



***“Describe how sportsmanship promotes the opportunity for diversity, equity, and inclusion on your teams, in your school, and in your community.”***

This book represents the winners and finalist entries in the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual MIAA Student Sportsmanship Essay/Multimedia Contest as voted by the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee.

**Multimedia Category**

***First Place***

Diego Pinto and Amani Kimiti – Maynard High School

[Click here to view video](#)

***Runner Up***

Nina Medeiros – Fairhaven High School

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**Literary Category**

***First Place***

Owen Fitzpatrick – Hopkinton High School

***Runner Up***

Benjamin Kahn – Marblehead High School

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## Embracing Sportsmanship Through Unity

**By Owen Fitzpatrick**

*Hopkinton High School*

A battle cry unlike any other is rising within my watchful generation. Stuck in pandemic observance, we are witnessing the spirit of "me first" transform to unity in a divided country. Though aspirational in form, true sportsmanship promotes the opportunity for diversity, equity, and inclusion across all aspects of life. As a runner, I've fostered and taught sportsmanship directly to kids through my successful company RUNNING UP! that I started while my mom was going through cancer treatment this summer. I carried her fight in my heart as I taught over 40 kids how to run a 5k and empower them, one step at a time. My watchfulness ended when I became a community leader, embracing sportsmanship.

As a Division one collegiate runner, my mom inspired my love of running. Her being struck with metastatic colon cancer was unfathomable. As a family, we are a team. To engage my team of kids enrolled in RUNNING UP!, I reached out to community fitness professionals, varsity coaches, global marathoners, athlete influencers, and more, asking for short videos about sportsmanship to share with my runners. I taught inclusion for the slowest runner, equity to remove gender stereotypes, and fostered diversity among my multiracial participants. Redirected behavior and unwelcome comments became teaching moments.

Plagued by the civil unrest and pain in our nation, professional athletes are providing teaching moments to the world. Together, the NBA players voiced discontent on the backs of their uniforms advocating for change in the Black Lives Matter movement. The league sparked a global conversation. Taking the knee was unequivocally judged in the NFL, and it's now considered advocacy for reform. The US Women's soccer team's fight for equal liberties for female athletes in compensation and treatment is unquestionably promoting sportsmanship, fairness, and equity. All three examples combined influence sports on the community and local level, calling for respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We aren't all superstars. On the ladder of competition, some reign at the top, while others look up from the bottom rung. Without sportsmanship, teams fail. When criticism pervades, humility is lost. During the 2020 Cross Country season, only 20 runners could compete. I was lucky to be among them. When the coach requested volunteers to forfeit their spot to a slower runner for just one meet, I was the only one to raise my hand. "Me first" has no place in sportsmanship, and I welcomed the opportunity to be a team player.

The ugly discord we've seen take root and grow has always existed in the soil of this country, on our teams, in our schools, and in our communities. Our failed leadership watered and cultivated that hatred, which has reared its disgusting prejudice, furthering a manifestation of all biases. I have faith that the humility that is ingrained in sportsmanship will prevail. It starts with my generation. The concept of sportsmanship begins and ends with unity. When united, teamwork breeds character, respect, discipline, resilience, and perseverance, which are goals for our communities and beyond.

\*\*\*\*Runner Up\*\*\*\*

2020 MIAA Sportsmanship Essay

**By Benjamin Kahn**

*Marblehead High School*

From the time I first started playing sports until being a High School athlete now, the concepts of sportsmanship, inclusion, and equity have always been a constant message. Whether that has meant supporting teammates, respecting opponents, or even changing some aspects of school culture, it is clear that these principles are vital to creating a competitive and fair playing field for all. While sportsmanship is celebrated each year, as it should be, I am glad that this year we can take time to evaluate how a school or state community can better use the values of sportsmanship to foster a more inclusive athletics community. It is evident that sportsmanship is at the heart of High School Athletics, but it cannot truly exist unless each athlete, coach, official, and administrator has an equal chance to make an impact.

Having a “diverse” team or an “inclusive” school culture can represent many things. This can range from having a mix of racial, religious, or socioeconomic backgrounds, to just having a group of players who have not played the sport before, but want a chance to play. What is most important is that every person involved in the game has an opportunity to follow their passion and be judged by what they can accomplish, not by a stereotype or assumption. Building a school environment where everyone feels included and respected is much easier said than done, however, I am extremely proud of the work my school and the MIAA have done to reach this goal. Players, Coaches, and Referees are all involved with a sport because they love it, and similarly to graciously accepting the outcome of a game, at the end of the day we can all unite behind our passions for the games we play.

