



PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY WORK
WITH THE PARENTS OF
KIDS ON YOUR TEAM.

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Introduction

Nearly 40 million American children and teens play competitive sports, according to the National Council of Youth Sports. And many of their parents are right there beside them, attending practices and games, providing transportation to events and providing the funds for the many athletic programs.

As a coach, you naturally want to build strong relationships with your players. At the same time, though, you cannot succeed in that regard without the support of the parents. You've probably heard or read many horror stories about parents who have exhibited volatile and rude behavior at their child's sporting event.

While no hard data is available on disruptive parent behavior at youth sports events because only the extreme cases are reported, a 2001 article in the New York Times reported that some type of verbal or physical abuse from parents or coaches occurs at roughly 15 percent of youth sports events. That percentage has likely increased in the past decade.

While there is no surefire way to prevent all explosive situations you might encounter as a coach, better communication is at the heart of effective parent-coach relationships. When you combine a great sport with a caring, trained coach and encouraging, loving parents, you get an unbeatable combination for kids.

A player's parent can be your ally and a big asset to the team or, in the case of a strained relationship, a parent can undermine your authority, causing you to not only second-guess your coaching decisions but to question why you ever decided to coach in the first place.

To get that parent-coach relationship off to a firm footing and to help avoid any potential problems, it is essential that you establish a clear communication line between coach and parent early on. This open communication is best accomplished by holding a pre-season meeting between the coach and the parents.

Set the meeting at a convenient time and place for most families, realizing that you will never be able to accommodate everyone's work schedules with one meeting. Stress the importance of at least one parent or guardian attending for each player.

After you have set the time and place, it's time to go over the material you will share at the meeting. You may want to consider developing your personal philosophy as a coach that includes your thoughts on winning and losing and on the importance of teamwork. Discuss the importance of safety, fun participation and development.

In addition, brainstorm a code of conduct for parents and for yourself. Having a set of guidelines encourages good behavior and sets a positive tone for the entire season. Here is a sample Code of

Conduct for Parents:

- I will demonstrate positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every team event.
- I will place my child's well-being above a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and I will refrain from the use of those substances at team events.
- I will remember the game is for youth, not for adults.
- I will do my best to make the team experience fun for my child.
- I will teach my child to treat other players, coaches, fan, and officials with respect, regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability and I will model that behavior.
- I will provide positive reinforcement for my child and the team.
- I will avoid coaching my child from the sidelines at games or practices

- I understand that if my conduct or language is deemed to be unsportsman-like by the officials or administrators at a team event, I may be asked to leave the event.

Here is an example of a Coaches Code of Conduct:

- I will place the well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual and provide each player with the best possible instruction.
- I will strive to balance criticism with praise.
- I will put the safety of players first.
- I will remember that the game is for the children, not the adults.
- I will stress safety, fun, participation and development over winning.
- I will not criticize a penalty or an official's decision of the official himself or herself.
- I will refrain from using profanity, alcohol or tobacco on the athletic field.
- I will emphasize teamwork in team sports with my team
- I will model all aspects of good sportsmanship, showing a positive attitude whether winning or losing.

Communicating with Parents

The pre-season meeting enables you to discuss the practice and game schedule, your experience and coaching style, your expectations for the athletes and for parent involvement. Here are some steps to follow for a successful pre-season meeting:

1. Prepare an agenda and stick to it. Parents are busy people and they don't want to leave work early for a meeting only to find everything in disarray. Have a printed agenda to pass out to attendees. Then start and end the meeting on time. Inform parents that there will be time for questions and answers at the end of the meeting, so that you do not get interrupted during the meeting.
2. Introduce yourself. Tell the families your name and how you would like the players to address you (i.e. Coach Doug, Coach Adams or Mr. Adams). Use this time to share a bit about yourself, including information on your own children and any prior playing and/or coaching experience.
3. Discuss the schedule. Pass out a printed practice and game schedule and refer parents to a website, if you have one, for updates as the season progresses. Stress the importance of coming to practice on time and being ready to play. Include any information on post-season play and travel, adding any maps, directions and parking information whenever possible.

If your sport involves time for assembly of equipment and getting into uniform, be sure to define what time the kids need to arrive and what time they need to be dressed and ready to play so that there is no confusion. Also discuss pick-up time and the importance of parents being there on time to take their children home from practices and games.

4. Mention any costs and fees and when they are due. Depending on your sport, there may be team fees, equipment rental fees or transportation costs

that parents need to know about. Discuss deadlines for fees, any financial assistance that is available and any repercussions if fees are not paid.

5. Medical requirements. Do players need to have physical before participating on the team? Be ready to provide medical forms and possibly a list of doctors who perform routine sports physicals in your community. Some athletic organizations find it convenient to contract with a health provider to offer low-cost, physicals for the entire team at a convenient location to practice.
6. Detail your expectations. This is the point of the meeting where you can outline what you expect from your players in terms of attitude and performance. Discuss the importance of a good attitude, of doing your best and of encouraging your teammates. You can discuss your views on sportsmanlike conduct and give examples of professional athletes that exhibit that standard. You might wish to share a few quotes such as these examples:

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”

- Michael Jordan

*“I can't play being mad. I go out there and have fun.
It's a game, and that's how I am going to treat it.”*

- Ken Griffey, Jr.

*“What you are as a person is far more important
than what you are as a basketball player.”*

- John Wooden

As you talk about teamwork, encourage parents to avoid using their child's attendance – or lack thereof -- at practice or games as punishment for bad behavior. Explain that being a part of a team is a commitment and that your child's presence will be needed and valued.

Here is where you can let parents know about what amount of playing time they can expect for their child. Refer to any league restrictions and regulations if they are available. Does your league have an “everyone plays” rule? Explain how it works.

One option for playing time is to establish a point system. With a point system, players get playing time credits for being on time and ready to play and for other factors such as completion of drills and other skill sets.

Would you prefer a player talk with you about a team concern first, before involving a parent? If so, discuss that preference, explaining how you feel it will strengthen the child/coach relationship as well as boost the child's confidence.

What is your policy on parents attending practices? This is the time to let them know how you feel and why. If you would prefer parents not attend practice, be very clear on why you feel it is best for the child to be able to perform to his or her best as part of a team without Mom or Dad watching. If you are fine with parents attending practice, specify how parents can support you and their child by being quiet and respectful. You also might want to consider creating a parents' section for games to help parents get to know each other and to help establish a fun, family atmosphere at your events.

