

Published by
RUDRA PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS

C-293A, Street No. 3,
West Karawal Nagar, New Delhi - 110094
Cell : 9873248544, 9312442975
E-mail : rudrapublishers@yahoo.com
Printed at Research Press India New Delhi.

COMMUNAL HARMONY & PEACE

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First Published 2023

ISBN: 978-93-92108-69-3

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Printed in India

Published By Ravindra Pratap Yadav
For Rudra Publishers & Distributors
Typesetting By Poojitha Yadav
Printed at Research Press India, New Delhi

Chapter-16

Youth Sports Relationships: Improving Coach-Parent Relationships: Increasing Harmony and Reducing Stress

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Introduction

Worldwide, youth sports have a huge impact on the lives of millions of children, teenagers, and adults. They have a long history in communities all around the world. Sports sponsored by groups like the Boys and Girls Clubs, Little League Baseball, and the American Youth Soccer Organization are estimated to be played by 60.3 million kids between the ages of 6 and 18. 7.5 million young people participate in high school athletics, 44 million of them boys and 3.1 million of them girls. As programs have grown more well-organized and sports scientists are increasingly paying special attention to their function, parental involvement has increased. According to a study, parents have a big influence on how their children interact with other children who participate in sports as well as the psychological impacts that follow.

Through teamwork, many parents successfully improve their kids' sporting experiences. Unfortunately, the negative effects of a relatively small percentage of parents are all too obvious. The following are extreme examples of media reports regarding violent crime-committing parents:

- A hockey coach in Massachusetts was fatally beaten by a father who was upset about harsh play during a scrimmage. The attacker was held responsible for the victim's unintentional death.

- During an argument with the coach about his son's playing time at a youth football game in the Philadelphia region, the parent of a player brandished a .357magnum.

- A Long Island, New York, soccer parent who was furious over being taken off the team's email list for game-day directions was held after

burning a metal folding chair across the face of her daughter's coach.

"The Athletic Triangle"

The "athletic triangle" is the term used to describe the coach-parent-athlete trio. The intricate interactions between the individuals in this social system can significantly impact the child's psychological growth of the child. Coaches can maximize the value of athletes' sporting experiences by directing parents' sincere worries and well-intended intentions.

Parents can also impact the degree to which the coach-athlete connection exhibits the qualities of closeness, commitment, and complementarity. This article seeks to help coaches effectively collaborate with parents, enhancing harmony and reducing hassle for everyone involved. The objective is to foster a better understanding of

- i) The distinction between amateur and professional sports,
- ii) The objectives of young sports, including a positive winning mindset,
- iii) The obligations and difficulties of being a parent,

Developmental versus Professional Models of Sport

The distinction between amateur and professional sports is a significant issue. Young athletes can develop good physical and psychosocial traits through participation in sports. The sporting environment is seen as a miniature version of society where kids and teenagers can practice adjusting to the realities of adulthood. Thus, sports offer a learning environment where an instructional process can take place.

Professional sports, on the other hand, are commercial endeavors. Simply put, they want to amuse people and ultimately make money. The major goal is financial success, which is strongly reliant on a winning mindset or product orientation. Is this incorrect? No! Professional sports are highly prized around the world since they are a component of the entertainment business.

Objectives of Youth Sports

Sports participation among young people has several advantages. Some of them are physical, like learning sports skills and getting more physically fit. Developing leadership abilities, self-discipline, respect for authority, competition, cooperation, sportsmanship, and self-confidence are some of the psychological ones. Youth sports are a significant social outlet for kids to meet new people, extend their social circle, and make new friends. Additionally, parent participation in athletic endeavors can enhance family

The wisest choice is sometimes to abstain. Sports participation is not necessarily for everyone, even though it is desirable. The optimal program might not even be one at all for kids who want to focus their energy in other directions. When their child doesn't express an interest in sports, many parents erroneously become concerned, especially if they too have had excellent sports experiences. They assume that a child who prefers other activities must be abnormal in some way. However, pushing a child to participate in sports against their choice might be a grave error. At least until a child's interest in athletics develops, it is sometimes best to encourage the youngster to move into other activities that may better suit his or her interests and abilities.

