SUPPORTING MULTI-SPORT ATHLETES

A Parent's Guide to a Healthy, Sustainable Season

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Multi-sport can be a great experience.

Playing different sports can give young athletes variety, new skills, friendships, and opportunities to enjoy movement in different ways. The important question is not simply how many sports an athlete plays. What matters is the total workload and whether there is enough time to recover.

Look at the Whole Schedule

When you are thinking about your athlete's season, consider the demands of every sport and activity.

How much? Consider practices, games, tournaments, travel, private lessons, and additional training across all sports.

How often? Look at how many days each week are physically or mentally demanding.

How much recovery? Make sure your athlete has enough time to recover physically and mentally.

Protect the Basics

Sleep. Treat sleep as an important part of training. Whenever possible, keep a consistent bedtime and wake time, and make sure practices, travel, and early training are not regularly cutting into sleep.

Fuel. Athletes with multiple training demands need consistent, intentional nutrition to support the work their bodies are doing.

Rest. A true day off means no organized sport. That includes practices, private lessons, open gym, extra skill work, and conditioning. Aim for at least one full day each week without sport obligations.

Be a Parent, Not a Second Coach

After a game or competition, give your athlete space to process the experience. Try listening before offering advice. Instead of analyzing what happened or immediately looking for solutions, ask questions such as, "How did that feel?" "Tell me about it," or "What do you need right now?" Sometimes the most helpful response is simply being present. Your athlete needs a parent, not another coach.

Watch for Patterns, Not Just One Bad Day

Overwhelm can happen during a particularly busy week, after a difficult stretch of competition, or before an important event. It is often temporary and can improve with rest and support.

Burnout is more persistent. An athlete may lose motivation, dread practices, or begin saying that they no longer want to participate. A sustained change in workload may be necessary.

Pay attention to patterns such as ongoing fatigue, repeated injuries, slower recovery, loss of enthusiasm, dread before practice, increased irritability, increased perfectionism, changes in sleep or eating, withdrawing from friends or teammates, or a decline in performance over time.

When You Are Concerned

Start by noticing a pattern rather than reacting to one difficult day. Talk with your athlete using curiosity rather than assumptions. If concerns continue, talk with the coaching staff and share what you are observing. Medical professionals, sports dietitians, and mental performance professionals can also provide support when needed. Reducing an athlete's schedule can be a healthy and appropriate choice.

Remember That Your Athlete Is More Than Their Sport

Help your athlete maintain sources of strength outside athletics, including family, friends, mentors, healthy activities, physical health, mental health, and other interests. A strong life outside sport can help young athletes handle setbacks and maintain a healthy relationship with competition.



Build Sources of Strength Beyond Sport: Young athletes are whole people. Help them build a strong foundation beyond athletics through **family, friends, mentors, healthy activities, generosity, spirituality, physical health, and mental health.**The more sources of strength an athlete has, the better equipped they are to cope with setbacks, build resilience, and maintain a healthy relationship with sport.

A successful athlete is one who is balanced, happy, engaged and enjoying their life.

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