

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING CONFLICTING ACTIVITIES

Every one of us has had our share of students that quit because of a sport. Most tell us that they will be back after the season, but we know that this is rarely the case. When the season is complete, it takes a lot of effort to get back into the routine of Martial Arts. Secondly, they feel like they have forgotten a lot and that their friends are a belt ahead of them. AS an instructor, we know that it is in the best interest of the student, and our business, to keep them training through the season. Follow the strategies listed below and if you do your job right, you will have a good chance of keeping that student.

The first thing we need to know is if they are happy with their lessons so far. If they are not, they might be using soccer as an excuse to quit and all your persuasion skills will be for naught. If they are happy with the program then you should be able to keep them training. A simple, "How are you enjoying the program?" is a good place to start. If you get a lukewarm response, probe a little deeper to find out why they are not completely satisfied with your program. At least this way you can see if there are steps you can take to tighten up so you won't lose more students for the same reason in the future.

If you find that they love the program and see its benefits for their child, then sometimes it is just a matter of sitting down with them, reviewing the schedule for different time options, and letting them know that it is okay to miss some classes; but by keeping their foot in the door, their child won't fall backwards. Possibly offer special fifteen-minute one-on-one classes.

Let's Role Play

Parent: I need to put Johnny's program on hold because soccer just started and we are just too busy.

Instructor: I bet you are extremely busy. Do you have a few minutes to talk about it?

Parent: Yes.

Instructor: Great!! First off, before we go forward I wanted to know how you have liked the program so far.

Parent: It's been great. Just what Johnny needed.

Instructor: How has it benefited Johnny exactly?

Parent: Well, there are a lot of things. His behavior has been better, he is much more confident now, and his coordination has really improved.

Instructor: Do you think it will help his soccer game?

Parent: Oh, yes!

Instructor: Can you see how keeping Johnny training until he gets his Black Belt will continue to help him?

Parent: Absolutely! Don't worry; we have no intention of having him quit. He will be back right after the season is over. It's just that we have to take a break because we just have too much going on.

Instructor: Mrs. Smith, I'm sure that this is true. Just let me share with you a couple of concerns I have and then some probable solutions, ok?

Parent: Okay.

Instructor: Mrs. Smith, there is a phrase that we use; it is "Sometimes maintaining is gaining". It basically means that if we can find a way to keep Johnny's foot in the door during the soccer season, he will be way ahead of where he would be otherwise. You see, at the end of the season, his friends will be a Belt ahead; he'll feel like he has forgotten everything, and you'll be out of the routing of bringing him. I can't tell you how many times that someone has stopped going for soccer season and then never got started again.

Parent: Well, what do you suggest?

Instructor: First off, take a look at the schedule. Right now Johnny comes on Monday and Wednesday. Did you know we have a Tuesday and Thursday schedule as well?

Parent: I'd forgotten. But I just can't get him in twice a week.

Instructor: Is there a way you can try to get him here once per week and then, during the season, maybe you can bring him in on a Friday or Saturday a couple of times for some one-on-one training?

Parent: Well, I am not sure. We are just so busy.

Instructor: How about we just try it out and see how it works? Then in a couple of weeks, we can see how it goes.

Parent: Okay.

Instructor: Great! So what day are you going to try to get Johnny here?