

Case Study 8: Watching a game on television with your child, a player taunts an opponent after making a great play. The taunted player retaliates. As a Second-Goal Parent, what should you do?

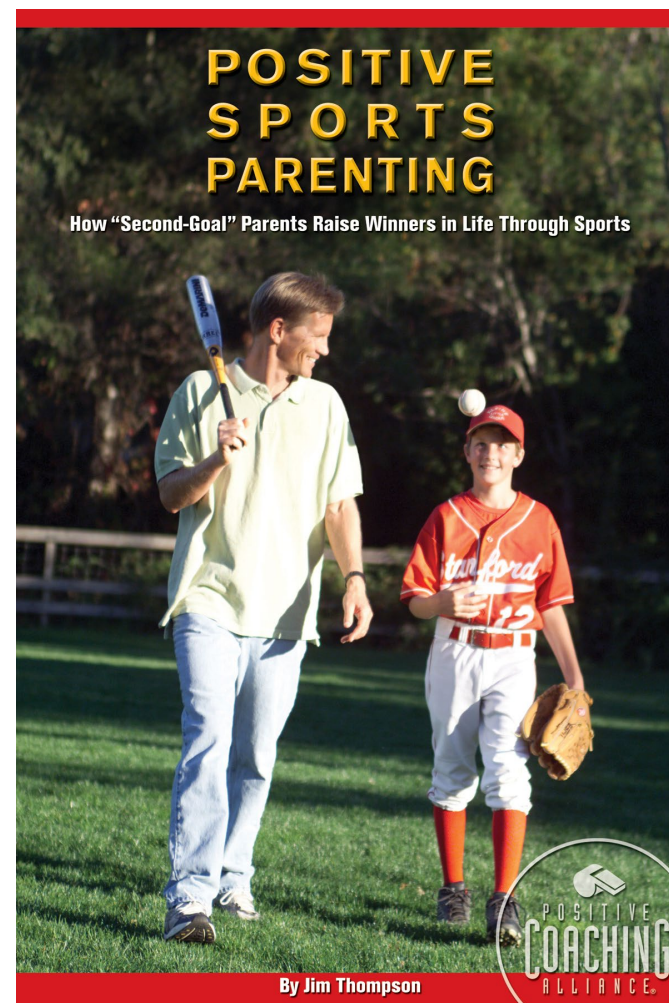
Your objective here is to reinforce character traits and life lessons you'd like your child to embrace. Televised sporting events provide a wonderful source of "teachable moments."

There are two ways to handle these conversations. One is for you to assert what you think of the situation. "I think both of the players blew it. Player A made a great play and then acted like a jerk. But Player B would have done better to have ignored Player A's taunt rather than letting it take him out of his game."

This is fine and is necessary sometimes, but an even more effective way would be to ask rather than tell. "What do you think about Player A's behavior after he made that great play?" It is more powerful and lasting when a young person comes to a conclusion himself rather than simply nodding his head along with something his parent or coach said.

Starting the conversation with a question doesn't mean you can't add your thoughts later and even push back if your child says something that you disagree with. "I agree Player B may have been justified in retaliating, but I would have liked to have seen him control himself and Honor the Game. Even if Player A acted like a jerk, Player B could rise above it. I'd certainly like to see you rise above your opponent's behavior if he dishonors the game."

Of course, the other opportunity watching sports together on TV is to point out positive examples of players respecting their teammates, opponents, the officials, and the rules.



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