



## Read this:

You have a teammate that you don't really like. The two of you bicker and fight back and forth, and even though you start it, you're proud to come out on top every time. You think it's all in good fun and harmless, and it's a better alternative to being nice to your teammate, who you really can't stand. Yesterday, your coach called you into the office and said that you need to stop "bullying" your teammate and wanted to go over a behavior plan with you.

## Discussion Questions:

What's going on?

*>Safe Sport says: What seemed to you like harmless fighting was interpreted as bullying. Your teammate felt targeted, unsafe, and disrespected, and now your coach is involved.*

What is bullying?

*>Safe Sport says: Bullying is negative behavior that is intentional, targeted, repeated, and includes a real or felt power imbalance. If you are targeting your teammate repeatedly in a negative way, they may feel like you have the power, even if they try and fight back. If you are bullying a teammate, your coach might give you consequences.*

What do you do?

*>Safe Sport says: Stop the behavior, own up to it and apologize, and face the consequences. You don't have to be best friends with your teammate, but you must show respect. That includes specifically apologizing for making them feel unsafe and hurt, and it also includes changing your behavior to be a positive contributor to the team.*

What if your best friend on the team is being accused of bullying?

*>Safe Sport says: Help them by holding them accountable for changing their behavior. If they start to say or do something that is mean, rude, or disrespectful, gently call them out on it and suggest an alternate behavior. You can also compliment the target of the bullying to let everyone on the team know that kind of behavior will not be tolerated.*

## Wrap It Up:

What are your team values? How do these show up on the team?

*>Safe Sport says: These will be unique to each team. Some examples are respect, hard work, safety, healthy boundaries and providing examples of how to maintain a safe environment for everyone involved in the swim club. These values show up when you shake hands with your opponents after a race or you do a fun and silly cheer with your relay team before you race.*

**\*For Coaches: Safe Sport has templates for an anti-bullying plan and peer-to-peer resource guide at [www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect). Use these to think through how all the coaches on your staff should respond to peer issues and cases of bullying. For more resources, visit [www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect) or contact Safe Sport at [safesport@usaswimming.org](mailto:safesport@usaswimming.org).**