

CHAPTER 8: VOLLEYBALL PARENTING

*One mother teaches more than 100 teachers.
~ A Jewish proverb ~*

The Team Around the Team

Parents are one of the three key parts of the stable tripod of a player's life; teammates-coach-parents are the three legs that support each player to become the best they can be. A couple of insightful articles on current situations in sports with parents are included in the on-line **IMPACT Resource** section for you to consider and even discuss with both coaches and parents.

A time to review and to clearly discuss program and coach/team philosophy, competition, and travel requirements, needs to happen at the start of the season, and then also needs to be re-visited often. Here are just a few suggested ways that parents can help any program:

⇒ Program Administration

- Help find and secure new facilities.
- Provide travel assistance to out-of-town tournaments.
- Attend team organizational, season planning and evaluation meetings.
- Work with coaches and other parents to adapt program guidelines.
- Deliver and pick up players in a timely manner, carpooling if possible.
- Keep attendance for all practices and games.
- Call children who miss or skip a practice and inform them of the next one.
- Be a PR person- listen to all complaints, compliments, etc., and get answers for any questions other parents may have.
- Get all information to every team member's parent, especially about game schedules, pictures, fund raising events, etc.
- Distribute and collect all picture envelopes for each team member and help organize the team on picture day.
- Dispense and keep track of all uniforms and know who has which number.
- Make sure water is available at all practices and games. Team parents can phone or ask in advance and pass the responsibility around to each family on the team. Water is essential.
- Watch children's behavior, attitudes, and sportsmanship at practices and games. Be able to watch what the coach may not see when he/she is concentrating on a small group, etc.

⇒ Financial Support

- Pay dues and competition costs in a timely manner.
- Solicit corporate support for team and/or program.
- Work with team coach on player's collegiate aspirations and recruitment.
- Serve as a treasurer for your program.
- Be responsible for the fund raising event the team is involved in; distribute the information; keep track of what items are in and out, and collect money and any leftover items not sold, etc.

NOTES:

Promise of Good Sports/USAV Parents as Partners Initiative

The mission of **The Promise of Good Sports** is to enrich the lives of young athletes and their families through, community-based educational initiatives.

Available to all interested RVAs, featuring use of the "Team Enhancement Program," player - empowered leadership development, and published materials.

"We mobilize and train youth sports leaders to improve their leadership skills, assume constructive roles in guiding youth sports organizations, and become mentors in their communities."
– Dave Epperson

Visit: www.volleyball-festival.com & click on the [Community](#) link.

Contact john.kessel@usav.org for more information.

⇒ Community Relations

- Report player progress to high school coaches.
- Arrange for team and action photos.
- Report team news to local media.
- Serve as hosts for out-of-town coaches and teams.

⇒ Education

- Attend or host parent skill and uniqueness training; and attend a match session/potluck.
- Attend or host college recruiting process, hand signals, rules and more informational session.
- Attend, if possible, an officiating training session.
- Parents can (if no Parent present, then a Coach) talk about how this Athlete is SPECIAL (usually NOT related to Volleyball). Coaches also talk about each Athlete and Players talk about how sport has impacted them.

A Child's Self-Esteem

All of these are important points, and apply to more than just being a supportive coach/parent for one's own children, and they should apply to everyone else's children on the team as well.

- **Always treat each child with respect.** Avoid making any remarks that are sarcastic, too adult in nature, or that leave the child confused about the intent or meaning.
- **Always provide specific praise for the effort made.** As outlined above, be precise, thoroughly encouraging, and praise the effort, not just the performance.
- **Always give the child a sense of responsibility,** independence and freedom to make his/her choices whenever appropriate. This is the essence of being a responsible parent; Let the child experience the responsibility of making decisions and choices in life.
- **Always remember to respect each child's uniqueness.** Each child is different from every other. Understand that and accept it. Just because a child wants to do something his/her way on the athletic field doesn't always make it the wrong way.
- **Finally, always be a good role model for each child** by maintaining a strong sense of personal self-esteem. If a parent presents him/herself to the child in a healthy, responsive, responsible way, then the child will pattern his/her view of life upon the parent's healthy outlook.

NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS COACHES ASSOCIATION (NYSCA) - NAT'L STANDARDS FOR YOUTH SPORTS

Sports can be an excellent learning experience for many and a career option for a few. To insure that youth and sports is a winning combination, parents and coaches must be aware of certain pitfalls which have hampered some young players in their emotional and athletic development.

Because parents generally want to do the very best for their children, they may feel obligated to give their talented athletes every advantage and opportunity. But when families make too many sacrifices and find themselves overextended - financially, time-wise, or emotionally - then they may actually be hurting their children's athletic potential rather than helping it.

Sports are exciting because you never know what might happen. For this reason parents must help their children have productive lives even if specific athletic dreams do not come true. In today's changing world, children need to develop not just athletic skills, but other skills as well which allow them to pursue other careers if or when they are unable to earn an income from professional sports, which happens for only a few.

Sometimes parents and children focus so much on sports development that other important aspects of life - education, friendship, good health, and other talents - are often neglected.

Unscrupulous Advisors

Because most sports parents and young athletes are not experts on the business of sports themselves, they often turn to others - agents, managers, coaches, and so on - for advice. And they will get it, though not all of it may be good advice.

In every profession, there are good people and bad people. Usually parents and young athletes can make the right decisions if they know what to look for, can sort out the hype from reality and know what is best for THEM, not just for their advisors.

The Standards

- **Proper Sports Environment-** Parents must consider and carefully choose proper sports environments for their child, including appropriate age and development for participation, type of sport, rules of the sport, age of participants and proper level of physical and emotional stress.
- **Based on the Child's Well-Being-** Parents must select youth sports programs that have been developed and organized to enhance the emotional, physical, social and educational well-being of children.
- **Drug/Alcohol-Free Environment-** Parents must encourage a drug- and alcohol-free environment.
- **Part of a Child's Life-** Parents must recognize that youth sports are only one small part of a child's life.
- **Training-** Parents must insist that coaches are trained and certified.
- **Parents' Active Role-** Parents must make a serious effort to take an active role in their child's sports experience by providing positive support as a spectator, league administrator and/or coaching parent.
- **Positive Role Models-** Parents must be positive role models, exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices and at home, while giving positive reinforcement to their child and support to their child's coaches and teammates.
- **Parental Commitment-** Parents must show their commitment to their child's sports experience by annually signing a Parental Code of Ethics.
- **Safe Playing Situations-** Parents must insist on safe playing facilities, healthy playing situations and proper first aid training and applications of such, should the need arise.
- **Equal Play Opportunity-** Parents, coaches and league administrators must provide equal sports play opportunity for all youth, regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status or ability.
- **Drug/Alcohol-Free Adults-** At all youth league sporting events, adults must remain drug- and alcohol-free.

Establish Your Own *Team Enhancement Program!*

So, you are committed to taking sports to a higher level, but how can the school or club join in creating a youth sports climate that brings the best out of everyone - athletes, coaches, and parents? ***The Parents for Good Sports "Team Enhancement Program"*** provides athletes, coaches and parents with opportunities to develop their abilities to work together to create mutually supportive team communities that maximize everyone's ability to get the most out of their sports experiences.

Step 1: Tell the local youth sports leader (perhaps a school administrator or club director) about) the Team Enhancement Program and ask them to contact the Positive Sports Parenting (PSP) national office.

Step 2: PGS staff will work with your local school and youth sports organizations to identify parent leaders to receive preparation to become local Team Enhancement Trainers.

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Step 3: The trainers will prepare small groups of athletes, coaches and parents from each team to facilitate sessions with their teams using the PGS curriculum. Team Enhancement exercises will be administered designed to promote team unity and establish clear expectations among athletes, coaches and parents.

Take the first step! Contact Parents for Good Sports: www.parentsforgoodsports.org, 19855 Southwest Freeway, suite 220, Sugar Land, TX 77479; Phone (281) 343-7213; Fax (281) 207-1071; email at dave@volleyball-festival.com.

