



# Bullying And Sports

In the sports world there is a fine line between competitive play and bullying.

Bullying is when one or more team members intentionally sets out to hurt a person. When it comes to team sports and athletic bullying, the most common forms of bullying are **Verbal bullying** (name calling, nasty and cruel nicknames, taunting, rudeness and threats of violence and/or harm to a teammate or another student.)

**Physical bullying** (hitting, slapping, towel snapping, tripping, head butting and physical violence against another's will. **Relational bullying** (excluding another player, gossiping, hurtful trash talk and embarrassment of a player in front of others.)

There is such a thing as playing fair and then there is making a teammate with less talent or power feel badly.

Signs kids and teens are being bullied on the sports field:

- Look for changes in behavior in your child.
- Your child no longer wants to participate in their favorite sport
- Your child doesn't want to see their friends or a particular friend
- Your child complains stomach aches and other ailments

Have regular conversations with your children. Don't ask if they are being bullied, but do ask:

- Do they enjoy being on the team
- Who are their close friends on the team
- Have they ever seen someone on the team being bullied or teased
- Have they been bullied on the team
- Have they ever bullied anyone on the team

If you learn that your child is being bullied or harassed by a teammate or their coach, and they ask you to stay out of it, ask your child what strategies he or she thinks will help solve the problem. You will teach them how to overcome adversity and learn to be resilient if you can help them come up with their own ideas.

If they choose to handle it on their own, keep checking in with them to make sure they are OK. If the bullying continues and becomes intolerable, then it's time for you to step in, talk to your child and determine how to stop it.

Athletic bullying can occur on school and community teams. We must teach our children to play fairly and begin that education early on. Otherwise the tone will be set for going way past competitive play into bullying. Coaches should work on character building as well as the sport and give our children a fun and competitive experience.

## St. Paul Athletics Code of Conduct

### Acceptable Standards of Spectator Behavior

Remain Seated

Respect Decisions Made by Officials

Coaches Coach, Spectators Watch

Referees Officiate Spectators Watch

- Be A Role Model
- Positively Cheer for All Players
- Do Not Criticize Officials
- Do Not Criticize Coaches
- Do Not Criticize Players
- Do Not Coach or Referee
- Do Not Make Derogatory Remarks/Gestures
- Players Play Spectators Watch

