

SPORTSMANSHIP

AND

CHARACTER

WHEN
COACHING AND PLAYING
TENNIS

A GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL COACHES,
PARENTS AND PLAYERS

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Introduction

I intend this manual to be a model of how to emphasize sportsmanship and character in a high school tennis program.

I know that for many tennis coaches, I am preaching to the choir when it comes to sportsmanship and character. To others, I am just preaching. I only mean to raise some discussion on the topics, not to have the final word.

Take it for what it is worth – just a jumping point to further the knowledge and ideas of coaches and players.

There are many reasons for a coach to coach, and a player to play a sport. Research indicates that the number one reason young people play tennis is for **FUN**. I am sure that making friends, competition and other reasons also come to fore, but having fun is the priority.

In light of this, I contend that in order to have fun, the game must be played according to the rules of tennis, and that the best sportsmanship should be exhibited at all times.

Sportsmanship is the key to making the game enjoyable to play.

Tennis competition is unique in high school because normally there are no referees during a match, and the players and coaches are expected to represent the best in sportsmanship by playing and coaching by the rules. The player and the coach are also referees. The Code of tennis is to be followed by both coach and player, and an ethical and moral atmosphere should be present before, during, and after a contest.

How we as coaches and players model this sportsmanship idea is key in making the tennis experience a one of a kind to the student/athlete. As a matter of fact, what we teach and expect in tennis can be a model for all of life's activities.

I hope that this guide will get coaches and players to think about the right way to coach and play the game of tennis. The game will teach you more than tennis if you let it.

Enjoy the coaching and playing of a unique game. You have chosen the best.

Bill

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CHAPTER 1 – SPORTSMANSHIP

The Apple computer dictionary defines sportsmanship as: conduct considered fitting for a sports person, including observance of the rules of fair play, respect for others, and graciousness in losing.

No doubt others have defined sportsmanship. Here are a few illustrations just to show a few other ways of looking at the subject.

Respect and fairness: How would you like to be treated? **Bill Lange**

Walking off the court and you can't tell whether the player won or lost. **Jim Courier**

Practicing fair play is better than preaching it. **Knute Rockne**

Sportsmanship is the essence of the game. **Rod Laver**

I imagine that you as a coach and/or a player have your own definition of sportsmanship that you put into practice when you coach or play. Are all coaches and players on the same page when it comes to practicing good sportsmanship? I really don't know. I have seen all sorts of behaviors while coaching and playing that I could call good sportsmanship, but I have also seen the same people exhibit very bad or borderline sportsmanship, depending on the day, the situation, or the attitude of the person.

I suppose consistency is of importance. How does one achieve consistency when practicing sportsmanship? Like many other things, habit is a big factor. What are you used to doing in certain situations. Can you control yourself in the most difficult situations? Are you concerned about being a good model of sportsmanship? Is sportsmanship of primary importance in your coaching and playing?

Coming up with a definition and concept of sportsmanship is worth discussing and spending time doing. Coaches and players should always be in an on going discussion about this topic. We need to agree on some basics, and also define certain situations and illustrate what is good sportsmanship in them.

Sportsmanship is part of your character. And as Michael Josephson from the Character Counts Organization (www.charactercounts.org) says: "Nothing about your character is hereditary. Everyone enters the world with an equal opportunity to become a person of great or petty character."

As coaches and players, let's continue to discuss and redefine sportsmanship as it applies to our sport, tennis. Let's make this sport a model for others.

CHAPTER 2 – SPORTSMANSHIP IN COACHING

How does a coach exhibit sportsmanship? Here are some thoughts on the subject. They come from the Character Counts Organization.

One of the advantages of sport is that it gives the athlete and coaches a chance to develop a sense of sportsmanship and character.

Sportsmanship Users Guide

Sportsmanship vs. Gamesmanship

There are essentially two ways to engage in an athletic contest: play for sport (to enjoy it) or play for the game (to win). The first is the sportsmanship model, in which how you play the game is central. Glory is not attained by victory but by how honorably you pursue it. The second is the gamesmanship model, in which all that matters is winning, by whatever dubious, but legal, means you can use to gain an advantage.

Gamesmanship Model

Gamesmanship coaches and athletes are pragmatists. They believe ethical standards revolve around **what works rather than what's right**, so they have no obligation to abide by rules. It's the official's job to catch violations and impose penalties. Consequently, they use shady tactical maneuvers to gain advantage over opponents such as psychological ploys, breaking the flow of action, intentionally making a mistake to nullify play, etc. The gamesmanship model often dominates the practice of sports.

Advantage: By finding new and better ways to cross the line and get around rules, gamesmanship coaches and athletes often gain a competitive edge.

Disadvantage: Victories attained unethically are counterfeit.

Sportsmanship Model

Sportsmanship coaches and athletes are idealists. They are committed to **scrupulous integrity** (including compliance with the letter and spirit of the rules even when they could get away with violations), fair play, respectfulness and grace. This model is deeply rooted in the Olympic spirit and lies at the foundation of all major athletic mission statements and codes of conduct. It is the way sports ought to be played.

