

TOP 10 TIPS Youth Sports and Parenting

By R. E. Martin

#1 The Golden Rule.

Thou shalt never say things about someone else's child that thou wouldn't want said about thine.

#2 Whispering on Social Media is Like Shouting in a Crowded Room

Don't do it!

#3 Albert and Norman Could Not Hit Curve Balls

You would not necessarily hand the ball to Albert Einstein or Norman Rockwell on third and three but, they did pretty good in life. Just sayin'. If your child excels in sports, cool - if not, let them be what they be... learn, enjoy and use the experience(s) to become better human beings.

#4 Apple Trees and Fallen Apples

The cliché is that apples don't fall far from the tree. True. But a fallen apple has embarked on its own journey... our children are like us, but they aren't us. Share, enjoy, nurture, guide and love, but try not to live too much through your children - their games belong to them.

#5 We Don't Skin Cats

There are lots of ways to do things, but some things we just shouldn't do. Generally, doin' it your way (whatever that is) is okay as long as it doesn't do harm to others. Preserving and nurturing the self-esteem of young athletes is everything! This axiom applies to yours and theirs.

#6 COME ON, MAN... or MAM! REALLY?

Adults shouting demonstratively onto the field at players, coaches and/or officials is an anathema (strongly disliked). Unacceptable! Monkeys throw their poop ...be better than that.

#7 Everyone is Entitled to Their Opinion

Competition necessarily requires opposition. Dr. King said, "...we shall overcome." Then he advocated peaceful means to achieve change and progress. Zip it. The game begins and ends on the field with the kids... leave it there, where it belongs. Not in the stands, not on social media... in their capable young hands.

#8 Guests are Best When at Rest

Hopefully, you know and abide by proper team protocols and standards of behavior at your children's practices and games. Grandma, Grandpa, Aunt Sally and Neighbor Charlie do not... let 'em know what's over the line.

#9 Who Put Them in Charge?

Well, it probably wasn't you. If ya gotta beef with the coach(es), handle it like an adult - away from the kids. Your child's welfare and well-being are your responsibility. If things are askew, find out who is in charge and take it up with them... again, handled like adults away from the kids.

#10 Cooler Heels versus Hot Kickin' Boots

Need we say it again? Come on, man/mam! All sports - including youth sports - evoke strong emotions. Learning to channel emotions into positive outcomes is one of the most valuable lessons to be derived from participation in youth sports.

Don't do something that you and your child will regret. If your team doesn't have a mandatory "cooling off period" before addressing emotional disagreements, then identify and use your own.

BONUS TIP: It is complicated, but strive to enjoy the journey and strive to make it enjoyable for your child too.

We are all different... every child, every coach, every official, every parent... and there's no one way to do anything. There's nothing that we care about more than our children - their welfare and their futures. IT CAN BE DARN SCARY, EXCITING, EXHILERATING AND DISAPPOINTING -- ALL WRAPPED IN ONE PACKAGE. When your child competes, they will be faced with adversity, obstacles and new peer social interaction... permitting them to practice and hone life skills. Support them and always be mindful of the importance of developing a positive self-image and self-esteem. Life lessons can be derived from both victories and losses, then applied to future, real-life situations. Young, parents haven't been through it before. A bad day is just a prelude to better days ahead. Stay calm.