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18. Parenting & Athletics

Make sure that this is HIS dream and not YOURS. Dads (or moms) reliving their glory days, or failures, create nightmares for their children. A sober dose of reality is needed here. You need to examine whether you are trying to build your own ego or help your child succeed in HIS DREAM. Get this matter in proper perspective.

Have a professional (professional scout / college coach) evaluate and give you an HONEST opinion of your son's talent. Don't let someone who looks to make a dollar off you give you his opinion, but one who truly knows what coaches and scouts are looking for. And, don't be thinned skinned about it! Leave your ego and pride at home. By doing so it may help you save several thousands of dollars and spare your child some misery.

Set realistic goals for your child. Don't put him in a situation where he is destined to fail. Your ego trip might affect his entire life and mental health. A little maturity and common sense on your part could save him a lifetime of misery. Know what he is capable of and encourage him to seek to be the best he can be at that level. Having a fun and successful career at a small time school is far greater an experience, than living a life of failures and disappointments, while looking for the big pie in the sky that will never come.

Develop a plan to help him succeed at the level he is capable of playing. There is little use in the small time player (a player who will not play at the D1/Major D2/Professional level) wasting thousands of dollars at major showcases and scouting combines to produce national exposure. A wiser decision would be to send him to local college camps, local showcases designed to provide local exposure and free local professional tryouts.

Do your homework. Know what is needed and be well educated in the process. This website is an excellent starting place and Bob is to be commended for his hard work to help parents find the information they need to become educated enough to make the decisions that must be made in your child's future. Don't take the task lightly expecting someone else to do it for you (HS coach / guidance counselor / or Bubba. To do so could mean disaster and future heartache. Take control of the situation like a responsible parent.

Investigate. Investigate every showcase, recruiter, school, coach and program that shows interest in your son. Help him make the right decisions based on FACT and not fiction. Remember the woods are full of ticks and leeches wanting to suck the life out of you. "Buyer beware!" Before sending your son to a showcase ask a few college coaches if they will be in attendance and what they think of the organization. Before considering a school spend some time speaking to former players and parents about the coach, the program and their experiences while there. It could save you some of that hard earned cash and a lot of trauma.

Take a long-term approach to your decision making. Always look at what is best for your child's future. A scout once told me, "Be careful you might get what you are wishing for!" His point being that your dream may not be in your ultimate best interest. The mature individual is the one who knows what he/she wants down the road and not just a passing fancy. Believe it or not, there have been quite a few individuals who passed up a major league careers because it wasn't the type of lifestyle they wanted for their family or themselves. Many drop out of the minor leagues every year, not because they couldn't make it as a player, but because the lifestyle of the professional ball player is a rough road. Know what your child wants, but more importantly what is best for them. Be a mind of reason and sensibility to them amidst a world of glamour and insanity.

Help your son prioritize his life. What are the things that are truly important to him and to your family? Would you rather him win a World Series ring or have his name be written in Heaven? Would you rather him win a College World Series or be the Father Of The Year? I am constantly reminded of the fact that most successful people have an abiding sense of the truly important things in life. Take the opportunity to teach him to live to the important, rather than the urgent. Baseball careers ALWAYS end, but life goes on into eternity.

A few of my thoughts for your consideration. As always, In My Humble Opinion. Consider them for what they are worth.

Greg Legg The Bama Bomber