TWELVE ESSENTIAL DRILLS: FOR THE PARENTS

This article was contributed by Rich Drake - CAP III Accredited Coach - Garden Empire Region

“Writing articles about volleyball is easy when you enjoy the sport and have a passion to coach; however, it is difficult to select just one important topic. The article could be about skills and drills, or it could be motivating to players and coaches. But how do you determine which of these is the most important?”

With all of the drill books and videotapes available about coaching, the easiest task for coaches is to create structured practices that are reasonably high in information and are fun for the players. Coaches also have access to training courses through volleyball or at work that provide motivational techniques; but I have never seen a guide or a course for the parents. I hope this article will help the parents help their child.”

~ Rich Drake ~

Drills for the Parents

“Those who hear not the music think the dancer is mad.” – Unknown.

Whether YOU get it or not, your child is enamored with sports, and it is likely they will commit a significant portion of their life to pursue their adventures. For those parents that reserve their highest aspirations for their children, here are a dozen drills that will enable you to help your child during the season.

⇒ ***Drill #1 – Enable Your Child To Pursue Their Dreams And Aspirations.***

Do everything in your power for your child so they achieve their goals on the court, in the classroom, and in life. You are and will be the one constant influence throughout their life, make the most of it.

⇒ ***Drill #2 – Frequent and First-Class Communication with Your Child***

Talk with your child everyday about homework, friends and activities. Since you cannot learn anything when you are talking, practice being an attentive listener.

⇒ ***Drill #3 – Candid Communication with Club Officials***

There is a tendency nowadays to send e-mails and consider that communicating. Personally I believe e-mail is a waste of time when a real discussion is required. Candid communication can best be achieved in person or, when needed, by phone. Talk with the team coach and club officials, even when everything is fine. But please avoid discussions during practices or tournaments, so the players and coaches can concentrate on the task at hand.

⇒ ***Drill #4 – Get Involved***

It is important for children and even adults to be involved with an organization that provides a sense of belonging. Team programs, such as volleyball, provide structure and meaning to life, build social skills, create lasting and memorable friendships, instill well-being, and help children become well-rounded citizens. Being involved with your club and sharing in the experience is important to your child, and it demonstrates that you support their decisions.

⇒ ***Drill #5 – Fix the Problem***

Some coaches believe that applying punishment, such as push-ups, for missing a play will improve the player's performance. But this only confuses the player, because they believe the coach is someone who is supposed to nurture and support them, and they are playing hard. This tactic eventually reinforces the player's belief that they will never be rewarded for a great effort and that they will only be punished for mistakes. Plus it does not address the issue of why the player made the mistake. The same is true for life off the court. When your child drops a grade in school or does something out of the ordinary, there is a reason that needs to be addressed and repeated punishment rarely solves the problem.

It is much wiser to discuss the situation with your child in their terms, understand their point of view, and then explain how to do things correctly to improve, and let them do it. If punishment is required to correct a behavior be predictable and consistent.

⇒ **Drill #6 – Be a Fan**

If you have time to watch football, baseball, tennis, golf, or other sporting events... you certainly then have time to attend your child's tournament; it is safe to say you will be more excited and will have more pride watching your child compete than watching any professional.

⇒ **Drill #7 – Reality Check – Get an Education**

Realistically, each year about fifty national and international high school seniors will have the opportunity to make a top-ten college team. The chance of your child being one of these elite players is remote. It is better to personally assist your child to choose a college that will provide them with the best education in their chosen profession, on a campus they will enjoy. If they play volleyball, consider that a plus. Also, help them select a minor, or even better, a double major. Most colleges enable students to apply credits towards two degrees, so why not get two degrees.

⇒ **Drill #8 – Dependability**

Imagine shopping at a store and the cashier was not at the checkout line, or if you were going to meet someone for lunch and they canceled at the last minute. We rely upon people everyday, even complete strangers. Your child's teammates rely upon each other, so teach your child the importance of commitment and enable them to complete their homework and chores so they can get to every practice and event on time.

