

This document contains four important articles for parents of athletes who are participating in **Classics Basketball's AAU Club** teams, clinics, or other basketball programs. **Classics Basketball Inc. expects parents, guardians, and other adults to abide by the rules, guidance, and philosophy stated within this document and the Classics Club and Team Expectations document also available for download from the Classics Basketball main page – [www.classicsbasketball.com](http://www.classicsbasketball.com)**

**WARNING:** Failure of a parent/guardian (aka “a-dolt” allegedly an adult) to follow these rules, guidance and philosophy may result in that parent being asked to not come inside the gym, stay at home or otherwise stay away from the Classics teams, players and coaches, with the worst case result, Classics having to turn their child away from our programs, because of their a-dolt parent’s inability to behave as an adult.

## **Article 1: Let the Coach Do the Coaching by John Busby**

It’s a common sound around gyms, ballparks and soccer fields or any venue where youth sports are being played. Moms and Dads yelling at their kids to “run faster,” “pay attention,” “pass the ball,” “shoot it now!!!!!!” **The only person giving instructions to the players should be the head coach or the assistant coaches.**

I caught myself doing this at my son’s roller hockey game the other week (as both an assistant coach and a sideline dad) and I thought to myself, “I wonder what he thinks when I yell instructions to him.” So I asked him, “You do know that when I yell instructions to you, I’m not yelling at you, I’m just trying to help?” He responded, “I know that Dad, but you could wait and just tell me when I come over to the bench or after the game.” And you know what, he’s right.

The only person giving instructions to the players should be the head coach or the assistant coaches. We often forget (or have never experienced) what it’s like playing in a competitive atmosphere. It’s hard enough running, getting where you’re supposed to be and playing your best, let alone having to listen to three different people yell three sets of instructions that you’re not doing or should do (and usually never the same things).

Next time you’re going to yell something to your child, try yelling, “Good job, keep up the good work” and leave it at that. Hopefully the parents around you will follow your lead. I guarantee your child won’t tell you after the game, “Geez Dad/Mom, I missed you yelling instructions to me during the game.”

The Basketball Highway by Jonathon Buzby

[http://www.bbhighway.com/Talk/Coaching\\_Box/Clinics/Youth/jon\\_buzby\\_let\\_the\\_coach.asp](http://www.bbhighway.com/Talk/Coaching_Box/Clinics/Youth/jon_buzby_let_the_coach.asp)

Publishers Note: Jonathan Buzby is the Director of Coaches Education for Special Olympics Delaware and is a volunteer coach for the Western Y.M.C.A. of Newark, Delaware. He has over fifteen years of experience administrating, teaching and coaching children in sports. He has written a book titled, "Coaching Kids: It's More than X's and O's" and is a freelance writer for various sports publications. To order a copy of the book for \$6.00 (shipping and handling included) contact Kids-n-Sports at: (302) 368-3698.

## Article 2: Top 10 Rules of Parental Behavior at Their Kids' Games

The following list of rules for parent behavior at their kids' games was prepared by Rick Wolff, a leading national expert on youth sports and Chairman of the [Center for Sports Parenting](#). They are each expanded upon below. This is a great list of rules for parents that all of our Classics parents should follow.

1. Parents should be seen, but not heard too often.
2. If you have to say something, it should only be positive praise.
3. Never criticize your kid....and never, ever criticize somebody else's kid
4. Please do not do a play-by-play of the game.
5. If you can't control your mouth, then don't stand with the other parents.
6. Refs are not there to be abused in any way.
7. It's okay to applaud a nice play by an opposing player.
8. Understand that you are a role model for the kids.
9. If a coach or a ref tells you to calm down, please take that caution seriously.
10. Try to give your kid a smile.

### Here is a little more detail about each of the Top 10 Rules of Parental Behavior at their Kids' Games:

1. Parents should be seen, but not heard too often - it's fine and good to go and watch your child play. But as a parent, you should try to blend in with the woodwork. Don't draw attention to yourself - the games are all about **YOUR child, NOT about YOU**. As such, parents (not children) should be SEEN....but not HEARD.

2. If you have to say something, it should only be positive praise. Very simple. If you absolutely feel compelled to cheer, make sure your comments are only positive! And make your comments generic in tone. That is, "Way to go guys" or "Great job girls" is much more effective than highlighting just one kid. Root for the TEAM - not just one individual kid.

3. Never criticize your kid....and never, ever criticize somebody else's kid! This is an absolute sin. If you feel compelled to try and coach your kid from the sidelines, or make some disparaging remarks, e.g. "C'mon, Tommy, you're not even trying hard out there," or "Sally, you gotta get back faster on defense," then you have really crossed the line.

Coaching is the Coach's job - - NOT yours. And even though it may kill you to say nothing, well, that's too bad. Act like the grown-up adult that you are.

And by the way, if you ever criticize somebody else's kid in a game-well, now you're totally out of line and risking a well-deserved punch in the nose. You never ever criticize some other parent's kid, or risk the consequences.

