



Teammates Harass and Bully Me at Practice

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.

“I’m new to my high school, and my teammates harass me at practice. Every time I mess up they hound me, and every time I try to be positive some kids ignore me. My confidence is low. I just want to have a positive time, but I feel bullied. Any suggestions?”

PCA Response by Joe Scally, PCA Trainer – Chicago

Moving to a new school is often difficult. Your new teammates aren’t making the change any easier. It’s important for you to maintain your integrity in this situation, even in the face of being harassed or ignored. Continue to treat others as you’d like to be treated yourself.

There are many possible explanations for your teammates’ behavior. They may treat all new team members in these ways. The overall team culture may be a negative one, with harassment, criticism, and ignoring being tolerated or even promoted. Some individuals may be worried about losing playing time to you and so respond negatively.

The thing you have control over is how you act toward your teammates. Examine your actions to make sure you are being how you want to be. Talking this over with a friend, parent, or teacher whose perspective you trust may help. Continue to be positive. We know that being positive helps you play better. It also helps your teammates in many ways. Your positive approach may rub off on your teammates and improve the team culture.

No matter the reasons, there is no excuse for harassment or bullying. If a teammate’s actions make you uncomfortable let someone know. Don’t remain silent. You’ll have to determine the appropriate person to talk to in each instance. Consider telling the offending teammate directly. Also consider the team captain, the coach or the athletic director. Regardless of whether you address this with anyone connected with the team, you should let a parent or other adult you trust know what’s going on.

Doing what I’ve suggested will not always be easy. It takes courage to do the right thing when others are not. In the end, being true to yourself will be the most positive experience you can have.

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Teammates Harass and Bully Me at Practice, continued

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