

Are you goal oriented?

Determining Responsible Sports Goals

In the post-game interviews of the 2009 NCAA Men's Basketball Championship title round, Michigan State freshman Delvon Roe was asked about the defeat and watching the Tarheels celebrate. "Absolutely this is going to motivate us," he responded. "If we put in the work that we all need to, we'll give ourselves a chance to get back here."

What Roe, Izzo and the rest of the Spartans took away from the game and post-game celebration was not a sense of defeat, but a clearer picture of their future goal. With immense respect for their opponent after a difficult loss, the Spartans didn't begrudge the Tarheels their celebration. Instead they saw it as a visualization exercise of what it will look like when they are the ones celebrating.

It was an example in goal setting that translates well to our kids and youth sports. And it's about more than just winning.

These days when you hear the phrase "goal oriented" you might think of the latest version of your resume or your kids' latest report card. For the team at Responsible Sports, determining your kids' goals in sports comes to mind.

The experts at Positive Coaching Alliance remind us, "the life lessons portion of sports start when parents get on the same page with their kids." Stop and think for a moment: what are your goals for your kids this year in sports? Improving their skills and becoming a better athlete? Learning to play a new sport? Winning? Gaining self-confidence? Improving their physical fitness? Make new friends and have some fun? All of these? How would you rank them from 1 to 10?

And then consider – what are your kids' objectives in sports? Do you know? Have you and your athlete sat down to talk about their expectations? Some parents might be surprised to hear that their kids' goals are different from their goals for their kids. Or that they are in a very different order of priority and interest. By talking together about these goals, parents and athletes work together to prioritize what it is they would like to get out of sports – a good reminder that we can't do it all. It also helps remind us of the importance of character-building in sports. If we find we don't have this element on our lists, it's a chance to reflect and add it back in there. And it also gives us another opportunity to talk to and really partner with our kids, both working towards the same purpose.

Coach Izzo and his players used defeat to help crystallize their goals for next season. And notice that players like Roe are not only focused on winning the Championship next year, but also on the hard work and focus they will put in place next season to achieve those aspirations. Coach Izzo turned a difficult situation into an extremely positive and motivating experience for his players – not out of bitterness, but out of passion for the game, their program and their school.

Think about how we as Responsible Sport Parents and Responsible Coaches can help our kids set and achieve their goals in youth sports. How we can facilitate that conversation at home as well as on the field, ice or court.

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