Overall, the foundational ideas of Sportsmanship are essential to promoting inclusion in all levels of sports. Personally, I take pride in having a different background than my teammates or opponents. When I am sprinting down the field to score a goal in soccer, I am not thinking that I might celebrate different holidays than the goalie I am about to shoot on. As I round the turn on running a 200 meter during Indoor Track, I don't consider the appearance of the runner next to me. And at the end of a great Baseball win, I go to give my friend a high-five (In non-COVID times), regardless of the classes we take in school or his political beliefs. A community is a place where differences should only be understood and not held against anyone. In a year that has been so difficult for everyone, especially those involved in High School sports, continuing to demonstrate the value of sportsmanship and diversity are key to succeeding on and off the field. When we all believe that everyone has something to contribute, we can uphold the importance of sportsmanship while promoting equity on our fields, courts, rinks, etc. It will take us all to accomplish this, but as sports teaches us, there is nothing a team can't do if they do it together.

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Sportsmanship

By **Bianca Grullon**

*Methuen High School*

Sports in our community become all tied together by one idea: Sportsmanship. Sportsmanship, in my definition, is the idea of collaborating and working with one another to succeed. You see sportsmanship from your school's athletic teams to the Olympics competition.

Sportsmanship provides inclusion, no matter your skin color, religion, beliefs, race, or sexuality. Everyone can provide sportsmanship; to make the whole team succeed with each individual talent. There should never be discrimination in sports. Sports should be a way for the people of our community to escape reality and focus on specific skill sets, such as collaborating with others, mental strength, and to encourage one another. It's not about how you identify yourself, it's about how you work and the effort you put to succeed. Everyone is a human in this world and in sports, you are an all star athlete.

Equity in sportsmanship gives value to the movement, in sports, to make it right between all identities. Even today we still see mostly men's images to represent sports. But, we are starting to grow the idea of women becoming images in sports. Sportsmanship brings men and women, in sports, together to represent the sports world, that whatever gender you identify as, you can still play competitive sports and become an all star. There are 2 changes being made to accept all genders, all sexualities into sports. Sportsmanship gives value to all who identify with what they feel they are.

Most importantly, inclusion in sportsmanship. Inclusion is the key hold to sports. You must be able to include everyone to make a team and use each other to succeed. You wouldn't be able to play football with one player being the quarterback, defense, and offense. You need to include everyone together in order to build a team, build a bond with that team. Especially, in school athletics, building that bond with a team you had in school will build your experience for future teams. Inclusion not only helps build relationships with others in sports, it also helps build self confidence and the ability to ask for help from others. Having the ability to know you have help from others and feeling included, it makes you feel stronger as a person, to know you have the bigger say by asking for help.

Sportsmanship helps build our community in all these different ways and helps us, as a community, know each other better and becomes a bigger support system. Sports is a whole other world, and in that world, we will all become stronger together, no one will get left behind because of who they are.

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Team Spirit

**By Albert Trey Fuccillo**

*Advanced Math & Science Academy*

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and test of our civilization." His words mean that together we can become one. In that same way, sportsmanship promotes an environment that embraces diversity and encourages inclusivity within our teams, clubs and community. We can learn a great deal from the unity we create in our teams and clubs and we can translate what we learn to many other areas of our community. As we practice a sense of togetherness, we will see the benefits.

My school is made up of students from many different nations, backgrounds and abilities, and together we make a difference for the whole of our teams, clubs and community through team spirit. When you search in the dictionary for team spirit, you find it is a feeling of camaraderie among members of a group, enabling them to cooperate and work well together. My favorite example of unity occurs each time the MIAA tournaments begin. Does it matter the sport? No. Does it matter where the game is? No. What you'll find is a collection of students from a particular school. They stand arm and arm, shoulder to shoulder, in support of their school and one another. They might not hang out in the same circles or perhaps have even spoken to one another before. However on this day, none of that matters. They come together as one. Team spirit proceeds all wins. It's a feeling of unity that should exist in everything that we do every single day. Sportsmanship gives an opportunity for everyone in the community to get involved. Whether you're an athlete, spectator, referee or coach, showing good sportsmanship can create a community which prides itself on inclusivity, kindness and a passion for the sports which bring us together. The sports are what brings us together, but it is the sportsmanship which keeps us together.

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Sportsmanship Essay

**By Sandrine Alouidor**

*East Longmeadow High School*

One time, I chose to play soccer in the winter. My mother had warned me not to, but I was stubborn, so I did. I was fine, right up until the first game. I spent most of it watching my teammates shuttle around the ball, while I huddled inside my jacket.

