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# In search of a few good

When it comes to role-modeling, Scott Harrison has witnessed opposite examples during his athletic career. "I've had coaches who want you to go out and hit as hard as you can; just do whatever you can to win. Even if it means breaking someone's head or something," said Scott, 17, a football and basketball player at Bishop Kearney High School. "The coaches may say to behave yourself a couple of times, but they don't live by it."

On the other end, Scott has begun practice for the 1996-97 varsity basketball season under Ed Nietopski — a coach who recites a rosary with his team before every game.

This prayer time, Scott said, "is a time to put the game into perspective. It closes my mind and helps me to think about God — and that after the game, life goes on."

For adolescents, Scott said, role-modeling is crucial in the development of teen athletes' attitudes and actions. "It affects the standards you carry over into your life," added Scott, a

senior at Kearney and parishioner at Holy Trinity Church in Webster.

Due to steadily increasing media coverage, professional and college athletes also play a big part in the role-modeling process. For Kearney senior Jerome Kowal, hockey's Wayne Gretzky is a sports celebrity who also serves as a good model.

"He goes out there and does his job. He doesn't hit much and doesn't get into fights. He just plays his game," said Jerome, 18, a member of the Kearney hockey team. He is also a parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Brighton.

Debbie Chichester, 14, saw various displays of role-modeling at the Summer Olympic Games. She said she was moved by Kerri Strug's courageous efforts after she suffered an injury early in her gymnastics competition. However, Debbie wasn't nearly as impressed with track star Gail Devers.

"She said in an interview, 'The only person I care about is Gail Devers,'" remarked Debbie, a parishioner in the Catholic Community of Mount Morris

and Nunda.

Scott is a big fan of Michael Jordan because "he's dedicated to what he does, and strives to do his best. And you always see him with a smile on his face, having fun."

However, Scott also stated that the media may play too big a part in presenting athletes as good or bad role models. For instance, he felt that Jordan's gambling habits were harped on too often.

"The media will take a good guy and pick him apart. If he does 10 good things and one bad thing, you'll hear about the one bad thing," Scott commented.

Jerome similarly criticized coverage of Darryl Strawberry, who resurrected his baseball career this year with the world champion New York Yankees. Jason feels that the media dwelt more on Strawberry's past struggles with drug addiction than on his comeback.

"I used to like him when I was little. Now when you see him, he looks sad because he gets picked apart," Jerome said. "But I still think he's a good guy."

However, Scott does not reserve as much sympathy for Roberto Alomar, the Baltimore Orioles second baseman who has generated a sea of controversy for spitting on American League umpire John Hirschbeck last month.

"That's beyond what is acceptable," Scott said. "It's one thing to say you do things in the heat of the moment, but that's going beyond."

Yet Scott also remarked that in setting limits, professional athletes aren't as influential as the everyday people he deals with.

"I don't think the public figures hit home as much as my coaches and parents," Scott remarked.

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Debbie — v country, swim Morris High not as likely t performance

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## Sports and Society

How do sports influence the nation? Americans think:

	agree	disagree
• Society is more violent because of its emphasis on competitive sports	27%	71%
• Children learn from sports that they should win at any cost	47%	51%

U.S. News/Boswell poll of 1,000 adults conducted by KRC Research & Consulting May 9-13, 1996. Margin of error: plus or minus 0.1 percent.

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