



# Tips for a Positive Parent-Coach Partnership

Following are guidelines for how sports parents can contribute to a Coach-Parent Partnership that benefits youth athletes.

**Recognize the Coaches' Commitment.** Your child's coaches have made a commitment that involves many hours of preparation beyond the time spent at practices and games. Quite likely in youth sports they are volunteers. Respect their commitment and imagine yourself in their place before approaching them to discuss any issues you may observe.

**Make Early, Positive Contact with the Coach.** As soon as you know who will coach your child, contact those coaches to introduce yourself and offer any assistance you may provide. Establishing a positive relationship with the coaches will help you proactively shape a positive experience for your child and will lay the foundation for respectful, productive conversations with coaches should a conflict arise later.

**Fill the Coach's Emotional Tank.** Too often, coaches hear only from parents who have complaints. Filling the coaches' Emotional Tanks with specific, truthful praise positively reinforces them to continue doing the things you see as benefiting the youth athletes.

**Don't Put the Player in the Middle.** You wouldn't complain to your children about how poorly their math teacher explains fractions. Don't share your disapproval of a coach with your children. Doing so may force the child to take sides, and not necessarily your side! If your child has an issue with the coach and can maturely articulate it, encourage your child to approach the coach and at the very least learn some life lessons in self-advocacy with an authority figure. Otherwise, if you disapprove of how the coach handles a situation, seek a private meeting to discuss the matter.

**Let Coaches Coach.** It can confuse players to hear someone other than the coach yelling out instructions. Also, your instructions may counter the coaches' strategy and tactics, undermining team performance.

**Fill Your Child's Emotional Tank.** Competitive sports can be stressful to players. The last thing they need is your critiquing their performance...on top of what the coach may deliver and what they already are telling themselves. Let your children know you love and support them regardless of their performance.

**Contribute to a Positive Environment.** Fill all the players' Emotional Tanks when you see them doing something well. Honor the Game as a spectator, respecting ROOTS (Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and Self), and encourage others around you to Honor the Game.