7. Specify boundaries. Be very clear about what behavior will not be tolerated. For instance, you could inform parents that there is a zero tolerance policy for cursing, yelling or any other abusive behavior at coaches, officials or other players. (More on this topic to come in Problem Parents section)
8. Outline safety and injury prevention recommendations. Here are some points to consider and some possible website links for further reference:
 - warm-ups (http://kidshealth.org/kid/watch/out/sport_safety.html)

- hydration
(http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/emergencies/dehydration.html)
 - first-aid procedure
(http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/#cat20889)
 - emergency medical plan (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid>)
(http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/safe_play/sports_safety.html#cat20889)
 - concussion signs and symptoms
(http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/first_aid/concussions.html)
9. Exchange contact information. In addition to providing parents with the best way to contact you, have a form or a sign-in sheet available so that you can have all necessary contact information for families. Be sure to have emergency phone numbers for each player. If you changes to the schedule or special announcements, be sure to contact parents directly by their preferred method of contact: phone, text or e-mail. Avoid sending verbal or written announcements home with the players. There is just too great a chance that they will be lost.
10. Offer volunteer opportunities. Do you need a team parent? Transportation help? Let parents know what volunteer positions are available and what the responsibilities are for each position. Be upbeat and encouraging when parents ask about the jobs, and, if possible, refer them to an experienced team parent to talk with after the meeting.
11. Have a question/answer session. Save time for parents to ask you questions about the season or to share any concerns they have about their child's participation. Be open and friendly. Don't be afraid to say when you don't know the answer to a question. Even the most prepared coach can't know everything! You might want to keep a notepad handy to jot down notes. That way, you can assure parents that you will find out the correct information as soon as possible and get back to them.

Many teams have instituted a team contract for parents and players to sign. This contract would stipulate the player and parent have read and/or understand the rules and regulations of the team and promise to abide by

those rules. When families perform this simple act of signing a document, they demonstrate knowledge and acceptance of what you have detailed in the meeting. There are a variety of sample player and parent contracts available online for your reference.

12. Finally, ending the meeting on time is as important as starting on time. If some parents have more topics to discuss, you can formally end the meeting, while at the same time, explaining that you will be available for additional questions after the meeting.

What to do about parents who miss the team meeting?

With working parents' busy schedules and just plain forgetfulness, it is likely that some parents will not attend the team meeting even if you have said it is required. Since it is important that all families benefit from the information from the meeting, be ready with a plan for this scenario. If there is more than family who missed the meeting, perhaps you or an assistant coach could arrange to meet them at another time to go over the meeting information. If that is not feasible option, ask them to pick up the paperwork and then plan time to talk with them by phone.

After the team meeting, communication with parents continues to be important. Consider asking your team parents to help with any timely notifications to families on practice changes or other notifications. Team parents can be vital time-savers by answering routine questions about the team. Advise the team parent to come to you for questions or comments that need to be handled by you directly.

If you get complaints or criticisms

It's a fact of human nature that the people who are unhappy are usually the ones you are going to hear from, not the people who are content. Keep this in mind. Every coach is bound to have at least one parent who complains about how their child is treated. If you have team of 20 kids, one or two out of 20 kids means you are doing most everything well.

Use discernment when it comes to complaints. While it is important to listen carefully to parent's concerns, it is also important to stay true to your values. Don't hesitate to refer to the information shared in the initial parent meeting about your policies and expectations.

If lack of playing time is the parent's concern and if there are no other overriding concerns (such as not attending practice or having a bad attitude), brainstorm other ways the player can get more experience. Could you establish a junior varsity team or arrange more scrimmages, for example?

Game Day Communication

Of course you want to be open and available to parents, but during a game is not the appropriate time. Many coaches have it as a policy to stay out of the stands on game day. Your focus needs to be on your players, and even encouraging comments from parents can shift your focus elsewhere.

Emotions run high on game day – both good and bad. You might want to consider a “no talking with the coach on game day rule.” Unless it is an emergency, encourage parents that their request or concerns can be better handled on another day when you can give them your full concentration. Explain that you have this rule for the benefit of the players.

If a parent insists on talking with you on game day, quietly but firmly advise them of your policy and ask to set up an appointment for the following day. Before that meeting, take the time to review any possible concerns that parent may have. Try to look at the situation from the parent's point of view and be ready to offer practical suggestions to remedy any problems. If the parent was particularly irate on game day, it is a good idea to ask an assistant coach, athletic director or other administrative officer for your team to attend the meeting. Having someone there as an objective witness can be invaluable. (More about this topic in the section Dealing with Problem Parents.)

Make a Lasting Impression

For many children, the end of a sports season is a time of sadness. Teammates have bonded with each other and with you. In many cases, you will not interact with each other again in the same way again. To ease this time of goodbyes, communication can again be your friend.

Finish the season off with clear communication about a team party or awards ceremony. This event can be as simple as a pot-luck cookout after the last game, to a group trip to a local pizza restaurant, to a sit-down dinner. Talk with your team parents and get their feedback as to what event will work the best. Consider cost and timing and the age of the children on the team in making the decision.

Thank you and evaluations

After the last game and the team party, a great way to gather information to help you become a better coach is by e-mailing families a thank you letter as well as a team evaluation. Your organization may already have a general team evaluation questionnaire in place. If not, you can prepare one from a variety of templates available online. Encourage families to fill out a survey as a way of improving your sports program and the experience players have on a team.

Several online survey companies will provide you with the means for parents to answer the survey and submit the form anonymously online. Another option is to print out blank survey forms and then ask families to return it to a team parent at the team party in a sealed unmarked envelope or to submit it anonymously by post office mail.

Be sure to offer the opportunity for parents to answer open-ended questions as well as to answer the standard ratings from 1 to 5 types of survey questions. If possible have a separate survey for both players and parents. Gear the survey for

the ages of the children on your team, and you will be surprised at how thoughtful children can be with their comments, suggestions and opinions.

