

How to Talk to a Coach

Parents and coaches can have different visions for players or for a team. Too often, the coach-parent relationship is tense.

When problems arise, parents want to talk to their teen's coach. A parent may have good intentions. Sometimes, however, a meeting with the coach can hurt rather than help your child.



When you want to talk to your teen's coach:

1. Find a good time to schedule a meeting. Right after a game is a bad time. Emotions are high. Coaches have many post-game tasks. Wait until you and the coach can meet in a calm, quiet place. Face to face contact helps avoid misunderstandings. A phone call or email limit communications.
2. Keep your teen's best interest in mind. You want what is best for your teen, and the coach may have some good ideas. Be open to his input.
3. Be a good listener. You may have many complaints. Fight the urge to tell them all to the coach. Simply tell the coach your main concern. Then listen to what she has to say – without

interrupting. Try to look at her point of view. Ask questions, and reword what you hear. This ensures good communication.

4. Explain how the sport affects you and your child. The coach is usually unaware of these concerns or problems. Give him a chance to help you problem-solve.
5. Avoid judging the coach. Use respectful words. Do not accuse or verbally attack her. You can be firm without yelling or becoming angry.
6. Work with the coach and the team. Every parent has wishes and concerns. Coaches must balance everyone's concerns. Work together to find as many options as possible to address your concern. If one option does not work, try another.

Not all coaches are positive role models. You may decide to look for a new team and coach. When playing other teams, observe the players and the coach. If you see a coach you respect, go meet him after a game. Introduce yourself and compliment his coaching style. Next year, ask if that coach has any opening on his team.

Dealing with a coach teaches a social skill. Set a good example for your teen. Show him positive skills that will be useful in solving future problems.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.