⇒ **Drill #9 – Responsibility**

Your child has chosen volleyball so they must be responsible for their actions and prepare for practices and events. This includes homework, chores, cleaning their practice gear and uniform, preparing food for events, and arranging or rearranging their schedules. Teach your child how to do the laundry, prepare the cooler for tournaments, and to explore options in their schedule to make things happen.

⇒ **Drill #10 – Feed Me**

Athletes have greater nutritional needs than non-athletes. They require more calories, protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, fat, and of course water; however, fast food and junk food are not the answer. During the season, with the exception of special occasions, athletes should avoid soda, French fries, and licorice. Giving up these three items is a simple way to stress the importance of proper nutrition. A simple rule to remember is if any item contains high fructose corn syrup, or is high in saturated fats, or has nitrates.....don't drink it or eat it. Before you automatically give your child vitamins or food supplements, check with your physician/nutritionist. Most children and adults on a proper diet receive plenty of nutrients and do not require any supplements.

⇒ **Drill #11 – The Decision Maker**

Excessive influence by parents or coaches to sway a player to choose volleyball or any sport or activity over another is inappropriate.

NOTES:

**Some ideas for getting the
“Out of Control” ...**

...under control!

- **The Dum Dum Time Out** – coaches carry some dum-dum suckers in pocket to hand to parents who need a time out from verbalizing
- **Yellow/Red/Green Cards**- coaches carry a set (several of each color) of “officials” cards to hand out to parents who need a warning (yellow), an ejection (red), or a “way to go?” (green)
- **Adopt a Cheer**- parents adopt another player – not their own- to cheer for each game/match
- **Give’Em a Clipboard** – and an assignment to keep ‘em busy
- **Required Reading:** *My Mom Thinks She’s My Volleyball Coach, But She’s Not*

It is better to discuss the situation and options with your child, provide them with your ground rules, ask them what they think, and let them make the decision. Some facts to consider when selecting an activity are the physical and mental aspects of the program, the social benefits, the staff organizing the activities, parent involvement, future opportunities such as college, the possibility of continuing as an adult player or entering the coaching profession themselves, and how much fun your child is having with that activity. In the end your child will be happy and will enjoy their chosen pastime.

⇒ **Drill #12 – Working the Sidelines**

When you attend tournaments you represent your club, your team, and most importantly your child. Always conduct yourself in a highly courteous manner, be drug and alcohol free the night before and day(s) of the event, and do not smoke or use inappropriate language in front of any of the players.

You should also employ proper cheering techniques:

- Do not boo or intimidate any player, official, coach or spectator.
- Avoid “The Gasp” - players know when they make mistakes and your gasp only highlights their error. Instead yell something positive, like “Let’s go, you can do it,” and eventually they will.
- No “coaching” from the sidelines. Coaches spend many hours teaching your child the game of volleyball and how to become a better player - let them continue this endeavor at tournaments. Otherwise you will have six players looking into the stands at parents hollering coaching advice and none of them will hear the coach.
- It is fine to appreciate great performances - by either team! So when the opponents make a magnificent play, give them a cheer. If the play is just unbelievable, stand up and cheer. I have done this a few times myself even while I am coaching... of course, I then ask my players to play as great as their opponent has just demonstrated, and they usually respond to the challenge.

By following these essential supporting principles, your athletes, teams, and coaches will reap great rewards. Then, when you share them with other parents, everyone will benefit.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

⇒ If you want to read more about the volleyball topics below, or others related to this chapter, download and print out the articles found at www.usavolleyball.org under the Resources tab, then click on the Education, IMPACT and IMPACT Articles links.

