



BETTER ATHLETES
BETTER PEOPLE



How Can I Help My Son Stay Humble?

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 13-year-old son has had a growth spurt in the last six months or so, and he is suddenly achieving much more on the field. The increase in achievement has boosted his confidence...maybe a bit too much. How can I teach him easy lessons in being proud but humble before his coaches or teammates are tempted to teach him some harder lessons?”

PCA Response by Will Jackson, PCA Trainer–Atlanta

Your son’s situation occurs frequently with youth sports and adolescent growth spurts. Help your son recognize that while he may now have some early physical advantages, his teammates and competitors will continue to mature and improve within their own developmental schedules.

Today’s biggest, strongest kid may be tomorrow’s very average athlete. The real measure of success will be how your son and his peers push to improve through their motivation and effort. Help your youngster by realigning his goal posts: What can he improve at? What weaknesses in his game can be addressed? How can his positive leadership help his team and teammates? How hard is he willing to work to improve himself and his skills?

Help him structure goals that focus on his own attitudes and enthusiasm for improvement, not just the score of today’s game.

I strongly encourage you to read Carol Dweck’s book *Mindset*: her discussion of fixed vs. growth orientations can be a very useful resource for you moving forward with your son.

PCA Trainer Will Jackson played football for Davidson College and taught psychology and coached football, baseball, wrestling, track and basketball in Atlanta-area high schools until his retirement. Most prominently, he served as head football coach and Athletic Director at Dunwoody HS near Atlanta and at Wesleyan School in Norcross. In retirement, he still assistant coaches varsity football at Wesleyan.

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