

Toxic Sport Parents: Healthy Solutions for Coaches, Administrators and Teachers

Mark E. Cole, Ph.D.
Algerian Hart, Ph.D.
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL

Toxicity

In the context of youth sports, a toxic parent is:

- An adult motivated by personal gain
 - Power for their youth
 - Establish, maintain or increase the advancement or Preferred treatment for their youth
 - Power for themselves
- Who engages in a variety of actions to further the *special status* of their child
 - Unethical
 - Mean-spirited and
 - Sometimes illegal actions

Toxic parents may also:

- Divert attention away from **their** child's performance shortfalls and misdeeds.
- Fail to recognize a duty to the organization in terms of ethics or professional conduct toward others.
- Define relationships with other parents, coaches, participants, and administrators not by organizational structure but by those they favor and who can advance their agenda

Why Do Parents Become Toxic?

- Most prestigious of childhood awards, an athletic scholarship
 - National Signing Day



The Rest of the Story...

- Since 1982 – all 1yr commitments
- Myth of a FULL Ride
 - NCAA athletes on scholarship get, per year, about \$10,000 less than the value of a full scholarship
- Healthcare?
 - UG and Graduate students
 - MDs pay for the privilege
- Insurance?
 - Secondary with LIMITATIONS
 - Minimum CASTROPIC
 - No long-term care

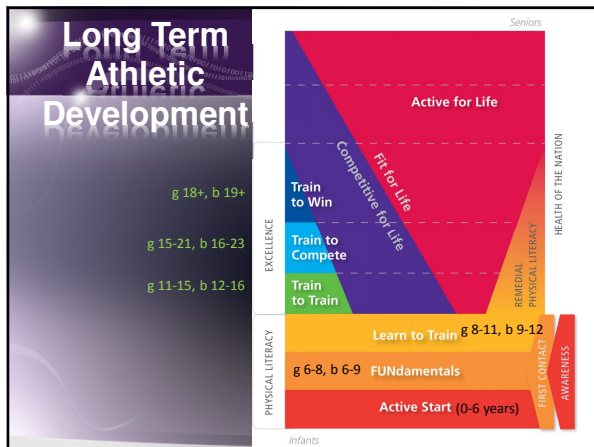
<http://www.scholarshipstats.com/varsitydds.html>





Volunteerism is Dead

- Everyone one wants SOMETHING in return
- With increased parental investment comes
 - advocacy blind to individual responsibility
 - Social development and
 - Organizational needs



10 Factors of LTAD

- Physical Literacy
- Specialization
- Developmental Age
- Sensitive Periods
- Mental, Cognitive and Emotional Development
- Periodization
- Competition
- Excellence Takes Time
- System Alignment and Integration
- Continuous Improvement

The Tool Kit

Your abilities for managing encounters

- Time is Fundamental
 - Take what you need
 - It's more than you have
 - It's more than you think
 - HUGE Dividends
- Intention for Progress
 - Ethical
 - Holistic
 - Timely
- Awareness (Situational)
 - What is Reality?
 - RIP Volunteers
 - Personal access points
 - My EXPLOITABLE weakness
 - Royalty Runs the CASTLE
- Acceptance
 - Leave EGO @ door
 - Errors
 - Improvements
 - Compromise

The Basic Tool Kit

Your abilities for managing encounters

- Intention for Progress
 - Ethical
 - Holistic
 - Timely
- Awareness (Situational)
 - What is Reality?
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Who are We Talking About?

- Common archetypes
- Motivations
- Harmful actions



Not Every Kid Deserves a Trophy

02:00



Discussion?

Vignette 1 Super Sniper

Alice is a knowledgeable and educated youth sport parent. She played collegiate sports and coached at the high school and collegiate levels. Alice is ever present at practice in the corner of the gym, up in the stands at games, observes camp from the balcony, and teaches her child the fundamentals of their sport in her backyard. Despite her extensive knowledge and deep interest in the sport, Alice refuses to be involved in the team on any level. She has strong opinions about coaching philosophy, skill acquisition, and youth sport, but saves her pointed comments for close friends and the occasional outburst from the stands.

Most recently Alice is heard yelling specific and detailed instructions to the team from the stands that are in direct opposition to the coaches' directions. Frequently Alice is heard to remark that the coaches have "no idea what they are doing" and "what they are doing is wrong on so many levels." When asked why she doesn't coach or advise the sport's coaches, she responds with "I don't want to get involved." Alice's persistent comments and behavior have now reached her child and their friends. Her comments during games and practices cause the athletes to snicker and her child has been heard openly questioning the coaches' skill and motives away from the team.

