I approached him. I apologized and shook his hand. I also told him that I embarrassed my parents, my team and my coaches and I promised him that he would NEVER see that again from me. He paused for a moment, smiled, shook my hand back and said something to me that I will never forget. He said, “You are a man...You made a mistake, you owned it. You are going to grow up and be a leader of lots of baseball teams”.

I am seventeen years old (one month from eighteen) and I still have such a love for the game. The lesson I learned from that moment five years ago is that individual stats and achievements are not what matters on a team. What matters most is being a part of the team, contributing where you can to help your team, picking up your teammates when they are struggling and always supporting others. I was selfish that day. I have been told that I am a leader and that feels much better! I may not always be the fastest or the most powerful on my summer ball team or my high school team, but that fateful day five years ago taught me that leadership is not about being the biggest or the best. Its about being a role model, having a positive attitude and good sportsmanship, being respectful to others and most importantly, owning up to and learning from your mistakes. I work hard daily to carry these qualities with me both in my school community and on the field as well.



MIAA Student Sportsmanship Essay/Multimedia Contest History

- 2001 What Does Sportsmanship Mean to Me?
- 2002 What Does Sportsmanship Mean to Me?
- 2003 The Role of Parents in Sportsmanship
- 2004 The Role of the Media in Promoting Sportsmanship
- 2005 The Role of the Coach in Promoting Sportsmanship
- 2006 What is My Role in Promoting Sportsmanship?
- 2007 What Does Sportsmanship Mean to Me?
- 2008 The Role of the Fan in Promoting Sportsmanship
- 2009 How Do Your Choices Impact Sportsmanship?
- 2010 The Role of Athletics in Deterring Bullying and Encouraging Respect
- 2011 How Can Student-Athletes Make a Difference in the Community?
- 2012 How Do the Values of Educational Athletics Build Your Future?
- 2013 When You Need it the Most...You Feel Like it the Least: What is your Sportsmanship Moment?
- 2014 Social Media and Sportsmanship: How do they work together?
- 2015 Paying forward...How an act of Sportsmanship made a difference in your life
- 2016 What word best defines sportsmanship, what it means to you, and the role it plays in high school athletics?
- 2017 The Authentic Athlete: How can you support teammates to be their best; while being true to yourself?
- 2018 How do I model sportsmanship and how will it support my future success in today's world?
- 2019 Describe how sportsmanship inspires leadership in you, our team, and your school community.



Acknowledgements

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Abington High School	Marblehead High School
Advanced Math & Science Academy	Maynard High School
Archbishop Williams High School	Medfield High School
Ashland High School	Methuen High School
Bay Path RVT High School	Middleborough High School
Belmont High School	Milford High School
Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School	Nashoba Regional High School
Dartmouth High School	Newton South High School
Durfee High School	Northbridge High School
East Bridgewater High School	Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)
Fontbonne Academy	Scituate High School
Franklin High School	Shrewsbury High School
Grafton High School	Smith Academy
Hopkinton High School	South Hadley High School
Leicester High School	Southwick Regional High School
Lenox High School	St. Mary's High School - Lynn
Leominster High School	St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School
Malden Catholic High School	

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