Advantage: When victory is achieved, the gratification is greater because it was attained by pursuing victory with honor.

Disadvantage: Those who play by the sportsmanship model are often at a substantial disadvantage when competing against those who adopt the gamesmanship theory. A true sports person must be willing to lose rather than sacrifice ethical principles, even when the stakes are high.

CHAPTER 3 – SPORTSMANSHIP IN PLAYING

In tennis, giving your opponent the benefit of the doubt is a cardinal principle. This idea comes from *The Code*. Meant to be used as a guide for unofficiated tennis matches [it is not part of the official ITF (International Tennis Federation) Rules of Tennis], it was developed by Colonel Nicolas E. Powell, so that players could reach an agreement on rules and at the same time makes tennis more fun and a better game for all. *The Code* also dictates the standard procedures that players will use in reaching decisions.

The Code is another detailed explanation of how good sportsmanship and character should be exhibited during a tennis match, **especially during an unofficiated one.**

I suggest that all coaches and players have a copy of *The Code*, and regularly discuss its content and how it applies to play in high school tennis. Many high school tennis coaches have not had a background in tennis, and knowing the unwritten rules as explained in *The Code* is as important as knowing the International Tennis Federation Rules. Both of these “rule books” can be found in *Friend At Court*, published by the United States Tennis Association.

Here are some quotes that can be used to illustrate sportsmanship for the player.

Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there. **John Wooden – basketball coach**

Most talents are a gift. Character is not given us. We have to build it piece by piece – by thought, choice, courage, and determination. **Arthur F. Lenehan**

Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you. **H. Jackson Brown – composer, advertiser, author**

Life is like walking through snow. Every step shows. **Jess Lair – psychologist, author**

Reputation is character minus what you’ve been caught doing. **Michael Lapoce, speechwriter, comedy writer**

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than a year of conversation. **Plato – Greek philosopher**

Tactics, fitness, stroke ability, adaptability, experience, and sportsmanship are all necessary for winning. **Fred Perry – British tennis player**

CHAPTER 4 – DEVELOPING CHARACTER

Good character is not something that is inborn. It must be learned. It must be practiced. How do you want to be known? In sports as in life, the kind of character you become will be more important than the wins and accomplishments you have done on the court. It is nice to be a winner, but if it is only in the win and loss column that you are concerned about, and your reputation is not a winner too, you will not have accomplished half as much as you think.

Of all the coaches and players that I have known, I remember the quality people that went out on the court, played their best, won or lost with class, and went on to become a person that you wanted to know. Hardly ever do we discuss the won/lost records. But rather, we talk about people, points, good times, bad times, and most of all how we have a camaraderie that is second to none.

In the following pages I hope that the ideas presented are of meaning and substance. Most of them come from the Michael Josephson Institute – Character Counts Organization. I hope that you will look into this organization a little more and find other ideas that may stimulate yourself and your team to become the best you can be in terms of sportsmanship and character. In doing so, I hope that the people you associate with will notice and follow suit.

The Character Counts organization builds its character foundation on the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

1. **Trustworthiness.** Be honest. Don't deceive, cheat or steal. Be reliable – do what you say you'll do. Have the courage to do the right thing, Build a good reputation. Be loyal – stand by your family, friends and country.
2. **Respect.** Treat others with respect: follow the Golden Rule, Be tolerant of differences. Use good manners, not bad language. Be considerate of the feelings of others. Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone. Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements.
3. **Responsibility.** Do what you are supposed to do. Persevere; keep on trying! Always do your best. Use self-control. Be self-disciplined. Think before you act – consider the consequences. Be accountable for your choices.
4. **Fairness.** Play by the rules. Take turns and share. Be open-minded; listen to others. Don't take advantage of others. Don't blame others carelessly.
5. **Caring.** Be kind. Be compassionate and show you care. Express gratitude. Forgive others. Help people in need.
6. **Citizenship.** Do your share to make your team, your school, and your community better. Cooperate. Get involved in community affairs. Stay informed; vote. Be a good neighbor. Obey laws and rules. Respect authority. Protect the environment.

T	R	R	F	C	C
R	E	E	A	A	I
U	S	S	I	R	T
S	P	p	R	I	I
T	E	O	N	N	Z
W	C	N	E	I	E
O	T	S	S	G	N
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People with good character are **TERRIFIC!**

Playing on a tennis team with the Six Pillars of Character may look at ethics in this way.

Trustworthiness. Practicing all scheduled hours. Providing honest feedback on personal and team progress and problems, and practicing with little supervision.

Respect. Treating coaches, teammates, and fans with courtesy and honor. Building mutual respect and long-term relationships by listening and communicating openly.

Responsibility. Taking pride in your tennis. Showing initiative. Recognizing what needs to be done. Paying attention to detail and pursuing excellence. Being loyal in attendance and always punctual.

