

# How to be a great teammate



*From our guest contributor, Nancy Justis.*

Not every basketball player has been blessed with great talent, but every player, regardless of ability can be a great teammate. Here are 11 qualities of a great teammate. Do these qualities describe your or your young player?

**1) A great teammate gives relentless effort:** Remember, your coach should not have to coach effort! You cannot control many things that will happen during your basketball season, but you can control how hard you play. The only way to get better is to give your maximum effort. This not only makes you better, it pushes your teammates to get better as well.

**2) A great teammate is unselfish:** Put the team first. Your job is to do what it takes to help the team be successful. This isn't always easy, but great teammates find a way to put the success of the team above their own success.

**3) A great teammate is honest:** All great teams and relationships are built on honesty. Your coach and teammates

need to know that they can trust you during the ups and downs of a season.

**4) A great teammate is humble:** Basketball is a team sport. You may be the star of your team or you may be a role player, either way, remember that the team comes first. Put your individual accomplishments aside and give praise to your teammates. Teams succeed when no one cares who gets the credit.

**5) A great teammate holds themselves and their teammates accountable:** You should have high standards for yourself and your teammates. If a teammate is not fulfilling duty to the team you can't be afraid to confront them and get them back on track. You might need to help them buy in to a particular strategy or help them accept their role on the team. Don't accept a negative attitude from teammates, be the player that reaches out to them to help your team as a whole.

**6) A great teammate strives to improve:** You can always be a better player tomorrow than you are today. Work to improve your game and you will lift your teammates. Stay and work after practice and see how many teammates start to join you.

**7) A great teammate is optimistic:** Don't be a player constantly complaining to others about what's wrong. Look for the positives in your teammates and coaches

**8) A great teammate has respect for others:** Respect your teammates. Respect your coaches. Respect your family, Respect your teachers. Respect your facilities. Respect your school. Look people in the eye. Nod and acknowledge your coach when they are addressing you. Clean up after yourself. Be polite. Encourage and cheer on your teammates. Help create a culture of mutual respect.

**9) A great teammate is a leader:** You don't have to be the best player on your team to be a leader. You don't even need to be a vocal leader. Every player can lead by their actions. Is

what you do on a daily basis making your team better? Challenge your teammates during drills. You'll improve and so will they. Bring energy to every practice. Don't talk bad about teammates or coaches outside the team environment. These are all ways you can lead your teammates towards success

**10) A great teammate is resilient:** Help your team use temporary setbacks or losses as an opportunity to grow and improve. Don't make excuses, look for solutions. As a mentally tough basketball player, pride yourself on being resilient. Your ability to bounce back will be infectious and help make your entire team more resilient. In any situation, one player's positive outlook can make a difference. Try to be that player.

**11) A great teammate helps foster a family atmosphere:** Support your teammates like family. Your season is going to have highs and lows, so are your teammates. Teams that build close relationships are usually the teams having the most fun and having the most success.

All of your actions, within and away from the team, are a representation of your team, your school or organization, and your family. Take responsibility for your behavior and actions at all times. Conduct yourself in such a way that your parents, coaches, and teachers would be proud of you. You never know who is looking at you for cues on how to behave.

Coaches – This is a key point for you to remember as well. Your young players are looking at you to see how you behave. This includes your interactions with players, officials, and other coaches. Be the person you want your players to be. Actions speak louder than words.



*Nancy Justis has over 40 years of journalistic experience ranging from newspaper and magazine writing and editing, to collegiate public relations. At a time when women were a virtual non-entity in the athletics media relations field, she blazed the trail. She has over 30 years of experience in the promotion of sports teams and working with student-athletes. She was Sports Information Director/Assistant Athletics Director for Media Relations at the University of Northern Iowa for most of those years, publicizing the Panthers' nationally-recognized men's basketball and football teams. She is a member of the Cedar Valley Character Counts Committee and serves on the board of the Cedar Valley Sports Commission. She freelance writes for various publications.*

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