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The Arizona Republic (Phoenix)

February 27, 2009 Friday
Final Chaser Edition

SECTION: SOUTHWEST VALLEY REPUBLIC 5; Pg. 17

HEADLINE: Victory with honor? Proud father lets Jace say it best

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My son was asked what pursuing victory with honor means to him. I was so touched by his response; our kids say it better than anyone else.

Jace is a senior at Phoenix Sunnyslope High School.

I have had the privilege of watching Jace play sports for several years. He will be able to look back on his youth sports years with no regrets. He may not have been the player who scored the most points or was the team's best, but he was best for the team.

He never complained about playing time, never yelled at the referees, never got mad at his teammates or opponents. He just gave his heart to what was asked of him.

Because of his attitude, he made lots of friends, and coaches wanted him to be on their teams. He reaped the rewards of working hard and placing the priority on relationships and integrity. He learned how to play through times when he felt sick, hurt, or just not in the mood.

Without adding up his career wins and losses, he is a winner. He is one who will walk away from youth sports with no college scholarships, but a rich future.

I've learned a lot from my son... I hope you will too.

"Pursuing victory with honor means you consider others to be more important than yourself. There is no honor in fighting your way to the top if you have trampled on others to get there. You fight through adversity, giving it your all; making no excuses and no complaints.

"When you're injured, you make the necessary adjustments, fighting through the pain and using what is left with more vigor. When all the odds seem against you, you buckle down and focus on what you have to work with, not looking for excuses, but looking for the way to get it done with integrity and honor.

"If the officials call a tight game, you adjust your game, backing off a little; if their style is loose, you can play a little more aggressively. Complaining about the officials only creates frustration for everyone. You exhort your teammates, knowing that by lifting them up and making them look better, the team succeeds, and everyone wins.

"It's important in victory to be gracious; affirming the other team's efforts, not gloating, but preparing mentally and physically for the next game.

"At practice, you don't count down the minutes until it's over, but you are fully engaged, working every bit as hard as you would in a game.

"Leaving out honor in the pursuit of victory is not true victory, just one empty win soon forgotten. Honor is what lasts and those who pursue it are the truly victorious."

-- Jace Kuyper

If you have a question or a comment for Tom, e-mail him at tomkuyper@kidsandsports.com