Fairness. Understanding and respecting the fans and your opponents and realizing that this relationship is a direct reflection on you, your school, and your community.

Caring. Striving to create harmonious, mutually beneficial, and ethical team relationships by showing kindness and sensitivity to the feelings of others.

Citizenship. Showing initiative by being helpful, resourceful, cooperative, and supportive. Following team policies, regulations and procedures.

As a coach, we need to emphasize the Six Pillars of Character. These ethical pursuits go far beyond just tennis. Leading every aspect of your life with these Pillars in mind will take you to places you want to go. It will show people around you that you are a solid ethical person worth knowing and having around. You will be a good example (role model) for your players and your colleagues. You will receive respect and a status that is worth striving for.

A PERSON OF CHARACTER

Michael Josephson

Let's face it: It's not easy to become a person of character. It takes a good heart, but it also requires wisdom to know right from wrong and the discipline to do right even when it's costly, inconvenient, or difficult.

Becoming a person of character is a lifelong quest to be better.

A person of character values honesty and integrity and pays whatever price is needed to be worthy of trust, earning the pride of family and friends and self-respect.

A person of character plays fair even when others don't and values no achievement unless it was attained with honor.

A person of character has strong convictions, yet avoids self-righteousness.

A person of character believes in the inherent dignity of all people and treats everyone with respect, even those whose ideas and ideologies evoke strong disagreement.

A person of character deals with criticism constructively and is self-confident enough to take good advice, to admit and learn from mistakes, to feel and express genuine remorse, and to apologize graciously.

A person of character knows what's important, sacrifices now for later, is in control of attitudes and actions, overcomes negative impulses, and makes the best of every situation.

A person of character willingly faces fears and tackles unpleasant tasks.

A person of character is consistently and self-consciously kind and empathetic, giving generously without concern for reward.

A person of character feels and expresses gratitude freely and frequently.

A person of character is not defeated by failure or dissuaded by disappointment.

A person of character seeks true happiness in living a life of purpose and meaning, pledging a higher value on significance than success.

CHAPTER 5 – RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING SPORTSMANSHIP AND CHARACTER

As you instill ethical characteristics into your life and team, it is possible to begin to expand your efforts to creating an **All-Character Team**.

Athletes are often honored for their achievements by being named to “All” teams (All-American, All-Star, All Conference, All-Pro, All-State, etc.). Why not spotlight your own players in a similar fashion? Instead of heralding their physical prowess, however, consider honoring their character by an All-Character team, **which the team will choose themselves**. Add this award to the ones all ready in place: MVP (Most Valuable Player), and MIP (Most Improved Player), or instead of MVP and/or MIP.

How to do it:

1. Explain the criteria for selection: outstanding commitment to the community and/or stellar behavior toward teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, or fans.
2. Have each teammate nominate someone by writing a one-page profile extolling his or her virtues.
3. Distribute the profiles to all teammates.
4. Have them vote by secret ballot.
5. Announce the All-Character team and present each player with a certificate.
6. Send a press release to local media about your All-Character team and describe their accomplishment.

New Trier High School
Sportsmanship Award

All Character Team

This certificate is presented to:

In recognition by her teammates for outstanding sportsmanship and character on the tennis courts, in the school, and in the community.

Pursuing Victory with Honor Code of Conduct for Student-Athletes.

www.charactercourts.org

Perhaps as a coach you can develop an attitude of victory with honor. To get the players to see what you mean, the following is a suggestion.

Athletic competition of student-athletes should be fun and should also be a significant part of a sound educational program, embodying high standards of sportsmanship while developing good character and other important life skills. Essential elements of character building are intrinsic in the concept of sportsmanship and the six core ethical values: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship (the Six Pillars of Character). The highest potential of sports is achieved when learning from the T.E.A.M. approach (Teach, Enforce, Advocate and Model these values) and by committing to the ideal of pursuing victory with honor. Good-faith efforts to honor the words and spirit of this Code will improve the quality of our programs and the well being of all teammates.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

- **Trustworthiness** – Be worthy of trust in all you do.
- **Integrity** – Live up to high ideals of ethics and sportsmanship and always pursue victory with honor. Do what’s right even when it’s unpopular or personally costly.
- **Honesty** – Live and compete honorably. Don’t lie, cheat, steal or engage in any other dishonest or unsportsmanlike conduct. Plagiarism or cheating is not acceptable.
- **Reliability** – Fulfill commitments. Do what you say you will do. Be on time to practices and games.
- **Loyalty** – Be loyal to your school and team. Put the team above personal glory.

