



Appropriateness of Uniforms

This resource stems from a question submitted to the Ask PCA blog. Responses come from our experts including PCA Trainers, who lead live group workshops for coaches, parents, administrators and student-athletes.

"Yesterday I spoke with a friend whose daughter plays youth beach volleyball. The uniforms for the young girl athletes are small bikinis. The boys of the same age wear long athletic shorts. The uniform disparity doesn't seem to imply equal athleticism or seriousness on the part of the girls and boys. Has PCA addressed girls' uniforms in other sports? How can parents talk to coaches in a positive, productive way about this issue, and perhaps change the culture of this sport for girls?"

PCA Response By Kelly Kratz, Lead Trainer

When I read this at first I was more alarmed that this club has young girls in small bikinis playing beach volleyball than I was worried about seriousness and equal athleticism between the boys and girls teams. I am the parent of four daughters who are all athletes, and uniforms are different in the boys teams and girls teams for many obvious reasons.

Ironically, I just spoke to a friend of mine about this exact topic after seeing video of her daughter's competitive cheering competition and the very short halter tops and excessive makeup that they wear. I feel that a sport like beach volleyball at the professional level is completely different than the youth level. I think the bikini that the elite players wear is not only practical, but also a bit of a draw to viewers. However, in youth, not only practicality of uniforms, but the CULTURE the team is trying to uphold is much more important than "looking like the pros."

I think that if a youth beach volleyball club is reputable, they obviously don't hide the fact that the girls uniforms are bikinis, so checking that out before joining the club is important. However, parents and athletes 'fuel' and finance these club teams. As a parent you have every right to speak up about the appropriateness of the uniforms, maybe not for this season, but looking into the future. (Not necessarily the same as the boys long shorts, but more of a tank top and girls length sport shorts would be more appropriate).

For example, My daughters' summer swim team 'seniors' tried to change the suit for the girls to a sport bikinis, but parents spoke up and the one-piece suit remains the team suit. As parents it is our role to protect and support our kids in sports. Speaking on their behalf about uniforms, team policies, and player interaction is the job of every Second-Goal Parents. When it comes to the skills, drills and team strategies, we ask that you leave that to the coaches.

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