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## Parents need to focus on the positives of a team

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Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Everyone wants their daughter to play in the ideal situation (whether it be summer ball or high school), which would be something like this: There's an elite player on the roster, so the college coaches are always hanging around. But your daughter is the primary player at her position, and gets plenty of minutes. If she's a rebounder, she's surrounded by shooters; if she's a shooter, the rest of the perimeter players are defensive specialists; if she's a center, the guards are excellent at entering the ball to the post.

The coach knows his or her Xs and Os, is highly organized and well respected. During the summer, the team plays the major tournaments; during the high-school season, postseason play is expected, and there's a nice trip over winter vacation. There's an assistant who played your daughter's position in college, and everyone thinks your daughter is an integral part of the team's success.

The players all get along. There's no infighting, and everyone works hard to achieve team goals.

And the parents also are a good group. They get together after games, have a great time and never criticize the other players or the coaches.

The problem, of course, is that this kind of situation simply doesn't exist. There always are issues and always problems. Your daughter doesn't get enough shots, or there isn't enough talent around her, so she's constantly double-teamed. The coach is semi-clueless, and the level of organization leaves something to be desired.

In short, it's not the perfect team. That by itself, however, doesn't mean that you should be complaining to the other parents every chance you get, or that your daughter also should be looking for things that aren't as good as they might be.

So look around. Is there a perfect team in your area? My guess would be no; the perfect team is no more likely to be close by than the perfect player -- and really, there aren't any of those.

Now compare your high-school program with the other options. How does the coaching stack up? How does the administration treat the girls' program? Do most of the players work hard and try to do the right thing? Are most of the parents relatively easy to deal with?

If the answers are mostly positive and there are no better places you can send your daughter, by far the best course of action is to quit worrying about the perfect and focus on the good. If your daughter doesn't get quite enough minutes or the coach's offense is unimaginative, balance those negatives against the positives -- and then focus on the positives. It will make you and your daughter happier.

The same applies to club teams. Maybe there's a team with a superstar who always gets seen by college coaches, but maybe your daughter would have to fight for the playing time she's getting now, and maybe she'd lose. Maybe the coach isn't very organized, but she's nice to the girls and parents. Is that better or

worse than a coach who knows how many balls are in each bag but is brusque and unapproachable?

Again, you can choose to focus on what's working, or what isn't. You can compare the team to what might be the perfect situation or you can acknowledge it for what it is -- and enjoy the aspects that work while doing your best to push the negatives aside.

Your daughter might be playing for a nice little high school team that goes 18-12. And maybe, if the coach listened to you and the other parents, the team might have been 20-10. But in the end, would your daughter be happier if you never complained and didn't pick up your negative feelings?

And the club team might be short a 3-point shooter, and the coach misread the schedule last week, but the girls like one another and your daughter looks forward to practice. It's not perfect, but that sounds pretty good -- and everyone involved should do their best to keep it pretty good, and not ruin things by complaining that the situation isn't perfect.

The perfect player, the perfect team, the perfect setting for your daughter... none of those situations exist. It's important not to let those fantasies interfere, and possibly ruin, a perfectly good reality. As the Rolling Stones said long ago "you can't always get what you want. But if you try some times... you'll get what you need."

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