

## **SPORTSMANSHIP – WHY IT MATTERS**

A growing problem in youth sports today is the all-too-common attitude that winning is everything. Nothing could be further from the truth. USA Hockey and USA Hockey InLine believe this attitude can contribute to players, coaches and parents displaying a lack of good sportsmanship.

In any athletic contest, the competitors should do their best to try and win. After all, striving to win is a part of healthy competition. But winning or losing is only a result – it should not be the reason we play the game.

Everyone in the game should have a sense of fair play. Satisfaction should come from playing your hardest and doing your best. There is a big difference between losing and being a loser. If you have done your best and played within the rules, you are never a loser. By the same token, you may win the game, but if you aren't humble in victory, or played without respect for your opponent, you aren't a winner.

Sportsmanship matters.

## **IF WINNING ISN'T IMPORTANT, WHY SHOULD I PLAY?**

The real reason to play ice hockey, inline hockey and other youth sports is because they are fun. When everyone displays good sportsmanship, it helps create a better environment.

Other reasons are:

- to develop fundamental motor skills
- to acquire skills for recreation and leisure
- to learn to interact with others
- to learn values such as loyalty to a common cause, respect for others and respect for the letter and spirit of rules
- to learn how to accept constructive criticism
- to gain a positive sense of self-worth
- to make friends and be a part of a team

*There is a lot to be gained by playing hockey.*

USA Hockey has developed "Codes of Conduct" for youth hockey. Try your best to display good sportsmanship and a winning attitude by following these codes.

## **PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Play for FUN.
2. Work hard to improve your skills.
3. Be a team player – get along with your teammates.
4. Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
5. Be on time for practices and games.
6. Learn the rules and play by them. Always be a good sport.
7. Respect your coaches, teammates, parents, opponents and officials.
8. Never argue with an official's decision.

## **COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game. Remember, players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.
2. Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.
3. Be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Be consistent and honest. Be fair and just; do not criticize players publicly. Learn to be a more effective communicator and coach; do not yell at players.
4. Adjust to the personal needs and problems of players. Be a good listener; never verbally or physically abuse a player or official. Give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem; teach them the basics.
5. Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of hockey. Encourage all of your players to be team players.
6. Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.
7. Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress habits that promote good health.
8. To play the game is great, to love the game is greater.

## **PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sport. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
2. Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
3. Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
4. Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in the younger age groups.
5. Know and study the rules of hockey and support the officials. This approach will help in the development of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
6. Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice – it is destructive. Work toward removing physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
7. Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
8. If you enjoy the game, learn all you can and dedicate time as a volunteer!

## **OFFICIALS CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Act in a professional and businesslike manner at all times and take your role seriously.
2. Strive to provide a safe and sportsmanlike environment in which players can properly display their hockey skills.
3. Know all playing rules, their interpretations and their proper applications.
4. Remember that officials are "teachers." Set a good example.
5. Make your calls with quiet confidence; never with arrogance.

6. Control games only to the extent that is necessary to provide a positive and safe experience for all participants.
7. Violence must never be tolerated.
8. Be fair and impartial at all times.
9. Answer all reasonable questions and requests.
10. Adopt a "zero tolerance" attitude toward verbal or physical abuse.
11. Never use foul or vulgar language when speaking with a player, coach, parent or another official.
12. Use honesty and integrity when answering questions.
13. Admit your mistakes when you make them.
14. Never openly criticize a player, coach, parent or another official.
15. Keep your emotions under control.
16. Use only USA Hockey/USA Hockey InLine-approved officiating techniques and policies.
17. Maintain your health through a physical conditioning program.
18. Dedicate yourself to personal improvement and maintenance of officiating skills.
19. Respect your supervisor and his/her critique of your performance.

### **SPECTATORS CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches and officials.
2. Act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans. Enjoy the game together.
3. Cheer good plays of all participants; never "boo" the opponent.
4. Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play; profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive.
5. Help provide a safe and fun environment; throwing objects onto the playing surface can cause injury to players and officials.
6. Do not lean over or pound on the glass; the glass surrounding the rink is part of the playing area.
7. Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
8. Respect locker rooms as private areas for players, coaches and officials.
9. Be supportive after the game, win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork and sportsmanship.

### **ADMINISTRATORS CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Follow the rules and regulations of USA Hockey/USA Hockey InLine and your association to ensure that philosophies and objectives are enhanced.
2. Support programs that train and educate players, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers.
3. Promote and publicize your programs; seek out financial support when possible.
4. Communicate with parents by holding parent/player orientation meetings. Be available to answer questions and address problems throughout the season.
5. Work to provide programs that encompass fairness to the participants and promote fair play and sportsmanship.
6. Recruit volunteers, including coaches, who demonstrate qualities conducive to being role models to the youth in our sport.
7. Encourage coaches and officials to attend USA Hockey/USA Hockey InLine clinics and educate your board members as to the necessity for these important training sessions.
8. Endeavor to provide everyone with a place to play, regardless of their ability or skill level.
9. Read and be familiar with the contents of the USA Hockey/USA Hockey InLine Annual Guide and Rule Books.

### **Sportsmanship Matters!**

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## *Why It Matters*

