

## SPORTSMANSHIP

"SPORTSMANSHIP IS DEFINED AS A PERSON WHO PLAYS WITH FAIRNESS, COURTEOUS RELATIONS AND GRACEFUL ACCEPTANCE OF RESULTS AT THE END OF A CONTEST."

Sportsmanship is not just about being a nice person; it is much more important than that...It's about character.

Sportsmanship deals with the behavior of coaches, players, and spectators. First and foremost young people need guidance in becoming a great person before they think of themselves as a great soccer player.

Millions of youngsters play in recreational soccer leagues throughout Canada, the signs of a decline in sportsmanship are evident: talking trash, challenging officials, refusing to shake hands with the opponent after the game, making excuses after every loss, players, parents and coaches.

Most people agree that teaching skills, rules, and strategies of soccer are among the primary responsibilities of youth coaches. Of significant importance is the physical conditioning of the players, promoting enjoyment of the game, and attempting to

avoid physical and psychological injury are also outcomes they should strive to achieve.

It is the responsibility of adult leaders to teach good sportsmanship. As the leader, teacher, motivator and organizer the coach must communicate clearly with their players.

The really outstanding coaches engage their players in a quest to be the best both on and off the field. The best they can be toward coaches, opponents, teammates, officials, and the game itself.

A coach, who does not inspire their players to strive for a higher standard both in play and behavior, may as well choose another hobby. They may coach soccer but they will never coach players...At least not really well.

Competition is important, but winning and losing should be secondary to participating. We should not let the desire to win sacrifice a commitment to sportsmanship and fair play. Associations, clubs, teams and adult leaders who honor and reward good behavior and the ability to set the right example are on the correct path in developing character in young people. And character defines the person.

