



Positive Sport Parenting

THE GOALS OF INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

The Goals of Interscholastic Sports

- ▶ Long-term development
- ▶ Mastering new sport skills
- ▶ Enjoying competition with others
- ▶ Experience enhanced self-esteem
- ▶ Learning life lessons
- ▶ Having fun
- ▶ Being a team player
- ▶ Showing good sportsmanship

When you forget what interscholastic sports are about you experience consequences in the form of:

- ▶ Embarrassment
- ▶ Distraction
- ▶ Pressure (to perform, to achieve, to win)
- ▶ Poor sportsmanship
- ▶ Creating a bad model for how to act
- ▶ Making it tough for your coach to concentrate on the game

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Respond to each question on scale of 1 to 5. 1 being “Nothing Like” you and 5 being “Like” you. Add up the numbers at the end to see your results. Be honest with yourself and think about how your child or your child’s coach would rate you.

Question 1

Do I emphasize the development of my child and having fun more than winning?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 2

Do I avoid trying to coach my child when he or she has a coach?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 3

Do I provide a love and support regardless of the outcome of the game?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 4

Do I emphasize the importance of hard work with my child?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 5

Do I hold my child accountable for poor or unsportsmanlike conduct during a game?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 6

Do I avoid focusing the majority of our conversations at home on the child's sport?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 7

Do I avoid considering my child's sport as an investment and that I should receive something in return?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 8

Do I treat my child the same following wins and losses?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 9

Do I avoid critiquing my child immediately following the game or during the car ride home?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

What kind of Sports Parent Are You?

Question 10

Do I support all players on the team even when my son or daughter is not playing?

- ▶ 1-Not like me
- ▶ 2-Somewhat not like me
- ▶ 3-Neutral
- ▶ 4-Somewhat characteristic of me
- ▶ 5-Characteristic of me

Parent Self-Assessment Results

- ▶ **Score 40-50 Model Parent:** Great job! You are a model parent. You are parenting your child in sports very effectively. It is still important to talk to your child to make sure you are not unaware of any negative actions
- ▶ **Score 30-39 Positive Parent:** You are very effective in parenting your child in school sport. Set a goal to improve on the questions you answered 3 or below on. Talk to your child to make sure you are not unaware of any negative actions
- ▶ **Score 20-29 Sometimes Positive Parent:** At times you are effectively parenting your child in their sport, but there are some behaviors that may be negatively influencing your child's sport experience. Set a goal to improve on questions you answered below a 3. Talk to your child to learn more about where and when your actions might be negative or counterproductive.
- ▶ **Score 10-19 Some Work to be Done:** Unfortunately, there is a good chance that you are negatively influencing your child's sport experience. Set a goal to improve on questions you answered below a 3. Talk to your child to learn more about where and when your actions might be negative or counterproductive. Think about how you can improve on these behaviors.
- ▶ **Score 9 and below Time for a Change:** Unfortunately, you are negatively influencing your child's sport experience. Try not to make excuses for lower scores, but think about what you could change to improve and still be yourself. Talk to your child to learn more about where and when your actions might be negative or counterproductive. It is important that you think about your child's goals and why he or she plays sports. Think about how you can improve on these behaviors.

Why do you think parents lose perspective and behave negatively?

- ▶ Parents have invested too much money and time to see their child not play.
- ▶ Parents tried to live their dreams through their child.
- ▶ Parents want their child to be successful and get scholarship.
- ▶ Parents get more attention when their child is performing great.
- ▶ Parents feel they can coach their child better than anyone.
- ▶ Parents put their goals before their child's.
- ▶ Parents do not entrust coaches with their child.
- ▶ Parents feel failure is not an option and prevents their child learning from it.

Losing Perspective

- ▶ Parents do not like to see their children fail or be disappointed, but a parents desire to see their child succeed and be perfect adds pressure.
- ▶ When you begin to equate your own self-worth as a parent based on your child's success, the problem begins.
- ▶ When you become wrapped up in the sport experience, you are unintentionally pressuring your child.
- ▶ We know you want your child (child's team) to be successful, but an emotional outburst and disappointed feedback are not helping. Your actions can be embarrassing and distracting.

Investment in Your Child's Sport Career

- ▶ Your time
- ▶ Sacrifices
- ▶ Traveling and tournament cost
- ▶ League fees
- ▶ Jerseys and equipment fees

You may start to view your investment and want to see desired Payoffs:

- ▶ Scholarships
- ▶ Media recognitions
- ▶ Rewards
- ▶ Scouting
- ▶ Making it to the pros

Correct Payoffs

- ▶ Having fun
- ▶ Learning sport skills
- ▶ Learning life skills
- ▶ Being a good sport

Be careful not to hold your investments in the sport over your child's head or act like you expect something in return because it will create pressure and resentment. Pleasing you as a parent will take priority over the sport enjoyment for the child and will make it hard for them to play.

