



HOW TO BE **A PARENT** **& A COACH**

One of the most difficult tasks a parent can face is being their daughter's coach. Although it may seem like the perfect way to bond and build a strong relationship with your daughter, it can lead you into turmoil. Don't get me wrong, I believe it's great for parents to volunteer their time for their daughter's and the team, but there needs to be a known divide between coach and parent.

WHEN TO BE A PARENT

Being a parent is the easy part; knowing WHEN to be the parent is a little tricky. It is perfectly fine to show your female athlete that you care about her and her athletics, but there is a fine line when you are a coach. Be a parent off the field. Take into consideration that you are coaching your daughter's team, not just your daughter. It is understandable that your daughter is the apple of your eye, your shining star, but making that obvious segregates your daughter from her team.

The more attention you give your daughter during practices or games, the easier it will be for her to be named a "coach's daughter". Let me just tell you, being "the coach's daughter" sucks. Being labeled as such singles out your daughter as the girl who is going to play no matter what, play the position she wants, and seemingly, always get her way even if there is a better athlete for that position. You want to avoid giving anyone the opportunity of labeling your daughter as the "coach's daughter" and allow her to earn her stripes like her teammates.

Now, this does not mean you need to ignore your daughter on the field, just remember that she needs to be treated as a member of a team, not as your daughter. As I said before, be a parent away from the game. Encourage her before, between, and after games. As soon as you both step on the field, she is an equal member that should receive equal treatment to her teammates.

WHEN TO BE A COACH

Now that you are coaching your daughter's team, you must find a way to balance being a parent and being a coach. I have heard many coaches say, "No, I won't give

my daughter special treatment, I won't be 'that dad'". 90% of the time, you are "that dad." Special treatment comes in many forms, even if you aren't praising your daughter, giving her negative attention is still special treatment. If you do not yell or nag all the other girls the same as your daughter, you are showing your daughter attention that the rest of the team does not receive. In turn, she is singled-out as a coach's daughter. If you really don't think you are giving your daughter more attention than the rest of the team, have someone quietly count how many times you refer to her, use her name, call her out, or praise her. You may be surprised at the amount of attention you give your daughter unknowingly.

I know you want your daughter to be the best, and you are destined to make her the greatest, but there is only so much you can tell your daughter before she becomes annoyed with your behavior. When your daughter begins to express and demonstrate desires of independence, let her be independent. Let her be trained by someone else; the more you push your training, the more she will try to prove you wrong; regardless if you are right in any way, shape, or form. There comes a time when you must step aside, and either be a coach to all, or let someone else be the coach. I promise you your daughter will be forever grateful to simply be a member of a team rather than labeled as the "coach's daughter".

I can't emphasize my last point enough; leave the coaching on the field. This truly enables you to be a parent and a coach without the hostility of inter-mingling the two. When you leave the field, you should be a dad; all coaching duties are set aside, and you can now be a parent to your child. There is so much more to an adolescent female's life than sports; it is important to stay involved in her entire life, so you can connect on more levels than athletics. Years from now, you want to be able to have a strong, well-rounded relationship with your daughter when sports come to an end.

KEY POINTS ON BEING A PARENT AND A COACH

- ❖ Your daughter is not the only athlete on the team. Treat her as an equal to her teammates.
- ❖ Let your daughter earn her stripes; she does not want to be labeled as the "coach's daughter". If she deserves a spot on the team, let her earn it.
- ❖ Leave the coaching on the field; once the practice, game, or tournament is over, be her dad, not her coach.
- ❖ Get to know your daughter outside of sports; maintaining a well-rounded relationship will create a stronger connection in the long run.