Here are some sample survey questions for parents:

- Please rate your satisfaction with the team from 1 to 5 with 1 not being satisfied at all and 5 being highly satisfied.
- Please rank your coach in terms of the following: Approachability, Communication, Professionalism, Knowledge, Planning/Preparation
- Please rank the importance of the following ways to improve our youth sports program:
 - Rules to ensure equitable playing time
 - Rules to promote fairer team
 - Approaches to de-emphasize winning
 - Ways to make the program more fun
 - Ways to make travel programs better and/or less stressful
 - Changes that de-emphasize or even eliminate travel programs
 - Better training for coaches in teaching sports skills
 - Better training for coaches about child development needs
 - Rules to enforce better parent and coach behavior at games
 - Ways to keep more kids playing as they get older
 - Make programs easier for board members to manage
 - Promote sports as education and not just competition
 - How likely is it that you would recommend this program to a friend or family member
 - How likely is it that you would participate in another team next season?
- Please list any highlights you may have experienced during this league or program:
- Please list any changes you would recommend for this program:

It is up to your athletic organization whether you see these evaluations directly or just get a summary of the results. Either way, keep in mind that, similar to the issue of complaints that we discussed earlier in this section, the parents and players who are most unhappy or the most happy with your coaching are the ones most likely to reply to a survey.

As you think about furthering your coaching career, look for any patterns in the survey comments. These patterns will show where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

Getting Parents Involved

Coaching youth sports teams usually involves a great deal of teaching time. In many cases you will want to spend time one-on-one with players or work with them in small groups on their skills. In order to accomplish this, you will need at least one assistant coach to help you manage the rest of the team.

So how do you find an assistant coach? While you may luck out and know of a talented, capable and dependable high school or college student who is looking for some beginning coaching experience, in most cases, the best way is to look to your group of parents for help.

Here are some things to think about when selecting an assistant coach:

- Can the person attend all practices and games?
- Does the person have any experience working with kids?
- Does the person have a similar coaching philosophy – not necessarily in how the game should be taught but in terms of the life lessons you desire to teach the kids.
- How well does the person know the game and/or how willing is the person to learn about the game?
- Can the person supervise drills and encourage players under your leadership?
- Does the person have a positive attitude?
- If the person has a child on the team, is that dynamic a healthy one?

After you have an assistant coach or two in place, you may still need help in other areas and responsibilities. Be sure to check with your team's governing body about any volunteer screenings and background checks that need to be done be-

fore your new staff members work with the kids. Every youth sports organization addresses these complicated but necessary processes a little bit differently. The National Alliance for Youth Sports

(https://www.nays.org/Coaches/Volunteer_Screening.cfm)

has some information to assist you should you need it.

Depending on your organization and what is offered through its administration, here are some other jobs you may look to fill with parent volunteers:

Team parent: These volunteers can assist you with a variety of duties, including coordinating refreshments and snacks for the kids after practices and games. This valuable person can also help coordinate team social events such as a beginning of the season party or an end-of-season awards ceremony.

Transportation: You should have discussed any travel needs in your pre-season meeting. Now is the time to ask a volunteer to help coordinate carpools or buses – and any necessary meals and lodging -- for any team travel.

Statistics: Depending on your sport, you may need help with statistics or timing of events.

Equipment: Having a parent manage the check-out and return of uniforms and equipment, including the turning in of any fees and any necessary cleaning or maintenance, can save your team both time and money.

Announcer: Your games or meets may require the services of an announcer. Some of your parents may have public speaking experience and would enjoy taking on this responsibility.

First-aid: This volunteer is responsible for making sure the first aid kit is well stocked and is on hand and ready to assist the players at each event. Another option is that this volunteer is responsible for handling the sign-up of other parents for this important job.

Publicity director: If your team hosts an event or tournament, this volunteer would help get the word out to the local media and perhaps submit short articles and photographs to social media sites.

Parents are vital to the success of your youth sports program. Their support of their children – through encouragement, transportation and financial means – is the reason youth sports programs are able to exist. Some parents are eager to get involved and to help the coach in a meaningful way. Others may need encouragement. Although parent volunteers help the team and all its activities move smoothly, parent volunteers also bring the enthusiasm and dedication that motivates our young athletes. And, they are why we are all there in the first place.

By working together with all the parents of your players, however, you can work to instill life-long character traits in your players. Children learn by watching the adults in their lives model appropriate behavior. When both you as coach and they as parents reveal that winning is not everything and that demonstrating grace under pressure and even defeat is the way to behave, they will feel empowered to do their best.

Here are some of the traits of good sportsmanship to share with your players and their parents:

- the love of the game
- how to win graciously
- how to lose just as graciously
- how practice and hard work improves skills
- how team work produces winning results
- how to respect good play by opponents and by teammates
- how to voice appreciation for those many people who donate their time to help you learn a sport

Serving as a Parent Coach

Let's face it. Many of us get into youth coaching because of our kids and our desire for them to have a good experience. When we register our child for a team, we see that there is a need for a coach and we step into the role. Sometimes we are hesitant about the time and energy commitment, but we figure we can help out the team and spend some quality time with our son or daughter at the same time.

If you are in the position of coaching your own child, you are faced with some challenging dilemmas, however. It is difficult to be objective when it comes to our own kids. We know them so well. We know the signs they give when they are not listening. We know when they are giving something their all or not. And our kids know us. They know what that "look" means. Plus, they have already heard our exciting personal stories of our sports triumphs and failures.

While some parent coaches are able to expertly remove the "parent" hat and put on the "coach" hat during practice, others struggle with that transition or don't feel they make it effectively. As a result, some coaches are too hard on their own kids, and some are not hard enough. It is indeed a delicate tight-rope to walk. No matter where you fit into the spectrum, here are some suggestions for coaching your own child.

First, before you step into the role of coach, talk openly with your child about the prospect of you coaching the team. Ask how he or she feels about it. Your child will not want to hurt your feelings so it is important that you make him feel he can answer honestly and openly. Be patient as your child finds the right words. Then practice reflective listening skills:

1. Introduce the topic when you have plenty of time to discuss it without feeling rushed.

2. Use body language to show you are listening. Be on the same level with each other, and establish eye contact. Make sure both of you are fully engaged in the conversation (i.e. no texting or watching videos)
3. Use “I” statements describing how you feel rather than “you” statements describing how you think your child feels
4. Let your child talk without interruption.
5. Reflect back what you heard with an “I” statement such as “What I think I hear you saying is that...”
6. Confirm a course of action that suits both of you.