If parents learn about and appreciate the sport, they will be able to enjoy their children's participation more. This includes having a rudimentary understanding of laws, abilities, and tactics. By responding to parents' inquiries and directing them to a local or school library or a bookshop for educational publications, coaches can be helpful resources for parents (books and videos). For instance, the *Masterly Approach to Parent in Sports* self-instructional DVD aims to get parents and coaches "on the same page" by assisting parents in creating a mastery motivational climate. Additionally, coaches should dedicate a portion of a session at the beginning of the season to a lecture or demonstration on the principles of the game. It is important to urge parents who are new to the sport to attend this session.

The Phenomenon of Reversed Dependency

In young sports, parents frequently take on a very active role, and in some cases, their influence turns into a significant cause of stress for kids. The so-called "reversed reliance phenomena" is one element that could be the underlying cause of parent-induced stress.

Every parent has some degree of identification with their kids, therefore they all want the best for them. Unfortunately, there are times when the level of identification goes too far and the child ends up feeling like an extension of the parents. When this occurs, parents start to gauge their worth in terms of their child's accomplishments or shortcomings. The "frustrated jock" father might want his child to achieve the athletic success he was never able to. If the child does not achieve a similar degree of performance, the star parent may feel rejected and resentful. As a result, some parents "win" or "lose" through their kids, which can put a lot of pressure on the kids to do well. A kid has to do well.

As a result, some parents "win" or "lose" through their kids, which can put a lot of pressure on the kids to do well. The parent's self-image is at

risk if the child fails. The child of such a father bears a huge burden, and such worry is at stake than just a game. Sports are inevitably stressful when parental love and acceptance depend on performance adequacy. Coaches might be able to stop this tendency by explaining to parents how over-identification works. They can inform parents that putting too much pressure on kids can reduce sports' potential for fun and personal growth. Insisting on parents that youth sports programs are for development and that kids should participate in sports is a strategy for young athletes and that kids should participate in sports that youth sports lowering parent-produced stress. Insisting on parents that youth sports programs are for young athletes and that children and youth are not adults is a strategy for lowering parent-produced stress. Each kid has the right to realize their athletic potential in a setting that prioritizes participation, personal development, and enjoyment. Parents must respect this right.

Confirmations and Commitments

Parents of children who play sports must also overcome other significant obstacles. Parents must be prepared and able to make numerous commitments to support a sports program successfully. The following queries, to which parents must frank answers of "Yes," provide essential reminders of the scope of parental responsibility.

Should parents be able to share their child? This calls for handing over control of the child to the coach and having faith in him or her to direct the sporting experience. It entails submitting to the coach's authority and accepting the possibility that the coach might win some of the respect and love the youngster had previously reserved exclusively for the parent. Although the coach is in charge, parents are still welcome to provide their opinion. It is preferable for everyone concerned if parents choose not to exert their child in the program if they intend to undermine the coach's authority.

Can Parents Handle Disappointments from Their Children?

Every young athlete goes through "the thrill of victory and the pain of defeat" during the course of a tournament. Parents are expected to help their children when they are hurt and sad in addition to celebrating victories. When a parent's child sobs after losing a game or competition, they shouldn't feel embarrassed, ashamed, or furious. Parents ought to be able to assist their kids in drawing lessons from seeming disappointments. Parents can assist their kids to see the bright side of the circumstance and convert their disappointment into self-acceptance by doing this without lowering the legitimacy of their feelings.

Can parents model self-control for their kids? Parents need to be

care deeply about their children while building positive relationships with parents. However, there are situations when parents merely are unaware of the problems they are creating. Coaches should acknowledge that they have a problem—one that they can assist in solving—instead of getting upset with them. It is your responsibility to delicately and professionally draw these individuals' attention to the detrimental effects of their behavior and persuade them to change for the better. Here are some examples of "difficult parents" in general. Additionally, to discuss their characteristics, suggestions for how to deal with them are offered.

Disappointed Parents

Differentiating Features. The most obvious sign of uninvolved parents is their absence from their child's team activities to the point where it is disturbing.

What Trainers Must Do. The coaches should investigate the parents' absence and inform them that their involvement is encouraged. Coaches should be careful not to judge parents who are truly interested yet have valid excuses for missing events (work, illness, etc.). Parents may develop a renewed interest in their children's activities if you explain the benefits of sports and how they may bring families closer together. The athletes in this scenario also require assistance. The players should be inspired by their coaches, who should also demonstrate a genuine interest in their personal lives.

