

Double-Goal Coaching Approach

The “Double-Goal Coach” is a training program administered by the Positive Coaching Alliance and is derived from successful coaching strategies and behaviors common among a broad range of sports and successfully demonstrated by prominent coaches throughout our nation.

As your coach I am committed to the principles of the Positive Coaching Alliance and against a “win at-all-cost” mentality. By comparison, a win-at-all-cost coach has only one goal in mind – to win. A Positive Coach shares that goal (wants to win) but has a second goal that is equally important – to use the sports experience to help young people learn “life lessons” and build positive character traits that will help them be successful throughout their life.

Help me promote the three PCA principles which have the power to “transform youth sports so that sports can transform our youth.”

The three principles, explained in this letter, are:

1. Redefining “Winner”
2. Filling the Emotional Tank
3. Honoring the Game



REDEFINING WINNER

In professional sports (entertainment), there is only one goal – to have the most points at the end of a contest. However, in youth sports (which is education), there is a second goal: to produce young people who will be winners in life.

To help our children get the most out of competitive sports, we need to redefine what it means to be a “winner.” Winners are people who:

- Make maximum effort
- Continue to learn and improve
- Refuse to let mistakes (or fear of making mistakes) stop them

This is called a Mastery Orientation. Mastery is described as an ELM Tree where ELM stands for **E**ffort, **L**earning, and rebounding from **M**istakes.

If our athletes keep these things in mind, they will develop habits that will serve them well throughout their lives.

There is an added benefit. Athletes who are coached with a Mastery Orientation tend to have reduced anxiety and increased self-confidence. And when athletes feel less anxiety, they are more likely to have fun playing their sport and ultimately do better!

Here's how you can help:

1. Tell your child that it's OK to make a mistake.
2. Let your child know you appreciate it when she tries hard even if unsuccessful.
3. Ask rather than tell. Try to get your child to talk about her play rather than telling her what you think about it. Ask open-ended questions to get them to talk (e.g., “What was the best part of the game for you?”)
4. Recognize that Mastery is hard work. Let the coaches criticize your child's play. Tell your child you are proud of them regardless of the outcome of the game.

FILLING THE EMOTIONAL TANK

Research shows that the home team wins about 60% of the time because of the emotional support a team receives when it plays in front of its own fans. Like gas tanks in cars, athletes have “Emotional Tanks” that need to be filled to do their best.

There will be times when you need to correct and criticize. Research has shown that a “Magic Ratio” of 5:1 (praise to criticism) is ideal. Help us achieve this Magic Ratio with your child.

Here’s how you can help:

1. Our #1 job is to fill your child’s Emotional Tank. Encourage her regardless of what happens in the game.
2. Try not to give your child a lot of advice (which after a tough game can seem like criticism, which drains a person’s tank). Remember, it’s difficult to do well with a low tank. When she makes a mistake, you might say, “Don’t worry. Let’s get the next one. You can do it.” After tough losses, it’s often helpful to acknowledge feelings of disappointment. For example, you might say “I can imagine you must be disappointed to have lost.”
3. Use the “3-Pluses-and-a-Wish” technique. Before you give advice, find three good things about your child’s performance. Phrase the advice as a wish:
 - *You really tried hard in the game today (Plus #1).*
 - *I also saw you encourage your teammate after she made a mistake (Plus #2).*
 - *And that play you made toward the end of the game shows how much you are improving (Plus #3).*
 - *I wish you wouldn’t get down on yourself when you make a mistake.*

If you can’t come up with three pluses, then don’t say the wish because then it may drain her emotional tank rather than fill it.

4. Remember the Magic Ratio*. Praise your child about 5 times for every time you criticize. If you do, she will be better able to hear your criticism without becoming defensive.

It’s called the Magic Ratio because great things happen when we get close to it with our children.

HONORING THE GAME

Honoring the Game gets to the **ROOTS** of positive play, where ROOTS stands for respecting:

1. **Rules:** We don’t bend the rules to win.
2. **Opponents:** A worthy opponent is a gift that forces us to play to our highest potential.
3. **Officials:** We treat officials with respect even when we disagree.
4. **Teammates:** We never do anything that would embarrass our team on or off the field.
5. **Self:** We live up to our own standards regardless of what others do.

Here’s how you can help:

1. Let your child know that you want her to Honor The Game. Discuss the meaning of each element of ROOTS with your athlete.
2. Be a good role model. Honor the Game when you attend games. Cheer both teams when good plays are made. If, in your opinion, an officiating mistake is made, be silent! Use this as an opportunity to think about how difficult it is to officiate a game perfectly.
3. Encourage other parents to Honor the Game