As part of this important discussion, you will want to weigh the pros and cons of coaching your own child. While some of these factors will be unique to your own situation, here are a few to get you started:

Pros

- Time spent together
- You know your child and understand his or her strengths and weaknesses
- You may know your child’s friends on the team and will enjoy spending time with them as well
- You had planned to be coming to games and practices anyway
- There is a need and you can fill it

Cons

- You may be too hard on your child, expecting more of him or her than of the other kids
- You may be too easy on your child, making allowances for excuses or other behaviors
- You may tend to favor your child with playing time

The challenge to serving as parent coach is separating your role as parent with your role as coach. It sounds easy, but since we have spends years parenting our child, it is difficult to effectively switch gears. One way to help you both separate the two roles more distinctly is to stipulate that from the outset that when you are home, you are Mom or Dad and that when you are at practice, you are Coach. Consider asking your child to call you “Coach” at practice to solidify the difference.

Discuss with your child that you will do everything in your power to treat your child as just one of the team, and that, in return, you expect to be treated with utmost respect as a coach.

At practice, strived to be fair and objective about your child’s abilities. Work on looking at his or her abilities from a third person point of view. It helps if you have an “everyone plays the same amount” rule. If you don’t have that policy, another option is to develop a skills point system to determine playing time. You could have your assistant coach keep track of the points each player earns.

In our efforts to avoid showing favoritism, many of us will go to the other extreme by instead becoming overly critical of our own child. This criticism can be damaging to the relationship we have with our child and can be uncomfortable for the whole team.

If you have an assistant coach and you feel comfortable doing so, explain your desire to treat your child fairly. Ask your assistant to give you constructive feedback if you waver from your goal.

As a parent, your job is to provide unconditional love and support for your child. Leave critiques of things that happened in practices and games behind when you leave the playing field or locker room, try to talk about things other than the sport, such as school, friends and other shared hobbies and interests.

If you would like to discuss practice, talk with your child about practice only with your “parent” hat firmly in place. Ask open-needed questions that defer judgment. Try to phrase questions as you would if you were not the coach. For example, ask “How did you feel practice went today?” or “How do you feel the team is doing?” Then listen as a parent, not as a coach.

You also can encourage your spouse or partner to talk with your child about practice. He or she can alert you if any tensions seem to have arisen.

Many parent coaches need to lower their expectations for their own kids. Try as we might not to, we often pin our own hopes and dreams on our kids. These expectations cause our kids to feel pressured and uncomfortable.

Youth sports psychology experts Dr. Patrick Cohn and Lisa Cohn say that some coaches' overly high expectations can make youngsters feel frustrated, especially if they feel as if they are not performing up to your standards. This frustration – and fear of failure – is heightened if the parent-child relationship is part of the mix.

Let's say you tell your child, "You need to strike this guy out!" You may see this as supportive and encouraging. You say it to improve his or her confidence, right?

Well, your son or daughter may take it as just the opposite. Your son may feel that if he doesn't get those strikes, he has failed in your eyes. Your daughter may feel she is personally letting you down.

With coaching in general, but in parent-coaching in particular, be mindful about the expectations you communicate. The Cohn's, the co-founders of The Ultimate Sports Parent, suggest that parents focus on the process of the game rather than on results of the game. In order to accomplish this, list out clear objectives for the game, such as improving pitcher-catcher signals or letting go of mistakes quickly.

If you hang around youth sports long enough you will notice that a common complaint is "the coach's kid always plays." The comment also is often modified as a complaint that the coach's kid always gets the key position (such as quarterback, point guard or pitcher). Like most stereotypes, these comments have some truth to them.

Since many parent-coaches played high school or college ball and have taught their kids their skills, it is often the case that their kids are some of the best players on the team and deserve the best spots and the most playing time. It is also true that some coaches unfairly favor their kids.

Plus it is human nature to complain and you will find that your players' parents are looking out for their own children's interests without necessarily looking objectively at the situation.

You and your child will be put under the microscope as you enter this new relationship. By following the above suggestions, you will gain the confidence you need that you are treating your child as he or she should be treated.

If a parent comes to you with a complaint of favoritism concerning your own child, treat as you would any other complaint. Arrange a time outside of practice or game time to discuss the parent's concerns. Listen carefully to what that person is saying. Use reflective listening techniques, pointing the parent back to your pre-season meeting and your standards and philosophies.

At the conclusion of the meeting, you may want to ask (in a friendly way, of course) the parent to consider becoming a parent coach next season!

Dealing with Problem Parents

Most people get into coaching because they love kids and they love a certain sport. We look at coaching as a way to combine these two interests while having a positive influence on young lives and on the community. Unfortunately, coaching youth sports can also involve dealing with some difficult situations with parents.

As we have discussed many problems with parents can be avoided by having clear communication from the beginning. Your pre-season meeting and stated policies and procedures will give you the necessary back-up if your actions are called into question. Despite the best preparations, however, it is a truism of coaching just as it is of life that “you can’t please all the people all the time.” How you handle problem parents will reveal a great deal of your character and will serve as a valuable role model to the children you coach.

Let’s look at some examples of difficult parents you may encounter and then how to handle the chaos they may cause.

The Overprotective Parent

These parents come in many shapes and sizes and they have kids in all age ranges, but you will recognize them because they worry about any and every thing that could go wrong. It is normal and right for parents to be concerned about their child’s safety and comfort. Overprotective parents, however, take this concern to another level. They may come to you with recent statistics on concussions or dehydration, for example, and ask you what you are going to do about the risks. Here are some of the areas of their concern:

- injury prevention
- equipment and safety

- adequate hydration
- bullying
- allergies
- exhaustion
- first aid

Listen carefully to the parent's concerns. Determine if the child has an existing health issues. Refer the parent to your school or league's health and safety measures and policies. If you determine that the parent has unrealistic fears about injuries, you might want to refer them to a referee or to an administrator who can reassure them about the rarity of injuries in your sport and to some other valuable resources.

You may find that the children of these overprotective parents are either tentative or over-zealous – one extreme or the other – as they move away from the parent's wing. Chances are the parent has exhibited this behavior in other areas of the child's life, so be prepared to encourage the child about safety measures, but also about the fun of the sport.

The Interfering Parent

You may get a handle on who these parents are from the first time you meet them. They usually make a point to tell you about their vast experience in the sport and they also tend to brag about their child's accomplishments.

