

## 5 | Coach Problems

### **I can't go into all of the reasons why, but I don't get along with my coach. How can I play for someone I have problems with?**

When athletes click with a coach, it is terrific. But many athletes and coaches don't. Nonetheless, the smart ones find ways to work together for the betterment of the team. Here's how you can do this.

**Recognize that coaching is hard.** Some coaches make coaching seem effortless, but it isn't. Coaching is difficult, especially for new coaches and recent head coaches. Knowing this may make it easier for you to feel empathy for your coach.

**Don't let this ruin your sports experience.** You will have talented and untalented supervisors your whole life. Don't let the quality of your experience depend on the quality of your supervisor. Make a commitment to yourself to stay positive and give your best effort to make this season the best it can be.

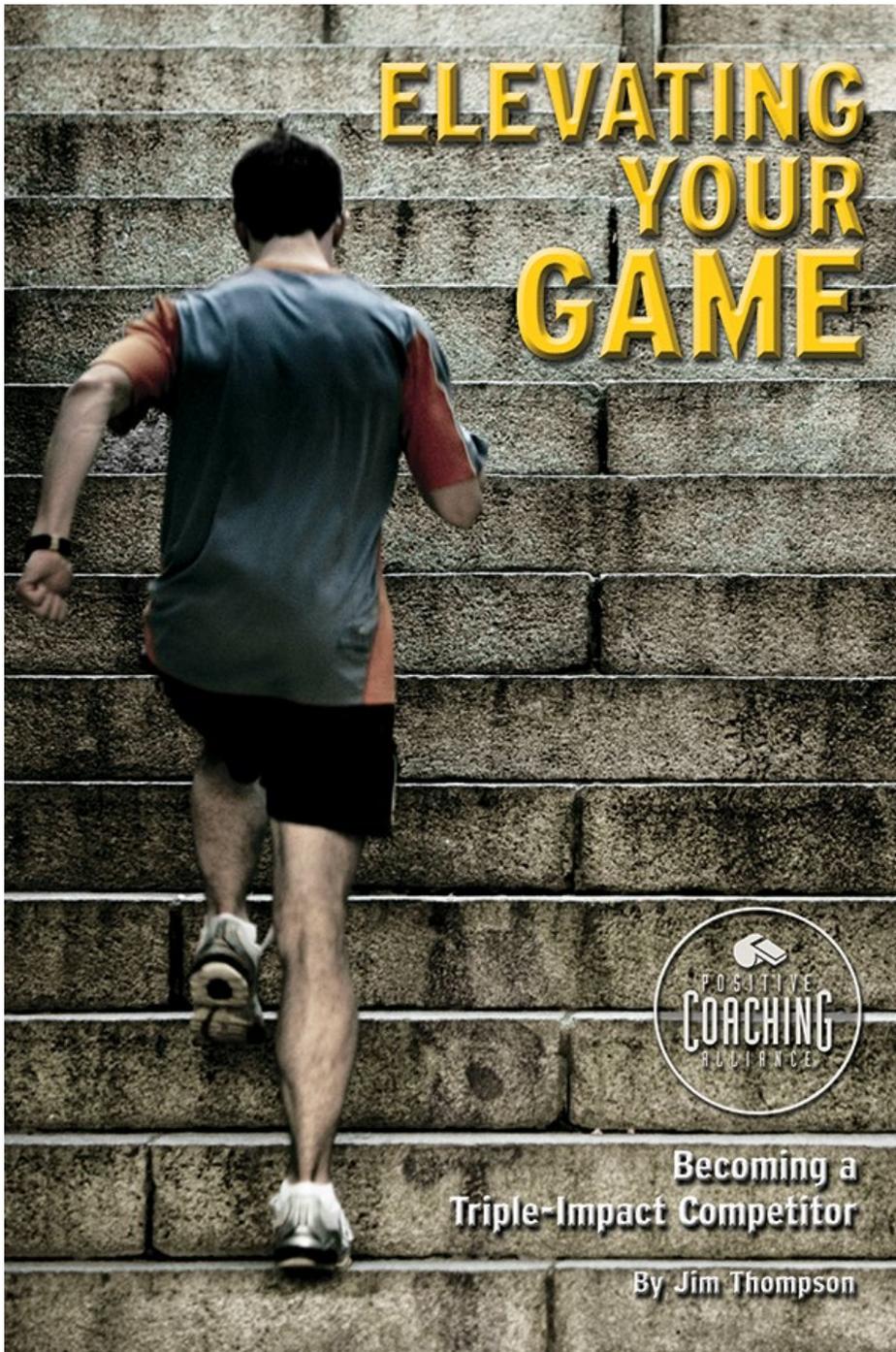
**Focus your energy.** Don't waste your limited energy talking trash about your coach with your teammates. This can create a downward spiral that may only make things worse as negativity feeds hungrily on negativity. Focus on things you can control to make yourself and your team better. When players give their best effort and stay positive, a good season is more likely than if they waste energy and time bad-mouthing their coach, as satisfying as that may feel.

**Don't talk "out of school."** I am unimpressed when people complain to me about their boss or the organization they work for. Although it may be tempting to complain about your coach with people outside the team, avoid it whenever possible. Ultimately people will respect you for keeping your team's dirty laundry private (with one exception – see the last point below).

**Consider talking with the coach.** Many, but not all, coaches are open to feedback, especially when offered in a helpful, non-confrontational manner. If you think there are changes your coach could make to improve the situation,

consider talking with him. Make an appointment to speak with your coach in private. Script your key points, and try them out on a trusted friend or adult. Approach the coach with respect, stay calm, and tell him your concerns.

**Take action when your coach is abusive.** When a coach is verbally or physically abusive, you need to speak with the athletic director or principal. Talk with your parents so they are not surprised. Think through what you want to say, and write it down. Ask the athletic director or principal for his advice and what he is going to do. Let him investigate and take action while you work on staying positive and working hard.



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