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## NEWS

30

Jun  
2015

## Five Tips For When Your Child Doesn't Make the Team

Author: Southern Hockey / Categories: News /

How parents react when their child isn't selected for a team can impact a child's ability to cope with not only the immediate disappointment, but the inevitable ones that will follow in his life.

A parent's reaction can either discourage a child from continuing to pursue the sport they love or foster the resilience needed to handle such rejections.

### Five Tips For When Your Child Doesn't Make the Team

**Moderate Your Own Reaction**

As much as you may want to throttle the coach, reacting angrily will only worsen the situation. It is important that your child understand that you are disappointed **for** them and not **in** them. Becoming too upset and blaming the coach, saying it is unfair, or challenging the decision will only add to your child's grief and send the message that they are not good enough.

**Validate Your Child's Feelings**

Allow them the space to feel sadness and disappointment. Sympathise with hurt feelings. Actively listen. Let them know that it is okay and normal to feel discouraged and depressed. Dismissing the situation by saying "it's ok" or "not a big deal" will tend to invalidate their feelings. Take a moment and remember for yourself what it feels like to be rejected.

**Help Your Child Gain Perspective**

All the top athletes have missed out on a team at some stage. Our Dunedin-born Black Sticks have been in and out of the National team, and it is always tough to be left off. There will always be speed bumps in an athlete's journey, at any level. How an athlete handles adversity is reflected in his character. Experiencing defeat will only make future successes more meaningful.

**Focus On The Future**

Help your child decide what they need to work on to improve. Ask for feedback and advice from coaches who know your child well at a later date, once your child's, and your own, disappointment has settled down. Help them set new goals, and plans of what they are going to do to achieve them.

**Teach Your Child to be Gracious**

As hard as it may be for your child, encourage them to congratulate their teammates as well as thank the coach for allowing them to try out. Parents can model this behaviour by congratulating the parents of their peers. Learning to respond graciously to rejection will build a child's resilience and boost self-confidence. Talking to the coach and touching base with teammates can provide needed closure and dispel any awkwardness.

**This post is adapted from one written by Dr Elizabeth Vantre, a school psychologist and 'Soccer Mom' from Richmond, Virginia for [soccerparenting.com](http://soccerparenting.com).**

We hope this article is of some use to you, and that whether or not your child has made the team the aimed for, that they continue to play and enjoy hockey. If you have any questions or comments regarding this article, please contact the Community Hockey Manager.



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