These parents will take every opportunity to offer you advice and suggestions about your coaching. They also may complain about your line-up and your strategies and tactics and question your objectivity – especially if your own child is on the team.

The primary concern on many parents' minds is playing time. Because of the way many sports programs are set up, with parents paying fees and also participating as volunteers, they have a sense of entitlement for their kids. Be careful about guaranteeing playing time to parents; instead guarantee playing opportunity.

Many coaches establish a rule that questions about playing time come first from the player, not the parent. Encourage “interfering” parents to talk with their child about this policy. If necessary, arrange to talk with the parents outside of practice and game time. When you get together, refer back to your pre-season meeting and policies and your reasons for them.

The Side-Coaching Parent

Some interfering parents get so involved that they offer their child advice during the game, either yelled from the stands or from the sidelines.

“Get the ball!” “Run now!” “Foul him!” are examples of instructions these parents may yell. It is very confusing for a player to hear a parent shouting instructions during a game. A child wants to obey a parent, but also want to follow a coach’s game plan. Many kids make mistakes because of the stress they are under in this kind of situation.

At your pre-season meeting and in your handbook materials, ask parents to refrain from making sideline comments. Explain how distracting and confusing they are to the kids. Educate your players to pay no attention to comments from the sidelines. In keeping with this philosophy, instruct your players to tune out the crowd and to focus on the game as you have practiced it.

The Abusive Parent

Like it or not, some parents are very concerned with winning and take this over-competitiveness out on others if things don’t go the way they want. Those others can include their child, the referee, the other coach, the other team and, of course, you.

Some parents get so worked up in the game that they get angry and abusive. For a study that was published in the *Journal of Applied and Social Psychology*, University of Maryland sports psychologists surveyed 340 parents before and after soccer games in which their kids, ranging in age from 8 to 15, participated.

The parents responded to questions about their levels of anger and aggression as well as to other aspects of their personalities. About 50 percent of the respondents reported they got angry during the game. They stated the main sources of their anger were: the referee and their child's team followed by hostile members of the opposing team or their fans, rude remarks or gestures, coaching mistakes and not following the rules of play.

Of the 40 percent of the parents who said they outwardly expressed their anger, about 19 percent muttered angry comments and 10 percent yelled their comments. Nearly 8 percent of the parents stood up in response to the incident.

Ever since July, 2000, when an argument between Thomas Junta and Michael Costin turned deadly after a youth hockey scrimmage, the term "sports rage" has been part of our national discourse. A study by Rutgers University defines "sports rage" as: "Within the context of an organized athletic activity, any physical attack upon another person such as striking, wounding, or otherwise touching in an offensive manner, and/or any malicious, verbal abuse or sustained harassment which threatens subsequent violence or bodily harm."

"The 2002 study (available here <http://youthsports.rutgers.edu/program-areas/2-uncategorised/45-parental-violence-in-youth-sports-facts-myths-and-videotape>) goes on to say that when parents begin to see their child's athletic endeavors as a means of achieving "fame, glory or material rewards," they particularly lose proper perspective. When this happens, parents are no longer viewing a sport as a fun or healthy activity for their child but instead as an investment.

In their book *Sports and Your Child*, sports psychologists Ronald Smith and Frank Smoll suggest that in order for coaches to have an effective relationship with youth sports parents, the parents should be able to say "yes" in response to the following questions:

- Can you share your son or daughter?
- Can you accept your child's disappointments?
- Can you show your child self-control?
- Can you give your child some time?
- Can you let your child make his or her own decisions?

Most of the time, sideline anger does not turn into an aggressive situation, but it can. Any time a parent is out of control, it takes a toll on the children. Scientists have found the same psychological trigger for screaming youth sports parents is responsible for road rage.

If you are the kind of person who yells and curses when another driver cuts you off, then you are likely to be the kind of parent who gets angry at your child's sporting events, according to sports psychologist Jay Goldstein, an author of the University of Maryland report.

As a coach, you cannot stop this kind of behavior at your games, but you can help to minimize its impact by keeping positive and by modeling respectful behavior for your players. If a parent becomes abusive to you, however, you will need to follow guidelines and procedures for such behavior set by your school or organization.

Many teams have warning system for a first violation and a policy of asking a parent to leave the event with a second infraction. These rules are usually enforced by the referee or by an administrator. If a parent is enraged, it is best for you to let these officials handle the situation, so that you remain safe and are not subjected to any further abuse. While cases of abusive words turning into violent behavior are rare, they are not unheard of, and you do need to keep yourself out of harm's way. Do not hesitate to ask for help from your organization if and when you feel a parent has violent tendencies.

As we suggested in the communication section, you may have a policy of asking parents to not talk with you during a game. However, abusive parents are not prone to follow the rules. If an angry parent confronts you during a game, ask the parent to call or email you to set up a face-to-face meeting at a location away from your practice or game site. Then explain that you need to get back to the kids.

If the parent refuses to meet with you later and continues any form of insulting behavior, excuse yourself as courteously as possible and get back to your team. If necessary, involve the referee in keeping the parent out of earshot of the players.

If you are able to meet with that parent at a later time, do not hesitate in bringing your assistant coach and/or team parent who witnessed the other parent's behavior along with you. At the meeting, listen carefully to the parent's concerns.

Remember that by simply listening and acknowledging someone's concerns, you are not necessarily showing agreement with those concerns or your responsibility for them. You are merely showing respect.

Above all, try to not take a parent's anger personally. Psychologists agree that this kind of anger has little to do with you and your coaching, and much to do with that parent's own particular issues. You cannot control other people's behavior; you can only control your own. By handling yourself calmly, you will convey leadership and calm under pressure to your players, and that is in everyone's best interests.

If you have followed these recommendations and an angry parent escalates the situation, you may need to get some help. Contact your youth sport administrator to discuss the problem.

Here is another idea for avoiding the problem of explosive parents: Have as part of your publicly stated pre-season team policy that the child of any parent who yells at a coach, official or opposing team representative will be benched for the remainder of the game. It can work!

Admit When You're Wrong

One of the hardest things we have to do as human beings is to admit when we are wrong and apologize. Just because you have taken on the responsibility of being a coach does not mean you are going to be perfect. In the heat of a game, you may sometimes make the wrong decision about who goes in to play and who makes what play.

If you maintain an attitude of humility and kindness, it will go a long way toward covering those mistakes. Be able to admit to your players when you have made an error. Ask their forgiveness and they will give it to you because you have earned their respect.

