

*"In the 2004 State Championship, my son Ben tore the patella tendon off his bone. He missed all the next season, but thanks to Jeremy, Ben was able to play football again in 2006. Jeremy helped my son become physically fit, emotionally strong, and go on to play football in college. It's not how you start, its how you finish when it comes to athletic performance. And just like athletes, Jeremy's book **Parent Your Best** will make sure every Sports Parent finishes strong. "*

Jim Jorden- Executive Producer NFL & NASCAR

"The unconditional love, nurturing, and support of a sporting parent are the important contributing factors in the development of young athletes in all sports. Jeremy's book will help you be the best Sporting Parent for your child you can be."

Wayne Goldsmith- World renowned Sports Performance Expert and owner of www.sportscoachingbrain.com

"Jeremy has the unique ability to help parents and athletes establish their definition of 'family excellence' and provide the tools to build and maintain healthy relationships that remain strong even during character building times."

Beth Ebert- Charlotte, NC

Parent Your Best

**Be the Reason Your Child
Succeeds In Sport**

Jeremy Boone

ATHLETE
BY DESIGN™

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You can find Jeremy online at the following websites

www.parentyourbest.com

www.athletebydesign.com

www.sportsaxiology.com

www.coachyourbest.com

The book is dedicated to my two sons Will and Jay.

Thank you for teaching me something new each day and I hope that I can be the dad that you both need me to be for years to come.

Acknowledgments

Most of the information in this book comes from what I have learned from some key individuals throughout my coaching years as well as my own unique experiences in life and in sport. There are many people that need to be acknowledged for Parent Your Best™ as no book is written by one person alone. However, there are a few key individuals that have played the biggest role in helping this vision become a reality.

First and foremost I want to thank my own parents for all that they have taught me, how to handle both the good and the bad in life. And while my mom passed away from cancer when I was younger, I know that she is smiling right now as she has been such a huge inspiration for me. And to my father, for continuing to teach me life's lesson of never giving up, no matter what life takes away from you.

Thank you Dr. Dave and Vera Mefford for all that you continue to teach me about the wonderful world of *Formal Axiology*. It is because of our friendship that I was able to connect my passion and purpose in what I hope to bring to the world of sport with you both. I consider you both part of my family!

I would like to thank Jim Jordan for all of the effort he has put in to shooting video and helping to spread this vision. I am most grateful for our amazing friendship and thankful for all that you continue to teach me about being a great Sport's Dad.

A big thank you goes out to Amy Jamerson. If it were not for you, this book would not have been able to fulfill its intention. I am forever grateful for all of the countless hours of helping me read, write, and edit, but even more so for our numerous conversations about what life is really all about.

I also want to thank Tom Jamerson, Amy's husband, for being a sounding board and testing ground in helping to bring clarity in these principles and exercises. His vision for adding value to the lives of

athletes, coaches, and parents is truly second to none. Most importantly thank you for being such a great friend.

I am thankful for all of the families who have allowed me to work with them over the years and develop friendships that go well beyond a workout. Although too numerous to list, you know who you are.

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Last but not least, I want to thank God for all of the many undeserved blessings that he continues to give to me each day. I can't wait to see how this journey continues to unfold!

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Introduction

Jeremy Boone

"A child is not a person to be molded, but a person to be unfolded."

-Author unknown

One of my favorite American sitcoms is the Bernie Mac Show. It is about the comedian Bernie Mac raising his sister's three children and gives his unique perspective on being a parent. In the season three episode titled 'The Eye of the Tiger' Jordan, the frail middle nephew, decides to try out for the basketball team in order to please his Uncle Bernie. As you can imagine, Bernie is so excited that he brings out his old high school jersey to give to Jordan and starts to relive his glory days. However, due to Jordan's complete lack of athleticism he ends up joining the gymnastics team. Now at first Bernie Mac was appalled at the idea, but then Jordan convinces him that he is going to attempt the rings, a man's event.

On the day of Jordan's first gymnastics meet, Bernie Mac is so excited he brings one of his friends to help cheer Jordan on. Then the moment of truth happens, the announcer calls out Jordan's name and instead of competing in the rings, he runs out onto the gym floor waving a giant ribbon on a stick! Bernie Mac is completely stunned! With his own pride and self-image now damaged, he turns and tells his friend that no one else can know about what just happened.

By the end of the episode, Bernie successfully gets Jordan to quit the gymnastics team. Eventually he realizes that Jordan does enjoy it, and Bernie has to put aside his own self-pride to be the parent that Jordan needs him to be. The episode ends with Jordan rejoining the team; back out on the gym floor waving his ribbon wand, and Bernie Mac confidently cheering him on.

