



# Conflict With Another Family Affects My Son

*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.*

**“My husband, while coaching our son’s 7- and 8-year-old football team last year, had a public disagreement with one of the parents. That incident scared him out of coaching. Now, the other family has persuaded our league to place my son on a team where he does not belong, and the league has done so without even hearing our side of the story. We should have had some say. It’s just not fair to my son. So what would you do? My husband wants to have a talk with the parents. Me, I wish it would all go away, and I don’t want to bring any negative attention to my son. Any advice would be helpful.”**

## PCA Response by Joe Scally, PCA Trainer–Chicago

Conflict between coaches and parents is an unfortunate reality of youth sports, but the most important consideration in youth sports is the education and welfare of the players. There are a few things you can do to make sure your son’s interests remain at the forefront.

First, consider whether your son has been appropriately placed based on league criteria for size, age and skill level. If not, there is likely some process for appealing the placement. But first ask yourselves “Why doesn’t my son belong on this team?” If it’s unsafe, or his skill level is seriously mismatched, you should take this up with the league administration.

If it’s some other reason, consider whether there are benefits to staying on this team that outweigh any downside. It’s important to ask your son how he feels, so that regardless of the outcome, you can support him in having a good experience this season.

If you decide to appeal, base your appeal on the rules, not on what the other parents may have done. Asking questions and remaining calm and civil will reduce the chance of any negative attention toward your son. Whatever team he winds up on, ask the coach what you can do to help out. Your willingness to be involved will enhance your son’s experience.

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## Conflict With Another Family Affects My Son, continued

I'd discourage bringing this up with the other parents. You risk adding fuel to a fire, and it is unlikely the family would do anything to help your son. After resolving the issue of your son's placement, your husband might give the league leaders his side of the public disagreement story. He should be willing to examine what he might have done differently, and the leaders may have had similar experiences that could give your husband valuable support and direction.

*Joe is principal of The Law Offices of Joseph T. Scally in Downers Grove, IL. He was the Director of Training for PCA from 2007 to 2010. With a Masters in Child Psychology from DePaul University and a Law Degree from the University of Illinois, he has devoted the majority of his career to helping children and families improve their quality of life.*

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