RESPECT

- **Respect** – Treat all people, including the teacher-coach, with respect at all times. Demonstrate an appropriate demeanor that reflects self-control and an unwavering commitment to fair play.
- **Class** – Live and play with class. Be a good sport. Be gracious in victory and accept defeat with dignity. Help fallen opponents, compliment extraordinary performance, and show sincere respect in pre-and post-game rituals.
- **Disrespectful Conduct** – Don’t engage in disrespectful conduct of any sort including profanity, obscene gestures, offensive remarks of a sexual nature, trash talking, taunting, boastful celebrations, or other actions that demean individuals or the sport.
- **Respect for Officials.** – Treat game officials with respect. Don’t complain about or argue with calls or decisions during or after an athletic event. Help youth sports organizations fill their need for qualified officials as a way to promote greater understanding and respect for the referee’s role.

RESPONSIBILITY

- **Importance of Education** – The primary responsibility of a student-athlete is academic achievement. Be a student first, and commit to earning your

- diploma and getting the best education you can. Be honest with yourself about the likelihood of getting an athletic scholarship or playing on a professional level, and remember that many universities will not recruit student-athletes who do not have a serious commitment to their education, the ability to succeed academically or the character to represent their institution honorably. Not achieving passing grades will result in your suspension from the team until the deficiency is cured.
- **Role Modeling** – Remember, participation in sports is a privilege, not a right, and you are expected to represent your school, coach and teammates with honor, on and off the field. Consistently exhibit good character and conduct yourself as a positive role model.
- **Self-Control** – Exercise self-control. Don't fight or show excessive displays of anger or frustration. Have the strength to overcome the temptation to retaliate.
- **Healthy Lifestyle** – Safeguard your health. Don't use any illegal or unhealthy substances, including alcohol, tobacco, drugs and nutritional supplements, or engage in any unhealthy techniques to gain, lose or maintain weight. Be informed about the health risks involved in the use of recreational and performance-enhancing drugs, tobacco and alcohol, as well as in eating disorders.
- **Integrity of the Game** – Protect the integrity of the game. Don't gamble or associate with or deal with professional gamblers.

FAIRNESS

- **Fairness and Openness** – Live up to high standards of fair play. Be open-minded, always be willing to listen and learn.

CARING

- **Concern for Others** – Demonstrate concern for others.
- **Teammates** – Help promote the well being of teammates through positive counseling and encouragement or by reporting any unhealthy or dangerous conduct to coaches.

CITIZENSHIP

- **Playing by the Rules** – Have a thorough knowledge of and abide by all applicable game and competition rules. Demonstrate and demand integrity.
- **Spirit of Rules** – Honor, observe and enforce the spirit and the letter of rules. Avoid temptations to gain competitive advantage through improper gamesmanship techniques that violate the highest traditions of sportsmanship. Do not engage in or allow any conduct designed to evade the rules governing fair competition.

I have read and understand the requirements of this **Code of Conduct** and acknowledge that I may be disciplined or removed from a team if I violate any of its provisions.

Pursuing Victory with Honor Pledge

**In the spirit of fair play
and sportsmanship, I
promise to conduct
myself in accordance
with the Six Pillars of
Character –
trustworthiness, respect,
responsibility, fairness,
caring and citizenship –
and to (help all
competitors) pursue
victory with honor.**

A Model Conference- wide Sportsmanship Awards Program

[www.w.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)

Consider presenting a sportsmanship award to a whole school at the end of each season. You can rank schools based upon ratings submitted by opposing coaches at each tennis match. You may create a traveling trophy or cup and have the winning school keep it until another school wins it away the following season.

A conference should appoint an administrator to direct the program. He/she will be responsible for the distribution and collection of sportsmanship evaluation forms at every match, and for the tabulation of results at the end of the season.

After each match, each head coach should fill out a “Coach’s Sportsmanship Evaluation Form.” The form asks the coaches to rate both teams and coaches. Players, teacher-coaches and fans all receive ratings, making the award truly a school-wide achievement.

If in any category a coach gives a team a “1” (on a scale of 1 to 5), he/she must explain the reason for the low score. A “1” is a flag to the administrator, who should contact the coach of the team in question and take appropriate action.

Especially in a large conference, you may want to add an “honorable mention” component, in which all schools reaching a certain sportsmanship rating at the end of the season receive a banner commemorating the achievement. In subsequent years, reaching the standard earns a school an attachment for the original banner indicating the years in which it maintained a high level of sportsmanship.

In any conference the responsibility of collecting and compiling the evaluation forms could be rotated from one school to another each year.

The sportsmanship award program could be announced before each tennis match, and before the Conference Tournament. The players and coaches would then be reminded of the best sportsmanship possible is valued. Pursue victory with honor should be the overall goal of each team, player, coach, and fan.

Coach's Sportsmanship Evaluation Form

www.charactercounts.org

Please fill out the following form as honestly and accurately as possible. The scores will help determine the winner of our **Conference's sportsmanship award**.

Sport: _____

Date: _____

Opposing Team: _____

Your Team: _____

Your Name: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____

Please answer each question by circling a number, rating the sportsmanship displayed as:

5 = Exemplary; 4 = good; 3 = average; 2 = poor; 1 = especially poor

For every question answered with a "1", be sure to describe the behavior in question under "Comments."

