



# Accountability



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## Lesson Companion

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Teaching this lesson? Here are some tips:

*Tight on time? Stick with the 3 Key Takeaways and The Basics. These will help your athletes understand quickly what it means to be accountable and how to do so.*

*Have more time? Share the TrueSport Talk with your athletes and discuss how an Olympic athlete can relate to this lesson.*

*Extra time? Continue on through Tips & Applications for more valuable information to share with your group.*

*Looking for more? Explore the Downloads & Additional Resources which offer additional conversation starters and fun physical activities to support each lesson.*

# Accountability



*“Taking responsibility for your life and accepting that you alone are in charge sets you free to accomplish anything your heart desires.”*  
— Bonnie Blair, Olympic gold medalist in speed skating

## 3 Key Takeaways

— 1 —

*Respect yourself  
and others will  
respect you*



— 2 —

*Be accountable  
for your  
own actions*



— 3 —

*Doing the  
right thing  
is not  
always easy*



## The Basics

**Accountability:** Having accountability means being responsible. And like having responsibility, being accountable translates to being punctual, attentive, prepared, and ready to help. It also means that you are willing to accept and learn from your mistakes.



Track and field Olympic gold medalist DeeDee Trotter recalls a time as a young athlete when she committed a false start in a race. Prior to the sprint, DeeDee was distracted; she was socializing with friends rather than focusing on the event and mentally preparing herself. When she began to run just before the starting gun fired, she was penalized for a false start. She remembers feeling embarrassed, but blamed others—the starter, her teammates, her coach, and even her mother—for her mistake.

However, after some thought, DeeDee soon realized that she should hold herself accountable for her own actions and that she alone was responsible for the false start. She knew it was easier to blame others, but also knew that she really had nobody to blame but herself. Had she focused on her race instead of her friends, she would've been better prepared to execute a good race.



From this experience, DeeDee learned to take accountability for her actions, a lesson that helped make her the Olympic champion she is today. In 11 years of competition, DeeDee is proud to say she has never false started in a race again since then. No matter what, TrueSport athletes stay accountable for their actions and understand that doing the right thing is not always easy.

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### TrueSport Talk Questions

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1. *What was the main point you took away from the lesson?*
2. *Have you ever learned a meaningful life lesson, like DeeDee did, from an experience you had while playing sports? What was it?*
3. *How can you practice being more accountable for your actions while playing sports? For your actions in your life?*

## Accountability On The Field

**Accountability:** An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions.

**Examples of accountability in sports:**

- Showing up on time for practices and games, ready to go.
- Taking care of your equipment.
- Fully participating in practice.
- Knowing the specific responsibilities of your position and fulfilling them as best you can.
- Supporting your teammates when they are having both good and bad days.
- Keeping track of your stats so you can chart improvements.
- Talking with teammates and coaches about mistakes you make and how you can correct them in the future.



## Accountability In Social Media

Whether or not you have aspirations to play sports in college, being accountable for what you say and post on social media is a smart plan. In order to get an idea for what kind of person a potential player is, college coaches pay attention to what they are posting on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and other social media outlets.

Case in point, this tweet from then-Penn State football assistant coach Herb Hand about a high school player he was recruiting:

*"Dropped another prospect this AM due to his social media presence ... Actually glad I got to see the `real' person before we offered him [a scholarship]."*

**Don't jeopardize your athletic career due to what you put on social media, and always keep in mind these guidelines before you post:**

- Remember that despite what apps may claim, it is nearly impossible to permanently delete anything from the Internet.
- Anything you create or communicate can be copied, edited, and sent around. Once you put something online, it's out of your control.
- Think before you post. Would you want a potential coach to read it? A potential employer?
- If you retweet, comment on, or like something inappropriate, realize you are now directly connected to it.
- Say thank you to fans, teammates, and family who support you.
- Set a positive example for other students by posting encouraging messages about your teammates and peers in other sports or activities at school.

***Be sure to check out these additional resources available for download:***

**Chalk Talk (PDF)**

*15-minute activity:* Teach your athletes how and why to be accountable for their actions with this short discussion activity.

**Activities (PDF)**

*15 & 20-minute activities:* These activities will demonstrate to your athletes the impact that accountability has on both themselves and their teammates

**TrueSport Certificate (PDF)**

*Lesson Certificate:* Celebrate your group's completion of the TrueSport Accountability lesson with this special certificate.