

## COACH TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Effective communication with parents and caregivers is a key part of creating a positive youth sports experience. When coaches proactively build relationships, align on shared goals, and communicate clearly, parents/ caregivers can become powerful allies in supporting athletes. **The following tips offer practical strategies to make the most of a parental partnership.**



### COACHES CAN...



#### **Set clear expectations early in the season**

Host a pre-season meeting outlining program values, team expectations, and coaching philosophy. **Outline policies on playing time, communication, and athlete development.**



#### **Survey parents/caregivers for the best mode of communication**

Determine the best platform to **communicate team updates**—whether it's an app such as GameChanger, email chain, text chain, or a 3 minute meeting after practices—**figure out what works best for your group.**



#### **Build relationships before issues arise**

Take time to get to know the parents and caregivers of your athletes. Learn their names, their goals, and **show that you care about their child as a person, not just an athlete.**



#### **Establish communication guidelines**

Outline parameters around how you would like to communicate. For example: “I won’t discuss anything competition related **until 24 hours after a game to allow time to cool off from the heat of the moment.** Please email me a request to discuss, along with the subject you’d like to discuss, and I’ll reach out when I’m prepared to have a productive conversation.”



#### **Lead with empathy**

When parents raise concerns, it’s often out of love for their child, not a personal attack on a coach. Keep this in mind when interacting with parents and caregivers. **Acknowledge their feelings and listen actively**, for example: “I understand you’re frustrated; let’s talk about how we can help your athlete improve.”