

## **What is Sportsmanship?**

A competitor who is a good sport is someone whose conduct and attitude demonstrate gracious behaviour before, during, and after competition. In fact, good sportsmanship demands that nothing be done before, during, or after competition to cheapen or detract from victory.

Examples of good sportsmanship-

- . Hugging or shaking hands with a competitor after a competition
- . Appreciating those who support you
- . Assisting a competitor in need
- . Acknowledging a competitor's skills to others
- . Accepting praise with grace and humility
- . Avoiding or deflecting all opportunities to criticize opponents or judges

The opposite of good sportsmanship is poor sportsmanship, which is characterized by winners who gloat over their victory, jeer at their competitors, boo at national anthems, fail to congratulate their competitors, or whine over their losses.

### **Fostering Good Sportsmanship**

Remember the saying "Actions speak louder than words"? That's especially true when it comes to teaching your child the basics of good sportsmanship. Your behaviour during training and at the competition will influence them more than any pep talk or lecture you give them.

Here are some suggestions on how to build sportsmanship in your child:

-Unless you are your child's trainer/teacher, you need to remember that you're the parent. Shout words of encouragement, not directions, from the sidelines (there is a difference!).

-If you are your kid's trainer /teacher, don't expect too much out of your own child. Your expectations are a lot for them to carry as well as the pressure of the competition.

-Keep your comments positive. Don't bad-mouth judges, other competitors, or other officials. If you have a serious concern about the way that the competition is being conducted, or if you're upset about other parents' behaviour, discuss it privately with the official committee.

-After a competition, it's important not to dwell on who won or lost. Instead, try asking, "How did you feel you rode, regardless of the placing?" If your child feels weak at a particular skill, offer to work on it together before the next competition.

-Applaud good sportsmanship no matter who it is.

-Set a good example with your courteous behaviour toward the parents of other kids competing. Congratulate them when their kids win.

-Remember that it's your kids, not you, who are competing. Don't push them into riding because it's what you enjoyed. As kids get older, let them choose what they want to compete in and decide the level of commitment they want to make.

-Keep your perspective. It's just a show. It's about your kid having fun, growing up, and enjoying the journey. A well rounded child is worth more than all the blue ribbons in the world.

-Look for examples of good sportsmanship in professional riders and point them out to your kids. Talk about the bad examples, too, and why they upset you.

Finally, don't forget to have fun. Even if your child isn't the star, enjoy the ride while you're thinking of all the benefits your child is gaining — new skills, new friends, and attitudes that can help all through life.

Sportsmanship can be summed up in three words—courtesy, respect, and consideration. Participation in sporting events provides children with opportunities to learn and acquire these traits. Parents should model for and encourage their children to exemplify sportsmanship that fosters this learning.

