

# CHILL Manager: Parents and Sportsmanship

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What does CHILL mean?

o **Cool**

o **Heads**

o **Instill**

o **Life**

o **Lessons**

# Who are CHILL Managers?

- o Parents who manage teams' expectations and behaviors around sportsmanship.
- o Adults charged with promoting sportsmanship through information and example.
- o Sometimes A CM is one designated person per team; other times every parent can be considered a CHILL Manager.
- o THEY ARE VERY IMPORTANT

# What is Sportsmanship?

- o A full commitment to sports participation
- o Respect for the rules and officials
- o Concern for social convention (good loser, good winner)
- o Respect for opponents
- o Avoidance of “winning at all costs” mentality

-- Lori Gano-Overway, M.S.

[Education World](#), 3/16/2010

# What does ROOTS mean?

R- We refuse to bend the rules to win

O- A worthy opponent is a gift that brings out our best

O- Show respect (for officials) even when we disagree

T- Never do anything to embarrass our team

S- We live up to our own standards, even when others don't.

From [www.uslacrosse.org](http://www.uslacrosse.org)

# How do parents influence sportsmanship?

- In-game behaviors – behaving in a way that draws attention to one's loud, arguing behavior
- At-home behaviors – reinforcing the idea that winning at all costs is of primary importance
- Expectations – pressuring kids to push themselves on order to achieve an unlikely goal
- Tolerances – staying quiet when other parents act out

# WAAC-ed Out

- Winning at all costs (WAAC) is a mentality that causes harm to youth athletes
- WAAC encourages behavior that is contrary to ROOTS
- WAAC has specific impacts on youth athletes, families, and society
- WAAC can be changed

# Problem: “My kid’s the best!”

Athletes	Women's Basketball	Men's Basketball	Baseball	Men's Ice Hockey	Football	Men's Soccer
High School senior athletes	129,408	156,096	134,477	10,361	306,221	102,553
NCAA Freshman Positions	4,313	4,735	8,219	1,135	17,501	5,655
NCAA Senior Athletes Drafted	32	44	600	33	250	75
Percentage: High School To NCAA	3.30%	3.00%	6.10%	11.00%	5.70%	5.50%
Percentage: NCAA To Professional	1.00%	1.20%	9.40%	3.70%	1.80%	1.70%
Percentage: High School To Professional	0.02%	0.03%	0.45%	0.32%	0.08%	0.07%

# Parent expectations are often unrealistic

In the top 6 NCAA sports, the chances of a high school senior athlete competing at the professional level range from .02 to .08%.

With 7.6 million high schoolers playing sports each year, there is a lot of competition for a tiny number of spots.

Kids feed on parental expectations, though, which causes them to also develop WAAC mentalities.

# Four Factors that emphasize the importance of sportsmanship

**Poor sportsmanship leads to:**

- o Bullying/Abuse
- o Safety concerns
- o Interference with lifelong enjoyment of sport/activity
- o Lack of belonging

# 1) Bullying and Abuse

According to [www.bullyingstatistics.org](http://www.bullyingstatistics.org),  
Bullying can be:

“Attempts to control through verbal abuse – which can be in tone of voice or in content such as teasing or threats – exclusion, or physical bullying or violence, which the victim does not want.”

Not all loudmouthed parent-fans, coaches, or players are bullies, but some are.

# Bullying/Abuse, continued

In a youth sports situation, what does bullying look like?

- Coaches yelling at players and officials
- Parents yelling at players, coaches, and officials because of ego-investment
- Players taunting others on the field
- Players turning on teammates for “letting the team down”

# What causes people to show poor sportsmanship? (or be an in-game bully?)

1. **Shame** – Parents, coaches, and players can get embarrassed by poor play on the field and overcompensate by being aggressive.
- **Fear** – People are overly aggressive at youth games are often afraid that their own shortcomings or insecurities (or their child's) will be revealed if they don't go on the offensive.
- **Ego- and financial-investment** – Parents and coaches who have sacrificed their time and money for their kids are **very** invested in those kids doing well in sports. They still live for the great dream of their kid getting a state champion title, college scholarship, or pro contract. When that dream is threatened, so are they.

