

Three Ways for Parents to Avoid Politics in Youth Sports

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in For better or worse youth sports, especially as the competition level grows, can be full of drama. Parents team up against coaches, [coaches penalize players](#) for the action of their parents, league administrators [pick teams made of their friends](#), parents get into it with each other, and more. Too much drama can suck the fun right out of a season, and keeping your hands out of the fray might be the best way to ensure your child doesn't get caught in the cross-fire of youth sports drama.

Here are three things parents can do to avoid youth sports politics:

1. Ask the coach about their expectations before the season starts. The best way to avoid confrontation/politics is to know what you are in for before the season starts. If your child has to miss a practice will they be benched during the next game? How will to coach ensure every players gets time on the field? What is their policy for pickup and drop-off at practice? Are there any rules you as the parent are expected to abide by? The more you know in advance about how the season should go the fewer surprises you'll be in for. If they written their policies up you can always pull those rules out should they not be following their own guidelines!

2. Don't get sucked in if other parents are complaining. Misery loves company, and parents that feel like their child isn't getting the playing time/recognition they deserve are bound to cause a fuss on the sidelines. They might start looking for allies and other parents are the first target. If you don't want to get involved in the politics of youth sports than don't get sucked in to another parents' drama. If they have a legitimate concern/complaint they can take it up with the coach after the game without having to drag you into the drama.

3. Encourage your child to speak up for themselves. When kids play on more high-powered travel teams most coaches don't adhere to the equal time for every player rule. If your son/daughter isn't getting to play as often as they want, or not getting to play the position they want, encourage them to talk to the coach themselves and remove yourself from the situation. Chances are the coach will be impressed that a young player is taking the initiative to find out what they need to do to improve and earn their spot. If you get involved it might create drama with the coach, especially if it comes across like you are trying to tell them how to do your job.

Granted, if your child is being bullied or teased or truly can't earn their spot on the field you have every right to speak up, but make sure you're coming in when necessary, and not just because you want to "fix" everything and make the team "perfect" for your child.

If you really want to change things, it might be worth looking into volunteering as a coach for the next season, or maybe even joining

the league board. Granted, getting really involved means dealing with more drama, but sometimes it's easier to prevent drama from the inside out!