

“An Athlete’s Pride”

Author: Unknown

“I’m a high school player. I’m a team player. I play with my friends and with some of my enemies but I respect everyone when it comes to my sport. I know I’m not going to get a multi-million dollar contract to play professionally. I know I may not even get my name in the paper. *I play for love of the game.* For the pride and honor, for the blood, sweat and tears it takes to make the team, to earn the spot, to win the game. I play because I can; I play because I know that my life would be empty without the sport I play. I would have a lack of everything my sport gives me...integrity, courage, talent, fearlessness, pride, strength, stamina, will, and the heart of a champion. If I didn’t play, I would lose a part of me. I’m an athlete. I’m a girl. I’m a champion, not because my team always wins, but because when we don’t, we learn from our mistakes. We try to fix them and most of all because we have fun. I have built lifelong friendships and memories because of me being an athlete. I leave everything on the field and continue to push myself. I am never happy with second place, but I have learned to accept it. I have learned to get over and through my anger and be the athlete and player I have always dreamed of being. I don’t play for my parents, for my family, for my friends; I don’t play for my coach or my teachers or my school. I play for myself, but when I’m playing I represent them. It isn’t about winning or losing, but I hate to lose. I won’t settle for a tie, and I am not satisfied with anything less than 100%. To play, you have to sacrifice everything: your body, your time, your sweat, blood, and tears, everything...for your team. I am a player, and athlete and a champion, not because I know what it is like to win, but because I know what it is like to lose. I know what it is like to feel the anger and pain that comes along with “second best”. I have been that girl with tears in her eyes, walking out to receive the second place trophy and clapping as the other team, my opponents, receive the first place one. I know what it is like to lose, to win, to want to quit, to want to cry, to not want to get up. I know what it is like to hear the cheers and yells for you. I know what it is like to feel the pressure of everyone on your shoulders, and I know what it is like to choke under that pressure. I know what it means to be an athlete, a true player, and that is why I play. I AM AN ATHLETE, A CHAMPION, A TRUE PLAYER.”

Parental Creed

For the best results, parents should memorize and use the following when talking with their daughters:

Before the match:

- 1. I love you**
- 2. Good luck**
- 3. Have fun**

After the match:

- 1. I love you**
- 2. It was great to see you play**
- 3. What would you like to eat?**



Parental Behavior

Suggestions from the coach: (all in good humor)

- Pants shall be worn high enough not to show your underwear at all games.
- Jewelry is allowed, but only if tasteful and does not present a danger to the person sitting next to you.
- Your eating area shall be cleaned after any post-game meal in a restaurant; food fights with the other team's parents are prohibited.
- Only those persons who get above a 90% or above on the yearly referee test may yell at the referee; only those with an IQ of less than 50 may yell at the coach.
- You do not need to genuflect in the presence of the coach; a curtsy or slight bow is all that is necessary.
- There shall be no foul language, birdcalls, peacocking, goosing or ruffling of feathers during games.
- At no time shall you make derogatory comments towards the opposition, as they may be a distant relative.
- Long balls to the opposition are not to be complimented with "oohs" and "aahs" on the length and height of the pass; however, short precision passes that may lead to a long ball to an open teammate can be applauded.
- And last, but not least, you are mandated to have some fun this season. Everyone else will.



Job Description for Parents ***Unknown***

Thought those of you considering the new job of parent might want to take a look at the requirements first.

POSITION: Parent

JOB DESCRIPTION: Long-term person needed for challenging, permanent work in chaotic environment. Candidates must possess excellent communication and organizational skills and be willing to work evenings, weekends, and frequent 24-hour shifts. There is some overnight travel required, including trips to primitive camping sites on rainy weekends and endless sports tournaments in far-away cities. Travel expenses not reimbursed.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Must keep this job for the rest of your life. Must be willing to be hated, at least temporarily. Must be willing to bite tongue repeatedly. Must possess the physical stamina of a pack mule and be willing to tackle stimulating technical challenges such as small gadget repair, sluggish toilets, and stuck zippers. Candidates must handle assembly and product safety testing, as well as floor maintenance and janitorial work. Must screen phone calls, maintain calendars, and coordinate production of multiple homework projects. Must have ability to plan and organize social gatherings for clients of all ages and levels of mentality. Must be willing to be indispensable one minute and an embarrassment the next. Must assume final, complete accountability for the quality of the end product.

ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION: There is no possibility of either. Your job is to remain in the same position for years, without complaining, constantly retraining and updating your skills so that those in your charge can ultimately surpass you.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: None required, but on-the-job training is offered on a continually exhausting basis.

WAGES: None. In fact, you must pay those in your charge, offering frequent raises and bonuses. A balloon payment is due when they turn 18 and attend college. When you die, you give them whatever income you have left.

BENEFITS: There is no health nor dental insurance, no pension, no tuition reimbursement, no paid holidays, and no stock options. However, the job offers limitless opportunities for personal growth and free hugs for life.

