



Champion Parent Focus: Bullying in Sport

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. The most common definition of bullying is “a repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons.” Someone can have less power than another for many reasons – age, being shy or different, lacking confidence, having problems at home or lacking physical strength. Bullying takes many different forms, including physical threats or violence, name-calling and teasing, ostracism and social attacks. The effects of bullying on a young person socially and emotionally are devastating to the person who is victimized and degrading to the whole community in which this social ill occurs.

Bullying occurs in many venues– sports and a sport team are a common place for bullying. “Popular” athletes may often be bullies. Coaches may engage in bullying behavior of athletes on their team or in the sport venue (down-grading, harassing officials). High school athletes may “haze” new members of the team.

What can a Champion Sport Parent do about bullying? Parents should be vigilant of the relationships on their child’s sport teams and recognize if a child is being ignored, excluded or taunted.

- If your child is being bullied, speak to the coach about the problem right away. You should expect that a Play Like A Champion trained coach will address the problem and support your child. If your coach does not deal with it in an adequate way, speak with your league/school administrator.



**This Way, Towards Bravery
Where Youth are Empowered.
This Way, Towards Acceptance
Where Humanity is Embraced.
This Way, Towards Love
Where Individuality
is Encouraged.**

Born This Way Foundation,
Empowering Youth,
Inspiring Bravery

- If your child is acting as a bully, be willing to address the situation. Before criticizing, try to understand what is going on from your child's point of view. Ask your child to take the perspective of the child being bullied. Then help your child understand what is the right thing to do. This is an opportunity for you to help your child to develop morally.
- If your child is a bystander, help your child to understand why bullying is wrong and to take action and speak up for the victim or report the abuse if they cannot stop it themselves.

Ninety percent of children report having experienced some form of bullying. About 1/3 of adults do not follow up on reports of bullying. All grown-ups have a moral responsibility to do something about bullying. The key to preventing bullying from a parent perspective is to recognize it; help your children realize why bullying is wrong; and report the situation. Champion Sport Parents can and must empower their children to get involved and speak up against this serious social issue.