



Civil Air Patrol's ACE Program

Sportsmanship - It's the Ultimate Grade 6 Physical Fitness Lesson #1



Topic: sportsmanship, ultimate Frisbee (P.E.)

Length of Lesson: 45-60 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will research an ultimate act of sportsmanship from collegiate girls' softball.
- Students will identify characteristics of being good sports.
- Students will participate in the game of Ultimate Frisbee.
- Students will be involved in honest sportsmanship and fair play.

National Physical Education Standards:

- Standards 1, 2, 4, 5

Background Information:

We have all heard at some point in our lives the old adage, "It is not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game." Sportsmanship should be a key component in any type of sporting event, whether on the softball field in the Great Northwest Atlantic Conference or on the practice field used for physical education in our schools.

In sports, just like in all areas of life, it is important that we simply do the right thing. As the students learn about Mallory Holtman's ultimate act of sportsmanship through her selfless deed to help opposing team member Sara Tucholsky, we should also remember how decorated astronaut Tom D. Jones, who has logged over 52 days in space and taken space walks totaling over 19 hours, displayed an ultimate act of sportsmanship when he decided to step aside and allow aspiring astronauts a chance to go where few men have gone before. His gracious decision allowed others the opportunity to soar, just as other acts of good sportsmanship lend themselves to giving others their time to shine.

It just seems logical that Ultimate Frisbee, a fun game played with a backhand throw resulting in a natural spin to the disc, which stabilizes it in free flight, would go hand-in-hand with the ultimate act of sportsmanship.

Today's lesson about sportsmanship and Ultimate Frisbee is sure to be an exciting opportunity for students. To find out more about the Ultimate Frisbee game, go to: [What Is Ultimate](#). You may wish to watch this video (or share it with your class): "[The Rules of Ultimate Frisbee \(Ultimate\) - EXPLAINED!](#)"

Materials:

- several Frisbees
- 8-10 small cones or objects to mark end zones and boundaries for the game
- rectangular field
- "Central Washington Offers the Ultimate Act of Sportsmanship" article (optional)

Lesson Presentation:

1. Ask students what a good definition of sportsmanship might be. Allow for several responses. Explain that sportsmanship is practiced not only on the sports field, but also in everyday life. Dr. Tom D. Jones, a highly-decorated astronaut, wrote the book, *Sky Walking*. Mr. Jones was turned down by NASA two times before he was accepted as an astronaut. Then, after he finally became an astronaut, he displayed the ultimate act of sportsmanship by stepping down from a job that he loved so that others following him might have the opportunity to experience journeys into space.
(Learn more about Dr. Jones at [Biography: Thomas D. Jones, PhD](#))
2. Ask students if they can think of people who have been really good "sports" in life and ask them to explain.
3. Tell the students that being a good sport is not always about whether one wins or loses with a good attitude; it is also about how one plays the game of sports or of life. It is about following the rules without arguing - whether there is a "referee" watching and making calls or not. It is about being honest and trustworthy. It is about doing what is right, no matter the outcome for one's self or one's team of people with whom they are working or playing.
4. Tell students that when they cooperate in the classroom and do what is right, whether the teacher is watching or not, they are showing good sportsmanship; they are being a responsible member of a team.
5. Explain that the class is going to play a game outdoors that involves making one's own calls for "out of bounds" or "fouls." There will be no referee to determine this for them. The game is called "Ultimate Frisbee."
6. Tell the students that they are going to learn how to play a game similar to football except they will use a Frisbee instead of a football. Explain that the field has an end zone on each side similar to that of a football field.
7. Explain that the game is played between two teams of seven players on a large, rectangular field, but they will simply play the game with two even teams for a modified version.

8. The object of the game is to move the Frisbee down the field to a teammate in the team's end zone to score a point.
9. Students are to set up their own field using the cones for boundaries.
10. When a player catches the Frisbee thrown by one of their teammates, they must stop and throw the Frisbee to another player within ten seconds. If the Frisbee hits the ground or is intercepted by the other team, there is a "turnover" and the other team takes possession of the Frisbee. A turnover also takes place if a player catches the Frisbee out of bounds.
11. Any contact between players can be declared a foul. This game stresses fair play and sportsmanship, so players are to be responsible for their own fouls and out-of-bound calls. Players must resolve their own conflicts.
12. Answer any questions students may have, and then take the class outside to begin the game.

Summarization:

Encourage students to do what is right, no matter the personal cost to themselves or their team with whom they are working or playing.

The Ultimate Frisbee game is a great connection to the ultimate act of sportsmanship and is a great game to teach responsibility and fair play. It should be explained to students that through this game, they demonstrated how to work together, how to determine their own boundaries, and how to solve any disputes that may have arisen during the game. Because the students had to set up their own game boundaries and determine their own rule enforcement, they became more responsible teammates and players of the game. Explain that these skills will work well in the game of life — being fair, honest, responsible, and, of course, healthy.

