



How To Work With Parents

In order to have a successful season, it is important to foster good parent behaviors on the sideline. Majority of the parents involved in youth sports are supportive and caring people who only want the best for their young players. Some of us know that even though majority of the parents fall into this category, every once in a while your team has that one problem parent who causes a season of aggravation and irritation. If you have been on a team like this before, you know that you don't want your team to go down that disappointing path of destruction. Remember that many issues can be headed off in the beginning by laying down expectations and ground rules at the beginning of the season as well as their roles and responsibilities.

The parents must realize that for a team to be successful it is important for teamwork among players, parents and coaches. The most important, but most overlooked is the teamwork between the coach and parents. If parents and coaches have a good relationship, the benefits for the young players are tremendous. On the other hand, coaches and parents who clash about playing time or the position that little Jimmy is playing spoil the experience for that child and often other affects other players as well. Often times that negativity boils over to the other parents who now start wondering why little Johnny isn't playing the position he should be playing. One bad apple spoils the bunch. And coming from a coach who has been there and done that, I can tell you that knowing that you are under a microscope during the game affects how effective and confident I coach, and often negatively affects my practices.

So as a rule of thumb keep this in mind:

1. Be Proactive with them.
2. Involve them.
3. Communicate with them.

“CREATING SMILES FOR TODAY, ATHLETES FOR TOMORROW AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE GAME FOR A LIFETIME.”





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Be proactive with them. At the beginning of the season, have a meeting with all of the parents and outline your expectations and coaching methods. Make sure you paint a clear picture of how you plan to handle the season. Make sure to set clear expectations about playing time, your plan concerning player position rotations, parent's participation, etc. When parents hear first hand that you are more concerned with skill development over playing time, you leave no room for issues later.

Involve them. Plain and simple, instead of the parent just being a taxi to and from practice, find ways to involve them in practice. Get them involved in drills, scrimmages.

Communicate with them. Besides only having a preseason meeting with the parents, make sure you keep the communication lines open. Talk to the parents about their child's progress, strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions for the child to improve while not at practice. This helps involve the parents in their child's development and puts responsibility back on the parent and player to seek additional help in certain areas and check in with the parents from time to time. Communicate with the parents on how to make the child's experience a positive and fun one.

Sometimes despite of your efforts, problems may arise with parents. If this occurs, make sure you remain in control of the situation and I have found that it is better to handle the situation sooner than later. The longer you wait, the more the issue escalates and starts to spiral out of control.

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