Being human and making human mistakes does not mean that you should be subjected to any form of abuse, however. If a parent harangues you for a badly-timed decision, calmly explain what happened, apologize and attempt to move on.

Make every effort to shield your players from witnessing an angry outburst. There is no justification for anyone – coach or parent – to use profanity or any kind of threatening language in front of children. By maintaining self-control you will go a long way towards diffusing a potentially harmful situation.

Disagreements between coaches and parents are an inevitable part of coaching. Most of the time, however, they can be resolved through respectful communication. As a coach, you have a unique opportunity to set a good example for your young players and to uphold the much-needed virtues of good sportsmanship.

In summary here are some general rules in dealing with difficult parents

- Arrange a time to talk away from the kids.
- Invite an assistant coach or team parent to attend the meeting with you.
- Listen carefully to what the parent has to say.

- Re-state the problem in your own words. For example, “So, if I understand you correctly the problem is...”
- If you have stated the problem to the parent’s satisfaction, explain your point of view, using “I” statements instead of “you’ statements.
- Direct the parent to team policies and procedures whenever appropriate.
- Keep the conversation’s focus on the parent’s child, avoiding comparisons between players whenever possible.
- Thank the parent for his or her concern and say you will consider the comments.
- If a parent gets angry and raises his or her voice, avoid matching their behavior. Try to stay calm and positive.
- If necessary, end the meeting and advise the parent that you will discuss the issue with an administrator.
- After the meeting is over, ask for feedback from your assistant coach or team parent.

Keeping the Kids in Mind

You've probably attended youth games and events during which a parent has yelled at an official, a coach, another team's player or even – maybe even most frequently – his or her own child during the heat of the game.

You may also have heard your player share stories about how their parents or grandparents pay them for each goal they score or for each time they beat a previous personal best. Or conversely, you may have heard how a player has been denied certain privileges or embarrassed in some way after a poor performance at a sports event.

Many people believe the issue of “problem parents” has gotten worse in recent years. Some, like sports psychologist Greg Dale, author of *The Fulfilling Ride: A Parent's Guide to Helping Athletes Have a Successful Sports Experience*, link it to growing moral decay in American society.

He writes that we have lost respect for people in authority over us, such as the teacher in a classroom or the coach on the playing field, and that parents are passing that lack of respect down to their children.

Other experts theorize that in today's more pressured society, parents are living vicariously through their children and, as a result, their self-esteem is too closely connected with how their children perform on the playing field.

Dr. Richard Ginsburg, who is a sports psychologist and the co-author of the book *Whose Game Is It Anyway? A Guide to Helping Your Child Get the Most from Sports, Organized by Age and Stage*, suggests that since many parents see their kids as a reflection of themselves, they feel competitive with other parents as a result. Still others suggest that the lack of spontaneous “pick-up” games and backyard sports opportunities have caused youth sports in general to be more regulated and stressful. These people feel that coaches have been placed too much into the role of teaching fundamentals to the kids rather than of honing their young players' existing skills.

Still other experts refer to what they call “the ESPN factor.” Because of the wide variety of sports – both current and historic events -- available on TV and on the internet, many parents feel they have themselves become expert on the way certain sports are played. They are so accustomed to watching professional, collegiate and Olympic athletes perform and to hearing those performances discussed and analyzed, that they somehow expect that same standard of play from their youngsters! And when their kids deliver a less than stellar ESPN-like performance, guess whose fault it must be? The coach’s.

Another important factor in the rise of problem parents could be the rising cost of a college education and the resulting increased competition for athletic scholarships. These parents feel that by paying for their child’s sports participation – be it equipment fees, team fees, uniforms and transportation expenses – they are making a financial investment in their child’s future, and they want to make sure they at least get their money’s worth!

So how, do you, as a coach who desires to be a positive influence in your young players’ lives, handle the stress of dealing with all these issues? One way is to realize how little these conflicts have to do with you and your coaching style. Take the opportunity to talk with other coaches, and it will not be long before you discover that each one of them has horror stories of problem parents.

Next, try thinking about some non-confrontational ways to educate parents on how their behavior is hurting their kids.

Many parents simply don’t know how to be a good sports parent. It may sound overly simplistic, but it’s true: they simply do not know any better. Today’s young parents may have grown up with the same kind of aggressive behavior they display modeled for them in their own homes. To assist these parents, plan to include some resources on proper sports etiquette in your hand-outs at your pre-season meeting.

Here are a few resource options:

- <http://discoversoccer.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/SportParent-handout.pdf>
- <http://www.nays.org/Parents/index.cfm>
- <http://www.truesport.org/resources/parents/being-a-true-sport>

- <http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/resource-center/resources-for-parents/keeping-perspective-in-youth-sport/>
- 101 Ways to Be a Terrific Sports Parent: Making Athletics a Positive Experience for Your Child by Joel Fish. Published in 2003 by Touchstone ISBN-10: 0743227026
- Whose Game Is It Anyway? A Guide to Helping Your Child Get the Most from Sports, Organized by Age and Stage by Amy Baltzell, Richard Ginsburg and Stephen Durant. Published 2006 by Mariner Books. ISBN-10: 0618474609

By sharing printed resources or links with all your parents early on, you demonstrate that parent behavior is a serious problem, but you are not singling any one parent out.

The next and most important way to help fight the “bad” parent problem is by consistently modeling appropriate parent behavior for your players. Choose your assistant coaches and team parent volunteers carefully. All of you should strive to reflect the positive attitudes you want your kids to learn.

Here is the content of an anonymous letter that has made the rounds of the Internet. You may want to read and re-read this letter when needed to help you realize you are not alone in dealing with problem parents:

An Open Letter to Parents from a Volunteer Coach:

Today I heard a comment made about me behind my back. I started to turn around and look, but then decided better of it and kept my eyes on the field. My wife hears things like this more often than I do, because many of you don't know who she is. She tells me what you say. I have received angry emails, full of “suggestions,” about who should be playing where and how I... lost that day's game for the kids. I thought I'd write an open letter to all of you parents, even though I might never send it. I'll start it this way: “I am a volunteer.”

