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Tips for juggling school and basketball

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HoopGurlz

Basketball is in a full-court press with teams traveling to play cross-town rivals. Add to that a school schedule jammed with finals and papers due. No wonder your life seems out of balance. Here are some things to remember during the season.

Manage your time: Juggling school, basketball, family and a social life can be tricky. If you ever feel overwhelmed, pump the brakes on basketball and focus on school. You're a student first and athlete second. Nothing should ever come before school. Get a monthly planner and write down appointments and events. This will help you make better use of your time.

You're always in uniform: Believe it or not, younger student-athletes aspiring to be future high school and collegiate basketball players look up to you. People will recognize you off the court. Be gracious, stay humble, smile and don't act a fool in public.

Impress scouts: Every now and then you might look up in the stands and see a college coach checking you out. Don't get nervous, get tough! Put your game swagger on high and play hard. This is your chance to impress the scouts and get on their radar.

Do the little things in a game: You're not going to make every shot you take or steal every ball, but you can do the little things that don't show up on the scoreboard. If your game is off and shots aren't falling, why not take a charge? There's nothing more reassuring than getting knocked to the ground and having four teammates run over to pick you up. If you make a bad pass, turn around and get it back on defense. It's the little things that matter the most when you have an "off" night.

Practice outside of practice: If you want to become a better basketball player, the two-hour practice after school will not cut it. Individual skill work is crucial to improving your game. If you want more playing time or you're tired of dribbling the ball off of your foot, stop complaining, and get your butt in the gym.

Parents: Remember to stay positive: I remember how funny it was for my dad to sit in the stands and chew out the refs for 32 minutes and later give me a 30-minute speech about sportsmanship during the car ride home. How embarrassing it is for a kid to have to claim the one parent in the crowd yelling at everyone. Don't be the hot-head parent no one wants to sit near. Give your kid a hug and buy her ice cream after a good -- or bad -- game. Stay positive by any means necessary.

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Managing school and basketball requires skillful choreography.

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