



Champions of Character Parent's Letter

Attention All Parents:

Our school is dedicated to the *Champions of Character* process. The *Champions of Character* process is committed to excellence in performance and character. The process uses athletic participation to teach and model moral and social character values to our nation's youth so that their performance on and off the field of athletic competition is enhanced.

We need your help in establishing a *Champions of Character* culture throughout our athletic program. Please read the following *Champions of Character* parent guidelines for establishing a character-driven athletic experience. Your help is greatly appreciated.

1. Pregame Guidelines

The number one reason cited by athletes regarding why they participate in sports is fun. Athletes want to have an enjoyable athletic experience. One way to increase your athlete's chances of having an enjoyable experience is to determine what you want from your athlete's participation for the season and compare it to what they want.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What do I want from my athlete's participation in sport?
- What does a good season look like?
- What are my expectations regarding my athlete's role on the team?
- What are my expectations on how the coach determines playing time?

Once you have answered these questions compare your answers to your athlete's answers. The *Champions of Character* process suggests that where the parent's expectations are different from their athlete's, the parent needs to drop their expectations and adopt their athlete's expectations.

A second preseason guideline is to put your child into the game. Much the same way a coach puts a player onto the field of competition, a parent must put their son or daughter into the game. You see, a coach after spending weeks developing

skills, tactics and motivation eventually must let the athletes execute against an opponent. Parents must do the same thing. They must let go and let the game belong to their athlete, the team and the coach. As a parent this is very difficult to do, but in the end it can be most rewarding.

The *Champions of Character* process is most effective when athletes are allowed to experience the coachable moments of sports participation. Coachable moments are those game and life lessons that can shape who an athlete is and what they will become.

2. Game Guidelines

Parents; your athletes want you to attend their athletic contests. They enjoy having you there to celebrate their participation in athletics with them. While athletes enjoy having their parents attend contest they have also identified three distinct components of parent participation during a contest. Athletes believe that if parents can bring the following beliefs to their contest it will actually help their performance.

Those beliefs are:

1. Parents should come to the contest with their game face on.
2. Parents should focus on the entire team.
3. Parents should be engaged in their athlete's sport.
4. Parents should allow the coach to be the only instructional voice.



Game Face

Your game face is when the expression on an athlete, coach or parents' face conveys a self-confident, positive mental attitude for performance. The *Champions of Character* process encourages you to put on a positive game face. When your athlete makes an error is your game face the same as when your athlete makes a wonderful play? Your game face can either inspire or detract from your athlete's participation.

Focus on the TEAM

The second guideline during the season is to focus on the entire team. A parent can contribute to the team's success if they focus on the entire team and the team's goals. By focusing on the team the parents not only get the attention off of their individual athletes, but also off of all the things that are beyond their control. (e.g. the score, referees, opponents, coaching and playing conditions) When a parent focuses on those things beyond their control it causes the event to be less enjoyable for everyone.

Full Engagement

The *Champions of Character* process requests that you are fully engaged during an athletic contest. Full engagement requires you to put away your phone, your day planner and anything else that distracts you from providing your full positive support of the team and its goals.

One Instructional Voice

The final guideline for during the season is to let the coach be the coach. That is to let the coach's voice be the only instructional voice heard during the athletic competition. Athletes need one instructional voice. One instructional voice provides a consistent message and a precise direction.

3. Postgame Guideline

The *Champions of Character* process suggests that athletes be given time and space following an athletic competition. An athlete spends countless hours in preparation for an athletic event. Parents should be aware of the fact that the contest itself represents the reward for the athlete. They have worked

hard all week and now they have gotten a chance to perform.

By giving your athlete time and space following an event allows that athlete the recovery time needed to begin to refill his/her physical and emotional tank. When an athlete leaves everything out on the field they will need time and space following the event.

Immediately following a contest athletes do not want to go over the tactical decisions made by the coach. Athletes do not want hear negative comments about their teammates nor do they want to have a wedge driven between you and the team's direction. Athletes have pointed to the ride home or immediately following a contest as when these incidents are the greatest and most intense. The *Champions of Character* process requests that a parent and a coach give the appropriate amount of time and space to an athlete following a contest.

One Final Note ...

In order for the *Champions of Character* process to work all athletes, coaches and parents must realize the role that they play in character-driven athletics. In fulfilling your role as a parent there is no greater starting point than letting your athlete know that you love that they are participating in athletics. The *Champions of Character* process requests that you let your athlete know that you love to watch them play, that they are part of the team and that you are proud of them. As parents we hope that our children will grow up to be happy well functioning adults. In meeting that challenge each student-athlete needs to know that there is someone that cares about them. Regardless of the scoreboard athletics can be one of the greatest tools in fostering that opportunity. Athletics does not only provide many teachable moments but also many opportunities to demonstrate a secure loving parental presence. Thank you for your cooperation and enjoy the season.