



Work Hard, Stay Humble

Lesson Content

Today's media bombards us with the promotion of superstar athletes. And if you pay attention, you'll notice that many of them are busy boasting about themselves too! It seems rare to see pro athletes give us examples of true humility. Tennis star Rafael Nadal is the exception. In spite of his #1 ranking in the world, 16 Grand Slam wins, and a decade of dominating his toughest opponent, he honors Roger Federer by calling him the greatest tennis player in the world. He doesn't spend time honoring himself with such talk. True humility is often misunderstood in our American culture, so it requires a closer look so we can explain it to our children.



Is it possible to be both confident and humble at the same time? According to the dictionary, humility is a modest or low view of one's own importance. Based on that definition, our kids can have high confidence in their skills, without an over-inflated sense of self-importance. Humility is NOT about being wimpy, lacking confidence, or putting yourself down all the time. What does humility *actually look like* in youth sports?

1. **Recognizing weaknesses – “I am not perfect.”** Athletes that accept their own imperfections don't feel compelled to ALWAYS be impressing others. They send the message – regardless of their skill level – that they are a work in progress.
2. **Give no excuses -** After a mistake, they apologize without including excuses. It's like the baseball player who pats his chest after an error to say “My bad.” These athletes accept responsibility for their errors.
3. **Asking for Help –** Humble athletes depend on their teammates; they allow others to shine, not needing the spotlight for themselves. They recognize that efforts from **everyone** on the team are to be celebrated. Team members and family members are appreciated for playing an essential part of the sport journey.

As parents we help our kids when we point out that humility is not being wimpy, and arrogance is not confidence. It all comes down to believing in one's abilities, but not having to talk about it...just show it on the field, court, or in the pool.



Work Hard, Stay Humble

Discussion Guide

1

Make a list of athletes you admire for their humility and discuss the evidence you find.

2

Of the three qualities listed in the video, which one needs cultivating by your athlete? How can you help?