# Effects of bullying on kids

- o Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. [Like sports and other activities.] These issues may persist into adulthood.
- o Health complaints
- o Decreased academic achievement—GPA and standardized test scores—and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.

# What enhances the bullying? Tolerance.

- o Not intervening when coaches belittle players
- o Not intervening when parents belittle their own children
- o Not intervening when parents attempt to shame officials
- o Not intervening when players report on-field bullying
- o Not intervening when teammates pick on other teammates

Tolerating behavior that harms another, whether it's an adult or a child, is sometimes just as hurtful as perpetrating the poor sportsmanship.

- Tolerance shows the victim that he or she cannot be protected.
- Tolerance shows the victim that she or he deserved the bullying.
- Tolerance shows the victim that bullying is the “right” behavior and resets a cultural norm.
- Tolerance glamorizes excessive aggression.

## 2) Safety Concerns

“Researchers (at the Center for Injury Research and Policy) estimated that between 2005 and 2007, more than 98,000 injuries (in youth sports) were directly related to an act that a referee, official, or disciplinary committee ruled illegal.”

-- Douglas E. Abrams, University of Missouri School of Law, January 2012

# Safety Concerns, continued

Following game rules (part of ROOTS) does this:

- Reduces chance of arguments over calls
- Reduces frustration and resentment
- Reduces paybacks
- Reduces injury

Allowing play to evolve outside sportsmanship puts kids at risk of serious injury due to retaliation or misuse of equipment/physical size.

### 3) Interference with Lifelong Enjoyment of Sports

From “Why Most Kids Quit Sports,” by Carleton Kendrick Ed.M., LCSW

o Twenty million kids register each year for youth hockey, football, baseball, soccer, and other competitive sports. The National Alliance for Sports reports that 70 percent of these kids quit playing these league sports by age 13 -- and never play them again.

Family Education: <http://life.familyeducation.com>

# Interference, continued

“Parents and coaches need to be aware of what kids can accomplish at their differing developmental levels -- physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Don't make unrealistic expectations concerning your child's sports performance -- be it in the area of muscle coordination, dedication, or attention span. Many kids lose their passion for youth sports during these years because they feel they can't live up to their parents' and coaches' expectations.”

--Carleton Kendrick Ed.M., LCSW

## 4) Lack of Belonging

- o Humans desire and need a sense of belonging to a bigger collective, whether it's a family, a team, a town, a school, or organization.
- o Feeling excluded, through acts of poor sportsmanship, interrupts that sense of belonging and can potentially damage self-worth.
- o Kids who feel they don't belong anywhere can wander to the "fringe" and be at risk of hurting themselves and others.

# Lifelong Lessons vs. Poor Sportsmanship

## Lifelong Lessons

- ✓ Worthy of protection from shame/abuse
- ✓ Safety is paramount
- ✓ Lifelong enjoyment of physical activity is important
- ✓ You belong

## Poor Sportsmanship

Bullying  
Safety concerns  
Interference with lifelong enjoyment of sport/activity  
Lack of belonging

# How do we parents promote good sportsmanship?

- o Model acceptable behavior
- o Talk about sportsmanship
- o Change the culture of an organization/team
- o Enforce consequences for poor sportsmanship
- o Stop glamorizing bullying
- o Adopt CHILL Manager program

# What does a CHILL Manager do?

- o Focuses attention on the issue of sportsmanship (simply by existing)
- o Disseminates information to team parents, coaches, players (through emails and meetings)
- o Provides support to those who want to promote good sportsmanship (doesn't tolerate poor sportsmanship)
- o Steps in to diffuse situations\*\*

# Diffusing Situations

- o Used only as last resort
- o Causes most risk of personal altercation
- o Most risk of escalation
- o Triggers shame in the “bully,” and increases chance of saving-face comments and activities