My mother wasn't mad at me for not playing. She was mad because I hadn't supported my teammates. She was mad because my teammates had spent the time on the field, doing the work I should have. She was mad because I had no sportsmanship.

She never signed me up for winter soccer again. But I did learn something, at least. I learned the consequences of sportsmanship. I learned that non-sportsmanship spreads beyond the game, like a virus, reaching every layer of society. Because, by not playing in that game, I made my teammates' lives a little harder. That was something I never wanted to do.

Sportsmanship isn't about following the rules. It's about doing what's right, and what should be done, no matter the circumstances. It's about following rules that will even the playing field, that will ensure a more inclusive and equitable world. Sportsmanship ensures that everyone has the same chance. It ensures the black kid playing on the field has the same chance of making a goal as the white kid across from them. And that sportsmanship spreads. The people on the field carry the sportsmanship on the field into their lives. They follow the same rules, the same edicts, and treat everyone in their school. And they exit the school and enter the community around them, and spread those same rules, those same edicts. Sportsmanship makes the world a more diverse place, because it forces humans to look at each person the same way, to disregard skin, sexuality, religion, gender, appearance, and just see the person underneath. It ensures that those who walk the world will follow a code of conduct that will make the world a better place. It spreads equal treatment, just like a virus.

When I remember my disregard for my teammates, I feel ashamed. But dwelling on the past helps no one. So, today, I urge you, step into the world, and follow the code of sportsmanship, and watch diversity and equity spread like a virus.

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How sportsmanship promotes diversity, equity and inclusion on your team, in your school, and in your community

**By Tatum Shaw**

*Andover High School*

Participating on teams throughout my life has instilled so many great and amazing values. It has taught me the basics of camaraderie, accountability, purpose, and responsibility. When a team comes together for one common goal, it is beneficial for all involved. People who can put the team in front of personal gains are taught life lessons that will be with them forever, such as helpfulness and discipline. Sportsmanship requires these qualities. I have been fortunate enough to have been taught to have a positive attitude and have the desire to conform for the team I am on. This is an essential trait for teammates promoting a great team. As a member of a team, to be a leader is to treat your teammates the way you would want to be treated. To be friendly, hardworking, and treat everyone with respect.

Teams across high schools are made from kids from different families, cultures, and beliefs coming together to play a sport they love. The Andover community is no different. With a culture created by inclusion and equity, encouragement of diversity is accepted. No matter color, ethnicity, religion, or orientation, everyone wants to be a part of it, because all are welcome. Andover High is a place where acceptance is practiced and encouraged by the administration and coaches. Everyone striving as a singular entity for a common goal in winning has become infectious. Leadership is key to this type of environment. Leaders must lead by example, take suggestions, and help everyone. This promotes accountability to yourself and those around you.

Good sportsmanship expresses inclusion. Having a role on a team, no matter how big or small, gives a sense of responsibility. The responsibility of being a starter, second teamer, or practice hero are all important in their own ways. No role should ever be overlooked or treated as inferior. A team can be very successful when the people on it feel included and purposeful. This helps to create a winning and goal oriented environment. Having multiple roles throughout my years at Andover, I have never waived a positive attitude and have continued to work hard at my sport for the coaches, team, and myself. Comradery shared on and off a court, field, or rink, carries over through life. There is a purpose for everyone on a team a coach brings together.

I can't imagine not being part of a team at Andover High School. I have learned so much about hard work and putting in the time for things to be earned and not given. As being a part of competitive basketball teams, fair and generous treatment of others manifests a winning culture. A winning culture infects the community and brings people together. Sportsmanship promotes positivity, teamwork, and drive. Leadership is taught by the example of courtesy, respect, and pride. Teams with common goals can attain unimaginable heights if they work together. From the coach to the bench, a team will be diverse, equitable, and inclusive when sportsmanship dominates the team.

Sportsmanship Essay

**By Sabrina Hopkins**

*Northampton High School*

Competing in sports with fairness and virtue opens the possibility for diversity, equity, and inclusion on teams, in school, and in the community. When people from different backgrounds come together for their common enjoyment of athletics, true sportsmanship can celebrate, recognize, and respect differences among athletes. Good sportsmanship helps to build connections between players that encourage inclusivity and fair play. Student-athletes can model these values and show others how they can improve the school community.

Sportsmanship is a vehicle to recognize and appreciate people's differences when they unite through their shared love for a sport. Sports attract a diverse group of people. Student-athletes are likely to bond with each other on sports teams because they share experiences of working hard, facing challenges, and growing together. Good sportsmanship encourages diversity and inclusivity by strengthening those bonds between players and bringing together different people through those experiences.

