

# Top 12 Parent Drills

*By Rich Drake - CAP II Accredited Coach - Raritan Valley Volleyball Club, Garden Empire Region*



Whether YOU get it or not, your child is enamored with sports and it is likely they will commit a significant portion of their life to pursue their adventures. For those parents who reserve their highest aspirations for their children, here are a dozen drills that will enable you to help your child during the season.

## **Drill 1 - Enable your child to pursue their dreams and aspirations**

Do everything in your power for your child so they achieve their goals on the court, in the classroom and in life. You are and will be the one constant influence throughout their life; make the most of it.

## **Drill 2 - Frequent and first-class communication with your child**

Talk with your child every day about homework, friends and activities. Since you cannot learn anything when you are talking, practice being an attentive listener.

## **Drill 3 - Candid communication with club officials**

There is a tendency nowadays to send emails, and consider that communication. Personally, I believe email is a waste of time when a real discussion is required. Candid communication can best be achieved in person, or when needed, by phone.

Talk with the team coach and club officials, even when everything is fine. But please avoid discussions during practices or tournaments, so the players and coaches can concentrate on the task at hand.

## **Drill 4 - Get involved**

It is important for children and even adults to be involved with an organization that provides a sense of belonging. Team programs, such as volleyball, provide structure and meaning to life, build social skills, create lasting and memorable friendships, instill well-being, and help children become well-rounded citizens.

Being involved with your club and sharing the experience is important to your child, and it demonstrates that you support their decisions.

### **Drill 5 - Fix the problem**

Some coaches believe that applying punishment, such as push-ups, for missing a play will improve the player's performance. But this only confuses the player, because they believe the coach is someone who is supposed to nurture and support them, and they are playing hard. This tactic eventually reinforces the player's belief that they will never be rewarded for a great effort and that they will only be punished for mistakes. Plus, it does not address the issue of why the player made the mistake.

The same is true for life off the court. When your child drops a grade in school or does something out of the ordinary, there is a reason that needs to be addressed and repeated punishment rarely solves the problem. It is much wiser to discuss the situation with your child in their terms, understand their point of view, and then explain how to do things correctly to improve and let them do it. If punishment is required to correct a behavior, be predictable and consistent.

### **Drill 6 - Be a fan**

If you have time to watch football, baseball, tennis, golf or other sports, you certainly then have time to attend your child's tournament; and it is safe to say you will be more excited and will have more pride watching your child compete than any professional.



**Being a fan means you don't miss out on moments like this!**

### **Drill 7 - Reality check, get an education**

Realistically, each year about 50 national and international high school seniors will have the opportunity to make a top-10 college team. The chance of your child being one of these elite players is remote.

It is better to personally assist your child to choose a college that will provide them with the best education in their chosen profession, on a campus they will enjoy. If they play volleyball, consider that a plus. Also, help them select a minor or even better a double major. Most colleges enable students to apply credits toward two degrees, so why not get two degrees?

### **Drill 8 - Dependability**

Imagine shopping at a store and the cashier was not at the checkout line, or if you were going to meet someone for lunch and they canceled at the last minute. We rely upon people every day, even complete

strangers. Your teammates rely upon each other, so teach your child the importance of commitment, and enable them to complete their homework and chores so they can get to every practice and event on time.

## **Drill 9 - Responsibility**

**Your child has chosen volleyball, so they must be responsible for their actions and prepare for practices and events. This includes homework, chores, cleaning their practice gear and uniform, preparing food for events, and arranging or rearranging their schedules.**

**Teach your child how to do the laundry, prepare the cooler for tournaments, and to explore options in their schedule to make things happen.**

## **Drill 10 - Feed me**

Athletes have greater nutritional needs than non-athletes. They require more calories, protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, fat, and of course water; however, fast food and junk food are not the answer. During the season, with the exception of special occasions, athletes should avoid soda, french fries and licorice. Giving up these three items is a simple way to stress the importance of proper nutrition.

A simple rule to remember is if any item contains high fructose corn syrup, is high in saturated fats, or has nitrates, don't drink it or eat it. Before you automatically give your child vitamins or food supplements, check with your physician/nutritionist. Most children and adults on a proper diet receive plenty of nutrients and do not require any supplements.

## **Drill 11 - The decision maker**

Excessive influence by parents or coaches to sway a player to choose volleyball or any sport or activity over another is inappropriate. It is better to discuss the situation and options with your child, provide them with your ground rules, ask them what they think and let them make the decision.

Some facts to consider when selecting an activity are the physical and mental aspects of the program, the social benefits, the staff organizing the activities, parent involvement, future opportunities such as college, the possibility of continuing as an adult player or coaching themselves, and how much fun your child is having with that activity. In the end your child will be happy and will enjoy their chosen pastime.

## **Drill 12 - Working the sidelines**

When you attend tournaments you represent your club, your team, and most importantly your child. Always conduct yourself in a highly courteous manner, be drug and alcohol free the night before and day(s) of the event, and do not smoke in front of the players.

## **Employ proper cheering techniques**

1. Do not boo or intimidate any player, official or spectator.
2. Avoid "The Gasp" - players know when they make mistakes; your gasp only highlights their error. Instead, yell something positive, like "Let's go, you can do it," and eventually they will.
3. No "coaching" from the sidelines. Coaches spend many hours teaching your child the game of volleyball and how to become a better player - let them continue this endeavor at tournaments. Otherwise you will have six players looking into the stands at parents hollering coaching advice and none of them will hear the coach.
4. It is fine to appreciate great performances - by either team! So when the opponents make a magnificent play, give them a cheer. If the play is just unbelievable, stand up and cheer. I have done this a few times myself even while I am coaching, of course, I then ask my players to play as great as their opponent has just demonstrated, and they usually respond to the challenge.

By following these essential supporting principles, your athletes, teams and coaches will reap great rewards. Then, when you share them with other parents, everyone will benefit.