

Tips for high school sports parents

by Terri Lobdell

If there's an issue you believe warrants an intervention, please proceed sensibly. There are some situations, such as physical or emotional abuse, where you may decide you need to intervene. If you feel you must approach a coach with a concern please consider the following guidelines:

1. Don't intervene while angry; wait until you cool down. (24 hour rule)
2. Assume all individuals mentioned in an e-mail will see everything you write.
3. Don't assume you have all the information or your child's portrayal of a conflict/incident accurate.
4. Consult with your child on your plan of intervention.
5. Act as if everyone is operating out of good will, even if you suspect they are not.
6. Follow the chain of authority.
 - Contact the coach first, even if you think he or she is the problem. You will ultimately get better results with the athletic director if you start with the coach. Similarly, the athletic director should always be contacted before an issue is brought to the principal or assistant principal.
7. If there is evidence of a coach behaving inappropriately report it immediately to the athletic director.

Editor's Note: This article was part of an investigative two-part series on high school coaching in Palo Alto published in the Palo Alto Weekly on May 21, 2010.