

Confessions of a B-Team Mom (<http://www.uslacrosse.org/multimedia-center/blog/postid/394/confessions-of-a-bteam-mom.aspx>)

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My son only made the B-Team this year. And we couldn't be happier.

This is a soccer story, but hang with me here lacrosse moms and dads—I'll bring it back around.

Our son had been on the A-Team of a club soccer program the past two seasons. As time wore on, he was seeing less and less playing time, and we were playing soccer year round just to “maintain” his spot. By spring of this year, he was (horrors!) identifying himself as a baseball player (he played one season on a pretty bad rec team, but hey, you got to wear a belt with your uniform and it wasn't soccer). His joy was gone.

He was more and more timid on the field. He sat the bench more than he played.

He was 10.

As we suspected, he was assigned to the B-Team this fall. We could have found another A-Team with another program that would have happily welcomed him, but we put the decision in his court and he chose to stay with the same club and play for the B-Team.

I'll admit, I was a little sheepish going to our first B-Team game as former "elite" A-Team parents, but 10 minutes in, I was utterly convinced this was the right thing for our kid.

Our son is now getting solid playing time and is a vocal leader on the field. He is a completely different player in terms of confidence than he was last season. He has a coach who takes pride in developing players.

Coach cares about what the kids eat before a game or tournament. Coach runs speed and agility practices (did you know kids at this age are ripe for speed development (<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/ten-ss-trainability/speed>) that will serve them their whole life?). Coach works the kids hard at practice, but on the car ride home, we get a blow-by-blow account of every drill they did and how much fun it was.

The impact of my son's choice hit home after the boys won a B-Team tournament in which my son played significant minutes. "This is the first trophy I feel like I earned," he said, while happily scarfing down a victory ice cream cone. I almost cried.

He didn't care what division they were in. He didn't care about A-Team status. He cared about feeling like he helped a team to a victory.

So, what have I learned from our A-to-B experience, and what does it have to do with lacrosse?

- A-Team status isn't the be-all end-all. What team your kid makes means nothing if your kid hates it and quits the sport. Check your ego at the door. Be OK with being a B-Team mom or dad.
- Kids don't care what letter or color team they are on. They just want to feel like they're part of the effort; they want to PLAY. If that means they're not playing for the top team in the club, so be it.
- A great coach is worth it, no matter what level they coach. I would rather have a good coach for a B-Team than chase after A-Team status and get a know-it-all former D-1 all-star who rolls the ball out and makes the kids scrimmage pointlessly all practice while he or she texts.

That tournament trophy will probably end up in a box in our basement, but his feelings about his sport and his contributions to a team will endure. His joy is back.

I hope that all little lacrosse players keep that joy, and that we as parents make helping them love this sport for a lifetime the most important thing we do.

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Photo Credit: Joe Koshollek