

any feedback about their child. When the coach talks, parents should pay attention, not interrupt and clarify any advice that might be confusing.

**Have specific questions.** Parents should ask questions that are specific rather than vague whenever possible. For example, the coach will likely have a much more difficult time answering a broad question like "What's my kid got to do in order to play?" versus a specific question like "You have mentioned the importance of conditioning, do you have specific advice on how my child can improve in this area?"

**Leave out the other kids.** While it may be tempting for parents to point out to the coach how their child is better than another individual who is playing more, that's probably not the best approach. Parents should view the coach as an ally, and immediately accusing the coach of wrongly playing another individual over their own will only put the coach on the defense. Again, parents should ask about how their child can improve, and what things their child needs to do in order to gain more playing time.

**Say thank you.** Finding extra time to meet is not always easy – for the parent or the coach. It is also challenging, if not impossible, to make everyone on the team happy all the time – especially for kids/families who rarely experience meaningful playing time. In some ways, coaching can be a thankless job – some good coaches go unrecognized, but many are noticed when their player selections do not measure up. Parents should be genuine and simply say "thanks" for the invaluable feedback they receive. As a result of the meeting,

parents should work with their child to develop new, specific, measurable goals for the future.

## Final Thoughts

Coaches are busy people, but they also care about the student-athletes they coach and want them to succeed. Most coaches will make a few minutes to meet with concerned parents, but these meetings should only be requested after parents have done their own observing of the situation to see if there are obvious reasons why their child is not playing much. If parents are granted a meeting with the coach, they should try to understand the coach's position, keeping in mind that with human, subjective decisions, some students will end up not playing as much as others. Parents should be patient, listen closely and employ the advice they receive from the coach – and do not forget to say "thank you." **HST**

Access this article online at [www.nfhs.org/resources/high-school-today](http://www.nfhs.org/resources/high-school-today).

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**Shooting sports is safe, affordable, and fun activity for your school!**

The USA High School Clay Target League is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is the independent provider of shooting sports as an extracurricular activity to high schools. Student athletes in grades six through twelve who have earned their firearms safety certificate are eligible to practice and compete weekly in a spring season "virtual" competition against other schools throughout their state high school clay target league. Events are conducted at a shooting range near the school's location and scores are submitted and compared online against other school teams within their conference. The season culminates with a state tournament where everyone is invited to participate!

- Everyone can participate** - Boys, girls and adaptive athletes participate on the same team and compete by the same rules!
- No cost to the school** - Volunteer coaches manage the team, everyone is insured, and expenses are paid by participants and sponsors!
- Safe** - With more than twenty million shots fired, 25,000 participants, and 330,000 events, there have been no reported injuries!

The League provides all the assistance students, parents, schools and shooting ranges need to get a team started at your high school! Check the League's website to see if your state has a League!

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