

Workshop's content summary

**Performance and positive development
do not take place in a social vacuum
What to do about athletes' parents?**

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**In your respective
sport / school settings,
what place do parents have ?**

Who or what made it this way ?

No news good news

Parents are important
but we'd rather not have them
around too much

**Why do guidelines, charters
and codes of conduct, for
parents fall short?**

*Can't they just let me
do my work?!*

What if we just banned
them from practice and
competition ?!

***Can't they just trust me
and let me do my job?***

From under to over-involvement

(Lauer, 2006; Schmid et al., 2015; Smoll, Cumming, & Smith, 2011)

Over-involved

Overly critical and
pressuring

Over-protective

Unrealistic
expectations



Somewhere in between

«my child can't do
anything wrong!»

Buddy-parent (not
enforcing rules)

Under-involved

Coach/organization
expected to provide
support

Athletes not held
accountable for poor
behaviors

Overall, a negative confirmation bias

Concerns with parental involvement has led to a growing research interest over 40 years (Brustad, 1992)

Parental involvement tends to be stereotyped as excessive, negative, and pressuring

In reality, a wide majority of parents are ...

- **supportive and valuable role models** (Harwood & Knight, 2012)
- **well-intentioned** (Gould et al, 2006)
- **NOT problem parents** (Harwood & Knight, 2012)
- **rarely behave negatively on purpose** (though some do...) (Lauer et al., 2010)

**Blaming or ignoring
parents is easy.**

And it simply doesn't work.

The real question

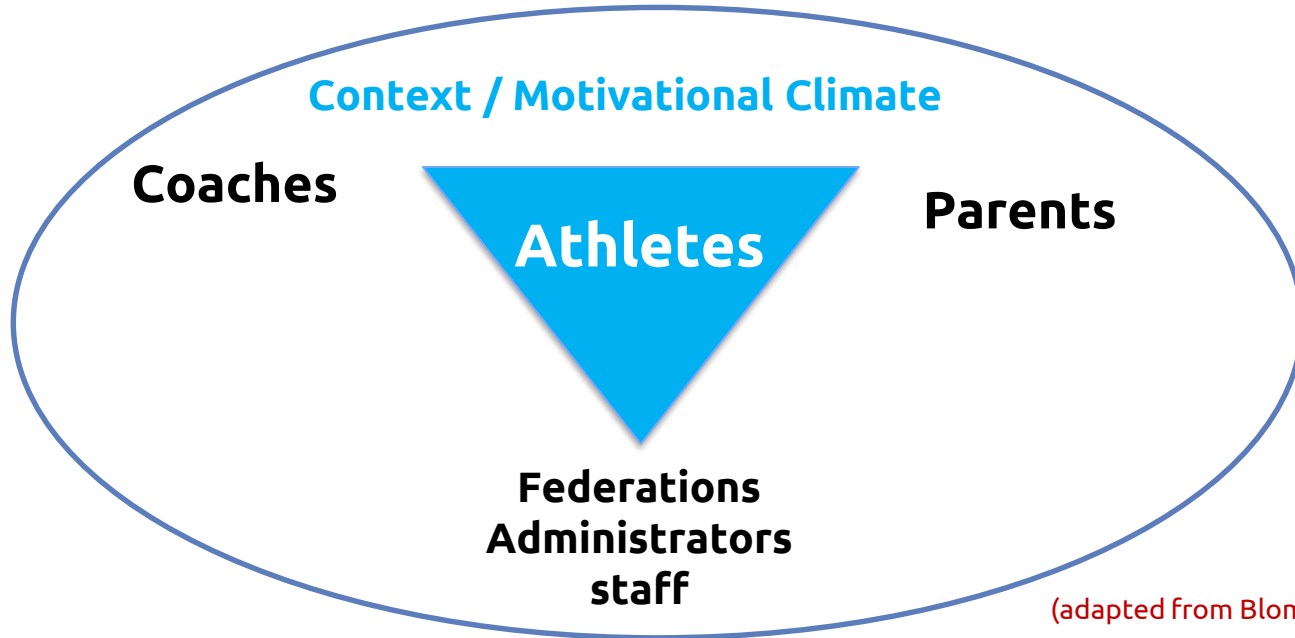
**Are youth sport parents
set up for success or for failure?**

Parents are not the enemies. Let's make them part of the team!

- Parents have a legal and ethical responsibility to be involved.
- Let's understand, connect with, and support parents so that they can better help their children, coaches, and all stakeholders involved.
- Shift in the youth sport culture and environment

Toward understanding, empathy, and appreciation of each other's contributions

→ *prioritizing athletes' health, rights, and goals*



(adapted from Blom, Vissek, & Harris, 2013)

**Ideally, what would parental
involvement in sport look like?**

The 6 postulates of excellent parenting practices

(Harwood & Knight, 2015)

1. Select the appropriate sporting opportunities for their child and provide necessary types of social support
2. Understand and apply an authoritative / autonomy-supportive parenting style
3. Manage the emotional demands of competition and serve as emotionally intelligent role models for their child
4. **Foster and maintain healthy relationships with other stakeholders in the youth sport environment**
5. **Manage the organizational and developmental demands placed on them as stakeholders in youth sport**
6. **Adapt their involvement and support to different stages of their child's athletic development and progressions**

What parents tend to need and want most...

- to feel valued, appreciated, and have a place
- to channel their energy toward appropriate and meaningful roles and shared objectives
- Regular and open lines of communication (planning, objectives, decisions, feedback) → Set and reinforce your boundaries
- to know more and be involved with coaches (Not only top-down information) → Who are your allies?
 - concrete and tangible resources (documents, videos, websites, ...) and information (physical training, mental skills, nutrition, talent development, planning, ...)

Invest time in parents, you will save time.

- Coaches ultimately benefit from being «available» for parents off the field («office hours» – included in their fees)
- Listen to parents (it does not mean you have to agree with them!)
- Anticipate questions and potential problems

Content - Meetings and workshops designed for parents

- Parent-coach-athlete interactions? Training and competition planning/schedule? Talent development? Behaviors and topics for before-during-after competition
- Clarify expectations of parents and of coaches/organizations

Format - Meetings and workshops designed for parents

- Small group discussions with coaches / other parents: opportunities to share and learn from their respective experiences, succes, failure, challenges and responsibilities
- Create support network between parents
- Follow-up through social media to reinforce messages

Your take home messages

Questions?

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