



PARENTING BEYOND THE SIDELINES

The Five Conversations That Matter
Long After the Final Whistle
(But they're rarely the conversations we
have)

BUILD BETTER ATHLETES.
DEVELOP BETTER PEOPLE.

THE CONVERSATION NOBODY IS TALKING ABOUT.

Every parent wants to support their athlete.

The most influential parents also strengthen the relationship behind the athlete.

Every practice creates an opportunity.

Every competition creates a conversation.

Every drive home shapes connection.

Your conversations are already shaping confidence, resilience, identity, and the relationship your athlete will remember.

Thank you for investing a few minutes in this guide.



My hope is it encourages you to see the incredible influence you already have, and inspires you to become even more intentional about the conversations that shape your relationship with your athlete.

—Scott Roussell
After We Play
Founder

**Meaningful
conversations happen
with intention.**



EVERY PARENT IS HAVING TWO CONVERSATIONS.

One is easy to have.

Schedules.

Practices.

Games.

Performance.

The other is less obvious.

Confidence.

Identity.

Resilience.

Relationships.

**The most meaningful
conversations make
room for both.**



The five conversations that follow are a framework for navigating life together with your athlete through the journey of sports.



01

THE CONVERSATION BEFORE THEY COMPETE

Long before the whistle blows, athletes are already carrying expectations, excitement, pressure, and uncertainty.

The conversations before competition have the power to calm nerves, build confidence, and remind athletes that they are valued regardless of the outcome.

Parents can't control what happens during the game.

But they can influence how their athlete enters it.



**CONFIDENCE
BEGINS LONG
BEFORE THE
GAME DOES.**



**WE ALL KNOW
THE PARENT
WHO . . .**

***Tried to motivate
with pressure!***

"You'd better win today."

"Don't embarrass
yourself."

"If you score, we'll stop
for ice cream."

Before the game even
began, the outcome had
become the focus.

The conversation can be
more.

REFLECTION

How do my conversations help
my athlete feel before they
compete? Pressure or
confidence?





02

THE CONVERSATION AFTER THE WHISTLE

The game is over. The conversation is just beginning.

The moments after competition have the power to strengthen trust, create connection, and remind athletes that your relationship matters more than the result.

Parents can't change what happened in the game.

But they can shape what happens next.



THE RELATIONSHIP
MATTERS MORE
THAN THE RECAP.

WE ALL KNOW
THE PARENT
WHO . . .

*Couldn't wait to talk
about the game!*

"Why didn't you take the shot?"

"You should have passed the ball."

"What were you thinking on that last play?"

Before their athlete had a chance to process the experience, the conversation had already become a critique.

The conversation can be more.

REFLECTION

When the game is over, what does my athlete need from me most?



03

THE CONVERSATION DURING THE STRUGGLE

Every athlete will face disappointment.

Injury. Failure. Self-doubt. Not making the team. Losing confidence.

These moments often shape an athlete more than success ever could.

Parents can't remove every obstacle.

But they can remind their athlete they don't have to face them alone.

WE ALL KNOW
THE PARENT
WHO . . .

*Looked for someone to
blame!*

"Your coach doesn't know what they're doing."

"The refs cost you that game."

"They always play favorites."

The conversation focused on everyone else's responsibility... instead of helping their athlete navigate the challenge.

The conversation can be more.

REFLECTION

What do my conversations teach my athlete about facing adversity?



THE HARDEST
MOMENTS OFTEN NEED
THE SIMPLEST
CONVERSATIONS.



04

THE CONVERSATION BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD

Scoreboards measure performance. They don't measure character, courage, kindness or growth.

The conversations beyond the scoreboard remind athletes that success is about more than wins, statistics, or trophies.

Parents can't control the outcome.

But they can help define what truly matters.

“SCORES ARE
REMEMBERED FOR
A SEASON.
CHARACTER LASTS
ALIFETIME.”



WE ALL KNOW
THE PARENT
WHO . . .

*Measured every game
by the scoreboard!*

"Did you win?"

"How many points did
you score?"

"Did you make the
starting lineup?"

Over time, their athlete
began to believe they
were only as valuable as
their last performance.

The conversation can be
more.

REFLECTION

If the scoreboard disappeared tomorrow, what would I want my athlete to remember about why they play?





05

THE CONVERSATION THAT LASTS A LIFETIME

Every season ends.

The practices will end.

The uniforms will be put away.

The final whistle will blow for
the last time.

But one thing will remain.

The relationship you've built
through every conversation
along the way.

Parents can't make the
journey last forever.

But they can build a
relationship that does.



**SPORTS HAVE A
SEASON.
RELATIONSHIPS
DON'T.**



**WE ALL KNOW
THE PARENT
WHO . . .**

*Couldn't stop talking
about yesterday.*

"Remember your senior
year?"

"You should have kept
playing."

"Those were the best
years."

While they kept looking
back, their athlete was
trying to move forward.

The conversation can be
more.

REFLECTION

Years from now, what do I
hope my athlete
remembers most about
our conversations?



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

The five practices are only the beginning.

The real work happens every day in the conversations you have, the culture you create, and the example you set for every athlete.

Because building a lasting legacy isn't about one season.

It's about the people your athletes become long after the final whistle.

CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP



ATHLETE

Build confidence.
Create your game plan.



PARENT

Connect beyond the sidelines.
Deepen your relationship.



COACH

Transform your team.
Develop better athletes and better people.



CLUB LEADER

Build a High-Impact Club.
Create a lasting legacy.



ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Shape an Exceptional Program.
Create a culture that lasts.