Are You a Pushy Parent?

All parents like to encourage their child to excel in sports but it's easy to get caught up in the excitement of games and practices and become over-zealous. Research has shown that all athletes improve more with positive reinforcement than negative criticism. In fact, 85 percent of athletes will improve if you work with them in a positive way and give them compliments for achievement and specific information they can use to work on skills. Be on the look out for these warning signs that you've crossed the line.

10. You push your child with the hopes of getting them an athletic scholarship or have aspirations of pro sports career for them.
9. You are more concerned about the team winning than if your child had fun participating.
8. You force your child to practice at home until YOU think they've shown significant improvement.
7. You punish or act coldly toward your child if they don't perform up to your expectations.
6. You constantly compare your child's skill to others.
5. Your child no longer enjoys playing the sport and maybe even has asked you to stop coming to games.
4. You get in game-related arguments with other parents.
3. You talk to the coach a lot about the way he or she coaches the game and what positions each of the children are playing.
2. During games you shout negative, critical remarks at your child, other children, the coaches and referees.
1. You focus on the outcome of the game.

Think about it people, are the kids playing for us or are they playing because they enjoy the game and being with friends. I say, LET THEM PLAY!

National Alliance for Youth Sports



Sideline Rules of Conduct

This is an excerpt from the FC Royals newsletter of a few years back which we all need to remember now and then-even when we have graduated to watching beyond club or high school soccer.

For many of life's endeavors there are unwritten, but fiercely enforced, codes of conduct which must be followed if law and order is to prevail. Soccer is not exempt from such codes and for the benefit of those parents and girls new to the Royals and/or premier soccer your trust reporter will try and explain some of those rules:

Rule #1: Thou Shalt Not Praise Thy Own Daughter. It is late in the second half of a vital game and the score is tied against the arch-villain traditional enemies. Your daughter performs a full speed slide tackle to strip the ball from an attacker who eluded the keeper 3 feet from the goal. She does a "pop-up" slide and comes to her feet without ever losing the ball. Juking and faking, she takes a run up the touchline, leaving opponents sprawling in her wake and then, sensing the whistle is about to blow, hits an off-foot shot from 35 yards that starts out 20 yards wide and hooks back just into the upper "V" to win the game. Your reaction, a pleased smile. A little leap no more than 4 inches off the ground. No cries of "Where is Anson Dorrance when you really need him?" No matter your intent, shoveling plaudits on your own kid is seen as basically self-promotion, selfish, and destructive to team unity. Other parents will mutter darkly and cast jealous glances at you.

Rule #2: Though Shalt Praise Other Parents' Daughters. The reason that you don't have to praise your own daughter is that it is the sworn duty of the other parents to do it for you. In situation #1 they will give you high-fives, hug you, and generally declare that the spirit of Pele (or Mia Hamm) is being channeled by your child. When someone else's little girl does anything ranging from mediocre to spectacular you will run up to them with similar comments, assuring them that international stardom is only a short time away, and that is proof that the gene pool runs true. When another girl does something appallingly awful you are duty-bound to rush to the grieving parent to assure them that it wasn't that bad, and that she's been having such a good game she can be forgiven for one little goof.

Rule #3: Though Shalt Never Criticize Players in Public. The coach has done it again. Starting at striker is a girl who is slower than American Online, completely clueless about the tactical niceties of her position, and to whom "airhead" would have to be considered a compliment. You see the opposing team laughing and pointing. You groan in what you think is a quiet voice "How can he even keep that dolt on the team?" Your feet leave the ground as you discover that the hulking behemoth behind you is her Uncle/Brother who you had never met. You can generally take as a given that the players are trying as hard as they can with differing amounts of skill. Desirable as a "skillectomy" might be, the ability to trap a line drive and drop it on the shooting foot cannot be grafted on or surgically attached. Secondly, players are quite aware when they have made a bonehead play. You will rarely hear a player shout, "Thanks guys, I didn't realize that whiffing was a bad thing!" Thirdly, even at the U-18 level these are still our kids – not professionals – and even the pros make mistakes. The pros are paid to be able to take criticism that is aimed at their play rather than themselves as persons. Your daughters aren't.

Rule #4: When Commenting about the Field Action, Silence is Golden. At times you may feel like commenting upon the quality of play, the quality of officiating, and the

coaches' decisions. Due to your years of observing from the sidelines and the fact that you coached the "Sunflowers" in the U-8 rec league you may have the belief that your opinions are (1) accurate, (2) incisive, and (3) worthy of communicating loudly so everyone else can hear them. You are wrong. Neither the players, the referees, nor the coach are going to make any changes in response to your bellows from the sideline. They are, however, going to be mad at you – joining a group including your spouse, your friends, and anyone standing close to you. Kids goof, refs goof, coaches goof. Before you shout, picture your next day at work as you are working on a project and in the doorway to your office are a crowd of players, coaches and refs booing you and demanding that you be fired.

