



Addressing Favoritism Between Coaches And Parents

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 a Junior in high school, and she participates in a team sport. For our tournaments, we travel and must stay in hotels or Air B&B type houses. In the past, our coaches have shared a house with other parents on the team, some of which are on our parent board. My question is this commingling with families of players ethical, overall, for a professional coach?"

PCA Response by Tina Syer, PCA Chief Impact Officer

Thanks so much for reaching out to PCA with this question. Without knowing all of the details of this particular situation, the first idea that comes to mind is that coaches (and potentially administrators) need to be aware of how particular arrangements may be perceived, even if the coach does not believe (or own the fact that) they are leading to favoritism.

Have you already asked for a private conversation with the head coach to talk about this matter? I'd advise you to bring this topic up directly with the head coach before elevating it to the athletic director or other administrative leadership. Anything you can do to make this conversation with the coach as non-confrontational as possible would be wonderful. Maybe this is "asking permission" for the conversation: "Would you be willing to take some time to talk with me about our travel accommodations?" Of course you do this in private - perhaps over the phone.

And then you start the conversation with words around "perceptions." Maybe something like, "I am getting the impression that some families may be having the perception that some kids are getting special treatment, if their parents are the ones spending the most time with you when we're on the road." Then you take a long pause and wait for the coach to respond.





Favoritism, continued

In an ideal world the coach will be receptive to this input and will do all he/she can to take actions to change the circumstances that are leading to these families' perceptions. If the coach is not sure what steps to take, perhaps you ask if he/she is open to your suggestions. Assuming there are adequate funds for the coaches to stay on their own, that is ideal. If budgets make this difficult, perhaps the coaches stay with different families on every trip.

To read more questions and answers like this, or to submit your own question to the Ask PCA blog, visit: www.positivecoach.org/ask-pca



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