

7. The Club vs. High School Dilemma Your son plays for an elite soccer team. The coach wants him to quit other sports, including his high school soccer team, to play exclusively with the club team. As a Second-Goal Parent, what should you do?

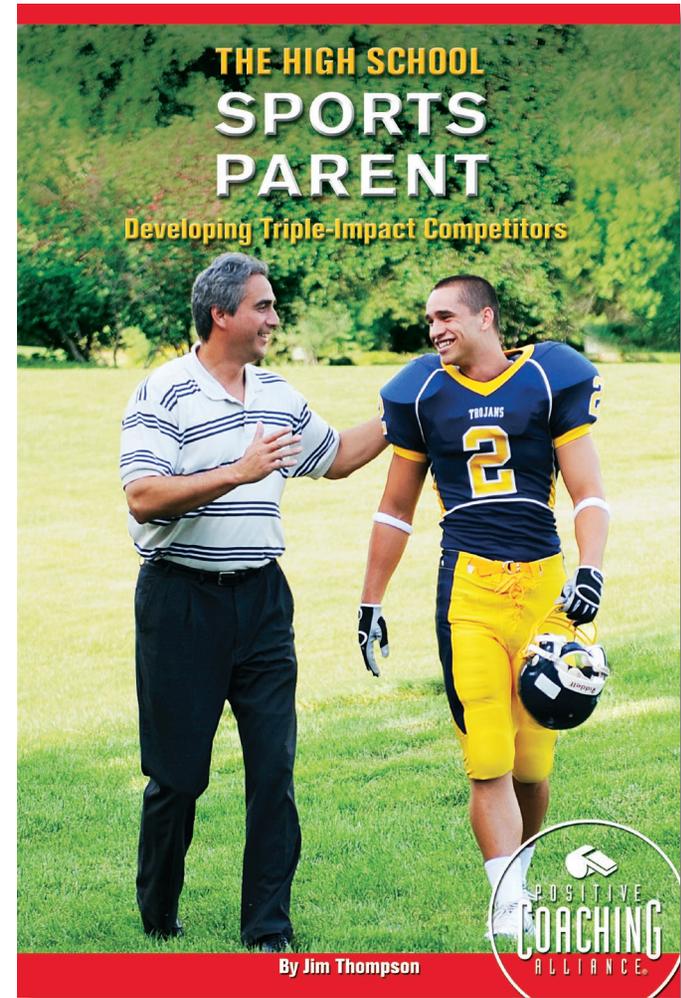
I start with a bias. I loved playing for my high school team. I was proud to wear green and white and represent West Fargo (ND) High School, and playing with my friends was great. I am sad when I hear of elite athletes passing up their high school team to play exclusively for a club team. So I tend to encourage athletes to try to keep playing for their high school team if they can.

I also understand that people get better by competing against opponents who push them to be their best. Some athletes may be better served by playing for a club team if that is the best or only place they can get the necessary competition. However, it is important to realize that your son's club coach may have an agenda that doesn't align perfectly with what is best for your son.

Many professional athletes did not specialize until quite late. Furthermore, they often say that playing multiple sports helped them when they did specialize, often not until college.

If you have not already used the 100-Points Exercise (see Chapter 4) for a conversation about your son's goals in sports, this would be a good time to do so. After discussing the various goals he has in sports, you might ask him to sort them into two columns: "Best Achieved on High School team" and "Best Achieved on Club Team." Then you can have him consider which team (club or high school) offers the best opportunity to achieve each goal.

If your son decides he wants to concentrate on his club team after considering the advantages and disadvantages, it could be a great thing for him. But it makes sense to do so after thinking through the advantages and disadvantages of each, including playing for both teams.



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