Please rate the sportsmanship displayed by the **opposing team's players** while on the court **1 2 3 4 5**

Please rate the sportsmanship displayed by the players on the **opposing team's bench**. **1 2 3 4 5**

Please rate the sportsmanship displayed by the **opposing team's coaching staff**. **1 2 3 4 5**

If the game was played **at your school**, please rate the sportsmanship of the opposing team's **fans**. **1 2 3 4 5**

If the game was played **at the opposition's school**, please rate the opposing team's **home crowd** on:

Respect shown to your team. **1 2 3 4 5**

Respect shown to the coaches **1 2 3 4 5**

Appropriate enthusiasm for their school and team. **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments:

Central Suburban League Team
Sportsmanship Award

*The All
Sportsmanship
and Character
Team*

This certificate is presented to:

In recognition by the coaches of the Central
Suburban League for outstanding sportsmanship and
character as a team.

CHAPTER 6 – COACH’S ETHICAL CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

Coach’s Code of Ethical Conduct and Expectations

www.charactercounts.org

It is important that every coach be an exemplary role model and maintains the highest standard of conduct at all times. Coaches represent their community, school and team. Many people observe their conduct closely. The coach must recognize that the purpose of co curricular activities is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well being of participants.

EXPECTATIONS

As a coach at (name of school) I will:

- Emphasize academics as our number-one priority.
- Encourage students to participate in a variety of activities to the best of their abilities.
- Treat students, officials and others with dignity and respect.
- Supervise and control students at all times.
- Maintain a physically and emotionally safe environment.
- Establish student safety and welfare as a high priority.
- Not tolerate abuse of officials, faculty or students.
- Not tolerate any damage to facilities or equipment.
- Establish and model fair play, sportsmanship and appropriate conduct.
- Use discretion when criticizing or reprimanding students.
- Be consistent in requiring students to follow rules and standards of the school and activity.
- Not recruit students from other schools.
- Not allow the use of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco.
- Educate students about the danger of using illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
- Not use profanity or allow the use of it.

Sportsmanship Self-Evaluation Form For Teacher-Coaches

www.charactercounts.org

Name: _____

Date: _____

Sport: _____

Please complete the following evaluation and review your responses with the athletic director.

- A. Please rate yourself in the following areas on a scale of 1 to 5. (1 – need improvement, 5 = excellent):

I encourage players to play by the rules.	1	2	3	4	5
I encourage players to respect officials.	1	2	3	4	5
I encourage players to treat opposing teams with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
I encourage players to react properly to spectators.	1	2	3	4	5
I encourage players to handle winning & losing appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
I supervise players to guard against sportsmanship problems.	1	2	3	4	5
I provide a good example for the players concerning sports- manship.	1	2	3	4	5

- B. Name the most effective thing you did this year to promote good sportsmanship.

- C. Identify the area of sportsmanship you could most improve upon as a coach.

- D. State the biggest problem you had this year in terms of sportsmanship. Was it preventable? How do you plan to deal with it next year?

CHAPTER 7 – POSITIVE COACHING

www.positivecoach.org (1-866-725-0024)

MASTERY ORIENTATION

Redefine “Winner”

A coach who pursues victory with honor will define winners in terms not of winning and losing games, but of effort and development. Begin by discussing what a “winner” is with your team.

Most winners:

1. Make maximum effort.
2. Continue to learn and improve.
3. Refuse to let mistakes – or fear of making mistakes – stop them from trying.

Winners diligently work to do better and persevere to master skills.

The Tree of Mastery is an ELM tree, where ELM stands for:

- **E = Effort**
- **L = Learning**
- **M = Mistakes**

Mastering a sport - or anything in life – requires effort, learning and mistakes. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes because they are part of the learning process. In order to master anything, you must be willing to risk failure. Keep trying because eventually you will succeed!

Tips for Coaches and Parents:

1. Let athletes know that you appreciate it when they try, even if the effort is unsuccessful. It’s all part of the **ELM** process.
2. Ask rather than tell. Ask athletes to evaluate their own play; get them to think about what they have done well and where they can improve. Ask open-ended questions to get youngsters to talk, such as: “What was the best part of the game for you?”
3. Recognize that mastery requires hard work. Tell athletes you are proud of them regardless of the outcome of the game or individual achievement.

Positive Ideas for Practice

Jim Thompson: Building Character & Self-Esteem Through Sports

Thought of the Day

Emphasize a particular skill to your players each day, but also emphasize a character-related “**thought of the day**”: a quote, ideas or other life lesson before practice. Later in the practice ask one of the team members to repeat the thought for his/her teammates. If he/she couldn't, the whole team has to run or do some other conditioning activity.

Positive Charting

Try to find and reinforce things that are being done correctly. Positive charting is a method for increasing the number of “right things” that your players do. It also creates a wonderful positive atmosphere in which players are more receptive to being corrected because they feel appreciated.

