

# How a Mensch Plays Sports

In all games, a *mensch* (a person of integrity) will **train to win**, but **play to make the assist** (*siyu'a* in Hebrew). **Jewish values encourage sportsmanship and not gamesmanship.**

Take some time to compare these two models and talk about why it is important to follow the Sportsmanship Model.

## LANGUAGE GUIDE

<i>Yosher</i> .....	Deal honestly
<i>Tzedek, tzedek tirdof</i> .....	Pursue justice
<i>Ve'ahavta</i> .....	Love your
<i>l'ray'acha kamocho</i> .....	neighbor like yourself



## Sportsmanship Model

To a true sportsperson, the way s/he plays the game is central. Sports are seen as special activities where honor is found. The goal is **honorable competition** in pursuit of victory.

A true sportsperson is willing to lose rather than sacrifice ethical principles to win. If you aren't willing to lose, you may do unethical things to win. A victory attained by cheating or other forms of unethical conduct is unearned and dishonorable.

A true sportsperson believes that winning without honor is not a true victory. Coaches must remind themselves and their athletes that true competition means pursuing victory with honor.

### The Olympic Creed:

*"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."*



## Gamesmanship Model

Gamesmanship sanctions ways of bending, evading and **breaking the rules** to provide a competitive advantage. The only thing that really matters is **winning**.

### It's the Officials' Job to Catch Me:

*It's only cheating if you get caught. It's the officials' job to enforce the rules and not our responsibility to follow them. There are no criteria for drawing a line between what's acceptable and what's not.*

### Examples:

-Espionage; Faked Fouls; Illegal Head Start; Doctoring Equipment; "Taking Out" a Player; Surreptitious (covert) Personal Fouls; Physical Intimidation

Gamesmanship coaches gain advantage by violating rules of eligibility, recruiting and practice just as gamesmanship athletes gain an advantage by using illegal performance-enhancing drugs and playing tactics.



# Who's your Superman MVP?

Baseball is an individual competition against **THE BALL** played within a team structure, not a direct competition against the players on the other team. An individual player might play a game perfectly while others on the team have a bad game and the **TEAM** loses. But there are plays in baseball where an individual can contribute to the team's success. During the game, keep a scorecard of players who have played with good sportsmanship who have made plays where they have helped others on the team.

Team: \_\_\_\_\_ My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Opponent: \_\_\_\_\_ Game Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ASSISTANT PLAY	PLAYER NAME	INNING
Relay throw from the outfield		
Double Play		
Sacrifice fly to advance or score a runner		
Bunt to advance the runner		
Pinch running or hitting		
Cheering for their teammates		

My MVP: \_\_\_\_\_

Because: \_\_\_\_\_

“A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives”  
- Jackie Robinson



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