

## Pitcher Overuse?

Written by Coach Corral

Monday, March 30 2009 09:25 - Last Updated Tuesday, March 31 2009 16:12

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The following is my response to a parent upset about the amount of pitches his son threw in a tournament.

*"Am I being over protective or what. My son started a game on Friday night and threw 4 innings. On short rest, he started again on Sunday morning and threw 3 innings. He threw 64 pitches on Friday and 26 in the Sunday morning game. The team had to wait for another game to be played so they rested for two hours before their next game. The starting pitcher in the next game wasn't doing well so the coach put my son back in and he pitched 3 more innings. Surprise, now he has a sore arm. I'm not happy.*

*I always thought when a pitcher was done, he was done for the day. Is this normal or even acceptable for 14 yr. olds?"*

CC: First off, its is absolutely asinine to throw that many innings/pitches in a tournament. The coach's failure is that he did not develop enough pitchers to adequately handle the workload/pressure, and now he has your son clean up the mess. If a team can only be competitive with one pitcher on the hill, then you guys are not ready for tournaments yet.

Part of a parent's job is being proactive about their safety, including arm health. I disagree with many of the posters on here that state that the kid should deal with his own problems and refuse to take the ball. I respectfully disagree, although I understand what you guys are trying to say. This (and the previous argument with the new HS coach) is a specific situation that should involve the parent to properly communicate the IMPORTANCE of arm health and safety...whereas an issue like playing time, i would have the player communicate that ONLY. I have had parents complain about their 10-12 yr old sons throwing 80 pitches twice per week. I have seen 12 yr old kids blow their elbows out only to be put back on the mound IMMEDIATELY after rehabbing back to health. There are irresponsible coaches out there people. Parents need to know when to talk to coaches, and when to stay away and let junior deal with it.

True, learning what to say and when to say it to coaches is a natural progression of the learning process of players...especially when it comes down to playing time, how to improve, etc. As a player you definitely want to develop a rapport with the coach in that sense. Saying NO to coaches will not improve or create a good rapport with your coach. In cases such as these however, a parent can simply say, "my son will take the ball whenever you ask him, but in this case, I'm speaking to you as a parent concerned with his arm." In that sense, you're taking the pressure off your son entirely while keeping his arm safe.

FYI, if my players tell me "my arm is bothering me today..." then they won't pitch. Sometimes, they'll come back 15 min later and say "Coach, I can pitch today..." They still DON'T pitch. I will not sacrifice their arm health for wins on the field. I've developed enough pitchers for my teams to be competitive and if my #1 or #2 are unavailable, then its time for the rest of the team to step up and compete.

The point here guys, is to hold coaches ACCOUNTABLE for decisions that may affect the health of your SONS. This isn't a case of playing time, this is a case of endangerment to the health

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and future of your son's playing career. As Rgun says later, the coach purposely misreported his outs in the tournament in order to have his son pitch more. Unacceptable behavior from a trusted authority figure.

*"My son is not the type to say "no" to the coach. He trust that the coach knows what he's doing and is looking out for his and the teams best interest. This game wasn't important. The tourney wasn't important. The season isn't important except from a learning experience. I guess we learned something."*

I hope you do."

Coach Corral

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