

## SPORTSMANSHIP STANDARDS

- **Avoid arguing.** Stay focused on the game instead of giving in to anger with teammates, coaches, or referees. Always avoid using bad language and negative words.
- **Everyone should have a chance to play.** In youth sports, it's important to encourage even those players who are the least skilled to have fun playing in the game. Parents, coaches, and even other players have an important role in allowing less talented teammates time to participate.
- **Play fair.** Good sportsmen want to win because they followed the rules and played the best game they could. Never support any effort to win that attempts to go around the rules. Cheating is not acceptable.
- **Follow directions.** Emphasize the importance of listening to coaches and referees and following their directions while on the field and involved in team activities.
- **Respect the other team.** Whether your team wins or loses, it's important to show respect for the effort of the other team. If the other team wins, accept defeat, acknowledge their abilities, and move on. If your team wins, resist bragging—that's what it means to be a gracious winner.
- **Encourage teammates.** Team sports work best when each individual supports the team. Praise teammates for what they do well and encourage them when they make mistakes. Avoid criticism and unkind actions. Parents should model this behavior for children by praising them for specific things they have done well, even if they made a mistake or may not have played as well as hoped.
- **Respect the decisions of referees and other officials.** These people are charged with making difficult decisions about plays in the game. Good sportsmanship requires that you accept a call, even if you disagree with it. Remember that it's only one call in a long game—get back into play and focus on the game.
- **End with a handshake.** Good sportsmen enjoy sports and know how to end a game on a positive note, whether or not they won. Threats, anger, criticism, and other negative expressions are not acceptable.