What goals are important to YOU when your child participates in a school sport?

Think about reasons for participating in school sports from your perspective and from your child's perspective. **Rank the goals in order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important to 10 being the least important.**

- ▶ To get exercise
- ▶ To improve skills
- ▶ To do something they're good at
- ▶ To stay in shape
- ▶ For the excitement of competition
- ▶ For the challenge of competition
- ▶ To learn new skills
- ▶ To play as a part of a team
- ▶ To have fun
- ▶ To win

Rank the goals in order of Importance to your child

- ▶ To get exercise
- ▶ To improve skills
- ▶ To do something they're good at
- ▶ To stay in shape
- ▶ For the excitement of competition
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- ▶ To play as a part of a team
- ▶ To have fun
- ▶ To win

Now you have seen the rankings of your goals and the rankings of your child's goals. How do they compare?

Let's see how your goals and your child's goals compare to the national rankings of students who participate in sports. *These results came from a large-scale survey given to the students who participate in school sports. The survey was conducted by the ISYS.*

National Rank

- ▶ 1. To have fun
- ▶ 2. To improve skills
- ▶ 3. To stay in shape
- ▶ 4. To do something they're good at
- ▶ 5. For the excitement of competition
- ▶ 6. To get exercise
- ▶ 7. To play as part of a team
- ▶ 8. For the challenge of competition
- ▶ 9. To learn new skills
- ▶ 10. To win

What You and Your Child Want out of School Sports: Understanding the Goals of Your Child

Your goals and expectations affect how you respond during a game. Your goals influence the way you see things and affect your interactions with others.

You can add to the pressure your child already feels by:

- ▶ losing emotional control in the stands
- ▶ yelling at the coach
- ▶ critiquing your child's performance

Ask your child what they want from their sport experience, and be prepared as it may differ from yours.

Your child wants you to have goals for them also, but they want them to be similar to theirs so you are on the same page.

Realistic Expectations

- ▶ Hold realistic expectations: not everyone can start or play all of the time
- ▶ Lofty expectations that your child cannot reach will create pressure

Academic Goals

- ▶ Have academic goals.
- ▶ It is essential that your child keeps up with their school work.
- ▶ Education comes before practice, training and games.
- ▶ Hold realistic expectations
- ▶ Place academic goals over sport goals

Understand the different roles you take in your child's sport

As a parent of a student who participates in athletics, what do you think your role is? **According to most parents, coaches, and athletes the parent's role is one of support and, encouragement, and being an interpreter and model.**

- ▶ Be Supportive
- ▶ Have Unconditional Support
- ▶ Keep Plans after a Game: When you change plans you show your child that the outcome is important and that creates pressure
- ▶ Be Encouraging: Be positive when things are going well **AND** when they are not.
- ▶ Stay upbeat and positive: *Tomorrow is a new day, you'll get another chance, etc.*
- ▶ Pushing on about mistakes or analyzing what should have been done after a game does not help your child.
- ▶ Remember to talk to your child about other things in their life other than sports.

Parents Take on a Role as an Interpreter

- ▶ Help to interpret sport as a way to learn life skills and lessons.
- ▶ The way you respond to wins and losses, to great and poor performances, shows how you view the sport experience.
- ▶ Those that support a “win at all cost” attitude can have ramifications to cheat or play dirty, which will then translate to bad behaviors later in life for your child.

Being a Model

- ▶ Sportsmanship: Yelling at officials, coaches or talking badly about opponents is teaching your child to behave in a similar manner
- ▶ You are the role model for your son or daughter
- ▶ We want parents to support the team and their son or daughter without ridiculing officials, coaches or other athletes and teams
- ▶ Allow the coaches to coach and the kids to play
- ▶ Support your child and the team in any way you can

*If the concern is about playing time, that is a coaches' decision. Coaches are evaluated annually, and coaches are hired to make decisions regarding playing time. That is not the athletic director's decision, a parent's or a player's decision. Only the coach can make that decision.

**Any time a student feels they are being injured in some kind of way, if a coaches actions are making them unsafe during the course of a game or practice, or they are being mistreating mentally, then a parent has a legitimate concern to call for a meeting with the athletic director, coach, and athlete.

Recognizing situations that parents are more likely to behave badly and recognize how to respond to situations

It's your turn to make the call. Read the following situations and select the best response.

