



## Champion Parent Focus: Building Positive Relationships is KEY to Character Development Through Sport

Welcome back to the second installment of our GROW series ( $G + R + O = W$ ) to assist sport parents in helping their child athletes to experience whole GROWth through sport. Parents can assist their children in setting  $G = \text{GOALS}$  for the season. Another essential element of the whole equation is  $R = \text{Relationships}$ .

Parents can help their child athletes foster healthy relationships with their teammates, opponents, referees, and coaches. Building positive relationships not only increases team stability, cohesion and performance, but it increases athletes' opportunity to feel successful and it builds individual player satisfaction.

### Parental Tips:

- Love your children unconditionally regardless of sports performance;
- Model positive relationships in your interaction with others (interaction with coach, comments to referees, welcoming attitude to visiting teams);
- Be respectful guests at your child's athletic competitions (the game belongs to the kids and can go on without the spectators);
- Assist your children in learning more about and accepting and including all of their teammates;
- Promote encouragement of teammates, talk through your child's criticisms of others (coaches, teammates, opponents); and
- Emphasize care and respect for all in the sport



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**“Sports remain a great metaphor for life's most difficult lessons. It was through athletics that many of us first came to understand that fear can be tamed; that on a team the whole is more than the sum of its parts; and that the ability to be heroic lies, to a surprising degree, within.”**

**~Susan Casey**

environment (both on your team and the other team).

**Suggestion:** As parents, help athletes to feel positively connected to all those involved in the sporting experience. This enables young people to form compassion, respect and a sense of fairness for all.

Help your child consider ways in which s/he could exhibit a greater amount of respect for those in sport: his/her coach, teammates, opponents, officials. Examples include: thank the coach after practice; encourage a lesser-skilled teammate; congratulate an opponent on a great play; shake the official's hand pre or post-game. Constantly refer to the Golden Rule, "treat others as you would like to be treated," as a guide for behavior.