

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

Champion Parent Note

Educating Parents and Developing Champion Athletes

Temperance



Sports are competitive by nature. The expectation in every game should be that both teams are trying their hardest to win. Winning is also *fun*. As parents, we all want our children to succeed and we enjoy celebrating those moments of success with them. Yet as fun as winning can be, research clearly highlights that competitive sports structures that emphasize "beating an opponent" or "winning at all costs" actually hinder athletes' intrinsic motivation and thus hurt their development. So how do parents strike the appropriate balance when it comes to winning? Let's take a look.

It's important to remember that the word *competition* comes from the Latin *cum petere*, which means "striving with." In the literal sense, competition is a form of cooperation. We might never think of sports this way, but it's true. Consider the games that we often enjoy watching the most are back-and-forth affairs where teams are evenly matched. These contests are not just more entertaining to watch, they are actually better for the athletes involved, who learn and grow more during these contests than a blowout win. A strong opponent allows athletes to focus, to elevate their game and enjoy the moment. It's telling that athletes often note having more fun in these games - win or lose - than in games where the outcome is determined early.

We admit these tense games can sometimes be difficult to watch as parents. This is usually because our focus is on the *outcome*, rather than simply enjoying the game. But what happens if we forget about outcome and put our focus on the *process* and how well the game was played? Instead of talking about the result after the game (did you win?) we can ask questions like "what went well?" or "how did you make progress toward your goals?" Win or lose, it turns out those are more important areas of focus for your child's long-term development.

When it comes down to it, the key word to remember is *balance*. Using Play Like a Champion's GROW approach, we can see that winning is tied to the Cardinal virtue of Temperance, which as Bishop Hying notes in the video above, is all about balance and

perspective. As parents, we can enjoy winning, but should understand that learning how to appropriately manage both winning and losing are important for our child's development. It's important that we support our children no matter what, emphasizing performance over outcome and making sure our children realize that how the game was played is far more important than the final score.

Celebrate the opportunity to watch them play the game they love, win or lose, and you'll find a balance that puts winning in the proper context.



Daily Prayers for Champions

Play Like a Champion has developed an exciting new resource. Our Daily Prayers for Champions page online is a sort-able compilation of sports prayers that can be used by coaches, parents and athletes in their faith and athletic journey. You can also submit your own prayers by emailing information@playlikeachampion.org.

[Visit Prayers for Champions on your Desktop or Mobile!](#)

A Parent's Prayer Before a Game

Strong and faithful God,

As we come together for this contest,
we ask you to bless these athletes, our children.
Keep them safe from injury and harm,
instill in them respect for each other,
and reward them for their perseverance.
Lead us all to the rewards of your kingdom,
where you live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.



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