

# Should I Coach My Kid or Not?



**THE APPROACH**  
PARENT RESOURCE

Each athlete and parent will have their own experience in golf, and some may consider taking one or several roles during an athlete's journey (e.g., technical coach, emotional support, caddy, scheduling/management, etc.). As an athlete continues to develop and becomes more skilled in their sport, there comes a time when a parent's role might have to change in terms of their training involvement. Knowing that most parents will pass the torch off to another coach at some point or another, it leaves the question; how can I support my athlete even if I'm not their coach?

When considering how to support an athlete, an important question to start the conversation with is "What support does this athlete need and want?" The athlete should be at the centre of the question and involved in the decisions, so it's always a good idea to circle back with them on their needs or observe any gaps that might be missing in their support team. Rather than this being a one-time question, this could be a periodic check-in. Athletes should be able to give you feedback in terms of what's working and what's not when it comes to their training.

Another important component of this question relates to you, the parent. Do a true, honest, self-reflection. Consider your strengths, challenging areas, and what possible roles you could play on your athlete's team. Where might you best fit in your athlete's support system? Just because you can do something, doesn't always mean that you should. So what fits for you and your athlete? Even if you're not coaching, there is one role that will always remain yours- being their parent. You are the one there on the ride home, at dinner time, watching the Masters on the couch, and so much more. There are so many great moments to support your child off the green. The biggest, ongoing task is offering unconditional, emotional support. Checking in with your athlete on how they're doing is one of the most important roles of all in a support system. Whether it is an informal moment during a grocery shop or an intentional moment on the ride home from the course, these are great opportunities you have to create connections with your athlete and take a very important role in their development.

## SCORECARD

There are multiple roles in a young athlete's life that need to be filled. Here are some different ways you can continue to support your athlete off the fairway.

### Emotional Support

Creating moments to check in on your athlete and their overall wellness. This can be helping them work through stressful moments, meeting them where they're at, celebrating their wins and helping them through losses.

### Post-Round Debrief

Over the course of 18 holes, golfers will have experienced a wide range of emotions. One moment they may be disappointed with their drive, the next they are celebrating a clutch putt. A parent can find themselves in the role of debriefing the round and being the soundboard, understanding their emotions and supporting athletes when they feel they need to fix any gaps in their game.

### Manager

For most young athletes it's incredibly difficult to balance school, sport, social life, and family. As a parent, you might find yourself in the role of managing your athlete's sport life. This might come down to organizing rides to and from the course, booking appointments with a trainer, communicating with coaches, and researching and signing up for tournaments. Never underestimate how important this 'behind the scenes' role is.

### Caddy

Some parents choose to go on the bag for their athlete. In this role, it is important to accommodate what your athlete needs- what do they want from you during the hard shots, or during the great and toughest moments

### Spectator

Parents can also come and support their athlete by watching their round. Be mindful of where you're standing, body language, and when you move. Your athlete may pick up on emotions you are experiencing from across the fairway.

### Mom or Dad

The most important role of all in an athlete's life is simply being their parent. Sometimes after sport, athletes just need a getaway, and a parent. Not everything in an athlete's life needs to be about sport. Balancing that may be important to them.

## FOLLOW THROUGH

Think back to when you were growing up in sport. How were your parents involved in your development? How did you want to be supported when you were the age that your athlete is now? Is there anything you wished they did differently?

**"Let your kid come to you and ask you to be in that role. They will, if they need you."**

- Augusta James, Former LPGA Golfer