Rule #5: Silence Can Be Deadly. The usual response to your sideline comments is a tug on your shirt from your spouse, a glare, rolling of eyes by your neighbors, and a silent promise by your daughter to change her name and become an orphan. However, there are those times when your comments result in a sudden fall of silence and you becoming the center of attention from the sidelines and the field. Sort of like in the 4th grade when you fell asleep in class and made that funny sound when you startled awake. This means you have **CROSSED THE LINE** from being an obnoxious parent/fan to another status entirely – such as the Unknown Brother at a U-16 Regional game making anatomically uncomfortable suggestions about where a referee's unblown whistle should reside. When silence falls and you are the focus of everyone's attention it may be time to announce that you are overdue at the hospital to perform a lifesaving operation and to slink away at top speed.

Rule #6: This is Still a Game. Despite the fact that each player's family has invested a great deal of time and money in soccer at this level, and they are hoping that soccer will help pay the college bills, it is still a game and if your daughter doesn't enjoy it she will not play well – and maybe not at all. Ask yourself if what you do at games, practices and tournaments helps your daughter have fun and enjoy the game or adds pressure and worry. Ask yourself after the game if watching two teams of beautiful, talented, fit and eager young ladies was fun to you? If it wasn't- if you found yourself criticizing, harping, upset and unhappy – remember that there is enough pressure and stress involved in making a living and guiding your family through the challenges of modern life. Forget the calls, forget the score, and forget the standings. Give your daughter a hug, tell her you love her, and be thankful for every day you have to share with her because they don't stay kids very long.



Unique Issues for the Female Soccer Player

Since the passage of Title IX in 1972, the number of females participating in sports and exercise has dramatically increased. There are numerous health benefits and risks that have resulted from increased participation. Although many medical issues relate to men and women, there are some concerns specific to females.

The Female Athlete Triad, defined in the early 90's, represents a health risk to female athletes. The Triad is defined by three separate medical disorders: disordered eating, amenorrhea, and osteoporosis.

Disordered eating is a wide range of abnormal eating patterns including bingeing, purging, restricting food intake, or prolonged fasting. The individual may be using prescription or over the counter medicine to help them achieve control over food/weight. Inappropriate though, patterns such as preoccupation with food, distorted body image, fear of becoming fat, or dissatisfaction with one's body are also a component of the disorder. Disordered eating can range from moderate food restriction, occasional bingeing and purging to severe food restriction (anorexia nervosa) and regular bingeing/purging (bulimia nervosa). All are risks for developing serious hormonal, skeletal and psychiatric disorders.

The prevalence of the disorder among female athletes is reported between 15% to 62%. It is most commonly seen in sports where a lead body is considered essential (e.g. gymnastics, figure skating, dance, diving, etc), but can be seen in other sports as well. The treatment of disordered eating is best left to health care professionals. If you notice some of the behaviors, signs or symptoms you need to try to get the player to seek help.

The second component of the Triad is amenorrhea. Primary amenorrhea is defined as the absence of menstruation by the age of 16. Secondary amenorrhea is the absence of 3 to 6 consecutive menstrual cycles in women who have already begun menstruating. The prevalence of this disorder in female athletes ranged from 3.4% to 66% as compared to 2% to 5% in the general female population. Never assume that any change in the menstrual status in an athlete is due to training. A physician should be consulted.

The last disorder of the Triad is osteoporosis; premature bone loss or inadequate bone formation that results in decreased bone density. Low bone density makes the bones weaker, increasing the risk of fracture for the athlete. The prevalence of the disorder in female athletes is unclear. Women athletes suffer more stress fractures than men and low bone density is a likely cause. Current medical research indicated that osteoporosis may be irreversible.

All female athletes are at risk for developing the Triad. We must be concerned about the player attempting to lose weight during the season. In season, she increases her energy output (increased exercise) while restricting energy intake (less food eaten). In an attempt to conserve energy, menstrual cycles may become irregular or absent. Less estrogen leads to the loss of bone density. Thus, you see how all three conditions are related. In-season is not the time to try to lose weight; the time for that is off-season.

There are some factors that may predispose the athlete to developing the Triad. Some internal factors are a focus on thinness, greater caloric output versus intake, and the athlete's ability to deal with life stressors. External factors that may influence the development of the Triad include pressure from others to perform, harmful training techniques, overly controlling coach/parent, social isolation, or family history of some component of the disorder. It is critical that you are aware of the risk factors, signs and symptoms of the Triad.

This sports science article comes from the Sports Medicine Section at the Duke University Medical Center and UNC Hospitals. The authors are members of the US Soccer Sports Medicine Committee including from UNC Dr. William E. Garrett, Jr. (US National Teams Physicians and Committee Chairman), and John Lohnes. From Duke are Dr. Don Kirkendall (exercise physiologist) and Patty Marchak (athletic trainer for the 1996 US Women's Olympic Team).