



For Immediate Release

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**Awards and Recognition Association  
Puts Youth Athletics on High Alert: Be Good Sports  
St. Louis Youth Football Coach, Player Incident  
Should be Teachable Moment for Sportsmanship**

GLENVIEW, Ill. (Oct. 8, 2008) – The Awards and Recognition Association (ARA), founder of the National Sportsmanship Award, today expressed concern over the recent youth football display of poor sportsmanship during a post-game high-five ritual between an 11-year-old player and a coach. The incident was caught on tape and shows the coach shoving the player. The ARA urges the public and media to discourage such negative displays and focus instead on the more common and frequent incidents of positive sportsmanship that are often overlooked.

The incident is reflective of a disturbing trend that was identified in the ARA’s annual state of sportsmanship survey, fielded by TNS Worldwide earlier this year. More than half of all Americans had witnessed acts of poor sportsmanship at the youth sports level, including incidents of players acting out (47%), parents acting out (33%) and coaches acting out (15%). Tips for fostering positive sportsmanship, created by ARA’s panel of retired collegiate coaches, are available at [www.arasportsmanshipaward.org](http://www.arasportsmanshipaward.org).

“What happened in this St. Louis suburb was lamentable, but it is not by any means representative of the vast majority of athletes who participate in organized sports,” says former Brigham Young University Head Football Coach LaVell Edwards, who chairs the selection committee for the ARA Sportsmanship Award.

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## **ARA/ Add One**

“As a coach, I saw up-close the character of the players on my teams and those of our opponents. Believe me, the good far outnumbered the bad. There are plenty of positive role models. Take for example, the Central Washington University’s girls’ softball team as a great example of good sportsmanship. They acted selflessly and helped their opposing team win,” said Edwards. ”The ARA Sportsmanship Award gives us an opportunity to shed a bright light on exemplary incidents and athletes.”

To further sway the negative trend and encourage good sportsmanship among athletes, coaches and parents and teach sportsmanship at all levels, ARA has recruited some of the most renowned coaching legends and sports experts to a blue-ribbon panel that rewards NCAA Bowl Sub-Division college football sportsmanship standouts with its national sportsmanship award. As the only national award that focuses on sportsmanship, it is unique among the millions of sports trophies presented to athletes annually.

“There is no better time than now to acknowledge the good sportsmanship exhibited every day by athletes at all levels and in all sports,” said ARA President Cathy Garcia. “And that is why we at ARA are excited to be the sponsors of an award that encompasses the qualities of hard yet fair play and sportsmanship on and off the field.”

Past ARA Sportsmanship Award winners include: Carolina Panthers running back DeAngelo Williams in 2005; St. Louis Rams running back Brian Leonard in 2006; and Washington State University quarterback Alex Brink in 2007, who was drafted by the Houston Texans.

The Awards and Recognition Association is the official sponsor of the ARA Sportsmanship Award. ARA is a membership organization of approximately 4,000 companies dedicated to increasing the professionalism of recognition specialists and advancing the awards and engraving industry. For more information on the award, visit [www.arasportsmanshaward.org](http://www.arasportsmanshaward.org).

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