

Spartan Wave

Dear Parents:

We believe strongly in the ability of sport to teach life skills far beyond those necessary for athletic success. The following is by Dale Brown and serves to illustrate our approach to coaching and reminds each of us not only how important it is how we treat our players, but why we love what we do:

Those parents who send us their most precious possessions, and the kids themselves, are due a lot more from those of us who ply this strange and thrilling trade called coaching.

We owe the kids a vision of life, and it cannot and must not be limited to what happens on a court. We must tell them that what one does, for better or worse, will have consequences and that inevitably there will be a piper to pay.

We owe them a definition of what winning really means, because, as Cyrano said, "A man does not fight merely to win." We must teach them that victory without dignity [and respect for the rules, opponents, officials, teammates, and self – ROOTS] is a little victory filled with ashes, that it is not a law of nature that the end always justifies the means.

We must show them the dignity within themselves and equally important, to respect the dignity of others.

Really, that's what coaching should be about: The lives of our athletes - and what we do to help with those lives.

As individual coaches, we dedicate ourselves to being the following to our players, parents, and Spartan Wave volleyball:

- ◆ A coach who is technically knowledgeable about the skills and tactics of volleyball.
- ◆ A coach who is an excellent communicator who knows how to coach to the developmental level of the players on our team.
- ◆ A coach who loves volleyball and shares this love with our players and parents.
- ◆ A coach who is a positive role model who Honors the Game and teaches our players to also Honor the Game.
- ◆ A coach who will work to fill the emotional tanks of our players.
- ◆ A coach who will promote effort, learning, and mistakes on the part of our players. As John Wooden, legendary basketball coach for UCLA, said "The team that makes the most mistakes will probably win – doers make mistakes and I want doers on our team – players who make things happen."
- ◆ A coach who will work to maintain and even increase our players' love for volleyball.

As a youth athletic organization, we ask our parents to enter a Coach-Parent Partnership with us operating under the following principles:

- ◆ Recognize the commitment our coaches have made to our players that includes many hours of preparation beyond the hours spent at practices and matches.
- ◆ Make early and positive contact with your coach. Introduce yourself and tell the coach you want to help make this as positive an experience for your child and everyone on the team.
- ◆ Fill the coach's emotional tank. Coaching is a stressful job, and most coaches only hear from parents with a complaint. Making positive statements will help your coach do a better overall job of coaching – and while most coaches don't do everything well, they do many things well – try to look for them.
- ◆ Don't give instruction during a game or practice unless asked to help. A player, especially a young player, is trying to deal with the unpredictable chaos of volleyball. It may help relieve the tension we feel as parents, but in almost every case, it will not help the player. Instead, focus on giving positive encouragement to your child and other players on both teams.
- ◆ Don't put the player in the middle. If you share your disapproval of a coach or a coach's tactics with your child, you will put her in a bind. If you think a coach is not handling a situation well, do not tell the player; rather, seek a meeting with the coach.
- ◆ Observe the 24 hour "cooling off" period. Emotions run very high in athletics, especially at a contest. Give yourself time to think about what your goals are and what you want to say.
- ◆ Never – Ever talk to the coach about playing time. Unless a coach is violating Simley's playing time minimums, you are not the coach who gets to allocate playing time and you are not the player. It is perfectly all right for a player to discuss playing time with the coach and should be encouraged. But coaches often interpret special pleading as an implied insult that they do not know how to coach and make appropriate decisions.
- ◆ Fill the team's emotional tanks. Be a cheerleader. Focus on the positive things the players are doing and leave the correction of mistakes to the coaches. Remember, we encourage as many mistakes as possible. And by praising other players, you will be very well-liked and considered very intelligent by the other parents.
- ◆ If one of our coaches is being abusive to players or officials, immediately intervene. There is no place in Spartan Wave volleyball for a coach who is physically intimidating or verbally abusive to a player or an official.
- ◆ Honor the Game and encourage other parents to join you. Do not show disrespect for the other team or the officials at any time. It is the coach's responsibility to deal with officials and the other team and coaches if necessary. Go further and encourage other parents and do not hesitate to gently remind parents who might be critical of officials to remember that we always try to Honor the Game.
- ◆ The Bottom Line: These are the "good old days." Your daughter's experience with youth sports will someday end and it may happen suddenly. You will look back and probably think, "I wish I would have enjoyed it more. I wish I wouldn't have obsessed so much on how well she was performing, or the won-loss record, or whether she was playing as much as I liked, or why the coach didn't play her in the right position." Because the youth sports experience is so intense, it is easy to forget how short it is and what a small amount of time we get to spend with our children over the course of life. Enjoy these good old days.

Spartan Wave volleyball will always strive to Honor the Game.
Honoring the Game goes straight to the R-O-O-T-S of positive play:

1. R is for rules. The rules of volleyball are what allow us to keep the game fair. Breaking the rules dishonors the game, even if it leads to victory.
2. O is for opponents. A worthy opponent is a gift that forces us to give our best. Our coaches promise to show respect for opposing players and coaches and always expect our players to do the same.
3. O is for officials. Respecting officials can often be the most difficult part of Honoring the Game, so we must remember to keep it as a focus as we coach and play and spectate. Officiating is very hard and will never be perfect. Coaches and players will show respect for officials even when we disagree with call. Calm and appropriate questioning is acceptable, but we will never treat officials with disrespect.
4. T is for teammates. Volleyball is about team. Being with teammates should be fun. Please encourage teammates both on and off the court. Never do anything that would embarrass your teammates. Simply treat them as they wish to be treated.
5. S is for one's self. Some people only Honor the Game when their opponents do, but Simley will Honor the Game no matter what the opponents or their fans do. We have set our own internal standards and we live up to them no matter what. We do so because we have so much respect for ourselves that we would never do anything to Dishonor the Game.

As always, we enter this season with our behavior mantra to guide players, coaches, and parents:

Do What's Right
Do Your Best
Treat Others the Way You Wish to Be Treated

We look forward to a great season. We know each player will demonstrate great commitment, talent, work ethic and competitive spirit. The players will show great support and respect for each other as individuals. They will set high goals that demand the highest level of dedication to becoming the best they can be; the challenge is to climb to these great heights with terrific courage, enthusiasm, and joyful hearts.

Sincerely,

Mark Kaschke