Do the Following:

1. Before a match or practice, write the name of each player in a box on a **Positive Charting Form**. If there is a specific action you want to look for with the players (for example, recognizing an opponents good shot, giving a best effort during every point, no double faults in a match) write it in a space marked “Look-For.”
2. Look for positive things players do. Whenever you see one, jot a note under the player's name. Remember look for team-building and sportsmanlike behavior as well as athletic moves on the court.
3. Be honest. Don't be tempted to make something up or write something that isn't true about any players. This is the hard part – you have to find something positive about each player. It may be a small thing, but you can find it if you look hard enough.
4. Make sure you have about the same number of comments (3-5 is good) for each player. You may have to look hard with some players. And you may have to limit the number of comments for the advanced players. Be disciplined: at the end of the game or practice you should have 3-5 items for each player.
5. At your next practice, begin with a quick team meeting and review your positive charting with your team. Take each player in turn and share with the group the positives. This should take no more than 30 seconds or so per player.
6. Enjoy the positive energy of your players during practice.

POSITIVE CHARTING FORM

Bill Lange

Name	Look For	Look For	Look For	Look For	Look For
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					

CHAPTER 8 – A GUIDE TO SPORTS PARENTING

www.charactercounts.org

Before the Game

- Tell your child to “give it your best shot and have fun!”
- Make a commitment to honor the game in action and language no matter what others may do.

During the Game

- Don't add to your child's confusion by giving him/her instructions during the game. Let the coach correct player mistakes.
- Cheer and acknowledge good plays by both teams.
- Mention good calls by officials to other parents, but refrain from commenting on officials' mistakes.
- Find ways to gently correct the unsportsmanlike behavior of other parents and spectators.
- Don't do anything in the heat of the moment that you will regret after the game. Ask yourself, “Will this embarrass my child or the team?”
- Have fun and enjoy the game.

After the Game

- Thank the officials for doing a difficult job.
- Thank the coaches for their efforts. Understand that the best time to question a coach is not immediately after a loss.
- Thank or congratulate your opponents for a good game.
- Congratulate your child and his/her teammates for their efforts regardless of the result.
- Compliment individual players on their standout plays and displays of sportsmanship during the game.
- Don't give too much advice. Instead, ask your child what he/she thought about the game, and be a good listener.

During the Car Ride Home

- Point out a good play, either athletic or sportsmanlike, that your child made during the game.
- Avoid criticizing or correcting mistakes.
- Ask open-ended questions about how the game was played, not how many winners were made. Some good questions are:
 - Did you have fun?
 - Did you give it your best effort?
 - What did you learn from the game?
 - What was the best play you made and how did it feel?
 - Did you bounce back from your mistake?

A Parent's Guide to Dealing with Teacher-Coaches

www.charactercounts.org

What you deserve to hear from the teacher-coach:

- The basic requirements, such as equipment needed, fees, school and team rules, and off-season expectations
- When and where practices and games will take place
- The coach's expectations of your child and other players
- The coach's baseline policies, such as rules on who gets to play
- What the team will do if your child gets hurt

What the teacher-coach deserves to hear from you:

- Advance notice of any schedule conflicts
- Concerns about your child or the coach's philosophy expressed *at the proper time and place*

What concerns you can discuss with a coach:

- How your child can improve
- Your child's behavior
- The mental and physical treatment of your child

What concerns you CAN'T discuss and must leave to the coach's discretion:

- Overall team or individual strategy
- Individual play calling
- Each athlete's playing time
- Situations dealing with other student-athletes

To discuss a concern with the coach, follow these steps:

- Contact the coach and arrange an appointment.
- If you can't reach the coach, call the athletic director and ask him/her to set up a meeting with the coach.
- Think about what you can reasonably achieve with the discussion. Try to put yourself in the coach's position.
- At the meeting, stick to discussing the facts, as you understand them. Don't get emotional.
- Do not confront the coach before, during or after a practice or contest. These can be emotional times for both the parent and coach. Such meeting rarely resolves the situation, and often worsens it.

What should a parent do if the meeting with the coach doesn't provide satisfactory resolution?

- Call the athletic director to set up a meeting with the athletic director, coach, and parent present.
- At this meeting, an appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S PLEDGE

As the parent/guardian of a student-athlete, I understand the important role sports can play in the development of a child's character. I also understand that the highest potential of sports is achieved when everyone involved in an athletic program, including the parents, works in concert to Pursue Victory With Honor.

I promise to help my child and his or her team Pursue Victory With Honor by modeling my behavior at all times after the Six Pillars of Character – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship – and expecting my child to do the same.

www.charactercounts.org

Glenbrook South High School
Sportsmanship Award

*MOST
VALUABLE
FAN*

This certificate is presented to:

In recognition of outstanding
sportsmanship at Glenbrook South
High School's tennis matches.

