



Expectations of Conduct for Sports Parents

1. *Please do not shout advice to your player during the game.* Shout encouragement? You bet. A steady stream of technique suggestions, though, has no value. Your insightful tips may conflict with the coach's instruction.
2. *Please do not harass the officials.* Parents that loudly harass the officials are embarrassing to the player and the team.

When a parent makes a spectacle of her/himself at a game, the player is embarrassed. If the official is being reamed by a parent for a bad call, (by definition, a bad call is any decision made against the parent's child), what does the player learn? He learns that the mistake was not his fault. It was the result of poor officiating. This is a bad habit to develop.

Do not encourage your child to place the blame for their failures upon others. One of the benefits of playing sports is learning to accept responsibility instead of making excuses.

Sometimes a call is hard to take for whatever reason. Such times are test of emotional control. If a player can learn to bite his lip and move on, a parent can learn to sit quietly for a moment and let the emotion pass. Learning to cope with disappointment is a valuable life skill.

3. *Do not blame the coach for your child's problems or lack of playing time.* Your child's struggles to succeed are your child's problems. Let him work them out without your interference. A player has every right to ask a coach what needs to be done to earn more playing time, for example. However, a parent stepping in to demand playing time is another thing altogether.
4. *Please do not talk bad about the coach in front of your child.* The worst thing a parent can do is take pot shots at the coach, criticizing decisions, and complaining about his/her leadership. Support the coach and stand behind his decisions.
5. *Please do not harass the other team's players.* The other team's players should be considered off limits. Yelling at or deriding someone else's child is a shameful practice for an adult at a sporting event. Parents who intend to disrupt, distract or upset players exhibit the worst of poor sportsmanship.

As a parent, be involved in a positive way. Attend your child's games as often as you can. Cheer for all the kids on the team. Help with fund raising. Assist with logistics. If you are not sure how to help, ask the coach.

There is probably a hundred ways to be a good team member and a good parent at the same time. When the larger definition of team is working well, the experience can be wonderful for everyone involved. People who see our program in action will want to be a part of it. Parents looking ahead to when their child will be old enough to participate will want to fit in and help. This kind of teamwork perpetuates itself. Once it gets momentum, it can be quite a force. It just takes parents who care.