



# Saint Ignatius College Prep Boys' Basketball

## 14 Points for Being a Parent of an Athlete

**1. Tell your child every time you watch them play, "I loved watching you play today."**

Please think about how that would make you feel! It takes the pressure off of your child and allows them to simply enjoy the game.

**2. Do not soften the blow for your child after a loss.**

If they lose, teach them to not make excuses, to learn from the loss, and move on. Many times the players move on from the loss quicker than the parents. We get better through setbacks if we face our challenges head on. It also makes us mentally tougher and resilient - two important life skills to develop.

**3. Teach them to be a part of something greater than themselves.**

Teach them this by applauding their efforts and their coachability. Do not coach them to look to score, take over the game, show their talent, or shoot more. If you teach them to be "me-first" players they will miss out on the experience of being part of a team. Teamwork teaches humility, working toward collective goals, and being part of something greater than any one individual. All young people need to learn these skills.

**4. Do not coach your child.**

Coaching your child will confuse them. Allow them to experience how to deal with others. Encourage your child to listen to the coach. Although you may not always agree with every decision a coach makes, you can rest assured that no matter what they have the best interests of the team and your child at heart. A very simple definition of each person's role puts it into perspective. Players = play, coaches = coach, officials = officiate, parents = support. Make sure to play your role well and don't try to assume someone else's role.

**5. Do not approach your child's coach about playing time.**

Encourage your child to speak with their coach. A coach should be honest with their players about where they stand and what they need to do to improve. Your job is not to approach the coach about playing time or strategy. Your child needs to learn to advocate for themselves and learn how to communicate with others. Remember that a player being a valuable member of the team is important. It is not all about playing time. Also, your child may be a less experienced player and may need to develop. Many players do not come into their own until their senior year.

**6. Do not compare your child to others, but encourage them to be the best that they can be!**

If a parent is constantly trying to have their child be better than someone else, the child will always be second best... but if you encourage your child to be the best they can be and compete to be that everyday, they will get better and they will reach their potential.

**7. Cheer for all! Never speak negatively about your child or another child or coach.**

We would not want anyone to speak negatively about our child, so do not speak of someone else's child negatively.





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## **8. Be self disciplined.**

Basketball is an emotional game. It can bring out the best in us. It can also bring out the worst in us if we are not careful. Keep your emotions under control. Would you want someone yelling at you from the stands? Would you want someone yelling at you at work?

## **9. Let it be your child's experience.**

In order to do so, we must acknowledge that we can not control the experience of our child... that is why it's called an experience. When we experience something we will have good times and bad times, great moments and average plays, we will deal with victory and defeat... allow your child to experience these highs and lows in sport which will give them the tools to deal with the ups and downs of life. If we try to control the experience, our child is not being prepared for life.

## **10. Teach them to play for the love of the game and not a trophy or individual recognition.**

Teach your child that they are playing for the love of the game, for their teammates, and for the love of competition. Think about if you could teach your child to be a great competitor, a great teammate, and to love what they do - that would be special! In youth sports we need to get away from the fact that everyone gets a trophy. If we do, we are teaching them to play for the reward rather than understanding that the reward is playing the game itself.

## **11. Focus on the process.**

Sports, like life, are a process. We need to attack the process everyday to grow and get better. The process is hard work, knowledge, attitude, perseverance, teamwork, coachability, dealing with success and failure - winning is only the by-product of the process in sports and in life.

## **12. Enjoy the journey of your child.**

Any journey we take is bound to have great moments, some bad moments, and some moments that we laugh at. Enjoy the journey with your child and do not agonize over every single play, decision by the coach, or a good game/bad game by your child or their team. In 25 years, you will wish you were watching your child play sports. Enjoy the journey while you can!

## **13. Be a parent, not a fan.**

Your child will make mistakes. Your child is not always perfect. Teach them when needed and make sure to compliment them when needed. There is always a teachable moment in any situation.

## **14. Do not make excuses.**

"The teacher or coach does not like me" is a familiar excuse. In the end, coaches and teachers like players that work hard, are coachable, have a great attitude, show perseverance, are good teammates, and more. Teach your child to show their coach these attributes.

*Credit: University of Washington Women's Basketball Newsletter*

