



Respecting an Injured Opponent

This resource stems from a question submitted to the Ask PCA blog. Responses come from our experts including PCA Trainers, who lead live group workshops for coaches, parents, administrators and student-athletes.

“Should field hockey players in junior high kneel on one knee during a stop in the action due to injury? When her teammate was injured, my daughter noticed opponents laughing and showing other signs of disrespect. Any advice on helping my daughter process this experience?”

PCA Response by Tina Syer, PCA Trainer & Chief Impact Officer

This situation seems to be exactly what PCA calls a “teachable moment”—one that should not be missed. If my child came to me upset with this sort of perspective, I’d ask, “If you had been in the other team’s position, what would you have done in this moment?”

She’ll likely say she would have taken a knee or huddled quietly and respectfully with her teammates – showing outward concern for the injured opponent. Letting her give you this answer and then reaffirming it positively is the most powerful thing you can do.

You can also let her know there are going to be many times in sports (and even in life at large) that people are not “Honoring the Game,” as PCA likes to say. PCA defines Honoring the Game as showing respect for ROOTS (rules, opponents, officials, teammates and self). When you’re together and you witness other people/teams not Honoring the Game (this can even happen when you’re watching sports on TV), it’s important to seize these moments by asking her what she thinks of what you’re seeing (and how she might respond in the same situation).

It sounds like your daughter intrinsically knows what it means to Honor the Game, and now it’s just up to you to keep reinforcing this in her.

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