

STORIES OF SPORTSMANSHIP



Many parents today force their kids into competitive sports at an early age – sometimes with negative results. Instead of having fun and finding out what sports they enjoy, the children are taught that winning is the only thing that matters.

Somewhere along the line, however, the best student-athletes realize that winning isn't everything. Team sports and competition help them learn many life lessons, including the value of hard work, discipline and sacrifice.

For being able to put others' needs and aspirations ahead of their own and for their unusually selfless acts of sportsmanship, two college student-athletes were honored November 21 at the 2009 AT&T National Sportsmanship Awards in St. Louis.

scheduled to graduate in December with a degree in math education.



Mackiewicz

Aleksandra Mackiewicz
Aleksandra Mackiewicz was a sophomore last year at Brown University in Providence, R.I., and a member of the Ivy League school's women's fencing squad. She was one of four members of the team specializing in the saber, which is one of three weapons used in the sport.

During the season, Mackiewicz switched off with senior Charlotte Rose for the team's third and fourth saber position. At the end of the season, all four women qualified for the NCAA regional tournament, but under the rules, only three women could compete. Because of her performance in the last regular season event, Mackiewicz earned the third slot.

At first Mackiewicz felt good about her chance to compete at the regionals, but then she thought about Rose, who would miss her last opportunity to win an NCAA championship. When the team returned to Providence, Mackiewicz went to see head coach Atilio Tass.

She told Tass that Rose was a more dedicated team member and, because she was a senior, deserved a shot at the regional tournament.

"Just by asking to give her very precious spot to a senior teammate demonstrates an immense amount of respect and caring for the team over the individual," Tass said.

Added Rose: "Her selfless sacrificing of her spot really speaks for itself. This is the epitome of putting the team and teammates before oneself, which I believe to be the essence of a great athlete."

For her part, Mackiewicz, of Westwood, Mass., admitted it wasn't an easy decision, but she said she had no regrets. "I was going to have more respect for myself and my teammates and my coaches," she said. "In the end, it was going to be more meaningful for me."

This year, Mackiewicz has taken a sabbatical from her studies at Brown and is interning at a Boston hospital. She is looking into ways to apply biophysics to medical imaging and architecture.



DiCarlo

Anthony DiCarlo

Anthony DiCarlo was a senior wrestler last season at Anderson University, a liberal arts school in Anderson, S.C., with an enrollment of about 2,200 students. He usually wrestled at 141 pounds. Against University of Central Missouri, however, he

agreed to fill in for an injured teammate and wrestle "up" at 157 pounds.

Wrestling "up" means facing an opponent who is bigger and stronger, but DiCarlo held his own in a back-and-forth match that would determine whether the Anderson Trojans would win.

With less than a minute left in the match, DiCarlo's opponent suffered an injury that blurred his vision and left him virtually defenseless. DiCarlo could have won his individual match and secured the team victory with a single takedown.

Instead of going for his opponent's legs, DiCarlo quit wrestling. The seconds ran off the clock, and Central Missouri won the match 20-15.

"I'm an advocate of solid wrestling," DiCarlo said, "but if (your opponent) is motioning to call injury time, it doesn't make any sense to blast him."

He added: "There are things bigger than sport and one of them is respect for the person. That transcends not just sport, but winning and losing."

DiCarlo, whose family lives in Covington, Ga., and whose twin brother Nick also wrestled at Anderson, is

ACTIVITIES

Discuss It: How did both of these athletes demonstrate respect? What makes each of these acts of sportsmanship memorable and unique?

Constructed Response: Anthony DiCarlo is quoted as saying, "There are things bigger than sport and one of them is respect for the person. That transcends not just sport, but winning and losing." What does he mean by this?

In the News: Use the sports section to find examples of athletes who promote the team instead of themselves as individuals. Explain the sacrifices these athletes make to promote the team.

Extension: Write the conversation that took place between Mackiewicz and her coach as you imagined it.

Missouri Show-Me Standards: G1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, CA1, CA3, CA4, CA6/Grade Level Expectations: R1F, R11/L Learning Standards: 1A2b, 1B2a, 1C2b, 3B2b, 3C2a, 4B2b, 5C2a/IL Social/Emotional Standards: 1A2a, 1A3a, 3A2b



Through its Sportsmanship Initiative, the St. Louis Sports Commission creates more positive environments for kids to play sports so they will remain active and lead healthier, happier lives. The Sports Commission seeks to make St. Louis a model community for good sportsmanship. The organization is proud to partner with Newspapers in Education to highlight exemplary stories of sportsmanship and showcase outstanding role models for young people.

SPORTSMANSHIP TIPS FOR PARENTS: Courtesy of "Through a Child's Eyes," a publication of the Citizenship Through Sports Alliance

SEE THE BIG PICTURE - NOT JUST THE SCOREBOARD

- Encourage your child to put forth his or her very best effort.
- Praise your child on effort, not results. (Winning is out of a child's control, but the effort is not.)
- Promote learning new skills and improving existing skills.
- Remind your child to focus on improving skills rather than on the scoreboard.

- Help your child bounce back from mistakes. It's impossible to learn new skills or complex plays without making mistakes. If your child is overly worried about making a mistake, he or she may quit trying.
- To encourage players to forget about mistakes, some teams will use signals to "brush off" or "flush" mistakes. If your child's team doesn't do that and your child is someone who worries a lot about making mistakes, help your child come up with a signal of his or her own.

Help improve the experiences for young athletes and make St. Louis a model community for sportsmanship. Sign the Sportsmanship Pledge at www.stlsportsmanship.org/



See more great stories of sportsmanship when the 2009 AT&T National Sportsmanship Awards airs on CBS College Sports Network at 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 16.