



BETTER ATHLETES  
BETTER PEOPLE

# Parent-Guardian Letter

As a coach, I am committed to the principles of Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) and against a "win-at-all-cost" mentality. I aim to be a Double-Goal Coach®, who strives to win, while also pursuing the more-important goal of teaching life lessons through sports. I hope you will help me by reinforcing three principles:

- **The ELM Tree of Mastery**
- **Filling Emotional Tanks**
- **Honoring the Game.**

Here are some details on these principles.

## **The ELM Tree of Mastery**

While winning is important and learning to compete is one of the major life lessons available through sports, not everyone can win every game. Still, youth athletes are winners, regardless of what the scoreboard says, when they pursue mastery of their sports. As a way to remember key elements of mastery, PCA uses the acronym ELM for Effort, Learning and Mistakes are OK.

Youth athletes who keep these things in mind develop habits that will serve them well throughout their lives. As an added benefit, athletes who are coached toward Mastery tend to have reduced anxiety and increased self-confidence, because they focus on things they can control. Therefore, they are more likely to have fun and perform better. Here's how you can help:

- Tell your children it's OK to make a mistake.
- Tell them you appreciate their best effort even if they fall short of the desired result.
- Recognize that Mastery is hard work and an ongoing process over time that can fuel great conversations with your children about sports and life.

## **Filling Emotional Tanks**

An "Emotional Tank" is like the gas tank in a car. When it's empty, we go nowhere, but when it's full, we can go most anywhere. The best fuel for an Emotional Tank is an average of five specific, truthful praises for each specific, constructive criticism. Here's how you can help:

- Encourage your children with specific tank-fillers regardless of scoreboard results. Be honest, but remember the value of that 5:1 ratio.
- Avoid an immediate and critical debrief right after the game.

## **Honoring the Game**

To help remember the ideals of sportsmanship, which PCA calls "Honoring the Game," we talk about respecting ROOTS, an acronym for Rules, Officials, Opponents, Teammates and Self. Here's how you can help:

- Review ROOTS with your children (you can learn more about the meaning of each letter by visiting PCA's website at [www.positivecoach.org](http://www.positivecoach.org)).
- Model Honoring the Game yourself as you watch your children compete and even as you watch sports on TV together.
- Encourage other spectators to Honor the Game.

**For more Resources, visit: [www.PCAdevZone.org](http://www.PCAdevZone.org)**

**For more information on Positive Coaching Alliance, visit: [www.PositiveCoach.org](http://www.PositiveCoach.org)**



BETTER ATHLETES  
BETTER PEOPLE

# Parent Pledge

Our organization is committed to the principles of Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA). Therefore, we ask that you read, sign and return this form to your child's coach or any appropriate representative of our organization.

Initial each  
line below

In keeping with PCA's ideal of the **Double-Goal Coach**® – who has a goal of winning and an even more-important goal of teaching life lessons through sports – I will be a **Second-Goal Parent**®, focused on the goal of **using sports to teach life lessons**, while leaving the goal of winning to players and coaches. \_\_\_\_\_

I will use positive encouragement to **fill the Emotional Tanks** of my children, their teammates, and coaches. I understand that, like the gas tank of a car, a full Emotional Tank can take people most anywhere. \_\_\_\_\_

I will reinforce the **"ELM Tree of Mastery"** with my child (E for Effort, L for Learning, M for bouncing back from Mistakes). Because I understand that a mastery approach will help my child succeed in sports and in life, I will: \_\_\_\_\_

- encourage my child to exert maximum **Effort**
- help my child **Learn** through sports
- urge my child to get past **Mistakes** by using a Mistake Ritual, such as a flushing motion, to trigger a reminder to flush the mistake and move on to the next play.

I will set an example for my child by **Honoring the Game**, respecting ROOTS (Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates, and Self). If I disagree with an official's call, I will Honor the Game and be silent. \_\_\_\_\_

I will use a **Self-Control Routine** to avoid losing my composure if I grow frustrated. I will take a deep breath, turn away from the game to refocus, count backwards from 100 or use self-talk ("I need to be a role model. I can rise above this.") \_\_\_\_\_

I will **refrain from negative comments about my child's coach** in my child's presence so that I do not negatively influence my child's motivation and overall experience. \_\_\_\_\_

I will be as prompt as possible dropping my child off and picking my child up from practices and games. \_\_\_\_\_

I will engage in **No-Directions Cheering**, limiting my comments during the game to encouraging my child and other players (from both teams). \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT ATHLETE'S NAME

PARENT'S SIGNATURE

For more Resources, visit: [www.PCDevZone.org](http://www.PCDevZone.org)

For more information on Positive Coaching Alliance, visit: [www.PositiveCoach.org](http://www.PositiveCoach.org)