



## Coaching Youth Sports



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# Parents vs. Coaches – An Ongoing Battle?

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Parents and coaches both play big roles in youth sports. Kids want to play and they want to learn. The parents and the coaches are going to be those people who help teach the athlete things like new skills and about teamwork. There are differences between the role of a parent and the role of the coach. Parents are supposed to encourage and support their kids. Coaches are supposed teach kids the skills they need to learn a sport.

When coaching youth, there always seem to be those parents who think they know more than the coach. Sometimes a particular parent may know more than the coach. If this is the case, and the coach realizes it, then the coach may want to ask if the parent would like to help coach the team either as an assistant or a volunteer. Some parents may know a lot about the sport but due to things like their job, they may not have time to coach so volunteering may be a good decision for all people involved.

Youth coaches are often volunteers who are there so that the kids can play. Without a coach, there is no team. When coaching youth, one needs to be able to know basic skills and fundamentals, but may not need to know a lot about strategy, depending on the age group.

Kids can sometimes be put in a rough spot when the parent and coach disagree on something. In fact, usually it is the kid that suffers either at practice or at home. A child may learn something at practice that he/she is really excited about. When they get home they show mom and dad what they have learned and the parents think that the child was taught wrong. It could be the other way around as well. The parents may teach the child something that the coach feels is wrong. This can be a big problem and very disturbing for kids. It's hard enough for kids to learn skills at their age and when they do finally learn them it is a big accomplishment. The last thing that they want to hear is that they are doing it wrong or that they need to forget what it was that they learned so they can be taught to do it another way. This "new" way may be more difficult than the "old" way and they may not be able to do it that way so they end up getting discouraged and frustrated. It is things like this that can make a child want to quit because they don't think they are good enough. The sport becomes more work and less fun.

Parents and coaches both need to be aware of the impact that they have on kids. They also need to realize that most children play sports to have fun, learn new skills, and meet new people. The age group has an impact on whether or not mastery of skills becomes more important than having fun. In the end, they just want to enjoy the thrill of competition.

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