Additionally, sportsmanship through teamwork builds a sense of integrity and accountability among players, which encourages diversity, equity, and inclusivity in school. Being on sports teams, but more specifically playing on a team, not individually, requires players to work together, depend on each other, and hold each other to a certain standard so they can reach a common goal. Sportsmanship in team dynamics promotes diversity and inclusivity because the players must unite and take advantage of their differences to do their best in competition. When teammates exemplify sportsmanship, by encouraging others to play fairly and with respect, and doing so themselves, they make their team more equitable and set an example of equity and how it can be achieved for their school and community.

Demonstrating sportsmanship in all situations in athletics makes sports teams and communities safer while encouraging diversity and equality. For example, when athletes demonstrate sportsmanship by treating an athlete who is neurodivergent in a kind and fair way, and making accommodations to fit their needs, they show that their team is a safe place for diverse people. This is a way of pushing for the inclusion of diverse student-athletes on their teams. These actions also promote the possibility of equity, by showing that changes can be made to make athletics accessible and safe for everyone. Actions that advocate for equality through sportsmanship can promote the inclusion of diverse people and equal chances for opportunities.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion can be promoted throughout communities through acts of good sportsmanship. When students unite to accomplish common goals by competing on sports teams, demonstrating fair play can inspire others to see and work at a greater scale for those important values. The push for diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community can start with student-athletes and the example of strong sportsmanship they set.

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Describe how sportsmanship promotes diversity, equity and inclusion on your team, in your school, and in your community

**By Kelly Hoffman**

*Boston Latin Academy*

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was unrightfully killed in an interaction with law enforcement officers. This event caused an uproar of support in the Black Lives Matter movement, which is made up of people from different communities throughout both the nation and the world. This collective movement showed me how important leadership is in order to make a difference in things you are committed to.

Leadership and commitment are also extremely important in sports, and are included in what I consider to be the factors that make up sportsmanship. Respect, determination, mind-set, and persistence are important as well - the list truly goes on and on.

Ever since I began playing volleyball, I quickly realized that it was a team sport. From the six people playing on the court, to the girls standing off to the sidelines, everything we did had an impact on each other. The way you serve may impact one point of the game, but the way we acted and treated each other would stay with us for a lifetime. That is the truly amazing part about sports - you can learn athletic skills, such as passing and blocking, while at the same time working on your sportsmanship and attitude.

Playing volleyball also provided me with the opportunity to play with girls who had completely different lives than me, and it allowed me to see that the acceptance and respect you provide to others around you is what allows you to become a team. Diversity is truthfully one of the most important parts of a team setting, and it is one of the values that shapes a group of athletes. My team provided me with friendships, conversations, safe spaces, and an overall home feeling that I probably could not experience anywhere else.

Being a leader on a team also requires equity and fairness, which is implemented by providing everyone with the same opportunities in order to succeed. I personally saw equity and open-mindedness in my freshman year tryout, where I was considered for and put on the varsity team because of my skills and positive attitude, regardless of my age.

I have also seen the values of sportsmanship outside of my sport, in places such as my high school and my community. I attend Boston Latin Academy in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where I have learned how important diversity and inclusion are in my day to day life. Being able to go to school with so many people from different ethnic backgrounds and areas of the city of Boston have taught me different things about different cultures, and how to be a more respectful and inclusive person both on and off the court.

The older I get and the more I experience, I have learned that sports are more than just your athletic performance, but rather the way you show and act upon your sportsmanship. Being an athlete has provided me with so many positive opportunities, and being able to share these moments with others is very valuable to me.

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Describe how sportsmanship promotes the opportunity for diversity, equity and inclusion on your teams, in your school and in your community

**By Jesse Troy**

*Belchertown High School*

Sports have the ability to change all aspects of a community and can lead the community towards a more diverse and inclusive future. However, athletes and fans have to lead by example or it can also do the opposite. Being a leader in the community does not always come naturally; leadership takes effort, patience, and time to develop. A good percentage of athletes don't understand the large scope of sportsmanship, making it difficult for them to lead by example. Sportsmanship isn't just high-fiving the other team after a game or helping players to their feet after a hard foul. Sportsmanship has to happen on and off the court, and has to be displayed by everyone on the court, to help create a more diverse and inclusive community. Learning to be a good sport is an ongoing process for everyone and there are always ways to improve.

