

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS OF ATHLETES

1. Make sure your children know that, win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be the person in their lives they can look to for constant, positive encouragement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your children's athletic capability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, but don't coach them on the way to the rink, pool, or track or on the way back, at breakfast, and so on. It is tough not to, but it's a lot tougher on children to be inundated with advice, pep talks, and often critical instruction.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying", to be working to improve their skills and attitude. Help them to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your children in a way that creates pressure. You fumbled too; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure them because of your lost pride.
6. Don't compete with the coach. Expressed differences of opinion with regards to playing philosophy or team strategy only confuses the student athlete and ultimately leads to frustration and discontentment for all parties.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your children with other members of the team, at least within their hearing.
8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your children under his/her leadership.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
10. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear or discomfort. The job of the parent of an athletic child is a tough one, and it takes a lot of effort to do it well. It is worth all the effort when you hear your youngster say, "My parents really helped. I was lucky, in this respect."

THREE STEP PROCEDURE FOR COMMUNICATING WITH A COACH

1. If appropriate, talk with your son/daughter about your question. What is your child's perspective?
Can your child solve the problem by him/herself?
2. Set up a meeting with the coach if you still have a question. This meeting remains as an informational meeting where you can ask questions, listen, and have a discussion. Remember that the coach makes decisions for the good of the team based on practice, ability, attitude, and chemistry.
3. If questions remain, set up a meeting with the athletic director, coach and yourself.

THINGS THAT ARE "OFF LIMITS" FOR DISCUSSION

- Playing Time
- Game Strategies
- Other Student-Athletes

RULES ON ROLES

Parents' Roles

1. Be a fan of everyone on the team
2. Respect the decision of officials
3. Respect other fans, coaches, and student-athletes
4. Talk to your child if he/she has any questions and, if necessary to answer them, contact the coach through designated athletic department procedures
5. Keep any negative thoughts about the coach, the program, or teammates to yourself
6. Don't talk to coaches on game day about a complaint
7. Understand the coaches' responsibility is to make certain students are safe and become better people on and off the field
8. Be supportive of your child

Student-Athletes' Roles

1. Be positive and have a good attitude
2. Support your teammates
3. Work and play hard
4. If there are any questions, ask the coach
5. Know and follow school and team rules
6. Challenge yourself as an athlete, student, and human being
7. Meet classroom expectations
8. Notify the coach of any scheduling conflicts in ADVANCE
9. Talk to the coach about any special concerns