# What makes an effective CHILL Manager? (External factors)

- o Organizational understanding of the importance of sportsmanship on player safety and emotional health
- o Top-down emphasis on creating a culture of positive sportsmanship
- o Focus on prevention, not punishment
- o Visibility and respect

# What makes an effective CHILL Manager (Internal factors)

- o Buy-in on importance of sportsmanship
- o Confidence that others will be supportive
- o Early-season information and expectations
- o Understanding that escalation is counter-productive
- o Calm, respected demeanor

# Steps to becoming a CHILL Manager

1. Evaluate your priorities as a parent – do you believe in the importance of sportsmanship in your child’s life? Do you act like it at games? At home?
2. Decide that you won’t tolerate others’ bullying behavior or poor sportsmanship.
  - Make time in your schedule to read an email or two about sportsmanship, talk to your child about sportsmanship, and/or volunteer to be the CHILL Manager for one game or more.
  - Work with your team’s coach and your organization’s leadership to confirm their commitment to safety and sportsmanship.
  - Pick out some cool CHILL Manager swag. 😊

# Hurdles to establishing a CHILL Manager program

- o Changing the culture of a league/team
- o Difficulties dealing with ego-invested parents, coaches, and players who won't back down
- o Effective training
- o Ensuring compliance
- o Financial investment in swag: identifying shirts, buttons, lanyards, etc.

# CHILL Manager Support

- o [www.chillmanager.org](http://www.chillmanager.org) – Parent Pulse section for discussion with other parents. Ask questions, provide thoughts and suggestions.
- o [www.chillmanager.blogspot.com](http://www.chillmanager.blogspot.com) - A blog on different sportsmanship issues

# Additional Thoughts...

- o If every parent takes a turn as the CHILL Manager, it becomes more critical to get buy-in, BUT it becomes much easier to change the culture of a team or organization.
- o If it's not a rotating position, then establish a CHILL Manager culture through example and information.
- o Understand the motivations of the bully: shame, fear, ego-investment.
- o Remember to treat others how you would like to be treated, even if they don't do the same.
- o Wear something identifying
  - o Carry a blue USL sportsmanship card on a lanyard
  - o Wear a CHILL Manager t-shirt
  - o Wear a button or other identifier

**Most important**  
**PREVENTION** (of parent  
issues)

**PREVENTION** (of coach  
issues)

**PREVENTION** (of player  
issues)

# More information

To order CHILL Manager swag:

<http://www.cafepress.com/>

[lovelacrosse](http://www.cafepress.com/lovelacrosse)

(or contact Jenni for bulk pricing)



For CHILL Manager training or questions:

**Jenni McNamara** – [jennimcmc@gmail.com](mailto:jennimcmc@gmail.com)

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# References

- o [www.bullystatistics.org](http://www.bullystatistics.org)
- o “Promoting Sportsmanship in Youth Sports, Perspectives from Sport Psychology,” by Jay D. Goldstein and Seppe E. Iso-Ahola
- o “Sportsmanship,” at [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org), reviewed by [Steven Dowshen, MD](#) and [Steve Sanders, PhD](#)
- o “PUTTING THE SPORTSMANSHIP BACK IN YOUTH SPORTS,” [Rick Coates](#) - August 6th, 2012, <http://www.northernexpress.com/michigan/article-5899-putting-the-sportsma.html>

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- o “In the Heat of Competition, The role of sportsmanship in youth sports today,” by Dr. Paul Weiss, [Parentguidenews.com](http://parentguidenews.com)
- o “Player Safety in Youth Sports: Sportsmanship and Respect As an Injury-Prevention Strategy,” by Douglas E. Abrams (This paper can be downloaded without charge from the Social Sciences Research Network Electronic Paper Collection at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1807404>)

# References

- “Why Most Kids Quit Sports,” by Carleton Kendrick Ed.M., LCSW, <http://life.familyeducation.com>
- “Emphasizing Sportsmanship in Youth Sports,” by Lori Gano-Overway, [www.educationworld.com](http://www.educationworld.com)