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Sportsmanship

Anil Kisan Bade*, A.F. Shinde

*S.S.C.CollegeJunnar, CACPE Pune Tal-Junnar, Dist- Pune

ABSTRACT

Sports also provide an opportunity to develop moral values and positive behaviour. Sport activities allow participants to demonstrate values such as working hard, playing fair, playing by the rules of the game, and appropriate behaviour towards others such as good sportsmanship. However, whilst the opportunity to develop moral values does exist through sport participation, it should be noted that participation in sport can also undermine the moral development of youth if it solely focuses on physical activity. That is moral behaviour can be learnt from engaging with others or by one being taught ethical behaviour.

Keywords: Sportsmanship, Sportsman, Behaviour, Moral, Values, Sports

INTRODUCTION:

Sports also provide an opportunity to develop moral values and positive behaviour. Sport activities allow participants to demonstrate values such as working hard, playing fair, playing by the rules of the game, and appropriate behaviour towards others such as good sportsmanship. However, whilst the opportunity to develop moral values does exist through sport participation, it should be noted that participation in sport can also undermine the moral development of youth if it solely focuses on physical activity. That is moral behaviour can be learnt from engaging with others or by one being taught ethical behaviour. Yoga is a sport that emphasizes physical skills alongside the philosophy of the sport which includes reflection and meditation and in one particular study youths involved in the sport experienced lower levels of anxiety and aggression, increased self esteem and improved social skills in comparison to those students who were trained only in self defence physical skills.

1. **'Sportsmanship'** is an aspiration or ethos that a sport or activity will be enjoyed for its own sake, with proper consideration for fairness, ethics, respect, and a sense of fellowship with one's competitors. A sore loser refers to one who does not take defeat well, whereas a good sport means being a "good winner" as well as being a "good loser".

2. Sportsmanship can be conceptualized as an enduring and relatively stable characteristic or disposition such that individuals differ in the way they are generally expected to behave in sport situations. In general, sportsmanship refers to virtues such as fairness, self-control, courage, and persistence, and has been associated with interpersonal concepts of treating others and being treated fairly, maintaining self-control if dealing with others, and respect for both authority and opponents. Sportsmanship is also looked at as being the way one reacts to a sport/game/player.

3. The four elements of sportsmanship are often shown being good form, the will to win, willing to lose equity and fairness. All four elements are critical and a balance must be found amongst all four for true sportsmanship to be illustrated. These elements may also cause conflict, as a person may desire to win more than play in equity and fairness and thus resulting in a clash within the aspects of sportsmanship. This will cause problems as the person believes they are being a good sportsman, but they are defeating the purpose of this idea as they are ignoring two key components of being sportsman like. When athletes become too self-centered, the idea of sportsmanship unfortunately is dismissed.

4. Today's sporting culture, in particular the base of elite sport, places great importance on the idea of competition and winning and thus sportsmanship takes a back seat as a result. In most, if not all sports, athletes at the elite level makes the standards on sportsmanship and no matter if they like it or not, they are seen as leaders and role models in society.

5. Since every sport is rule driven, the most common offence of bad sportsmanship is the act of cheating or breaking the rules to gain an unfair advantage. A competitor who exhibits poor sportsmanship after losing a game or contest is often called a "sore loser" (those who show poor sportsmanship after winning are typically called "bad champs"). Sore loser behavior includes blaming others for the loss, not accepting responsibility for personal actions that contributed to the defeat, reacting to the loss in an immature or improper fashion, making excuses for the defeat, and citing unfavorable conditions or other petty issues as reasons for the defeat. A bad winner acts in a shallow fashion after his or her victory, such as by gloating about his or her win, rubbing the win in the face(s) of the opponent(s), and lowering the opponent(s)'s self-esteem by constantly reminding the opponent(s) of "poor" performance in comparison (even if the opponent(s) competed well). Not showing respect to the other team is considered to be a bad sportsman and could lead to demoralizing affects as Leslie Howe describes if a pitcher in baseball decides to pitch not to his maximum ability suggest that the batter is not at an adequate level and could lead to the batter to have low self-confidence or worth.

HOW TO AVOID NEGATIVE SPORTS ENVIRONMENTS:

Sports environments can also very quickly lead to young adolescents making incorrect assessments of their abilities and by observing peers making social comparisons, which threaten their self esteem. (Festinger, 1954). With those who have their self esteem at stake, downward social comparisons to protect against negative self evaluation can result in lost interest in the sport. The early involvement of coaches and parents is therefore imperative for the development of accurate assessments of abilities and competence.

Although there is an argument for moral development through sports, there has also been evidence to suggest that sports can increase the risk of opportunities for unstructured social activities, substance abuse and not violent behaviour. Therefore, it is essential that coaches and administrators consider the following factors that foster moral values, build self esteem, develop social connectedness, as well as develop emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

1. Scaffolding through coach and peer relationships to allow for skill building
2. Positive re-enforcement and appropriate constructive learning
3. Empowering adolescents to be a part of the decision making process
4. Fostering inclusion rather than an exclusive dynamic
5. Fostering self improvement rather than self comparison
6. Provide community serving opportunities
7. Allowing each youth to have an important role and voice
8. Encourage social development alongside physical development
9. Relating to the youth how the skills and efforts acquired in such environments are transferred to other domains.

CONCLUSION:

In developing self esteem, coaches who engage positive reinforcement, frequent encouragement and corrective feedback can improve on a youths self esteem . The coach's involvement is critical to the development of self esteem as their level of competence can be assessed more accurately. The appropriateness of coach's feedback is also critical in that it may not be appropriate to reward a child whose effort was lacking by giving positive feedback. Instead, by giving constructive criticism with positive reinforcement in response to performance errors, a player's perception of competence can be built. When it comes to morality, developing programs which are led by coaches and parents that promote fair play focus on personal improvement such as working hard, co-operating with others and becoming good citizens will develop athletes who display good sportsmanship in contrast to those more concerned with beating others at all costs. Coaches can teach their youth appropriate behaviours when certain situations arise in games and practice, and by displaying moral behaviours as instructors.

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