

Letter from a Player
by Mike Cullina, Director of Coaching

Dear Mommy and Daddy,

It's starting to get dark outside before my soccer practice is over so the season must almost be done! Because you are a "good" parent, I wanted to tell you about all the sports and activities my friends and I have decided to do this winter.

My coach says that we will split the team in two and we'll play both teams in both indoor sessions. She asked me if I would play on both teams sometimes. My coach also says that if I get faster, she might let me play forward sometimes in the spring and that I could make the Varsity team when I go to high school. I was thinking I could join one of those speed and jump training programs too.

My best friend wants me to play basketball with her. Practice and games won't interfere with soccer or speed training, but I might need to leave some of the stuff early so I can get to my indoor soccer or basketball game. That reminds me, since we don't have regular soccer practice during the winter I want to do some individual skills training with a professional coach.

Oh, the Winter Play is coming up at school. I'm so excited, because I have an important part this year. Practice is right after school, so it shouldn't be a problem.

School won't be a problem. I'll do all my homework between play practice and basketball practice or skills training or sprint training. We never eat dinner as a family anyway, so we can grab something on the way. I'm not usually that hungry after practice anyway.

Once I get all the practice and game schedules, I'll give you a car pool assignment.

You see, what I really need from you mommy and daddy is to tell me something I don't get to hear very often, because you want to make me happy. The problem is I'm not going to like it. I need you to tell me "No!" Of course, I may cry and scream. In fact, I may say something that will hurt your feelings.

I'm still a child so I don't understand how all these activities may affect me both physically and psychologically. You know that my body may break down if I do all of them. I could get any one of a number of overuse injuries or I may just stop liking sports all together. I also won't have much time to spend with my family and friends or do my homework.

Only you know how important it is for me to take some time off so I can be a kid. You recognize the value of sitting down to eat dinner as a family, because soon I'll be off to college. Besides, I probably need a nutritious meal once in a while. You also know that the more quality time we spend together, the more likely I am to come to you when I have a problem.

You'll try to explain that I'll have to choose which activities I'll do and that I won't be allowed to participate in sports at all for at least four weeks straight during a calendar year, so my body and mind have a chance to relax. The winter might be the only time I can do that. I won't understand until I'm a parent myself. It'll be right around the time I realize I'm becoming my mother.

People might try to pressure me and I'm sure I'll get some flack at school, but you'll say "No" because you love me and some day I'll thank you.

Thank you mommy and daddy,

Your daughter