



Should I Make My Son Play?

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 son is a sophomore who hoped to make the varsity baseball team, but was kept on the JV so he could be their top starting pitcher and fully develop into a varsity-caliber starter. My son is so disappointed that he does not want to play at all this coming season. Should I make him play?”

PCA Response by Eric Eisendrath, Lead Trainer–New York

I recommend letting your son make his own decision. While it is difficult to watch your child make a decision he might regret, in this instance, it is his choice. If you step back and allow him to process the situation for himself, it is possible that he will realize how much he enjoys baseball, values his relationships there and that his chance to play baseball in high school will end if he chooses not to play now.

You can remind your son that even Michael Jordan did not make the varsity basketball team his sophomore year, and that often players actually improve much more over a season when they are leading a JV team, rather than riding the bench on the varsity team. You can suggest that your son focus on cultivating his “Teachable Spirit” so that he learns and develops so much that he will be prepared for success as a varsity starter in his junior and senior years. And if he does that, he might even find himself on the varsity before this season is over.

Help your son think this through by asking him what he would do with the time he normally spends on baseball and what else he might do that could be more rewarding. That may cause him to realize he really wants to play or it may lead him to get involved with something else that will enrich his future life. With those factors in mind, hopefully he will choose the course you desire. However, it will be selected because he wants to, not as the result of a mandate from you.

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