I'm the one who answered the call when the league said they didn't have enough coaches. I understand that you were too busy. I have some news for you. I'm not retired. I'm busy too. I have other children and a job, just like you do. Not only do I not get paid to do this – it

costs me money. I see you walk up to the game 15 minutes after it started, still dressed for work. Do you know I've already been here over an hour? Imagine if you had to leave work early nearly every day. I've never seen you at a practice. I'm sure you're plugging away at the office. But I'm out here, on the field, trying my best to teach these children how to play a sport they love, while my bank account suffers.

I know. I make mistakes. In fact, maybe I'm not even that great of a coach. But I treat the kids fairly and with respect. I am pretty sure they like coming to my practices and games, and without me or someone like me, there'd be no team for them to play on. I'm part of this community too and it's no picnic being out here on this stage like this. It's a lot easier back there with the other parents where no one is second-guessing you.

And I also know you think I give my son or daughter unfair advantages. I try not to. In fact, have you ever considered that maybe I'm harder on him than on the others? I'm sure he hears plenty of criticism at school from classmates, who hear it from you at home, about what a lame coach I am. And if, even unconsciously, my kids are getting a slight advantage because I know them better and trust their abilities, is that the worst thing in the world, considering the sacrifice I'm making? Trust me, I want to win too. And if your son or daughter could guarantee we'd do that, I'd give them the chance.

After this game is over, I'll be the last one to leave. I have to break down the field, put away all the equipment and make sure everyone has had a parent arrive to pick them up. There have been evenings when my son and I waited with a player until after dark before someone came to get them. Many nights I'm sure you've already had dinner and are relaxing on the couch by the time I finally kick the mud off my shoes and climb into my car, which hasn't been washed or vacuumed for weeks. Why bother cleaning it during the season? Do you know how nice it would be if, just once, after a game one of you offered to carry the heavy gear bag to my car or help straighten up the field?

If I sound angry, I'm not. I do this because I love it and I love being around the kids. There are plenty of rewards and I remind myself that while you're at the office working, your kid is saying something that makes us all laugh or brings a tear to my eye. The positives outweigh the negatives. I just wish sometime those who don't choose to volunteer their time would leave the coaching to the few of us who do.

Final Thoughts on Partners with Parents

Former UCLA basketball teacher-coach John Wooden, whose won 10 NCAA national championships in a 12-year period, is known for his profound coaching advice. Wooden once said, “When it comes to success, you must be interested in finding the best way, not in having your own way.”

These are indeed words to live by when it comes to coaching, to parenting and to living life in general. You’ll find that as coach, you are sure to receive a constant stream of comments, both good and bad, from parents. Most coaches find that the good comments far outweigh the bad, and more importantly, that the words of praise and thanks that they receive from their young players far outweigh anything positive or negative that comes from their Moms or Dads.

Coach Wooden was known to continually assure players and parents that he always acted in the best interests of the team. So should you.

Parents cannot be objective when it comes to their own kids. As coach, you are in the position of seeing the “big picture.” No one can know the individual team members as well as their parents do, but, on the other hand, the parents cannot begin to know how their child behaves on this team as well as you do.

Parents may share the “labels” they have for their child with you. “My son is shy,” you might hear, or “He doesn’t perform well in the spotlight.” Or “My daughter is a leader. Give her plenty of responsibility.” Thank the parents for their insights and then do your best to set these labels aside as you develop the intricacies of a new team and its roles and responsibilities.

Your players will surprise you. The same child who is aggressive at home could be passive on your team and vice versa. The same child who appears confident and capable on your team may be shy and withdrawn at home. Trust your in-

instincts as you shape your team and your young players' attitudes about how they are part of it.

As coach, you will be instrumental in blending the team chemistry that will make all of your young players winners, whether you win the game or not.

*"It's too bad when parents think their children can do no wrong —
but it's better than thinking they can do no right."*

-anonymous, from the Albert W. Daw Collection of quotes

Coach's Code of Conduct

I, _____, hereby pledge to honor and support the
_____ by adhering to the Coach's Code of Conduct
as stated below.

I WILL...

- Present a clean and professional image in terms of personal appearance and provide a positive role model in terms of personal habits, language and conduct.
- Be honest at all times, and teach by precept and example.
- Treat all players equitably and sensitively, within the context of their activity and ability. Never discriminate based on sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, or any other group or affiliation.
- Ensure my obligations are kept by being dependable, self-disciplined and responsible.
- Keep the best interests of each student-athlete as our aim. Every human being has value, and every player on a team adds value to the team in some way.
- Teach the importance of leadership on and off the field.
- Ensure the well-being, safety, and protection and future of individual players.
- Teach qualities and values that exemplify an outstanding team player.
- Encourage athletes to set reasonable goals and identify an action plan to attain their goals.
- Challenge athletes to excel, maximize their opportunities, and perform to their potential.
- Encourage the athletes to develop the desire to change. The desire to change is the key to growth in all areas of life.
- Ensure athletes are held accountable for their actions on and off the field.

- Show my commitment by teaching strategies, techniques, values and sportsmanship each day.
- Provide a coach's competitive evaluation in an effort to highlight player performance.
- Respect the integrity and personality of all athletes' individually.
- Teach, educate, push, cajole, encourage, prod, and sometimes even demand, in order to bring an athlete within reach of their true and reasonable potential.
- Build an athlete's self-esteem and self-confidence by strengthening their foundation via positive attitude, desire, knowledge, and effort.
- Encourage all athletes to do their best, and have fun doing it.
- Strive to protect the integrity of the sport by being honest and play by the rules of the game.
- Teach players not to perform any form of trickery or evasion of rules in order to gain advantage over an opponent.
- Promote clean living and strive for good health. I will not smoke or ever be under the influence of alcohol at any time while coaching.
- Refrain from arguments in front of players and spectators.
- Refrain from verbal or nonverbal conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, creates a hostile environment or is demeaning to fellow coaches or athletes.
- Show respect for players, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators.
- **Strive to make sportsmanship my #1 priority.**

I have read and understand the above statements and agree to conduct myself in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct.

_____ Date _____
Signature of Coach

Pre-Season Athlete-Parent-Coach Agreement

Athlete Agreement

I Agree To...

1. Attend every practice and contest, unless I inform the coach in advance of my absence.
2. Give support and show respect to my teammates.
3. Emphasize academics and family over athletics.
4. Express myself intelligently and appropriately.
5. Work hard in practice.
6. Practice sportsmanship at all times. Winners don't brag and losers don't make excuses.
7. Strive to be a positive influence in the way I talk and listen to my teammates, parents, and coaches.

