

## Parentally Speaking - November 2007

*What are your thoughts when a parent of an elite travel team member decides to discipline his or her son or daughter for a home- or school-related incident by forcing that child to miss a game or tournament? Shouldn't the other members of the team be considered by parents who use this method of punishment, especially if it costs the team an opportunity to win?*

In my opinion it's not really anybody's business other than the parents and their child when it comes to discipline. It's really not my place to tell people how they should discipline their own children. Everyone has their own methods that they are comfortable with. I think that sometimes when it comes to athletics we lose sight of the age group with which we are dealing.

Even though we are talking about an "elite travel team," the most important thing to keep in mind is the age group involved. At most developmental levels (yes, youth travel teams are still developmental), while it's nice to win, that shouldn't necessarily be the ultimate goal for that age group. There are a lot of things that are more important in life than winning a game or a tournament. If, in the view of the player's parents, their child's actions are serious enough that the best way for them to teach him or her a life lesson is to take away something that he or she loves, that may be the best way for that particular family to handle the situation. I think it's hard as an outsider for me or anyone else to judge whether that is the proper way for the parents to handle the situation, and I don't think it's necessarily fair for anyone to say that it cost a team the game or the tournament. When it comes to competitive athletics, there are no sure things. That's why we play the games.

**By Cal and Bill Ripken**