4. Please do not do a play-by-play of the game. This applies mostly to youth coaches who try and dictate every play of the game while it's happening...."Okay, Sam, dribble the ball up....now pass it over to Joe....Joe, pass the ball to Mike....Mike, take the shot."

Do this, Coach, at practice....but during the game, let the kids figure it out! Otherwise, they'll become too dependent on you for constant instruction. Even worse, they'll feel that they can't be spontaneous during the game, less you get angry with them and bench them.

PS - when you played sports as a kid, did anyone dictate to you what to do?

5. If you can't control your mouth, then don't stand with the other parents....stay way far away from the others, and stand off by yourself....

Folks, you have to know your own personality. If you honestly feel that you might get too emotionally involved in your kid's game, then stand off by yourself during the action. You can come back and rejoin the sane parents during half-time, but there's nothing wrong with going away from the crowd and being alone with your thoughts.

I'd rather you do that than make a jack-ass out of yourself where everybody can hear you and confirm that you're an out of control jerk AND embarrass your kid.

6. Refs are not there to be abused in any way. Here's the deal. Without the refs, umps, or officials, the game quickly is transformed from a real game into just being a scrimmage....okay, so understand that.

Then, understand that the vast majority of sports parents DO NOT know where to draw the line when it comes to questioning a ref's call....too many parents DO think that a ref can somehow be psychologically influenced during a game, and that the parent keeps chirping and pointing out mistakes, then the ref will begin to give them the close calls.

Of course, that never happens. If anything, the ref will just get annoyed at the parent.

So, here's what you do to fix the problem. Don't say anything to the ref. And don't say anything about their calls. Let the coach do that. You, as a sideline parent, just be quiet. The ref is NOT going to change their call. The ref is NOT going to be influenced on future calls by your catcalls. So, just be quiet.

7. It's okay to applaud a nice play by an opposing player....we're trying to teach our kids to be good sports, and to respect their opponents. So if one of the opposing players makes a great play, applaud it!

That's okay - yes, even sometimes the opposing team makes good plays! And you should tell your child that it's okay for their opponents to be talented as well.

8. Understand that you are a role model for the kids - they will follow your behavior. Along those lines, ALWAYS remember that your son or daughter is watching YOU on how they should behave.

So if you're going nuts on the ref, or throwing a temper tantrum, or seem emotionally unsettled, don't be surprised if your kid starts acting the same way. And you know what? That's YOUR fault, not the kid's.

9. If a coach or a ref tells you to calm down, please take that caution seriously! You folks know I'm a big fan of zero tolerance. And if a ref or ump or official singles you out, and tells you to calm down, then consider yourself fully warned! You won't get - nor do you deserve - a second chance.

And if you can't calm down, then yes, you should be banned from the game. What gives you the right to ruin it for all the kids?

10. Try to give your kid a smile....when your kid looks over to the sideline and, for a brief moment, sees your face, please make sure you have a smile on it....or at least, a look of quiet pride. Kids DO look to parents for approval, and if you look like you're having a good time, then he or she will feel the same way.

But if you're scowling, or cursing, or stomping around, then your kid will take that as a sign that they ought to be nervous and angry too. So, relax - leave your game face at home - and wear a relaxed face to your kid's game.

### Article 3: **The Ten Commandments of Sports for Parents**

1. Make sure that your child knows that win or lose, scarred or heroes, you love him or her, appreciate the efforts, and are not disappointed in him or her.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and his or her actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, **but do not coach** your child **on the way to** the field or court **or on the way back.**
4. Teach you child to enjoy the thrill of competition. Do not say, "Winning does not count," because it does.
5. Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure because of your pride.
6. Do not compete with the coach; in many cases the coach becomes somewhat of a hero to the athletes.
7. Do not compare the skill, courage, or attitude of your child with that of other members of the team.
8. Get to know the coach so that you can be sure that his or her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to expose your child to him or her.
9. Remember that students tend to exaggerate both when praised or criticized. Temper your reactions when they bring home tales of woe or heroics.
10. Make a point of understanding courage and the fact that it is relative. All of us must know courage. Courage is not absence of fear, it is actually doing something in spite of fear.

## Article 4: What's Changed Since Parents Played Youth Sports? A Lot

**Q:** What are the differences between high-school sports now and when most parents of current high-school athletes were in school?

**A:** Got a couple of days? Probably not, so, here's an abridged version:

1) **Athletes are bigger.** It's a matter of genetics (bigger moms and dads produce bigger kids), diet and weight training, which is now a year-round activity. In 1977, when the state football championships moved inside to the Kingdome for Kingbowl I, Sumner faced Gonzaga Prep for the big-school title and the two teams had a combined total of 11 boys who weighed more than 200 pounds. Last December, when Ballard played Pasco for the Class 4A title, there were 33 boys in uniform who weighed more 200 pounds and three weighed more than 300. *Read on for 21 more interesting changes.*

2) **The caliber of play and speed involved has improved in every sport.** Most of the best athletes from earlier eras still would be forces today, but they would be surprised at how much harder it is to dominate. "It's only natural for things to keep improving," said Mercer Island boys basketball coach Ed Pepple, who has coached since 1958. "There's more instruction, more emphasis offseason, more kids lifting weights, more kids getting started earlier and more good coaches now than ever."

