

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. I am very concerned about my child's coach, but I fear that a conversation with the coach will lead to retaliation and resentment. What should I do?**

*If your child was having problems in their math or science class, would you call the school and ask to schedule an appointment with the teacher to find out what you as parents can do to assist your child? If your child continued to have pain in their teeth long after visiting the dentist, would you schedule a follow-up visit? The answers are obvious, YES. Your concerns regarding retaliation should not enter your mind. Of course, much will depend on your manner of inquiry. Like most people, coaches will get defensive when attacked so the best method is to schedule a face-to-face meeting with the coach and include your child at the meeting, just like a meeting with their math teacher. Make sure you are seeking answers to questions that will ultimately enhance your child's sports experience and what you, as a parent, can do to assist in that effort.*

**2. Why do school administrators protect incompetent coaches?**

*Much of the answer is in defining the term incompetent and the age-old adage, "in the eye of the beholder." Often when you hear individuals in the stands yelling "fire the bum" or "the coach doesn't know what their doing" it really means that their child is not getting enough playing time or the fan's ego is hurt. There are incompetent coaches just as there are incompetents in other professions. However, school administrators, based on the educational philosophy of the school and the mission of educational athletics to promote the positive values of the school, evaluate coaches yearly. Retention of coaches should be based upon their ability to assist and improve their student's character development and life long learning skills. Winning contests is just the icing on the cake.*

**3. When my child played youth sports everyone got to play. Now that my child has made the high school team, it seems she doesn't get much playing time. Should I encourage my child to seek other interests?**

*You are assuming that your child's role on the team has not been rewarding. Listed on page three (3) of this handbook are the results of a national study on why kids plays sports and nowhere in the top ten answers is "playing time." Kids play for a variety of reasons and everyone including parents have a desire for more playing time and a higher profile on the team. Not everyone can be the star on a team, yet the most successful teams are ones where all members contribute, be it in practice or the games. Kids learn great life-long skills about commitment, dedication, teamwork, effort, accountability and never giving up while participating in high school sports. These are the character traits we all want our children to learn.*

**4. How can I ensure that my child is getting a qualified coach?**

*In 1998 the State CIF instituted a nationally recognized program "Coaching Principles" that teaches coaches how to be better at their profession. Over 11,000 coaches in California have been certified in the past few years in this class that covers sports philosophy (Pursuing Victory with Honor), physiology (how to deal with students and adults), nutrition, team management, risk management and basic CIF rules and regulations. Ask if your schools' coaches are required to take this class as a requirement to coach. Go to [www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org) and click on "education programs" for more information on this program and others that can help schools and their coaches.*

**5. Our high school team has not won very many games, shouldn't the coach let the younger kids play and gain experience?**

*It will depend on the philosophy of the coach making the decision. When teams are struggling to win, everyone has suggestions. The coach must balance the desire to play the best players while keeping an eye on the future. It is not an easy decision, but ultimately, it is the coach's decision who gets to play.*

**6. Is one particular coaching “style” more effective?**

*About the time that you argue that one style is more effective, a host of exceptions comes to mind. There is no one way to coach. We generalize that there are the three basic coaching styles as taught in the CIF “Coaching Principles” classes; command, submissive and cooperative. We strongly advocate a combination of all three. A command style coach might be viewed as a “my way or the highway” type of personality, yet when it comes to the health and safety of the students, the coach must be assertive as to expectations. There are times when the best lessons kids learn are when we let them fail and they have to recover and studies have shown that kids and teams excel best when the team has some say in the goals and decisions for the team. However, again, ultimately the coach is the adult and has the duty to ensure that the kids grow and mature under their leadership and good coaches use a multitude of tools and styles to accomplish that goal.*

**7. Why is officiating so poor at our high school games? I wouldn’t yell so much if the officials were better.**

*An unfortunate attitude in our society these days is to “place the blame” and the official becomes an easy target or villain. We hope that you will recognize officials the same as we do players, coaches and teams...some are good and some are not so good. It is difficult finding people who are willing to become game officials as the*

*potential for abuse far out-weighs the pay. High school sports officials receive very low pay (this is not the NBA) and most officials do it for the love of the sport. Officials, just like coaches and teachers, are constantly being evaluated and rated for competency, but they are human and do make mistakes. But, as the student in the videotape said, “give them a break, they are right most of the time.” Be a Fan, not a Fanatic!*

**8. Should I be concerned with the increase in violence in sports?**

*YES! We all need to be concerned about the increasing violence that takes place during and after the contest. Most incidents are occurring in the stands and parking lots, not on the field of play by the game participants. Most parents and fans are outstanding role models for kids. However, it only takes a few people to ruin this great sporting experience. Schools must set and demand high behavioral expectations from spectators, including parents. Pre-season parent meetings like the one you have attended help set those standards for parents. As the young lady in the videotape stated, “the good parents have to stand up and tell the bad parents to sit down and shut up.” Parents, school administrators, coaches and spectators have to be courageous and demand acceptable behavior from all involved in high school sports if we are going to provide positive life lessons for our children.*