Assessment:

Teacher will observe students working together as a team, putting forth effort to play the game according to the directions, and demonstrating good sportsmanship.

Additional activity ideas to enrich and extend the primary lesson (optional):

- Read the article, "[Central Washington Offers the Ultimate Act of Sportsmanship](#)" to students as a class. (It is a bit lengthy, but is very good.)
- Allow students to come up with a new game using the Frisbee. Have each student present their idea to the class and allow the students to vote. Let the winning student's game be played at the next available time outside.
- Allow students to research other acts of sportsmanship in the news or in books or on the Internet and write about them. Students may present their reports to the class.

- Read the ["What is Good Sportsmanship?"](#) article.

Additional sources and literature:

- [Sportsmanship for Teens](#)

You may wish to watch this video (or share it with your class):

["Sara Ticholsky Home Run/ESPY Sportsmanship Moment"](#)

Central Washington Offers the Ultimate Act of Sportsmanship

By Graham Hays ESPN.com

Western Oregon senior Sara Tucholsky had never hit a home run in her career. Central Washington senior Mallory Holtman was already her school's career leader in them. But when a twist of fate and a torn knee ligament brought them face to face with each other and face to face with the end of their playing days, they combined on a home run trot that celebrated the collective human spirit far more than individual athletic achievement.



Sara Tucholsky got a lift from the opposition in scoring her first homer.

Both schools compete as Division II softball programs in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. Neither has ever reached the NCAA tournament at the Division II level. But when they arrived for a conference doubleheader at Central Washington's 300-seat stadium in Ellensburg, a small town 100 miles and a mountain range removed from Seattle, the hosts resided one game behind the visitors at the top of the conference standings. As was the case at dozens of other diamonds across the map, two largely anonymous groups prepared to play the most meaningful games of their seasons.

It was a typical Saturday of softball in April, right down to a few overzealous fans heckling an easy target, the diminutive Tucholsky, when she came to the plate in the top of the second inning of the second game with two runners on base and the game still scoreless after Western Oregon's 8-1 win in the first game of the afternoon.

"I just remember trying to block them out," Tucholsky said of the hecklers. "The first pitch I took, it was a strike. And then I really don't remember where the home run pitch was at all; [I] just remember hitting it, and I knew it was out."

A part-time starter in the outfield throughout her four years, Tucholsky had been caught in a numbers game this season on a deep roster that entered the weekend hitting better than .280 and having won nine games in a row. Prior to the pitch she sent over the center-field fence, she had just three hits in 34 at-bats this season. And in that respect, her hitting heroics would have made for a pleasing, if familiar, story line on their own: an unsung player steps up in one of her final games and lifts her team's postseason chances.

But it was what happened after an overly-excited Tucholsky missed first base on her home run trot and reversed direction to tag the bag that proved unforgettable.

"Sara is small -- she's like 5-2, really tiny," Western Oregon coach Pam Knox said. "So you would never think that she would hit a home run. The score was 0-0, and Sara hit a shot over center field. And I'm coaching third and I'm high-fiving the other two runners that are coming by -- then, all of a sudden, I look up, and I'm like, 'Where's Sara?' And I look over, and she's in a heap beyond first base."

While she was doubling back to tag first base, Tucholsky's right knee gave out. The two runners who had been on base had already crossed home plate, leaving her the only offensive player on the field of play, even as she lay crumpled in the dirt a few feet from first base and a long way from home plate. First-base coach Shannon Prochaska -- Tucholsky's teammate for three

seasons and the only voice she later remembered hearing in the ensuing conversation -- checked to see whether she could crawl back to the base under her own power.

As Knox explained, "It went through my mind, I thought, 'If I touch her, she's going to kill me.' It's her only home run in four years. I didn't want to take that from her, but at the same time, I was worried about her."

Umpires confirmed that the only option available under the rules was to replace Tucholsky at first base with a pinch runner and have the hit recorded as a two-run single instead of a three-run home run. Any assistance from coaches or trainers while she was an active runner would result in an out. So without any choice, Knox prepared to make the substitution, taking both the run and the memory from Tucholsky.

"And right then," Knox said, "I heard, 'Excuse me, would it be OK if we carried her around and she touched each bag?'"

The voice belonged to Holtman, a four-year starter who owns just about every major offensive record there is to claim in Central Washington's record book. She also is staring down a pair of knee surgeries as soon as the season ends. Her knees ache after every game, but having already used a redshirt season earlier in her career, and ready to move on to graduate school and coaching at Central, she put the operations on hold so as to avoid missing any of her final season. Now, with her own opportunity for a first postseason appearance very much hinging on the outcome of the game -- her final game at home -- she stepped up to help a player she knew only as an opponent for four years.

"Honestly, it's one of those things that I hope anyone would do it for me," Holtman said. "She hit the ball over her fence. She's a senior; it's her last year. ... I don't know, it's just one of those things I guess that maybe because compared to everyone on the field at the time, I had been playing longer and knew we could touch her, it was my idea first. But I think anyone who knew that we could touch her would have offered to do it, just because it's the right thing to do. She was obviously in agony."

