



The Role of the Parent in Sports

Parent and Coach Communication Guidelines

Parent-coach relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents whose children are involved in our athletic program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach

1. The coach's philosophy.
2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
5. Procedures that are followed should your child be injured during participation.
6. Disciplinary procedures that results in the denial of your child's participation.

Communication coaches expect from parents

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance of the practice or event.
3. Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and expectations.

As your children become involved in the programs at their high school, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, we encourage discussion with the coach.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

It is very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach.



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Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches

1. Playing time.
2. Team strategy.
3. Play calling.
4. Other student participants.

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

Guidelines for Expressing Concerns to a Coach*

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

1. Never approach a coach immediately after a contest. This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.
2. Call the following day and make an appointment which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
3. Raise your concern in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable.
4. Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Often a parent may be blinded by emotion and this overrides logic and reason. Listening receptively may really help you to understand any explanation which is given.

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
2. At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined.

Research indicates that a student involved in sport activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided these guidelines makes both your child's and your experience with the high school athletic program less stressful and more enjoyable.

**Credit to: David Hoch and Loch Raven High School, Towson, MD*