

Helping Sailors Succeed in Spite of their Parents

Richard D. Ginsburg, Ph.D.

Co-author, *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*

Massachusetts General Hospital

Harvard Medical School

Performance and Character Excellence in Sport
(PACES) Institute



Our Culture

Culture of immediate gratification

Relentless search for competitive edge

Disrupted family routine

Cocktail party nervosa



Two Driving Forces in Parent Behavior



FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

What kind of person do you want your child to be by the time he or she is 21?

What are the 3 to 5 core values that you would like them to embody?

How will you define success?



Benefits of Sports

- Reduces risk of obesity and cardiovascular illness
- Improves academic performance
- Reduces anxiety and depression
- Improves social skills
- Teaches adversity management
- Fosters leadership



Probability of High School Athletes Competing at the NCAA and Professional Levels

	<u>NCAA</u>	<u>PRO</u>
• Men's Basketball	2.9%	.03%
• Women's Basketball	3.1%	.02%
• Football	5.8%	.09%
• Baseball	5.6%	.5%
• Men's Ice Hockey	12.9%	.4%
• Men's Soccer	5.7%	.08%
• Scholarships?		



Overtraining and Specialization Risks

- Up to 50% of all injuries seen in pediatric sports medicine clinics are related to overuse (Brenner et al., 2007)
- Specialization before puberty can jeopardize physical and emotional health and lead to overuse injury, burnout and stress (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000; Butcher, et al., 2002; Coakley, 1992; Wiersma, 2000)
- Adult back, spine, knee and contusions (Neville & Folland, 2009)





Warning Signs

- Eye sparkle deficit
- Primary outcome focus
- One-dimensional athletic identity
- Phantom injury or ache
- Chronic fatigue
- Overly intense training regimen/No time off
- Dramatic competitive shifts





Family Contributions to Burnout

- Parental zeal overload
- Parental discord
- Parent-child discrepancies
- Family conflict with coach



Three-Step Approach

- Know Your Child
- Know Yourself
- Know Your Child's Environment



What does an emotionally healthy 12-year-old look like? (Ages 6-12)

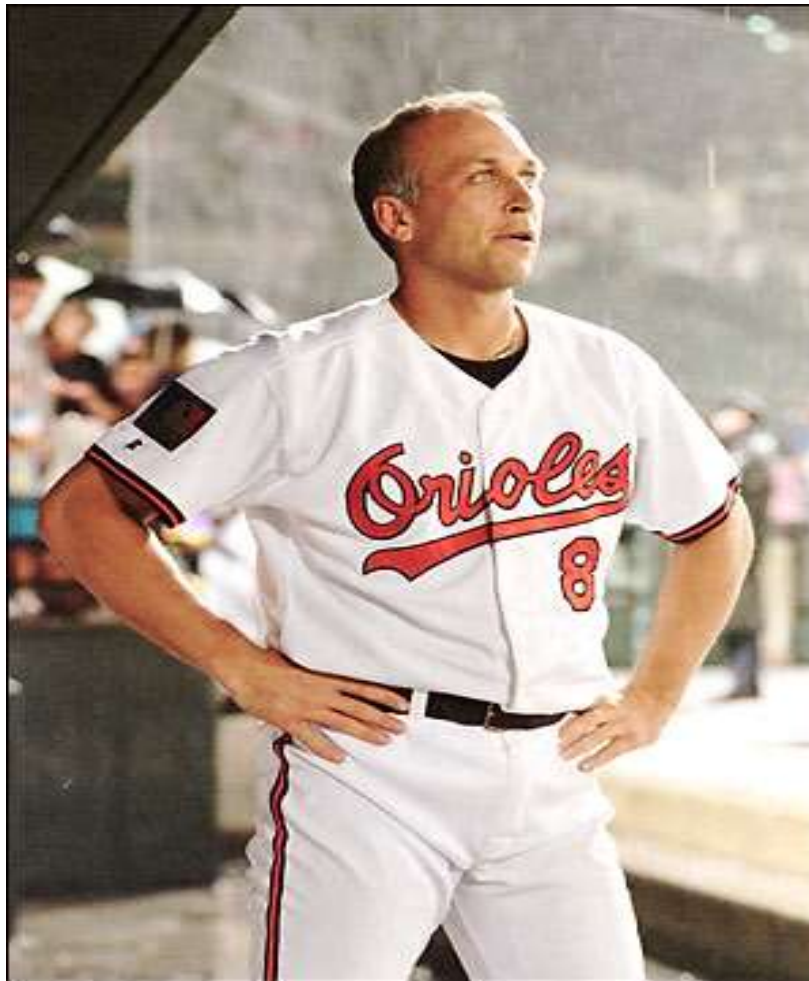
- Develops Competencies and Established Friendships
- Has Multiple Interests
- Avoids Specialization
- Increases Frustration Tolerance
- Experiences Huge Variation in Skills



