

Top Three Advocates' Tips

Enjoy the journey ...it doesn't last forever. Make good memories for yourself and all young competitors. We often live vicariously through our involvement with youth sports; but the playing of amateur games should belong to the participating young competitors ...let them own it and don't ruin it for them. Competition can extol the best that we have to offer as Advocates of youth sports or get downright ugly. In the heat of competition, setbacks, adversity, losses and victories can fire our deepest passions. Channel those passions toward creating positive experiences ...don't be the Grinch that spoils youth sports/competitive events – let's all strive to enjoy the journey together!

#3 The Golden Rule of Youth Sports

Don't say out loud anything about other people's children that you wouldn't want said about your own child. As parents, there is absolutely nothing that we care about more than our children. We all have personal judgments and opinions and it is human nature to comment on and converse about our thoughts and opinions regarding life. Words hurt ...sometimes intentionally and more often, unintentionally. To avoid future embarrassment and/or to avoid harming others ...just don't do it.

#2 Protect the Self Esteem of Young Competitors

The effort to win is VERY important, but the personal self esteem of each young competitor is paramount and even more important. We are all different -- children, adolescents, teenagers, young adults and adults. As caring, responsible youth sports' Advocates, we should strive to remain vigilant to the needs of the emotionally sensitive, particularly emotionally vulnerable young competitors, as well as the overly self-driven -- or driven by others - perfectionistic, seemingly tough minded, young competitors. At the end of every season, the ideal outcome would be that every young participant will feel as good -- or better -- about themselves than as before the season started. We do not live in an ideal world, but self-assured, young competitors will be better equipped to take the life lessons learned from their participation in youth sports and apply those lessons to the pursuit of their futures. That is called a job well done!

#1 TIP: TALK ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS!

Talk about it – encourage young competitors to share their true, personal feelings with those that they trust. If you are a concerned Advocate – ask! There is a sense of vulnerability and exposure associated with inquiring/talking about PERSONAL feelings that may seem inconsistent with the toughness normally associated with competition. It is not something easily shared, but left unaddressed, personal feelings can escalate and become deep, hidden feelings of unhappiness, inadequacy and possibly even contribute to tragedies. Isolation is a terribly corrosive thing. Feelings of isolation can be both physical and emotional. As concerned, responsible Advocates, break the ice, broach the subject ...studies suggest that asking and talking will not contribute to further harm. We are all here for our youth!

ADVOCATES SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH TOGETHER

