

TOP 3 TIPS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

By R. E. Martin

Youth Sports are about having fun...

Let's work together to make sure that it is... remember, you are very special!

No one likes to lose, but don't let that influence how you judge yourself as a person. Other people's criticisms can often be FAR too harsh — words and actions hurt. Even friends can bully and try to shame others... sometimes even coaches do it... the other team... even parents can be too hard on their own children!

Do your best. Don't let other's judge you. Don't be too hard on yourself.

#3 Exhibit Good Sportsmanship

Be positive and appreciative of your opponents, officials and parents.

Good sportsmanship requires giving your best effort and trying to win. It also includes respecting those who are also making a genuine effort to do the right things. Always stand up for yourself and your teammates, while also being respectful to others. Please do not make public negative comments and/or criticisms about others -- temper your comments at games, practices and on social media.

#2 Believe In and Like Who You Really Are **Being competitive is what you do, it is not who you are.**

Others often assign their expectations on to us. You may sometimes assign expectations that are too high on yourself. We compete to win and excel, but just as importantly, we should also do so to learn and grow. We can and should use defeats, setbacks and disappointments to become better. Embrace the challenge of being the best that you can be.

#1 Talk to Those You Trust – Seek Support **Feeling alone is a false perception. You are never truly alone!**

Stress and pressure can become heavy burdens, causing cracks in the strongest of foundations. As foundations weaken and the cracks continue to expand, they can crush a soul. Sometimes you may feel compelled to surrender to your troubles. You have hidden strength, the gift of life... the urge to fight for survival... a gift from your parents, your grandparents, your loved ones.