

nevada-utah conference sports ministry
PHILOSOPHY FOR COMPETITION IN LIFE

Competition is a common experience in life and is present in play, work, education, economic systems, and the political arena. It exists between individuals, groups and nations. There is even competition for the souls of humankind. When competition is present in appropriate settings, mentors can guide athletes toward the values of staying focused on a goal, perseverance, handling victory and defeat graciously, and emphasizing teamwork over individual accomplishments. If competition is friendly and organized so that every athlete has the opportunity at some time to win, then motivation, achievement, and interpersonal relations may be enhanced.

Competition that is allowed in the wrong setting or that is not properly managed can have negative effects. Only a few athletes will be able to experience success, and the tendency to make safe rather than growth choices will be increased. Athletes may think of academics or athletics as a means to an end (being better than others) and may become more interested in their relative position in a class or on a team than in the performance of the team or group. In poorly managed competition, it is likely that hostility between members of the group will often develop into outward aggression.

It is therefore essential that in all activities, actions, and attitudes be guided by higher principles. School and church personnel should make every effort to develop a Christ-centered, cooperative environment in which coaches and athletes together identify group goals, plan activities, develop communication skills, delegate responsibilities, participate in spiritual growth activities, and learn strategies for helping one another.

In response to appropriately employed competitive activities, students guided by their coaches, should seek to:

- Develop their physical, mental, and spiritual gifts to the fullest extent;
- Cultivate Christian virtues such as commitment, courtesy, fair play, honesty, loyalty, obedience, respect, and self-control;
- Manage successes and contend with failures;
- Function effectively as team members; and
- Strive for excellence.