On Back: We believe sportsmanship is a set of actions that avoid negative behavior & demonstrate respect & appreciation for opponents, officials, fans, coaches & the home team. Underlying sportsmanship are values of generosity & genuine concern for others. Athletes & fans are good sports when they celebrate their success without diminishing others' efforts, when they accept defeat & their own mistakes in performances with dignity, when they are good hosts for visiting teams & when they compete fairly & ethically.

The team has chosen you for exemplifying outstanding sportsmanship at Glenbrook South High School tennis matches.

CHAPTER 9 – MOTIVATING THOUGHTS

These are a collection of motivational quotes from various people. I hope they will be of value to you as a coach and to your players as we all seek to get better.

One Role Model We Could All Emulate – Associated Press, 5/3/07

Chicago Bulls forward **Luol Deng** was presented with the NBA's sportsmanship award this year (2007). The Joe Dumars Trophy, named after the Detroit Piston's Hall of Fame guard and the award's inaugural recipient, **honors the player who best exemplifies ethical behavior, fair play, and integrity.**

"I haven't told my parents yet", Deng told the Associated Press, "but for them it means a lot more than any other award. I can win awards on the basketball court, but this is on *and* off the court. They will appreciate I'm being recognized for who I am."

Pursue victory with honor.

Enthusiasm – from the Greek word "entheos" which means the god within.

Service to others – rewards are directly proportional to efforts. Contributions, enthusiasm, and service to others lead to many rewards.

The only disability in life is a bad attitude – **Scott Hamilton, figure skater**

If you can react the same way to winning or to losing, that's a big accomplishment. **Chris Evert, professional tennis player**

At one point in your life you either have the thing you want or the reasons why you don't. **Andy Roddick, professional tennis player**

Learn from the mistakes of others. There is not enough time for us to make all the mistakes ourselves. **Harriet Hall, actress**

If it's your limit, you can't exceed it. If you exceed it, it's not your limit. **Andrew Poon**

I became an optimist when I discovered I wasn't going to win any more games by being anything else. **Earl Weaver, baseball manager**

Attitude: Richard Schonbom – Chief coach for the German Tennis Federation

No matter what the score, it is possible for you to win every match.

Maintain a positive attitude by focusing on what you can do to win the match.

Some chance of winning is better than none, which is what you will have if you become discouraged by your problems.

Players who win the most points in a match win 99% of all matches. Play every point as if was the last point of the match. Players should not get upset over losing big points because there is no such thing as a big point – every point is of equal value.

It's not the push from behind or the pull from up front, but the drive from within.

Unknown.

It's not the will to win; it's the will to prepare to win. **Paul "Bear" Bryant**, football coach

The strongest people aren't always the people who win, but the people who don't give up when they lose. **Ashley Hodgeson**

Attitude, effort, commitment, determination, and discipline: necessary ingredients to become a champion. **Bill Lange, teacher/tennis coach**

Talent (born with it), opportunity (chance to develop talent), and discipline (desire to develop talent): these are the three necessary ingredients for a champion. Many people have one or two of these, but champions have all three. **R. J. Murphy, tennis teacher**

If a healthy adult is to emerge, parents must allow, even encourage their children to struggle. **Michael Josephson**

Nothing about character is hereditary. Everyone enters the world with an equal opportunity to become a person of great or petty character. **Michael Josephson**

Sometimes a tennis match comes down to a battle of the minds. The player who hangs in longer, wins. **Chris Evert, professional tennis player**

Part of the fun of the game is overcoming difficulties. **Rod Laver, tennis player**

Step Up!

Some fear failure, some fear success.
What is it that you fear?
What is it that you do best?
It's cool to discover your gifts and find out
What it takes to step up to your talents
And use them to reach your limits.
What is it that stops you?
How will you know how good you can be
Without trying?
I'll bet you're afraid!
Why don't you step up!?
It's a matter of pride!

Bill Lange, teacher/tennis coach

Better than a thousand days with diligent study is one day with a great teacher. **Japanese proverb**

Coaching: A Sacred Trust. A leader, particularly a teacher or coach, has a most powerful influence on those he or she leads, perhaps more than anyone outside of the family. Therefore, it is the obligation of that leader, teacher or coach to treat such responsibility as a grave concern.

I consider it a sacred trust: helping to mold character, instill productive principles and values, and provide a positive example to those under my supervision.

Furthermore, it is a privilege to have that responsibility, opportunity, and obligation, one that should never be taken lightly. **John Wooden, basketball coach**

To Any Coach:

There are little eyes upon you,
And they're watching night and day;
There are little ears that quickly
Take in every word you say;
There are little hands all eager
To do anything you do;
A little boy or girl who's dreaming
Of the day they'll be like you.

You're the little one's idol;
You're the wisest of the wise,
In their little minds about you,
No suspicions ever rise;
They believe in you devoutly,
Holds that all you say and do,
They will say and do, in your way
When they're grown up like you.

There's a wide-eyed little person,
Who believes you're always right,
And their ears are always open,
And they watch both day and night.
You are setting an example
Every day in all you do,
For the little boy or girl who's waiting
To grow up to be like you.