There is a camp I go to in the summer called Point Guard College (PGC) which teaches that the things you learn on the court are also things you can apply to everyday life. However, the most important part of PGC is learning to play basketball with strangers, and doing so in a positive and enlightening way. At the beginning of every PGC camp, you walk into the gym with 200 other basketball players that are just like you, wanting to learn and improve. Some of them you may know, most are complete strangers. The camp fosters a spirit of inclusivity and diversity. Campers learn to be inclusive through cheering everyone on, helping all players off the floor, and working together to leave the gym better than you found it. All the things learned to be inclusive are subsets of sportsmanship. Campers come out of PGC ready to lead their communities through sportsmanship, which fosters inclusivity and diversity.

This year, the NBA and the WNBA have been an example of how sports teams can advocate for a better community and a better world. Most of the NBA and WNBA players had Black Lives Matter messages on their jerseys and warm-ups. The Atlanta Dream wore 'Vote for Warnock' shirts to promote Georgia turning purple. In addition, players wore warm ups promoting voting and racial equity to their games as a way of increasing awareness and uplifting their community. Professional basketball players did more than any other professional sports organization to advocate for social injustice. NBA and WNBA players are the examples everyone should aim to be. They are leading by example in their communities as well as using their sport to elevate important messages. The use that professional basketball players have made of their platforms is amazing, and while student-athletes are not professional basketball players with large platforms, their use of sportsmanship can hopefully create similar results.

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Sportsmanship Essay

**By Roxanne Oh**

*Longmeadow High School*

To have sportsmanship is not only to treat everyone equally, but to put in effort to include those who come from different backgrounds and ethnicities. Through a common interest in a sport, sportsmanship unifies players. Many sports, such as field hockey, lacrosse, crew, baseball, and soccer are very white-dominated, and it is vital that we take steps through sportsmanship to encourage diversity. Sportsmanship shows respect for people who may not always receive that respect due to prejudice and discrimination. It reaches beyond the scope of games: it is foundational to interactions which occur both on and off the field. All teams share a common goal and must work together to succeed. The camaraderie and teamwork on a team are so important in promoting diversity by being inclusive of ALL players.

As an Asian American in my suburban, predominantly white town in western Massachusetts, I sometimes feel like an outsider. It's not that others intentionally treat me differently, but it just feels like there's an invisible barrier due to my race. Sports have been a great way for me to connect with my peers. In my younger years, I've been part of basketball, soccer, and lacrosse teams. However, my all-time favorite sport is field hockey. I've been playing field hockey for five years and have been part of an amazing high school team for the last two. It feels validating that I've found teammates who cheer me on, support me, and constantly reassure me that I'm an important part of the team. My town is very passionate about sports: students wear their jerseys to school, and there are always community members at sports events to support the players. Feeling accepted by my team makes me feel accepted by my community. Knowing that there are parents, teachers, and students who appreciate me and my sport reinforces that I am included. Although COVID has prohibited supporters at games, the encouragement I feel from my community is expressed in other ways, whether it is a donation to a team fundraiser or a simple congratulations on a win.

I always feel more relaxed when I see other people of color playing field hockey. People of color bring new culture, while at the same time demonstrate that we are all united by our commitment to our sport and our common desire to be the best that we can be. A safe, welcoming environment is key to increasing diversity in sports and serves as a gateway to new friendships.

Even with opposing teams, showing sportsmanship promotes inclusion because it illustrates that everyone is deserving of respect and the opportunity to play a sport they love; whether that is helping a fallen player, giving a compliment, or just smiling. Therefore, when someone extends an act of sportsmanship, it makes the recipients feel like they belong. On a larger scale, when a community shows sportsmanship towards another community, the shared love for the sport brings these communities together in the spirit of inclusion and equal opportunity.

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Sportsmanship Essay

**By Sydney Whittaker**

*Cardinal Spellman High School*

Sportsmanship is the prime example of how one can show appreciation for someone they may not even know. They can demonstrate appreciation through the smallest gestures, such as saying “good luck” or “great game.” Respecting and appreciating someone else’s gameplay demonstrates a high moral character which allows for diversity, equity, and inclusion both on and off the field.

Showing sportsmanship on a team is just the beginning. The paramount way to show appreciation for someone else is by sharing a common passion. Sharing a common interest with others, on one’s own team and the opposing team, connects players. Players can appreciate that others share those same passions which will, in turn, promote diversity and equity. Everyone can play this same game and players should feel compelled to include those who want to share their interests. A player’s race does not matter; they participate in the sport for the same reason that everyone else does. Showing respect for another team shows that players care about the sport and every single member, regardless of race or gender. Everyone is equal and, demonstrating sportsmanship can create a friendly, respectful environment for everyone playing on the field to share their common interest with the world.

