



OBNOXIOUS SPORTS PARENTS

The Top 10 Rules of Expected Parental Behavior

Now, for those of you who have been through the wringer of sports parenting issues, some of this will sound familiar...but for those of you who are new to this or are going through these struggles now. We have done a round-up of what is appropriate in terms of parental behavior at our kids' games....

We all know that the kids are rarely the issue when it comes to sports parenting problems today...rather, it's usually the coaches and the parents who don't always see eye to eye on sports....and as such, we want to run down some of the basic principles that you and your friends and colleagues might encounter this year.

Okay, let's begin...

Here are – what we like to call – the Top 10 Rules of Expected Parental Behavior at their Kids' Games:

1) **Parents should be seen, but not heard too often** – it's absolutely fine and good to go and watch your child play. But as a parent, you should try to blend in with the woodwork. Don't draw attention to yourself –the games are all about YOUR child....they are NOT about YOU.

As such, parents (not children) should be SEEN....but not HEARD.

2) **If you have to say something, it should only be positive praise.** Very simple. If you feel compelled to cheer, make sure your comments are only positive! And make your comments generic in tone. That is, "Way to go guys" or "Great job girls" is much more effective than highlighting just one kid.

Try and Root for the TEAM – not just one individual kid.

3) **Never openly criticize your kid....and whatever you do, never, ever criticize somebody else's kid!** This is an absolute sin. If you feel compelled to try and coach your child from the sidelines, or make some disparaging remarks, e.g. "C'mon, Mike, you're not even trying hard out there," or "Sally, you gotta get back faster on defense," then you have really crossed the line.

Coaching is the Coach's job – -NOT yours. And even though it may kill you to stand there and say nothing, well, that's too bad. Act like the grown-up adult that you are.

And by the way, if you ever criticize somebody else's kid in a game—well, now you're totally out of line and risking a well-deserved punch in the nose. You never ever criticize some other parent's kid, or risk the consequences.



4) **Please do not do a play-by-play of the game.** This applies mostly to youth coaches who try and dictate every play of the game while it's happening...it happens a lot in soccer matches” Okay, Sam, dribble the ball up...now pass it over to Joe....Joe, pass the ball to Jerry....Jerry take the shot.”

Feel free to work with your kids at home...but during the actual game, let the kids figure it out! Otherwise, they'll become too dependent on you for constant instruction. Even worse, they'll feel that they can't be spontaneous during the game.

PS – when you played sports as a kid, did anyone dictate to you what to do? I didn't think so. So why are you doing it to your kids?

5) **If you can't control your mouth, then don't stand with the other parents....stay far away from the others, and stand off by yourself....**

Folks, you have to know your own personality. If you honestly feel that you might get too emotionally involved in your kid's game, then stand off by yourself during the action. You can come back and rejoin the sane parents later, there's nothing wrong with going away from the crowd and being alone with your thoughts.

We would rather you do that than make a jack-ass out of yourself where everybody can hear you and confirm that you're an out of control jerk AND embarrass your kid.

6) **Umpires are not there to be abused in any way. Nor can you influence them.**

Here's the deal. Without the umps, or officials, the game quickly is transformed from a real game into just being a scrimmage, so understand that and accept it fully.

Then, understand that the vast majority of sports parents DO NOT know where to draw the line when it comes to questioning an umpire's call...too many parents DO think that a umpire can somehow be psychologically influenced during a game, and if that the parent keeps chirping and pointing out perceived mistakes, then the umpires will begin to give the chirping parent the benefit of the close calls.

Of course, that never happens. If anything, the umpire will just get annoyed at the parent.

So, here's what you do to fix the problem. Don't say anything to the umpire. And don't say anything about their calls. Let the coach do that. You, as a sideline parent, just be quiet. The umpire is NOT going to change their call. The umpire is NOT going to be influenced on future calls by your catcalls. So, just be quiet.

And besides, in sports, bad calls are part of the game. You must understand – and accept that as well.

7) **It's okay to applaud a nice play by an opposing player....we're trying to teach our kids to be good sports, and to respect their opponents. So, if one of the opposing players makes a great play, applaud it!**



That's okay – yes, even sometimes the opposing team makes good plays! And you should tell your child that it's okay for their opponents to be talented as well.

8) **Understand that you are a role model for the kids** – they will follow your behavior.

Along those lines, ALWAYS remember that your daughter is watching YOU on how they should behave.

So, if you're going nuts on the umpire or throwing a temper tantrum, or seem emotionally unsettled, don't be surprised if your kid starts acting the same way. And you know what? That's YOUR fault, not the kid's. Another case of monkey see, monkey do.

Think I'm kidding? Ask one of the other parents who has a video camera to go across the field and to tape the behavior of parents on the sidelines during a game. The tape is so revealing that parents won't believe what they're seeing....just remember – this is exactly what your kid is seeing when they play.

9) **If a coach or a umpire tells you to calm down, please take that caution seriously!**

You folks know we are big fans of zero tolerance. And if an ump or official singles you out, and tells you to calm down, then consider yourself fully warned! You won't get – nor do you deserve a second chance.

And if you can't calm down, then yes, you should be banned from the game. What gives you the right to ruin it for all the kids, coaches, and other parents?

10) **Try to give your kid a smile**....when your kid looks over to the sideline and, for a brief moment, sees your face, please make sure you have a smile on it...or at least, a look of quiet pride. Kids DO look to parents for approval, and if you look like you're having a good time, then he or she will feel the same way.

But if you're scowling, or cursing, or stomping around, then your kid will take that as a sign that they ought to be nervous and angry too. So, relax – leave your game face at home – and wear a relaxed face to your kid's game.

Parent/Guardian signature

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