



## Topics for Parent Education

So let's assume that you have made a commitment to devote time and effort to educating the parents of your athletes. Where do you begin? What topics should you include?

### Preseason

- **For all of the parents.** During the pre or early season it is important to make both new and old members feel welcome to your program. Traditionally coaches have a Parents' Meeting packed with information about the upcoming season, usually focusing on procedures, rules, uniforming, volunteer recruitment, financial commitments and fundraising. It is very important to set the tone for the season. This is your opportunity to sell yourself, your program and your ideas. Look, speak and act professionally!
- Sample topics include:
  - Your coaching philosophy and expectations
  - Your goals and plans for the season
  - Workout and practice policies, especially any changes over the previous season
  - Volunteerism
  - Communication: how to get in touch with a coach
  - Staff responsibilities: who does what
  - A complete agenda is included on this CD.
- **For new parents.** The general meeting may be a bit overwhelming to brand new parents who may not even have the sport vocabulary mastered as you start talking about different levels of competition or training groups. While these new parents should attend the general meeting, it is a good idea to have a separate meeting, with written handouts, for new parents only. (See New Team Parents' Orientation Meeting.)
- **Other parent education topics.** During the season, plan to conduct periodic meetings and make written communications available on a variety of pertinent topics. Where applicable, consider having an outside speaker present to the parents. If you are not an expert on a topic, bring in some one who is!
- Tailor your parent presentations to the level and age of their athletes. Talking about the college recruiting process does not really interest the parents of novice swimmers.



# SUCCESSFUL SPORTS PARENTING

## Suggested Topics for Each Basic Level

### Recreational or Novice Level

- Basic rules of the sport
- Benefits of participation at this level
- What is the child doing in practice
- Basic expectations for being a team member
- How the team functions: administrative, governance, team rules
- How to contact the coach and where to get information
- How to help and volunteer
- Reasonable expectation of child's progress
- Introductory level competition: expectations for the parent and child
- The 10 Commandments
- Intro to growth and development

### Mid Level

- Benefits of participation at this level
- Understanding basic child growth and development (early vs. late maturers)
- Understanding basic child psychology and goal setting
- Levels of competition: moving up the steps
- Dealing with success and disappointment
- What to expect during the season (competitions, season plan, expectations of athlete performance during various phases)
- Basic nutrition
- Intro to drugs and supplements
- Expanding commitment of parent: appropriate parental involvement and volunteerism
- Increased commitment of the child
- Coach-athlete-parent: communication and roles



# SUCCESSFUL SPORTS PARENTING

## Senior and/or Elite Level

- Body changes, puberty and growth
- Drugs and supplements
- Injury and illness: prevention and coming back from
- College recruiting
- Reaching the highest levels: what is it and how to get there, plateaus, focus, taper
- Dealing with success and disappointment
- Expectations for parents: optimal push and letting go
- Coach-parent-athlete: communication and roles
- Fueling for training and competition

This is not an all-inclusive comprehensive list but it should certainly get you started. There will be other topics related specifically to your sport or to the level of athlete in your program. Remember, the more time and effort you spend educating parents, the better the chances that you will have the parents "on the team!"