

## Study Guide #3

# Cooperation vs. Competition Within A Team

*Parent & Child Study Guides to Watching a Sports Event*

*Association for the Advancement  
of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP)*

Watching a sports event can be a valuable learning experience for young people. Within the sporting arena we see both good and poor examples of such topics as: setting and working towards goals, focusing attention, managing emotions, handling disappointment, relating to others, dealing with nervousness, etc.

In order to maximize this learning opportunity, AAASP has developed a series of study guides for parents and children to use while watching a sports event, either in person or on television. Each guide is brief and focused around a limited topic. It suggests certain observations and presents several questions for the parent and child to discuss. The study guide concludes with a brief summary of important facts regarding the topic.

We hope that these guides will promote a healthy dialogue between parents and their children about various issues that athletes face during sporting events, as well as in preparation for competition. Your child doesn't necessarily need to be an athlete to benefit from these discussions, since children experience most of these issues in daily life, such as in school. We hope that this information is helpful to you in promoting healthy ideas about sport, exercise, and human performance in general.

In an effort to enhance the viewing of an athletic competition and to help promote positive viewing interaction between parents and children, AAASP has developed a series of topics and questions that adults can discuss with their children. We hope that these guides will help promote a healthy dialogue between parents and their children about various issues that athletes face during sporting events, as well as in preparation for competition. Your child doesn't necessarily need to be an athlete to benefit from these discussions, since children experience most of these issues in daily life, such as in school. We hope that this information is helpful to you in promoting healthy ideas about sport, exercise, and human performance in general.

### **Discussion questions: Cooperation vs. Competition Within A Team**

While you watch a sports event

1. Observe a couple of team sports.
2. What is the difference between playing on a team sport versus playing as an individual?
3. What is the difference between cooperating with others versus being competitive with them?
4. Is being competitive with members of your own team helpful or harmful to the team?
  - a. How can it help the team?
  - b. How can it hurt the team?

5. Have you ever been on a team where someone was very competitive with their own teammates? How did that make you and other teammates feel?
6. What do athletes say or do that shows you they are cooperating with their teammates?
7. Do you think everyone on the team likes one another? If not, how do they make it work?

### **Lesson conclusion**

Participation on a sport team can present unique challenges for athletes. For example, in Olympic competition, some athletes may have previously competed against someone who is now their teammate. Before, they were competing against them, and now they have learned to cooperate with them. One way they do this is by focusing on achieving team goals. Only by working together can a team be successful. Athletes also compete against their teammates for playing time, which can create unhealthy competition within the team. A positive team atmosphere can be encouraged by emphasizing that “friendly competition” will make everyone a better player. Teammates can help each other improve by working hard in practice while also supporting one another. This will help the team remain unified and play to their potential. Learning to cooperate will increase confidence and self-esteem in young athletes and lead to a fun youth sport experience.

AAASP encourages parents to do their part in creating a supportive youth sport environment so their child will develop a lifelong interest in physical activity and sports. By teaching fundamental sporting principles, you can help your child develop a winning attitude, not only in sports but also throughout his or her life.

### **About AAASP**

Founded in 1986, the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of the psychology of sport, exercise and health. AAASP is the premier international, multidisciplinary sport and exercise psychology organization, and is the only professional organization in North America that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport, exercise, and health psychology. For more information on this and other topics, or to find a certified sport psychology consultant in your area, visit <http://www.aaasponline.org>.

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