3) **Girls sports are fully established.** Title IX has had such an impact that the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association even has sanctioned bowling as a girls-only sport to help meet gender-equity requirements to offset the imbalance caused by football. Girls basketball now receives more statewide publicity than all boys sports except football and basketball.

4) **Coaches used to be teachers but now it is estimated that more than half of the coaches in metropolitan areas work outside of education.** The figure is closer to 75 percent in some districts, one educator told me.

5) **Teams didn't go to summer team camps and individuals didn't go to individual sport camps in the summer.** These camps are held on college campuses and college coaches pay special attention to standouts and sometimes decide to offer scholarships on the spot. One officer in the state football coaches association estimated that 75 percent of the 3A and 4A football teams in the state go to at least one camp. The figure is higher in basketball.

6) **Select teams didn't abound.** Now most good 3A and 4A soccer players and many basketball players participate on a school team and a select (non-school) team. In soccer, the seasons overlap and some players consider the school team "the fun team" and the select team "the serious team."

7) **There wasn't a cottage industry in special individualized instruction or tutoring in a sport.** These days, parents can hire someone to help their son or daughter run faster, dribble better or hit to the opposite field. Complaints about the "hired" coach undermining the school coach are common. "How-to" videos on how to do everything from field a grounder to run a proper curl route in football weren't available. "Parents will pay for anything if they think it gives their kid an edge," one administrator said.

8) **Coaches weren't subjected to as much second-guessing.** "Everything is analyzed to death," said Tom Doyle, who retired last spring as Seattle Prep's athletic director. "Everybody is a coach. Everybody is an expert."

Doyle sees two factors in this trend:

A) Many parents coached at a lower level because their kids were playing;  
B) The media, particularly talk radio, encourages second-guessing. One athletic director calls it "ESPN-itis."

9) **"Scholarshipmania" wasn't in full force because the full effect of Title IX hadn't hit.** Now it seems that the goal of all parents with an athletic son or daughter is having their offspring win an athletic scholarship. Never mind that the odds of winning one are slim and that scholarships in most sports are only partial.

10) **There wasn't an assortment of books on the market about how to get a college athletic scholarship.** There also weren't "recruiting services" that do some or all of the work for you for fees that range from a couple hundred dollars to more than \$1,000.

11) **It was rare when school teams traveled out of state for games.** These days, dozens of basketball teams from Washington travel to out-of-state tournaments, particularly during Christmas break. Sea-Tac is awash in team colors the day after Christmas. The 3A state-champion Mount Rainier boys swimming team trained in Hawaii over Christmas break.

12) **Athletes didn't have to "pay to play" a school sport.** That's still the case in most school districts, but an increasing number have instituted a fee to play a sport. The fee, usually about the cost of a good pair of basketball shoes, is waived for lower-income families.

13) **Seasons used to be just that — seasons.** Now basketball is year-round with spring leagues, summer leagues and fall leagues.

14) **Food supplements to help an athlete do everything from gain weight to get more energy weren't common.** Neither were questionable supplements such as creatine or dangerous drugs such as steroids.

15) **Athletes were less inclined to "specialize" in one sport and instead played two or three.** These days, many coaches often urge an athlete to pick one sport in junior high and do it exclusively. Part of their pitch is that "this will improve your chance for a scholarship." What it really improves is the coach's odds of a winning season.

16) **Parents used to be hesitant to approach a coach on any subject concerning their son or daughter.** These days, "parent-relations" are part of a coach's job description. Overbearing parents are a scourge.

17) **Sports weren't expensive.** These days, a family can spend more than \$5,000 a year, including travel to out-of-state tournaments, for a son or daughter on a select team in basketball or soccer. Summer baseball is expensive, too, if the team plays in national events.

18) **Athletes used to shower at school after a game or practice.** Now they

usually go home and shower.

19) **Summer used to be for working and earning money.** Now many athletes are too busy with offseason athletic camps, weightlifting, passing leagues or summer baseball and fastpitch to even work part time.

20) **There are a lot more schools and leagues and not only because the population has increased.** Most of the private schools of 1A or B enrollment classification in King County didn't exist when today's high-school parents were in school.

21) **Overall, there was more civility** between rival athletes, coaches and fans from competing schools.

22) **Information was harder to obtain.** With the Internet, statewide scores and stories are instantly available. If you happen to be wondering who the No. 6 scorer was for the Shoreline Christian girls basketball team this past season, just check out [www.seattletimes.com](http://www.seattletimes.com) and we'll tell you.

Have a question about high-school sports? Craig Smith will find the answer every Tuesday in The Times. Ask your question in one of the following ways: Voice mail (206-464-8279), snail mail (Craig Smith, Seattle Times Sports, P.O. Box 70, Seattle, WA 98111) or e-mail [csmith@seattletimes.com](mailto:csmith@seattletimes.com). *Seattle Times, March 30, 2004.*