



Coach Plays My Daughter Out of Position

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 daughter is 5’ 11” and very strong. She has played guard in basketball since kindergarten and never played post. After her freshman year, she is going to play this summer in various leagues with our varsity high school coach, who wants my daughter to play post. My daughter has guard skills, wants to play guard, and is playing guard on her AAU team. First my daughter, and then I met with the varsity coach, who said he will not be playing my daughter as a guard, and nothing my daughter does will change this. Any ideas how to change the coach’s mind? I’m considering asking my daughter’s AAU coach to invite the varsity coach to the AAU games.”

PCA Response by Eric Eisendrath, PCA Lead Trainer

Despite your frustration, I suggest you simply let the situation play out a bit. As a freshman, there is plenty of time for your daughter to dazzle the coach with passing and ball-handling skills! And remember, a point guard named Magic Johnson started an NBA Championship-clinching game at center!

Learning to play another position could actually help your daughter improve her game. In PCA’s Second-Goal Parent workshops, we encourage parents to recognize both their role and that of the coach. They are different. The coach’s role is to decide on playing time and positions. The parent’s role is to provide love and support for your child, while focusing on “big picture” issues such as the life lessons learned through sports.

I suggest you avoid “trying to change the coach’s mind.” Asking your daughter’s AAU coach to intervene likely will increase friction and leave your daughter stuck in the middle.

If, after a few games at center, your daughter is still struggling, then she alone should address the matter with her coach. Through this process she will learn the critical life skill of being an advocate for herself, and the coach may well admire your daughter’s maturity enough to reconsider her role on the team.

Eric Eisendrath is a former Division One hockey goalie at Brown University, and has coached soccer, lacrosse and hockey at a variety of levels.

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