Holtman and shortstop Liz Wallace lifted Tucholsky off the ground and supported her weight between them as they began a slow trip around the bases, stopping at each one so Tucholsky's left foot could secure her passage onward. Even with Tucholsky feeling the pain of what trainers subsequently came to believe was a torn ACL (she was scheduled for tests to confirm the injury on Monday), the surreal quality of perhaps the longest and most crowded home run trot in the game's history hit all three players.

"We all started to laugh at one point, I think when we touched the first base," Holtman said. "I don't know what it looked like to observers, but it was kind of funny because Liz and I were carrying her on both sides and we'd get to a base and gently, barely tap her left foot, and we'd all of a sudden start to get the giggles a little bit."

Accompanied by a standing ovation from the fans, they finally reached home plate and passed the home run hitter into the arms of her own teammates.

Then Holtman and Wallace returned to their positions and tried to win the game.

Sara Tucholsky got a lift from Central Washington's Liz Wallace, left, and Mallory Holtman.



Hollywood would have a difficult time deciding how such a script should end, whether to leave Tucholsky's home run as the decisive blow or reward the selfless actions of her opponents. Reality has less room for such philosophical quandaries. Central Washington did rally for two runs in the bottom of the second -- runs that might have tied the game had Knox been forced to replace Tucholsky -- but Western Oregon held on for a 4-2 win.

But unlike a movie, the credits didn't roll after the final out, and the story that continues has little to do with those final scores.

"It kept everything in perspective and the fact that we're never bigger than the game," Knox said of the experience. "It was such a lesson that we learned -- that it's not all about winning. And we forget that, because as coaches, we're always trying to get to the top. We forget that. But I will never, ever forget this moment. It's changed me, and I'm sure it's changed my players."

For her part, Holtman seems not altogether sure what all the fuss is about. She seems to genuinely believe that any player in her position on any field on any day would have done the same thing. Which helps explain why it did happen on that day and on that field.

And she appreciates the knowledge that while the results of Saturday's game and her senior season soon will fade into the dust and depth of old media guides and Internet archives, the story of what happened in her final game at home will live on far longer.

"I think that happening on Senior Day, it showed the character of our team," Holtman said. "Because granted I thought of it, but everyone else would have done it. It's something people will talk about for Senior Day. They won't talk about who got hits and what happened and who won; they'll talk about that. And it's kind of a nice way to go out, because it shows what our program is about and the kind of people we have here."

What Is Good Sportsmanship?

Good sportsmanship occurs when teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials treat each other with respect. Kids learn the basics of sportsmanship from the adults in their lives, especially their parents and their coaches. Kids who see adults behaving in a sportsmanlike way gradually come to understand that the real winners in sports are those who know how to persevere and to behave with dignity — whether they win or lose a game.

Parents and teachers can help their kids understand that good sportsmanship includes both small gestures and heroic efforts. It starts with something as simple as shaking hands with opponents before a game and includes acknowledging good plays made by others and accepting bad calls gracefully. Displaying good sportsmanship isn't always easy: it can be tough to congratulate the opposing team after losing a close or important game. But the kids who learn how to do it will benefit in many ways.

Kids who bully or taunt others on the playing field aren't likely to change their behavior when in the classroom or in social situations. In the same way, a child who practices good sportsmanship is likely to carry the respect and appreciation of other people into every other aspect of life.

Good Sports Are Winners


Ask first or second graders who won a game, and they may answer, "I think it was a tie." It's likely the question isn't of any real interest at that age. Kids may be more eager to talk about the hits they got or the catches they almost made. But as they move into older and more competitive leagues, kids become more focused on winning. They often forget to have fun. Without constant reminders and good examples, they may also forget what behavior is appropriate before, during, and after a sporting event.

Kids who have coaches who care only about being in first place and say that anything goes as long as they win, pick up the message that it's OK to be ruthless on the field. If parents or teachers constantly pressure them to play better or second-guess their every move, kids get the message that they're only as good as their last good play — and they'll try anything to make one.

Adults who emphasize good sportsmanship, however, see winning as just one of several goals they'd like their kids to achieve. They help young athletes take pride in their accomplishments and in their improving skills, so that the kids see themselves as winners, even if the scoreboard doesn't show the numbers going in their favor.

The best coaches — and parents — encourage their kids to play fair, to have fun, and to concentrate on helping the team while polishing their own skills.

Remember the saying "Actions speak louder than words"? That's especially true when it comes to the basics of good sportsmanship.



Tips From the Big Leagues

Former pro baseball player Cal Ripken Jr. has worked with young athletes for the last 8 years, in addition to being a dad to two young athletes himself. Watch him talk about:

- ▶ [Kids specializing in one sport](#)
- ▶ [Competitiveness in youth sports](#)
- ▶ [Helping kids deal with defeat](#)
- ▶ [How parents can be good spectators](#)