Overly Analytic Parents

Differentiating Features. Parents that are too strict often reprimand and discipline their kids. The performance of their child never quite meets the expectations of such parents. They convey the appearance that the player is playing more "their" game than "their" game. What Trainers Must Do. As was mentioned previously, some parents unintentionally compare their child's success or failure to their own. They can explain how a child's continual criticism might lead to stress and emotional turbulence, which reduces performance. They can explain to the parents why they choose to utilize positive reinforcement and instruction to inspire and guide young people, as well as how parents might do the same.

Meeting of the Coach and Parents

Coaches willfully invest a significant amount of time and energy

toward giving kids a positive experience. They are urged to complete "just one more thing" far too frequently. Successful coaches are conscious of the significance of gaining the assistance and support of informed parents, though. A pre-season meeting is essential to lowering the possibility of negative experiences rather than having to deal with problematic parents. In other words, investing extra time and effort in a coach-parent meeting is highly worth it! This section of the article serves as a manual for organizing and holding successful coach-parent meetings. Coaches should consider the information and comments and make any necessary adjustments because every coach is different.

Objectives of the Meeting

Meetings between coaches and parents should aim to:

- Enhance parents' knowledge of youth sports, and
- Obtain their support and cooperation.

The importance of athletic participation for their kids' physical, psychological, and social development can then be increased thanks to their input.

Evaluation and Preparation

Coaches frequently feel uneasy leading a group of adults, which makes them hesitant to hold coach-parent meetings. People frequently refuse to perform tasks for which they lack formal training or prior expertise. Coaches who have met with parents report that the experience is not too difficult and that the rewards make the meeting a worthwhile investment.

It will take about 75 minutes to go over all the relevant material. It is not necessary for the meeting to be complicated to be successful. But it's impossible to overstate how crucial it is to plan and be organized. Create and adhere to a written program outline to enhance organizational excellence.

The meeting should be scheduled as early in the season as feasible, and the coach should make sure the location is convenient, has a conference room that is big enough, has the right furniture, lighting, and other amenities, and is easily accessible. Are athletes expected at the meeting? Some coaches have no issues with it and think it enhances communication between all parties. For some coaches, holding the meeting without the athletes present is more beneficial. The chosen policy will depend on the coach's personal preferences. The coach should make special accommodations for parents who would not be able to come without their children if the athletes are

excluded, though. For instance, acquire a second room where an assistant coach can watch a sport-related educational DVD with the athletes.

Content and Conduct of the Meeting

As previously mentioned, two-way sharing is the foundation of efficient communication. To avoid lecturing the parents during the meeting, the coach should involve them in the conversation. A coach can accomplish this by:

- inviting inquiries from parents, and
- occasionally posing queries to them.

Additionally, respecting the parents is crucial in fostering an open environment for dialogue. They ought to feel more like participants in the meeting than mere bystanders.

Opening (5 minutes). The coach welcomes everyone to the meeting and introduces the assistant coach (as). It's crucial to welcome the parents and let them know that you appreciate their attention and care. The coach can commend their presence and mention that they are doing their part to ensure their kids have a positive sporting experience. The coach then creates credibility by providing relevant background data.

The coach speaks to the parents about his or her background in the sport, coaching background, and any special education that he or she has received (e.g., workshops, and clinics). The coach concludes by outlining the goals of the meeting and explaining to the parents how they would receive instruction on the fundamentals of the sport.

A word of warning is necessary. Coaches should avoid admitting this as a personal failing or requesting the parents' tolerance at the outset of a coach-parent meeting if they lack experience or are conducting one for the first time. Parents' trust and support may be diminished by such utterances. Parents could start to doubt the coach's competence to lead the meeting if they hear self-deprecating comments. Coaches must lead the session with assurance if they want to be respected.

The purpose of youth sports (10 minutes). The introductory remarks should be followed by a discussion of the goals of youth sports, including a mastery-oriented philosophy of success. Goals and ideals that are important to the coach should be the center of attention. The coach should also learn which goals the parents want to be stressed. As was already mentioned, the goals can be met if coaches and parents cooperate to minimize misperceptions.

Information about the Sports Program (10 minutes). Another beneficial aspect of the workshop is the presentation of specifics of how the sports program is run. When doing so, the following should be taken into account: a) necessary equipment and where to buy it; b) time allotted for practices and games; c) travel arrangements; d) principal team directives and rules; e) At this level of competition, specific rule modifications will be implemented; f) medical exams; g) insurance; h) fund-raising initiatives.