Athletes for Life

Remember, Coach

It was on a warm and sunny day,
A group of children set out to play,

What game shall we try, said a boy named Paul,
One boy suggested, let's try baseball,
So on that warm and sunny day,
Their fathers took them to the field to play.

The Coach was there, to take them in,
To teach the game and how to win,
To hit and throw and run like deer,
To practice daily and how to cheer,
To play the game and have a ball,
Respect the Ump, no matter the call.

The Coach was approached, by the father of Tim
He had this message to leave with him,
Remember Coach; kids are fragile like toys,
They soon become men, from little boys,
Their games are played in sun and cloud,
Help them grow up so they can be proud.

Later in life with gloves put away,
They'll think of that warm and sunny day,
Their fathers took them to the field to play,
They'll remember their Coach and hopefully say:

He taught us that life was just like play,
Be it yesterday, tomorrow or even today,
That if you tried your best and lost,
It was better than winning at any cost,
A gracious winner is not hard to be,
But to be good losers is the key.

If life should reward me with a son one day,
I know where I'll take him on a warm, sunny day,
Like my father did, down to the field to play,
The games that prepare him for a later day,
And when I offer my silent prayers,
I would ask for a good Coach, one who cares. **Al Rae**

He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. **Edmund Burke, Irish statesman, author, and philosopher (1729-1797)**

If you are truly striving for excellence, you will only be competing against about 10-20% of the people in the world.

Self Discipline: Doing what you should, when you should, even when you don't feel like doing it.

Competitive sports are played mainly on five-and-a-half-inch court – the space between your ears. **Bobby Jones, golfer (1902-1971)**

Hark work spotlights the character of people: Some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all. **Sam Ewig**

In true competition no person is defeated. Both players benefit by their efforts to overcome the obstacles presented by the other. **W. Timothy Gallwey, author**

Respect for humanity is a learned characteristic and we can never stop teaching it. **Michael Josephson**

The ethical behavior of an athlete: Is he/she honest? Is he/she fair? Is he/she honorable? Is he/she responsible?

Success is doing many things 1% better, not one thing 100% better.

The Key to Success: The difference between success and failure is sometimes very little – but it's that little, which makes the difference. Hence, the key to success is often found in three little words, the three simple words...**AND THEN SOME.**

Most of us do only what we're told to do; what, in effect, we have to do. Therein is the difference. It's where most people quit that success begins...**AND THEN SOME.**

There is no great variance in the talents of people. No wide margin in opportunity. It is more that some do enough to merely get by, while others give to their every task the best they have...**AND THEN SOME. Victor C. Short**

Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming." **John Wooden, basketball coach**

Success without honor is an unseasoned dish. It will satisfy your hunger, but it won't taste good. **Joe Paterno, college football coach**

Here is what I've learned: There are no failures, just outcomes or results. I always succeed in producing results. If I don't like the results, I'll change and produce new ones that I like. This is what success is made of. Winners work hard to be successful.

Some things to think about: Adversity introduces a person to himself. All problems become smaller when we don't dodge them, but confront them. How we react to problems determines our success. Success is striving, establishing goals – trying. Failure is not trying at all.

When building a team, I search for people who love to win. If I can't find any of those, I look for people who hate to lose. **H. Ross Perot, businessman**

Partner

We've been through a lot together,
Hot and cold days,
Wind and sun.
We've practiced, we've fought.
We've tried to do our best.
I know I am not perfect.
I have played well and
I have played terribly.
I just want you to know
That every practice, every match,
I gave my all.
I played each point
As well as I could.
I trusted you to do the same.
I did not question your ability
Or your desire to do well.
I accepted you as my partner.
I accepted you during good
And during bad times.
All I want you to know is
That I enjoy playing the game with you.
Let's do our best
And support each other.
Let's make us a memorable team. **Bill Lange, teach/tennis coach**

What is a workout? A workout is 25% perspiration and 75% determination. It is 1 part physical exertion and 3 parts self-discipline. A workout makes you better today than you were yesterday. It strengthens the body, relaxes the mind, and toughens the spirit. A workout is a personal triumph over laziness and procrastination. A workout is a form of rebirth. When you finish a good workout, you don't simply feel better, you feel better about yourself.

Good shot, bad luck, and hell are the five basic words in tennis, though these, or course, can be slightly amplified. **Virginia Graham, TV talk-show host (1912-1998)**

Of all the lessons we must learn, few are more important than those we learn from exercise and sport. They teach us to perfect and protect our health; to respect our own capabilities and those of others; and to accept excellence as our standard of performance. **Gerald Ford – former U.S. President**

Your eyes lead your body to action.

Seedings and rankings are what others think of you. Results are what you think of yourself.

Play tennis without fear of defeat and because it's fun, or don't play at all. **Bill Tilden, World champion tennis player**

Don't argue about the marginal call. But don't let a blatantly bad call go by without action. **Brad Gilbert, tennis player/coach**

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