Your daughter is a very good soccer player but rarely sees action on the varsity team. She is frustrated and is not having much fun. You are becoming frustrated about the lack of playing time and want the coach to play her more, especially at crucial times in the game. You contact the coach via email about your concern and he replies that your daughter is where she belongs in the lineup and that he makes the decisions. What do you do?

- ▶ Trust the coach's judgment and let it go
- ▶ Express your concerns again to the coach right after the next practice or game and be more adamant. You should be heard too
- ▶ Tell your daughter the coach is playing favorites and she should just ride out the season and not play for him next year
- ▶ Emphasize to your daughter that she needs to talk to the coach and find out why she is not playing and then commit to working hard in practice to achieve what the coach expects from her

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Correct Answer: Having your daughter approach the coach in a tactful and respectful manner is best. Then he will know what is expected. If she does not receive feedback, then you should consider talking to the coach by setting up a private meeting.

Recognizing situations that parents are more likely to behave badly and recognize how to respond to situations

In a tight game, several of the parents have been loudly complaining about the official calls. You can see the team is getting frustrated and beginning to “talk back” to the officials as well. One of the parents begins to swear at the official during a timeout. What should you do, if anything, in this situation?

- ▶ Just keep your distance and don't get involved
- ▶ Join in with the other parents. Get on the official and let him know that he is screwing up and needs to make things right
- ▶ Kindly ask those parents that are complaining loudly to remember that they set an example for the boys and this is not the best example
- ▶ Tell the parents to “shut up and sit down.”

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Correct Answer: Kindly asking the parents to remember that the boys follow their lead should help. Often, bad behavior happens because no one stands up to say, in a respectful way, this is not what we do here. If it doesn't work, or it won't because you've tried in the past, consider keeping your distance and talking to the athletic director at an appropriate time.

Recognizing situations that parents are more likely to behave badly and recognize how to respond to situations

You are concerned because your daughter is coming home from volleyball practice very upset. She won't talk to you about her problem she is having with her coach which appears to be very serious. She tells you she has attempted several times to talk to her coach but is rejected by him. You tell her you will make an appointment to speak with the coach instead, but she gets more upset because she fears the coach will take it out on her by not playing her in the upcoming game. What should you do?

- ▶ Disregard your daughter's feelings and proceed to make an appointment with the coach
- ▶ Instead of going to the coach you make an appointment with the school's athletic director
- ▶ Do nothing
- ▶ Make an appointment with both the coach and the athletic director

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- ▶ Instead of going to the coach you make an appointment with the school's athletic director
- ▶ Do nothing
- ▶ Make an appointment with both the coach and the athletic director

Correct: In this situation, the best strategy is to make an appointment with both the athletic director and your daughter's coach. This way you can express your daughter's concerns and fears while using the athletic director as the mediator. Involve the athletic director only when there is a serious concern.

Recognizing situations that parents are more likely to behave badly and recognize how to respond to situations

Your son just had a terrible game. He threw four interceptions and was benched in the third quarter. He has had problems all year with his decision making and seems to rush when throwing. Your son is walking up to you from the locker room following the coaches' post game debrief. How do you approach him?

- ▶ *Say "good game" and "you tried your best."*
- ▶ *Give him a hug or pat on the back. Talk about what you are doing tonight as a family. Wait for your son to bring up the game*
- ▶ *This is a teachable moment. Be positive and yet let him know why he had such a bad game*
- ▶ *Wait until you get home and then talk about the game. It is important for him to know what he did wrong*

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- ▶ *Wait until you get home and then talk about the game. It is important for him to know what he did wrong*

Correct Answer: In this situation, not talking about the game is best. A simple hug can alleviate concerns that you are upset with him and let him know that your support is unconditional. Let him bring the game up when ready and then you ask questions that lead him to coming up with some of the feedback you would have given. Finally saying “good game” or “good effort” after the game may only serve to irritate him—this depends on the child of course.

Recognize ways to improve behavior to be a more positive sport parent

- ▶ Talk with your child about their goals for the season
- ▶ Line your goals up with theirs
- ▶ Create a plan to achieve those goals
- ▶ Talk with our child to see if you are unintentionally pressuring them or are doing anything that bothers them. Ask ways you can improve
- ▶ Enhance your awareness of your actions by looking at others' reactions to you and your behavior during games
- ▶ Keep perspective. Understand that everyone makes mistakes.
- ▶ Sport is for them to grow, to make friends, to have fun and to not feel pressure or be subjected to unsportsmanlike behaviors.

References

- ▶ <http://www.wiaawi.org/myWIAA/Coaches.aspx>, *Positive Sport Parenting* course