Regarding the specifics of the program, the coach should also explain what is expected of the athletes and their parents. Some coaches find it helpful to set up a parent committee, giving this committee the responsibility of coordinating parent participation in numerous season-long activities.

Coaching Relationships and Roles (10 minutes). Understanding the leadership style of the coach will be helpful to the parents. The coach should encourage parents to reinforce this strategy in contact with their children in addition to outlining the mastery technique he or they will be adopting.

Challenges and Responsibilities of Parents (20 minutes). The purpose of the meeting is to inform parents of the duties that the coach wants them to perform. The following subjects, which were discussed earlier in this article, should be brought up by the coach:

1. Risks associated with the phenomena of reversed dependence—the consequences of this process.
2. The five crucial questions that parents must be able to sincerely say "Yes" to our parent commitments and affirmations.
3. Guidelines for behavior during sporting events. The coach is in charge of the team, and the parents are in charge of their behavior.

Parent-coach relationships (5 minutes). The coach should let the parents know that he or she is open to discussing any potential issues—two-way communication is crucial! He or she should inform parents of the ideal times and locations for discussions.

Closing (20-30 minutes). A question-and-answer period should follow the coach-parent meeting. A coach needs to be prepared to address a variety of parental issues for this to be worthwhile. The aforementioned sport-parent DVD is a great resource for getting ready for the kinds of questions that might be posed.

A good way to start a question-and-answer session is for the coach to initiate the first few inquiries. He or she might encourage parental involvement by posing the first few inquiries and then directing the

conversation. The coach should not feel embarrassed to acknowledge ignorance if they do not know the solution to a particular question. The parents will cherish honesty. The coach can volunteer to check into the situation with the parent rather than giving a tepid or incorrect response, or perhaps someone in the group will have the answer. The coach should give the impression that they must respond to every question.

Finally, the coach should thank the parents once more for coming at the end of the meeting. A key method for increasing parental involvement and support is the coach-parent meeting. The coach-parent-athlete triad will be strengthened by a fruitful meeting, which will result in positive youth sports experiences.

After-meeting Conferences

It would be ideal to meet with parents mid-season if at all possible. This will give the chance to review previous information, talk about the athletes' development, and work together to find solutions to any issues that may have arisen.

A post-season party is a great way to wrap up the season. The parents might organize a family supper as an example of this. Coaches could spend some time getting parents' feedback on the program and their coaching in addition to enjoying the excellent company and having fun. In these discussions, the coach solicits feedback from the parents on what went well as well as suggestions for improvement.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on interactions between coaches and parents, a sometimes overlooked part of minor athletics. To enhance the athletes' sporting experiences, consideration was made to encouraging strong coach-parent ties. The following key points are highlighted as a result:

1. Parents and coaches both have a significant impact on how youth sports participation turns out.
2. In a developmental model, sports offer a learning environment where success is defined in terms of individual development and growth.
3. Youth sports participation can enhance physical abilities and fitness, develop character, foster social skills, strengthen family ties, and offer young people pleasurable recreational experiences.
4. Play is ultimately about having fun, and great young athletic experiences are built on this foundation.

young athletes put up their best effort in pursuing brilliance, they

5. If young athletes are put up their best effort in pursuing brilliance, they will never be considered "losers."

6. Children engage in sports for enjoyment, skill development, thrills and excitement, and friendship-building. Compared to these other goals, their desire to win is comparatively inconsequential to them.

7. Parents shouldn't coerce, threaten, or pay their kids to participate in sports.

8. Parents ought to pick up some fundamental sportsmanship knowledge.

9. Coaches should act as helpful resources and provide parents with the best available answers to their inquiries.

10. Making parents understand that youth sports are for young athletes is essential to lowering the stress that comes from parenting.

11. Parents must be able to support the coach's program and approve of their child's engagement in youth sports.

12. At practices and games, parents are expected to behave properly.

13. Open, healthy contact with parents must be established and sustained when working with them.

14. Speaking and listening skills are equally necessary for effective communication.

15. The best way to steer clear of uncomfortable situations is to hold a coach-parent meeting before the season.

16. Gaining parents' cooperation and support as well as increasing their awareness of young sports are the key goals of a coach-parent meeting.

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