Sportsmanship does not just remain on the field; it demonstrates a high moral character reflected in schools and the community as well. The same fundamental principles that guide sportsmanship can be applied to the community. This can be exemplified through community service or other leadership positions in the community. Someone who maintains great sportsmanship is most likely able to show their community that they care as well. Players that demonstrate sportsmanship off the field are able to include others in their community ventures as they promote kindness and respect. They know that everyone should be treated with the same respect, just as they treat others on the field. Including others in service projects, recognizing others’ ideas as a leader in the community, and making sure everyone has their say in a decision, regardless of their race or gender, results from high moral character on the field. Traits such as kindness help those players succeed as members of the community that promote inclusion, diversity, and equity. The kindness that builds the foundation for sportsmanship is reflected in the rest of a player’s character.

All players should remember that their actions on the field reflect their actions in the community. Team members are just that, a member of a team of others sharing a common interest. They should be kind to everyone on the field as they all share a passion for the same sport and know that everyone is equal both on and off the field. Players on the field should be leaders off the field as they promote diversity, equity, and inclusion of all members of the community.

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Everyday Sportsmanship  
**By Conal Scully**  
*Taunton High School*

Here in Massachusetts there is no shortage of heart-warming stories about diversity and inclusion in sports. We are extremely fortunate to live in a region in which egalitarianism is not only supported but also promoted as one of our community's most integral standards. I know this to be true, not because of any specific heart-warming tale (of which there are, admittedly, many), but because of the respect that every athlete is taught when they enter Taunton High School and its athletic department.

Sports in Taunton go further than to just teach teamwork, fitness, and work ethic. I can say with the utmost confidence that at Taunton High, ideals such as respect, integrity, equity, and inclusion are not only encouraged by our coaches, but expected and required. If any student does not adhere to these stipulations set forth and agreed upon by the collective of coaches, teachers, administrators, and volunteers, there are consequences. It is plain to see, from the repercussions that student-athletes who do not follow these rules face, that community and inclusion is important to Taunton High.

I feel incredibly lucky to grow up, go to school, and play sports in Taunton, and not because it is a city of great beauty, or because of the history of academic success that it honors, or because of how competitive and exciting its sports program is. No, I am grateful to call this place my home because of the diversity of cultures, experiences, and opinions that its people bring. Taunton is unmatched in how honestly it teaches its citizens about diversity, and because of this, produces young adults that are extremely passionate about social activism. This passion is backed not only by intelligence but also by experience, and there is no better place to get the experience required to form your beliefs than the THS athletic department.

The magic of Taunton and its school sports is that Sportsmanship does not provide the opportunity for diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the THS athletic department, students only have to fit one requirement: the willingness to be a teammate. It does not matter whatsoever to the department your race, ethnicity, ability, or your past, as long as you are ready to join a team and agree to the requirements set forth by the coaches. To reiterate, these requirements are the most simple ideas such as: respect, integrity, inclusion, and equity. We win as a team, we lose as a team, and we are respectful no matter the result.

The most beautiful thing about Taunton High School sports is that there is no question that diversity is respected and celebrated. Our diversity is what sets Taunton High apart, because of how seamlessly it exists in our athletic department. For us, sportsmanship is a universal language.

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Describe how sportsmanship promotes the opportunity for diversity, equity and inclusion on your teams, in your school and in your community

**By Morgan Ouellette**

*Uxbridge High School*

Sportsmanship encourages diversity, equity, and inclusion on teams and amongst individuals. It is crucial when interacting within various disciplines. Sportsmanship conveys a lifelong value that is essential for sports but extends into other aspects of life. The benefits of good sportsmanship are numerous and it is the key to creating a positive competitive environment.

Diversity serves as an important factor in sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is the willingness to support and encourage individuals of all colors, genders, age, and talent within the specific activity. Diversity makes it possible to have a healthy, successful community or team. "We are all different, which is great because we are all unique. Without diversity, life would be pretty boring." - Catherine Pulsifer. Alienating individuals who are different from you or your peers should be discouraged under any circumstances. As someone who takes both academics and extracurricular activities very seriously, I can attest that the success of a community, team, or school is largely determined by the sportsmanship of its constituents.

Equity is crucial when it comes to the acceptance of specific individuals, groups, or teams. Treating all people with dignity and respect is paramount in both academics and athletics. Favoring individuals should never be accepted nor tolerated under any situation. Reasonableness and fairness each play a necessary role in demonstrating equity. As a teammate, coach, teacher, or an individual of any occupation, it is important that you are accepting of all people. Excluding individuals represents poor sportsmanship and has no place in our society.

