

Parent/Coach Communication Guidelines

Parent/Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely challenging vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to athletes. As a parent, when your athlete becomes involved in the Grand Rapids Crew Juniors (GRCJ) program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed upon him or her. This begins with clear communication from the coach.

Communication You Should Expect From Your Athlete's Coach

- *Philosophy of the coach.*
- *Expectations the coach has for your athlete as well as all the players on the team.*
- *Locations and times of all practices and contests.*
- *Team requirements, i.e. fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.*
- *Procedure should your athlete be injured during participation.*
- *Actions that may result in the denial of your athlete's participation.*

Communication Coaches Expect From the Parent

- *Concerns expressed directly to the coach.*
- *Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.*
- *Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.*

When your athlete becomes involved in our program, he/she will experience some of the most challenging and rewarding moments of his/her life. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way your athlete wishes. At these times, the expectation is that the athlete, not the parent, will initiate a discussion with the coach about the concerns. We believe this approach is both the most likely way to a positive end, and a valuable learning experience for the athlete. The coaches have been instructed to encourage this type of dialogue and to promptly set aside time for individual, private appointments when requested.

(U8-U12)

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss With Coaches

- *The treatment of your athlete, mentally and physically*
- *Ways to help your athlete improve*
- *Concerns about your athlete's behavior*
- *Playing time*
- *Team strategy and tactics*
- *Other athletes - if they are affecting your child*

During the normal course of the season, situations will arise that require communication with the coach. When this situation occurs we expect both parties involved to have a clear understanding of the other's position. If the situation cannot be resolved adequately, please follow the "The Next Step" process outline below.

(U13-U19)

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss With Coaches

- *The treatment of your athlete, mentally and physically*
- *Ways to help your athlete improve*
- *Concerns about your athlete's behavior*

It is difficult to accept that your athlete may not be playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your athlete's coach. Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss With Coaches

- *Playing time*
- *Team strategy and tactics*
- *Other athletes*

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. Such meetings are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution of the issue of concern:

The Procedure to Follow if You Have a Concern to Discuss with a Coach

- *Call to set up an appointment with the coach*

Please do not attempt to confront a coach before/after a practice or match. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

The Next Step

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution? Write to Tom Bestrom - Trustee, Conflict Resolution Coordinator (tbestrom@steelcase.com) outlining the facts and concerns of the situation. As appropriate, additional meetings will be set up and the situation will be addressed.

Approved by the Grand Rapids Crew Juniors Board of Directors, October 6, 2008