

Spectator's Playbook #1



Did you know?

A new study indicates that angry verbal, nonverbal, and physical conflict is emotionally upsetting to children as young as 12 months of age. Since sport is a public stage for this type of behavior, parents who engage in these actions are not only upsetting their own child, but all other children who can see or hear them.

Your children will only get the most out of their sports experiences if they can play, uninterrupted by unnecessary outbursts and yelling by parents.

Your team is a community of children and adults who should be dedicated to all children having the most successful experience possible.

The parents and coach should gather with your team minister prior to the very first game to determine what sort of environment you can/will provide for the season. Include such topics as what responsibilities each parent has, importance of pre and post game prayer, appropriate ways and times to interact with the coach, acceptable forms of cheering, etc. The team minister should write up the guidelines and distribute them to all parents.

Have parents buddy up to monitor each other—if I am getting too noisy, my partner gives me a silent, agreed upon signal to remind me to respect the children and other spectators.

Together, you will create a place where children can play for the love of the sport and not be distracted by the drama and unnecessary anger that can come from someone's parent, or their own.

Spectator's Playbook #2



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What can a parent do when they believe a coach is treating a child unfairly or an official is not making calls the same for both teams? Does yelling at either the coach or official during the game accomplish anything? Not likely, and by disturbing the game, all of the children are punished. Parents do not always know what's best.

The time to talk with a coach is a day after the game, when temper has cooled. Allow the coach to explain his/her behavior and listen respectfully. Present your ideas, not your demands. The better your working relationship is with the coach, the more you will come to understand the choices he/she has to make as the coach.

Officials' calls can look completely different depending on your physical distance from the play. What you think you see may not be what they see—and what you see, they may not be able to see. This is a fact. No official at any level can make every call in every game.

Your expressed anger at an official or coach will influence how much respect your child develops for authority which is a virtue expected in a Christian way of life.

Finding the right time to discuss disagreements is the only appropriate example to set for the children.



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Spectator's Playbook #3



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So...

Get to know your own responses to the situations that occur in sport. These responses are often triggered by your own experiences with sport as a child or adult. For example, if you felt bullied as a child, you may well be extra sensitive to seeing it within your child's team.

For the sake of the children, defuse your anger responses by practicing restraint in word and action. Nothing good comes from responding in the heat of the moment—if you can't calm yourself down, take a short walk away from the field/court and compose yourself.

Know that your opinion is your own, but the people around you do not care to know what you think unless they ask you.

Controlling your anger WILL make the game more pleasant for everyone—especially you!!

Spectator's Playbook #4



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So...

Set expectations for your child's performance with your child before the game but do not comment on their mistakes during the game.

Do not allow your personal view of sports to influence how you react to the game. Try to see it from your child's eyes. You may see a certain situation as a "big deal" when the children do not even notice it. Your angry response will not assist your child.

Do not assume that everyone wants to hear your expert opinion about the game—a person who always seems to tell everyone what "should" be happening will likely be seen as arrogant and tuned out by everyone else. A "Know-it-all" is not fun to be around.



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