What does an emotionally healthy 18-year-old look like? (Ages 13-18)

- Growing Sense of Identity
- Awareness of Strengths and Limitations
- Move Away from Parents toward Peers
- Integrating Sexuality
- Can Think about Thinking!
- Increased Sense of the Needs of Others
- Increased Capacity to Manage Emotions
- Humility





- “When I was 16, my father was a fool. When I was 25 I was surprised at how much he had learned in nine years.” Mark Twain



How do we address parents?

- Prevention
- Reaction



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Know Yourself

- What did you get from sports?
- What went well?
- What didn't go well? Were you ever cut from a team?
- What values did you acquire?
- Who were your influential coaches?
- What produced "sports scar tissue?"
- Rate your overall satisfaction now



Know Your Child's Environment

- Fast-Paced, Win-at-all-Cost Culture
- Academic, Artistic, and Athletic Time Commitments
- Sport Program Ethos





Regulating ourselves

- What is the safety structure or system?
- What are your values?
- What is your child learning?
- What is your distraction?
- Where should you sit or observe?
- Who is your wing person?
- How are you taking care of yourself?
- How do you manage cocktail party chatter?



Soccer-Parent Coach



“O.K., big cheer here, but nothing that might be construed as pressure. Quiet now, but a supportive quiet. Watch your body language.”

Promoting Enjoyment

- Model fun and passion in sports
- Pick good coaches and programs
- Cheer quietly from the sidelines
- Avoid sideline coaching
- Provide positive framed feedback when asked



Prevention: What Can You Do?

Protect Your Sailors

- Give your sailors a voice
- Ask what they like and dislike about sailing
- Encourage parents to become fans, not coaches
- Encourage parents to develop interests outside of their child's sailing activities



Managing Parents in Conflict Situation

- Identify what you love about their child
 - Praise an aspect of their parenting
 - Use **D. E. S. C.** (Greenberg 1990)
 - Describe
 - Explain
 - Specify
 - Consequences



TAKE HOME POINTS FOR PARENTS

- 1) Use a 5:1 ratio of accurate praise to constructive criticism
- 2) Avoid post-performance criticisms for first 24 hours
- 3) First post-game question is “How was it?” not “Did you win or did you score?”
- 4) #'s 2 and 3 are hard to do
- 5) Kids are not mini-adults



TAKE HOME POINTS FOR PARENTS

- 6) Talent develops well into late teens
- 7) Make sure your child is the one who most wants to sail
- 8) Recognize when it's time to step back
- 9) Collaborate strategically with coaches
- 10) Fun and joy are best predictors for long-term benefits



A guide to helping your child
get the most from sports,
organized by age and stage

whose game is it, anyway?

"Timely, well written, and important . . . a must-read for every parent and coach in America."
— Mary Pipher, author of *Reviving Ophelia*

"Fascinating . . . an invaluable tool to help guide us through the challenges that face parents of young athletes today."
— Cal Ripken, Jr.

Directors of the Massachusetts General Hospital Sport Psychology Program
and the PACES Institute

Richard D. Ginsburg, Ph.D., Stephen Durant, Ed.D.,
with **Amy Baltzell, Ed.D.,**



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FORUM 2014