As an athlete who plays field hockey, basketball, and tennis at Uxbridge High School, I can affirm that inclusion is a crucial element of team sports. Excluding individuals should never be condoned under any circumstances. "Inclusion and fairness in the workplace...is not simply the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do."-Alexis Herman. Throughout the years, I have learned that treating individuals equally is fundamental in achieving the greatest success within relationships, communities, friendships, or teams. The best strategy to create and support a cohesive team is through diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Including a strategy that incorporates these aspects within your team, classes, community, and friends will create a positive environment for all. When participating in events during a specific sport or affair, it is important that you remain respectful to your opponents and teammates. Diversity, equity, and inclusion all play major roles in relationships, friendships, or team developments. From my own experiences I have learned that sports teams, as well as the classroom, are more enjoyable, rewarding, and successful when incorporating these elements. Including them in all circumstances is essential in order to convey a successful and positive relationship.

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Sportsmanship

**By Kayleigh McDonald**

*Somerset Berkley Regional High School*

Having two boys on a typically all female field hockey roster was something completely normal to me. We looked past gender and genuinely respected each other as players and people. We were the definition of sportsmanship, built on the premise of embracing diversity. Unfortunately, not many teams shared those same values of inclusion regarding gender. In a sea of harassing articles and derogatory comments about their sexuality, our boys kept their heads above the wave of cruelty. Being part of a controversial team, I never really saw great sportsmanship from the outside. But from within, we fostered a powerful sense of integrity, equity, and inclusion.

With success, grew opposition. Progressing into playoffs, a uniform issue arose, as opponents jumped at the fact that the boys wore shorts while us girls wore skirts. Opposing parents demanded that our boys wear skirts, as another petty attempt to demean their masculinity. In an act of solidarity, we decided to abandon the classic skirts and all wear shorts instead. More symbolic than anything, the shorts were a way of standing together as one team, despite gender. Similarly, we chose to be announced as a team prior to each playoff game rather than individuals. We all sacrificed the opportunity to have our name announced, knowing the hostile crowd response that would occur if the boys were called individually.

We wore shorts and we skipped individual intros, which doesn't seem like much. But in that, we created an environment of simple inclusion and that's what sportsmanship is. Our efforts showed these boys that they had a group behind them that would go to great lengths to ensure they were respected. In our own bubble surrounded by hatred, we formed a team that I can only describe as family.

Our individual sportsmanship translated to a stronger sense of inclusion and companionship among our school. While most of our student section didn't understand any rules about the game, they became our biggest supporters amongst the hostility; packed into fan buses and cheered for us like it was the Super Bowl. In our community, we cherished and embraced the diversity of our team.

Teams came together in hatred for us; casting a very harsh spotlight. However, in our little community, that light was positive. Young kids, both girls and boys, now have the opportunity to grow into a space that accepts them for who they are and their passions, regardless of their gender. Knowing that I was a part of the sportsmanship that created this environment is something I'll forever cherish. This experience taught me lessons about the harsh realities of society, but more importantly about how strong the power of sportsmanship is. When faced with adversity, it can be harder to stay true to the integrity of the game and to lift each other up, but in doing so it can create the most beautiful of opportunities for love to thrive, diversity to grow, and inclusion to flourish.

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Inclusion

**By Olivia MacLeod**

*Milford High School*

One of my favorite quotes written by Dr. Timothy Shriver states, “We are the inclusion revolution. We will not rest until everyone with an intellectual challenge is treated with the dignity they deserve. Everyone. No exceptions.”

As a friend, ally, and teammate, one of the most important values instilled in players from day one is ‘respect’. As I began playing field hockey and lacrosse my freshman year of high school, I realized that we also needed to include the phrase ‘inclusion’ alongside ‘respect’. Many players with intellectual and developmental disabilities are written off as not being able to play on a team or be athletic, when in reality, I have found that students of all abilities are valuable on a team. That’s when I decided to become more involved with the unified sports teams that my high school offers. Students with disabilities were given the chance to thrive, and I believe that being a part of a unified team was one of the best experiences of my high school career.

When I started high school, I sought out clubs dedicated to ensuring the students in my community never felt like outcasts. That’s exactly what I found in unified sports, and I have found a home within this community. Over the past four years, I have traveled to Special Olympic conferences across the state to advocate for the inclusion of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Every year, our community comes together to ensure students with intellectual and developmental disabilities feel welcome and empowered. I joined unified sports with the goal of making sure that every student felt like they had a friend they can count on. Since joining unified sports teams, I have worked to coordinate with my field hockey team to volunteer with Special Olympics at our annual 5K. As a result of volunteering, many of my fellow team members have dedicated time outside of practice to our unified teams working to make all athletes feel empowered. Watching my team volunteer has inspired me to want to get more people involved. I have learned that whether our differences are skin deep or genetically deep, we are all worthy of respect.