- [Florida Region Spectator/Parent Code of Conduct](#)
- [North Texas Region Spectator/Parent Code of Conduct](#)
- [Parenting and Coaches](#), by Anonymous, a CAP II accredited coach, AVCA member and former High School Coach
- [The Agony of De Parent](#), by John Kessel
- [So You Want To Be A Better Spectator?](#), by John Kessel
- [The Magic Hockey Helmet](#) (www.youtube.com)
- [Hockey PSA’s for Parents](#) (www.usavolleyball.org/blogs)
- [Frequently Asked Questions By Parents Regarding Junior Olympic Volleyball](#)
- [Implementation of Scholastic Boys’ Volleyball](#)
- [NCAA/Collegiate Men’s Volleyball Programs](#)
- Many other articles written by John Kessel, for volleyball for coaches, parents and athletes can be found in the education section of the USAV website or under the Grassroots tab. A list of some of them include:
 - [Dear Vocal Coach](#)
 - [Dear “Stupid” Player](#)
 - [Splinter Siblings](#)
 - [A Player’s Handy Excuse List](#)
 - [It’s Not Where You Are, It’s Who You Are](#)
 - [25 Questions for a Volleyball Coach](#)
 - [You’ll Be a Better Player if You Coach](#)
 - [An Open Letter to All Coaching Kids 14 & Under](#)
 - [Guide to Disabled Volleyball 2007](#)
 - [Ten Commandments of Camp](#)
 - [FUNdaMental Volleyball](#)
 - [My Son Wants To Play Volleyball](#)
 - [What Is There To Do In Volleyball After High School?](#)
 - [Playing After College Overseas](#)
 - [Volleyball By Mail Lessons](#)
 - [Recipe For An Elite Player](#)

⇒ Other Parenting Resource books and Courses:

- [National Federation of High Schools \(NFHS\) Parent Education Online Course \(www.nfhslearn.com\)](http://www.nfhslearn.com)
- ***My Mom Thinks She's My Volleyball Coach...But She's Not!***, by Julia Cook with USA Volleyball, 30 pages, ©2007 CTC Publishing. A quick but "must" read sport parenting book, written "through the eyes of a kid". Available on the USAV Website.
- ***Positive Coaching***, by Jim Thompson, 400 pages, ©1995, Warde Publishers. This is a MUST book for parents, coaches, teachers and administrators. Available on the USAV Website.
- ***Just Let the Kids Play***, by Bob Bigelow, Tom Moroney and Linda Hill; 340 pages © 2001 Health Communications. A top five favorite on how to stop other adults from ruining a child's fun and success in youth sports.
- ***From the Bleachers with Love***, and ***Beyond the Bleachers*** by Dave Epperson and George Selleck, 210 pages each, ©1999/2000 by Alliance. Advice about the art of parenting today's athletes.
- ***Will You Still Love Me If I Don't Win?*** By Christopher Anderson and Barbara Anderson, 200 pages, ©2001. Available on the USAV Website.
- ***How to Win at Sports Parenting***, by Jim and Janet Sundberg. 200 pages, ©2000 Water Brooks.
- ***The Cheers and the Tears***, by Shane Murphy, 225 pages, ©1999 Jossey-Bass Books. A healthy alternative to the dark side of youth sports today
- ***Coaching Kids for Dummies*** by Rick Wolff 225 pages, © 2000 by IDG Books Worldwide. Great ideas presented in a well known format.

NOTES:

Remember, you can also share with your team's parents the following "Code of Behavior for Parents" as well as the "Code of Behavior for Spectators" from Chapter 3 and the RVA examples of a Parent-Spectator Code listed above in the Resources section.

⇒ PARENT CODE OF BEHAVIOR

As a parent, I will aspire to:

- Be positive in attitude toward volleyball and emphasize the cooperative nature of the sport;
- Encourage hard work and honest effort that will lead to improved performance and participation;
- Encourage athletes to participate in volleyball alcohol - and drug-free;
- Encourage and respect referees and officials and their integrity;
- Encourage athletes to participate for their own enjoyment;
- Applaud fair play and good play during games and/or matches;
- Be supportive of all attempts to remove verbal and physical abuse from organized volleyball activities, including language;
- Meet the required administrative and programmatic rules if in some cases the athletes are not able to do so;
- Protect athletes from sanctions and/or suspension by producing accurate documentation;
- Attend age-group (5-18) volleyball events alcohol- and drug-free;
- Use only designated smoking areas that are clearly posted at age group (5-18) volleyball events.

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