Playing time is one of the most common sources of frustration for many athletes, coaches and parents. Everybody wants to play, that is why they are on the team. How much is enough? What is fair? Especially at young ages, players who spend a lot of time on the bench often don’t benefit as much from sport. For young athletes to continue to have fun and work hard, they need to feel they are actively contributing to the team’s success. If you do find your child frustrated with playing time, there are many terrific lessons that a child can learn even without playing — including teamwork, perseverance, resiliency, and goal setting.

Tips on How to Think About Playing Time

**EXPECTATIONS** Many coaches base playing time on various factors including attendance, practice performance, and defense. Make sure your athlete knows how the coach makes decisions on playing time.

**MATURE CONVERSATIONS** Encourage your athlete to approach the coach if he/she has questions around their playing time. If your child is younger, we recommend you join them to talk to their coach but let your child lead the conversation. The player should speak to their coach.

**24 HOUR RULE** It is always best for players, parents and coaches to wait at least 24 hours after a game to discuss any concerns around playing time. Let all of the emotions and thoughts settle before initiating a conversation with the coach.

**OPTIONS** Do some research to learn more about programs in your area. Is there another program in your area that might align better with your child’s ability and playing time expectations for the next season?

“We have to learn as players that we play for coaches when we’re in sports, we work for bosses when we’re in the real world. And we’ve got to learn to communicate through them not through a third party (parents.)”

KEVIN EASTMAN, NBA COACH

Learn more about the Jr. NBA Parent Initiative by visiting jr.nba.com