So what about you? When it comes to your child participating in sports, how many Bernie Mac moments have you struggled with?

“How did the whole Parent Your Best™ vision get started?”

Like all inspiring visions that often start with a burden, Parent Your Best™ has stemmed from my work with training thousands of student athletes since 1996. What was most frustrating for me was to see these young men and women work so hard to change their bodies and acquire new skills, but then are unable to effectively translate these new gains to the field, court, or ice. Searching for the reasons why, I finally realized that the problem was not solely with the athletes themselves, it was also due to an unhealthy relationship with their parents.

On one occasion, I ran into a former athlete a few years after she graduated high school asking her how she was doing and what her parents were up to. I then asked her about playing soccer and with a look of disgust on her face she replied *“We don’t talk about sports at all in my family after what happened with my parents. What should be remembered as a fun experience in high school is instead a freaking nightmare.”*

In 2007 I was introduced to Dr. Dave and Vera Mefford, who I now consider extended family, and with them became involved in developing a new mental performance profile for athletes based on Sports Axiology (the science of human value and decision making in sport). Since then, I have reviewed just over two thousand mental profiles of high school athletes looking at their mental strengths and weaknesses. The results showed that many of these athletes were feeling a lot of stress and tension from outside themselves which was

affecting other mental attributes such as self-confidence, mental toughness, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-motivation.

So just what was this 'outside' source? You guessed it...for many of them it was pressure from their parents! A small percentage was due to overbearing parents, but many of the cases involved normal hard working parents and basically healthy families. It was the athletes themselves who felt they needed to reach the next level in order to not disappoint their mom or dad.

This research provided tangible proof beyond my own coaching experiences of the negative impact that an unhealthy parent-child relationship can have on and off the field. As a result, I set out on a journey that would hopefully allow me to impact an entire culture in a positive way... the culture of Sports Parents.

I began by asking myself a few questions:

- What was great about my relationship with my parents as a young athlete?
- How could our relationship have been even better in relation to my youth sports experience?
- If I had known then what I know now, how would that have impacted my relationship with my parents as well as my performance?
- Of all of the athletes I have worked with, what were the qualities and attributes of the sports parents who seemed to 'get it'?
- What were the qualities and attributes of the sports parents that often led to family feuds and even their child's athletic burnout?
- What about those parents who honestly had no idea of the unintentional stress they were putting on their child to perform?
- What would be some KEY sports parenting principles, tools, and skills that parents of today's young athletes need to know in order to have a healthy family relationship that at the end

of the day positively affects the young athletes' performance and their enjoyment of the game?

- What media format and platform should be used to educate sports parents in a non-judgmental way?

The answers to these questions and many more are found in this book.

What this book will not tell you

Parent Your Best™ is by no means meant to be the definitive answer to sports parenting. Although the concepts, principles, and exercises in this book are helpful for any parent, it is not meant for the Sports Parents you see on the news assaulting coaches or other parents. This type of parent only makes up 10% or less of the total Sports Parent culture.

You will not find specific answers to the top twenty problems that sports parents face on a daily basis. Actually, there is already a good resource for this type of quick solution book which I will tell you about later in the book. One final but very important point, it is not meant to serve as counseling or therapy for struggling families, as I am not a counselor, but rather a coach.

So who exactly is this book for?

It is written for the other 90% of Sports Parents just like you who have high aspirations for their children in sport, who find themselves trying to survive week to week with their family life dictated by their children's sports, and for some, who are simply tired of a stressful marriage completely built around youth sports.

Just like your child has a coach to help them learn sports skills, design practices and routines to develop those skills, and then through games display those skills, EVERY SPORTS PARENT NEEDS A COACH, including you!

Below are a few of the key skills that are critical to being a Sports Parent:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Listening | Patience |
| Communication | Praise |
| Connection | Recognition |
| Empowerment | Engagement |
| Leadership | Empathy |
| Decision Making | Respect |
| Support | Time Management |

I have been extremely blessed to have met and built meaningful relationships with many families over the years, some of whom you will meet in this book, and who in many ways are probably similar to your own family.

The principles and exercises in this book are a result of those relationships, including a blueprint to help you build the skills and tools you need to be the best sports parent for your child.

If you let it, the information you are about to discover will be a life changer for you as a Sports Parent.

I am enthusiastic and honored to be a part of your team!

JB