Signature of Athlete

Date

Parent/Guardian Agreement

I Agree To...

1. Accompany my children to as many orientation and informational meetings as possible.
2. Accept the authority of the coach to determine strategy and player selection.
3. Avoid the use of tobacco and refrain from being under the influence of alcohol during practices or contests.
4. Help my children follow the athlete's code of conduct, team agreements and rules.
5. Encourage my son or daughter during the contest and leave the coaching to the coach.
6. Ensure that my children attend all scheduled practices and contests. If my child is not able to make a scheduled practice or contest, they will be responsible for contacting the coach in advance.
7. Provide only supportive comments to coaches, officials, and players of all teams.
8. Show enthusiasm, interest, and support for our child.
9. Work closely with all program personnel to guarantee academic as well as athletic experiences for my child-athlete.
10. Ejecting spectators who are violating the guidelines related to poor sportsmanship and unacceptable personal habits in the contest area.

_____ Date _____

Signature of Parent/ Guardian

Coach Agreement

I Agree To...

1. Exercise model sportsmanship 100% on and off the field.
2. Speak with parents about their athletes whenever it is mutually convenient.
3. Respect my athletes as individuals.
4. Encourage my athletes to have a winning attitude through perseverance and hard work.
5. Keep up-to-date on coaching strategies.
6. Help each athlete realize his or her full potential.
7. Place school and family relationships above all other activities.
8. Recognize performance as more important than winning or losing.
9. Develop leadership skills with all my athletes.
10. Teach and coach the athlete the necessary skills and talents needed to qualify for scholarship opportunities.
11. Enforce the Team Rules

_____ Date _____

Signature of Coach

Post-Season Parent Assessment Form

This assessment provides the coach an opportunity to review information provided by the parent/guardian/athlete to modify his coaching program for upcoming athletes and provide ideas and action plans for athletes during off-season development. This will identify areas that possibly need improvement. (The largest room in the world is the room for improvement!)

1) Assess the degree you believe your son or daughter achieved the following (check one):

	Very Much	Somewhat	Not at All
Child/Athlete had fun.			
Child/Athlete learned the fundamentals of the sport.			

2) Assess the degree you believe your child changed on the following characteristics (check one):

	Improved	No Change	Declined	Can't Tell
Sportsmanship				
Physical Fitness				
Listening Skills				
Self-Esteem/Confidence				
Desire to Continue				
Self-Reliance				
Learned Skills of Sport				
Leadership Skills				
Competitive Abilities				

	Improved	No Change	Declined	Can't Tell
Values of Teamwork				
Discipline				
Commitment to Activity				
Ability to Follow Directions				
Positive Mental Attitude				
Coordination/Balance				

3) Please share any additional Comments:

Print Athlete's Name

_____ Date _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Parent Orientation Checklist

“The sum of all your thoughts comprises your overall attitude”

- Maxwell, John C.

This orientation will give the coach time to give a brief overview of his coaching philosophy, review team rules that may require disciplinary action, provide pre-season agreements and codes of conduct and answer any questions.

NOTE: *Agreements and Codes of Conduct will need to be signed and returned at this meeting or at first practice before participation can begin – A signed copy of the Coaches Code of Conduct will need to be provided to each parent/guardian at the meeting.*

Maximum 90-Minute Agenda

“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”

Introductions (5 minutes)

(check)

1. Introduce yourself and any assistant coaches. _____

Give a little background about yourself, why you're coaching, your experience in the sport, what you do for a living. Let parents know what qualifies you to coach and why they should trust you in taking responsibility with their sons or daughters.

Coaching Philosophy (20 minutes)

2. Present a brief overview of your coaching philosophy. _____

Refer parents to Coaches Code of Conduct. Be sure to discuss at least the following:

- *The benefits their athletes are likely to receive from participation in the sport.*
- *The methods you use to teach skills and values. (Describe a typical practice)*
- *The emphasis you give to sportsmanship vs. winning, having fun, and helping athletes develop physically, psychologically, and socially.*
- *Have parent's review and sign pre-season agreements.*

Performance Demonstration (15 minutes)

3. Prepare a short demonstration or explain the skills, scoring, and rules to parents. _____

Parents may not know much about the sport. Perhaps you can locate a good film or video [10 minutes], Emphasize safety when talking about necessary equipment and rules.

Potential Risks (5 minutes)

4. Emphasize the potential risks of participation. _____

It is your duty to inform parents of the inherent risks. They must make informed decisions about their child's participation. Be sure to be specific about the dangers of your sport. Keep discussion upbeat by telling parents about your precautions you will take to minimize the risk of injury.

Sport Program Specifics (15 minutes, 1 minute per bullet)

5. Describe the program you will be conducting. _____

Remind parents to review the coaches code of conduct regarding coaching philosophy, and "touch" on the following questions regarding the performance side of the program.

- *How much time will their sons or daughters practice daily?*
- *How often and when does the team practice?*
- *How long is the season?*
- *How many contests will there be? Are cancelled contests to weather, rescheduled?*
- *How do you decide who plays?*
- *Is there any team travel involved? If so, how are the expenses paid?*
- *What equipment does each athlete need to purchase?*
- *Where is equipment available, and how much does it cost?*
- *Are there scholarships available for athletes that have limited financial support?*
- *Are there any insurance requirements?*
- *How do you want parents to communicate with the coaches?*
- *Are physicals required for players to compete?*
- *Who decides when an athlete is ready to play following an injury?*
- *Are there special instructions for pre-game meals?*
- *What can parents do at home to facilitate the child's physical development or learning of sport skills?*

Player and Parent Pre-Season Agreements (15 minutes)

6. Briefly review Agreements. Collect agreements.

In addition to agreements identified by the coach, the parents can provide the following:

- Be supportive of your child's participation on the team, but don't pressure your child.
- Keep winning in perspective, and help your child do the same.
- Help your child set realistic performance goals.
- Help your child meet his or her agreements, codes, and responsibilities to the team and the coach.
- Inform the coach of any medical or physical ailments that your child may have that may affect performance or health immediately.

Question and Answer / Closing Comments (15 minutes)

7. Answer questions that have not already been resolved. Thank the parents and players for attending and ask for their cooperation and commitment during the forthcoming season.