It is my hope as I continue my journey through life playing sports, that I continue to help others grow. My community has set a great foundation to let athletes of all abilities thrive, and I aspire to also become an ally within the special needs community. As more and more people band together to fight for inclusivity and respect, I think back to my first day at practice for all of my sports teams. Each one had the goal of making sure everyone felt comfortable and was ready to have fun. Sports continue to provide a meaningful distraction and outlet for many, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I have learned much more from being their friend, ally, and teammate, than I ever could have imagined.

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Sportsmanship and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**By Joyce Lee**

*Newton South High School*

On the subject of her rise to success in the sporting world, tennis player Serena Williams once said, "It doesn't matter what your background is and where you come from, if you have dreams and goals, that's all that matters." By affirming that the only requisite is "dreams and goals," Williams underscores the power of inclusion, which can be attributed to sports' potential to be an equalizing force through the amalgamation of opportunity, persistence, and the learned culture of sportsmanship. We see power, grace, and dedication in athletes around the world and believe there is something special to be learned from them. Most importantly, however, is the diversity of the players. For people of color, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, and everything else that makes each one of us unique, seeing ourselves mirrored in athletes who are immersed in their element is undeniably inspiring.

The common thread that ties Williams' international championships to my own high school tennis matches is sportsmanship. No matter what scale you are playing on, it is your job as an athlete to treat everyone with the same level of respect, for inclusion and equity are a must. By being selfless in this way, I have watched my team blossom into a diverse community where all feel like valued members, bonded by a common goal. Teams like these will produce inherently better experiences, as diversity breeds a more holistic perspective, which a team can utilize in order to play to many individual strengths. In addition, I find that sportsmanship remains relevant whether or not it's in the context of playing sports. Amidst our new normal, I see values like tolerance and open mindedness connecting people in my school and in my community while we cannot physically be together. Sportsmanship teaches us how to adapt to create an inclusive environment in every circumstance, from modified sports seasons to topical projects dedicated to fighting discrimination. If we commit to shedding any preconceived notions and being open with each other, there is always incredible growth to be found, a reliable constant in our endlessly changing world.

When you're on the playing field, sportsmanship supersedes bias and intolerance. Your teammates are all that matter in the moment, no matter their background or skin color. They are the pillars you trust to hold you up, and in turn you must be trustworthy in supporting your teammates as well. After spending months practicing and competing together, a team knows how to bear both the wins and losses *together*. A team knows how to take a collective energy into practice every day. In regards to equity, sportsmanship does not mean turning a blind eye to our differences— instead, it means acknowledging and embracing them for the good of the game. As athletes, we understand that sportsmanship means no person left behind. It is an universally-applicable agreement, a contract that we all honor: a team is home for every player.



### **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, your team, and your school community?
- 2020 Describe how sportsmanship promotes the opportunity for diversity, equity and inclusion on your teams, in your school and in your community?



### Acknowledgements

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association extends its appreciation to the high school students from the following schools who submitted entries to the 20th Annual Student Sportsmanship Essay/Multimedia Contest and to this publication. We hope that your voices will influence others to share your ideals.

Advanced Math & Science	Framingham High School	Plymouth North HS
Algonquin Regional	Franklin County Tech School	Randolph High School
Andover High School	Gateway Regional High School	Revere High School
Archbishop Williams	Greenfield High School	Shrewsbury High School
Arlington Catholic High School	Hopkinton High School	Somerset Berkley
Ashland High School	Littleton High School	South Hadley High School
Barnstable High School	Longmeadow High School	Southeastern Regional
Belchertown HS	Marblehead High School	Sutton High School
Belmont High School	Maynard High School	Taunton High School
Bishop Stang High School	Methuen High School	Uxbridge High School
Boston Latin Academy	Middleborough High School	Webster High School
Brookline High School	Milford High School	Wellesley High School
Chicopee High School	Mount Alvernia High School	Westfield High School
Dartmouth High School	Nashoba Valley Regional	Westport High School
Dover Sherborn	New Bedford High School	Wilmington High School
East Longmeadow HS	Newton South High School	Worcester High School
Fairhaven High School	Northampton High School	
Fontbonne Academy-Boston	Oxford High School	