Vignette 2 Over-involved Otter

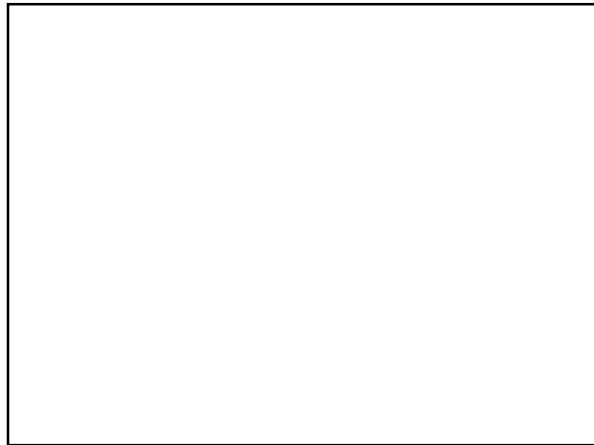
Kind, compassionate and ready to assist, the Otter can be a welcome addition. Ever-present, she is there to help and be relied upon. When in need, especially early on, she can be counted on to drop everything and assist. Below the surface, the Otter has a need to belong, leading her to put too many irons in the fire. Involvement is a requirement for this parent, to the point of creating a compulsive need. As the commitments stack up, time gets short and eventually the Otter will be spread too thin to adequately handle everything. In addition to over-commitment, the

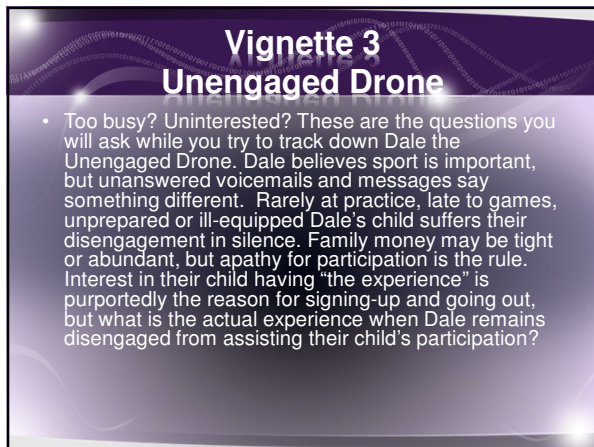
Otter's over-involvement encourages them to confuse their child with the team. Child-specific issues are viewed as pervasive concerns affecting everyone, and are dealt with on a global scale. Conversely, the Otter recognizes team-wide concerns only in terms of "my child" with little regard for broader implications. A further stumbling block in dealing with the Otter is their subtle expectation of importance and influence having woven themselves into the team. Be forewarned, the Otter can exit at any time due to over-commitments or perceived slights, because it never was about the team, it was always about the Otter.

Discussion?









Vignette 4 The Dark Knight

Aubrey has extensive history as a parent volunteer with the community sports club. She has served in a number of capacities, including President, Vice President, Secretary, Substitute Coach, Officials, and State Representative to the State Association. For the last decade no swimming event has taken place in town without her involvement and on more than one occasion, she was the only driving force behind the sport continuing in town. As her children have aged out of the sport or gone on to participate at higher levels away from town, other parents have stepped in to volunteer. Aubrey met the new crop of parent volunteers with enthusiasm and encouraged their involvement because she had become more active as an official on the state level.

As the volunteers took over more and more of running the team and local organization, Aubrey became increasingly vocal about how things were being done "differently" than how she had done them. The situation with Aubrey reached a tipping point during last weekend's invitational meet. On the pool deck prior to the start of the meet, Aubrey (that day's meet official) approached the parent volunteers and voiced concern over how athletes were seated in the waiting area prior to their races. She was specific in wanting them to walk a certain way around the pool deck and stated "this is how we've done it for 30 years." When she was informed that the parents had decided to do it differently, Aubrey responded by insisting that either "we do it how we have always done it, or you need to find another meet official because I am leaving."

Discussion?

Vignette 5 Ogre Under the Bridge

Oliver is your go to person for statistics for all of your sports. They are ever present, generous with time, effort and knowledge. He is a skilled operator behind the stats keyboard and their contribution is an important part of your program. Their personality on the other hand is borderline, curmudgeonly to the point of mean and stubbornness is the rule. For everyone's sake, do it Oliver's way! It will be done accurately and interactions with him be minimized!

Organization changes and updates are done expediently with little complaint, but coaches, officials, administration or athletes failing to follow Oliver's 'rules' are punished with rude, snarky responses and outright meanness. Satisfied this volunteer is not, only temporarily quieted. When confronted, Oliver assumes a defense stance and is quick to threaten that they may "take their toys (skills/knowledge) and go home".

Vignette 6 Unhappy Clam

Ever present, Corrine sits quietly watching soccer practice from the bleachers. Her watchfulness is joined by an articulate intelligence. Her reserved demeanor masks a judgmental and manipulative person, lacking empathy, with low self-worth. Corrine plants subtle complaints amongst parents as unmet goals are identified or coaching weaknesses are perceived.

Her agitation grows when coaches and administration fail to adequately address her complaints or her expectations are not met. Her displeasure is evident as she maneuvers to gain control of others toward her personal goals. Negativism and unhappiness fill the air around Corrine, although she proclaims a feigned interest in "what's good for everyone". Hostile exchanges are not uncommon with Corrine as she vents concern because of those *failing others*. Hurting others is not only an option; it is the price of doing business with the anti-social parent.

Discussion?