



Parents: A Valuable Game Resource

BY THE POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE

Lacrosse coaches have a lot on their plate during games. Keeping their minds around substitutions, what defense they want in place, and which players have yet to get into the game is just the tip of the iceberg. PCA believes that parents on the sideline can play an important role in supporting the coach to create an Honoring the Game culture by being asked to help with "Positive Charting" and "Culture Keeping." They just need to be asked!

POSITIVE CHARTING

Coaches can ask parents on the sideline to be in charge of the team's "Positive Chart." Here's how it works—

1. Coaches write the name and jersey # of each player on a sheet of paper leaving enough space below each name for notes. If there is a specific action the coaches want to see from a certain player (for example, picking up ground balls, or bouncing back from mistakes) they write it in parentheses next to the player's name.

2. One or two parents fill in the chart during the game. They look for specific positives from each player. Whenever they see one, they jot a note under the player's name. They should be reminded to look for team-building actions (such as encouraging teammates) in addition to specific positive lacrosse skills.

3. The parents in charge of the chart should end the game with the same number of comments (2-5 is good) for each player. They may have to look hard with some players. They will need to work hard to limit the number of comments for the most skilled players. Be disciplined—at the end of the game you should have 2-5 items for each player.

4. Parents need to work hard to find specific and truthful comments for each

player. Being honest is crucial. Writing something that is not true undermines the chart. Admittedly, it is not always easy to find multiple positives about each player, but parents will be able to do it if they look hard enough.

5. Coaches can collect the chart at the end of the game and use it to start the next practice. In a quick team meeting take 30 seconds for each player and share the positive comments from the chart with the group. This will bring a positive energy to your practice immediately.



CULTURE KEEPING

Another possibility for involving parents is to have them be your team's "Culture Keeper." A Culture Keeper is a parent (officially appointed by the coach) who gives others on the sidelines gentle, informal reminders to Honor The Game. Again, coaches are very busy during games, and it is a great idea to have a Culture Keeper helping to keep the sidelines in check. The person occupying the role of Culture Keeper, as well as the role of the Culture Keeper, should be made known by the coach to all on the sidelines.

So what exactly does a "culture keeper" do? Their basic job is to spread the word about the team's commitment to a Positive Coaching Culture to parents and fans on the sidelines. Specifically they:

- Become familiar with and embrace the three themes of Positive Coaching

(Honoring the Game, Redefining Winner, and Filling the Emotional Tank). In particular they know the elements of Honoring the Game (ROOTS) which includes respect for Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and one's Self.

- Get to know other parents on the team at the beginning of the season and talk with them about their role as culture keeper, explain the three themes and ask them for their support on the sidelines during games.

- Share the team's Parent Letter with all new parents and ask if they have any questions about it. As the season progresses, they continue to keep the idea of Honoring the Game alive with all the parents.

- Carry a supply of "We Honor the Game Here" buttons, cards and Positive Parent Pops to give to parents on the sidelines during practices and games.

- Set an example on the sidelines by remaining calm, cheering for all of the athletes on the field and respecting the official's call even if they disagree.

- Nip potential problems in the bud. If a parent or fan gets upset about a call made by the officials or acts in any way that doesn't Honor the Game, the culture keeper gently reminds them that this team is committed to Honoring the Game no matter what. They reiterate that this team Honors the Game even if the official makes a bad call and even if the other team doesn't Honor the Game. This may also be a good time for them to hand out a button, card or Positive Parent Pop.

- Try to catch parents and fans in the act of Honoring the Game on the sidelines and then acknowledge them for it!

PCA encourages youth sport coaches to take advantage of the time and energy that parents offer to the team. Positive Charting and Culture Keeper are two great ways to do so! ○