

Petaluma High Football
Coaches,

This is a letter I distribute to our parents at the beginning of every season. It is called the 10 commandments of positive football parenting. I am not the original author but I have tweaked to meet my philosophies. Our parents (most of them but not all) are very appreciative of it and I go over each one at a meeting I have with the parents before the season. Hope this may be of interest to you.

Steve Ellison,
Head Football Coach
Petaluma High School

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF “**POSITIVE**” FOOTBALL PARENTING

1. **Be positive with your son**—let him know he is accomplishing something by simply being a part of the team.
2. **Encourage him to work hard and do his best whether he is a starter or not.**
3. **Support his coaches.** Remember the coach represents the “boss”, the “authority”, the “parent”, the “teacher”, the “law”, etc. Teach your son to be a doer not a complainer. If he is not a starter and thinks he should be, encourage him to talk to the coach privately in a respectful manner. As a last resort, you as parents can discuss problems regarding your son with coaches. It is good for the players to learn to deal directly with their problems. Coaches encourage and appreciate players who want to improve their playing time and deal with any problem in a positive manner.
4. **Encourage your son to follow the team rules.** The rules are the same for everybody regardless of their status on the team.
5. **Insist on good grades.** Check the number of hours your son spends on homework. It is the duty of the parents to see that their son is working in the classroom. Those students with any college aspirations need good grades. Eliminate use of the car, phone television etc. These are detriments to study time.
6. **Football is a kid’s game, let them play it.** Don’t relive your glory days through your son. Don’t develop envy toward other players because they are competing with your son or you don’t get along with their parents. Win or lose, start or sub, football can and should be a very rewarding experience for the athlete.
7. **Be respectful of the game strategies of the coaches.** The coaches spend a lot of time with the players and are well aware of what each kid can do and what he cannot do. That is also true in regards to what a team can and cannot do. As a fan you are entitled to scream your head off, but don’t be belligerent and arrogant towards players or coaches. They are amateurs. They also have family and friends sitting around you. Don’t compare what goes on Friday night to what happens in the NFL on Sunday. In summary, let the coaches coach. Be there to support and show love for your son.
8. **Insist on your son’s respect for team rules, school rules, game officials, and sportsmanship.** Don’t let him make fools out of his family, school, and team by some uncalled for gesture or incident. Self-respect begins with self-control. We really emphasize to the players to be even tempered. Don’t get too high and don’t get too low. That applies to everything. If they can remember to move on to the next play, game, practice etc., and not dwell on the past they will be better for it.
9. **Encourage your son to improve his self image by believing in himself.** Don’t compare him to an older brother or relative. Every youngster is different. They don’t need added pressure. The fact that they are out for a positive activity should be the most important thing. Any accomplishment beyond that is icing on the cake.
10. **Encourage your son to play for the love of the game.** Playing for a scholarship or fulfilling somebody else’s dream usually fails.

In Summary, football can and should be a fun, educational, rewarding experience for ALL participants. Parents as well as coaches have an important role in making that happen.