

## **How to handle Baseball parents**

No one ever says "Gee, Honey, little Johnny is old enough, let's get him on a baseball team, make complete jerks of ourselves and drive some coach crazy!"...but it happens. The wise coach understands that he is not just teaching boys to play baseball but is shepherding a group of families through the baseball experience.

He must explain to the parents their role in this adventure. I suggest an early Parents Only Meeting. I lay out a list of do's and don'ts a coach should communicate to the parents.

1. DO Get your son to practice and games on time or arrange transportation. I am not a taxi service.
2. When practice is over, take him home. I am not a baby sitter. (I once had a mother enroll in night school figuring that I'd watch her little darling every day after practice until she could pick him up!) The coach can't leave any player at the field after practice so that parent that shows up 15 minutes late is not to be tolerated.
3. DO get involved. I need help.
4. DO encourage your son to do his home training. This is just like homework and the parent needs to get involved and cherish the experience. This is important as it makes couch potato Dads get off their butts and share this precious time with their sons.
5. DON'T pressure your son to succeed in the games. This experience is about the journey not the destination. It is probably not a good idea to go over his every mistake in last night's game over breakfast.
6. DO cheer for the team.
7. DON'T cheer against the opposition. In fact, if they make a good play applaud.
8. DON'T yell at the umpires. That is insulting to the coach and indicates that you think he won't look out for the best interest of the team. Yelling, "Come on Blue" will not result in more favorable calls.
9. DON'T coach from the stands. Is there anything worse than some Mom who knows nothing about baseball yelling little coaching catch phrases at her son while he tries to hit, like, "get your elbow up"? I have no problem going over to the backstop and calling the Mom out and telling her to be quiet.
10. DON'T come to me with your ideas about the lineup or playing time. This is probably the most important DON'T. It allows the coach to tell the parent/agent when he comes up to inform the coach that he thinks his son should be the shortstop, "What part of, we are not going to have this conversation did you not understand." Parents have no say so in how the team is run. Plus, the players are on the team, not the parents. If a player has something to say about his situation, he should talk with the coach. He must learn to confront his boss. That is one of those lessons in life we talk about learning from baseball. My eldest son played for Gary Ward at Ok State. Coach Ward told them that if they weren't man enough to come to his office and discuss a problem, then he didn't think they had a problem... with baseball. My son says that for the rest of his life he will never be intimidated to meet with an executive even the President of the US because nothing could possibly be as scary as going to Coach Ward but he did it and is a better man for it.
11. DO your part in the field maintenance program, concession stand duty, etc. I even went so far as to tell the parents "I don't do fields. I coach baseball. You will be responsible for organizing field duty". It worked.
12. **HAVE FUN!!!** Enjoy this precious time in your son's life.

Parents can be your best friends or your worst nightmare. You control which.