

Handy Guide to Help Athletes Build Character



We want athletes to have the strong character necessary to meet life's challenges, on and off the field. But good character doesn't just happen. It's up to each of us to teach young people right from wrong — and to act as good role models by pursuing our own goals with honor. To help student-athletes, teacher-coaches, administrators and parents, CHARACTER COUNTS! Sports,™ at the Josephson Institute of Ethics produces educational materials, publications and programs, including *Pursuing Victory With Honor*,™ Ethics in Sports Seminars, workshops and summit conferences. CHARACTER COUNTS! Sports is part of the CHARACTER COUNTS!™ Coalition, a nonpartisan partnership of hundreds of schools and youth-serving organizations — including the YMCA, 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, AYSO and Little League — dedicated to strengthening the character of young people through promotion of the "Six Pillars of Character": trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Use the T.E.A.M. Method to Build Character

T

Teach

TEACH Teach that character counts — that success and happiness depend on who people are inside, not on what they have or how they look. People of character know the difference between right and wrong because they guide their thoughts and actions by basic ethical values (the "Six Pillars of Character"): trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship. Consciously use these words (see definitions on the reverse) as well as examples from your life, history and the news when explaining character.



E

Enforce

ENFORCE Instill the "Six Pillars of Character" by rewarding good behavior (usually, praise is enough) and by imposing (or, in some cases, allowing others to impose) fair, consistent consequences that prove you are serious about character. Demonstrate courage and firmness of will by enforcing core values when it is difficult to do so. Discourage all instances of bad behavior.

A

Advocate

ADVOCATE Continually encourage others to live up to the "Six Pillars of Character." Be an advocate for character. Don't be neutral about the importance of character or casual about improper conduct. Be clear and uncompromising that you expect young athletes to demonstrate trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

M

Model

MODEL Set a good example in everything you say and do. Hold yourself to the highest standards by honoring the "Six Pillars of Character" at all times. You may be a good model now, but remember, you don't have to be sick to get better. Everything you do, and don't do, sends a message about your values. Be sure your messages reinforce your lessons about doing the right thing even when it is hard to do so. When you slip, act the way you would prefer young people to when they behave improperly. Be accountable, apologize sincerely — and do better!