



# What Is The Right Age To Start Watching Game Film?

*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.*

**“Is it normal, productive, healthy or wise to have a 6th grade boy’s basketball team review their game film? Our coach seems to think so. We already practice twice a week and have a game on Sundays so this would essentially be a 4th weekly team event. The nature of the team is travel so they are playing in a ‘competitive’ environment.”**

## PCA Response by Eric Eisendrath, PCA Lead Trainer

There is nothing wrong with occasionally watching film in order to show the kids some pointers (plus kids like watching themselves play), but at this age it should focus on showing positive things players are doing. As any of us who remember first seeing ourselves on video can attest, it can be a bracing experience to have other people critique our performance on film.

Coaches should also set clear expectations for an Emotional Tank filling atmosphere in watching film. Players should be reminded before the session that they’re watching film to get better and they should focus on filling each others’ E-Tanks.

That said, given the fact that this team already practices twice and plays once per week, this fourth weekly team event seems a bit over the top. One of the biggest problems that plague youth sports, and travel teams in particular, is the notion that they are the “lowest division of the NBA!”

They aren’t. They are 12 years old. Basketball is not their job. Having them involved four days a week runs the risk of burnout, which is happening far more frequently each year, along with a staggering rise in overuse injury, up 75% in the last 15 years. The environment being “competitive” does not necessitate an almost full week commitment at the age of 12!

So often, coaches who are overly focused on winning use a “competitive environment” to justify their loss of focus on more important aspects of youth sports, such as having fun and learning the game and life lessons. A “competitive environment” that neglects these more important values is adult driven – not kid centered – and likely will negatively impact your child’s overall enjoyment, rather than delivering the “benefits” of extensive film study.

*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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