RESET PERFORMANCE · APX ATHLETE

A FREE GUIDE FOR SPORTS PARENTS

The Car Ride Home

What to say — and what to skip — in the ten minutes after the game.

Built by Joe Jardine & Kaysee Cooper

resetperformancemindset.com

START HERE

The most important coaching conversation isn't on the field.

Ask a room of grown athletes about the hardest part of playing sports as a kid, and a surprising number won't name a coach, a loss, or an injury. They'll name the car ride home.

It's the most emotionally loaded ten minutes in youth sports. The game just happened. The feelings are still hot. Your athlete is sitting three feet from the person whose opinion matters most to them — and they are reading every word, every sigh, every glance at the rear-view mirror.

This is where a young athlete quietly decides whether sport is a safe place to fail. Not in one dramatic moment. In a hundred small car rides.

Here's the good news: you can't control the scoreboard, the playing time, or the referee. You have **complete control over the next ten minutes**. This guide is about using them well.

> **The car ride home is where kids decide whether sport is still fun. Handle it well and you protect the one thing that keeps them in the game.**

AVOID THESE

Five things that land harder than you think.

1

"Why did you…?"

Opening with a question about a specific play turns the car into a film session. Your athlete is still raw. The breakdown can wait — right now it just feels like a verdict.

2

Instant coaching.

Your athlete already has a coach. Add a second voice from the front seat and you stop being the safe one. Home should be the one place that isn't an evaluation.

3

Comparisons.

"Your teammate had a great game." "When I played, we used to…" Even meant kindly, comparison tells your athlete that who they were today wasn't quite enough.

4

Being more upset than they are.

If your athlete has shaken it off and your face hasn't, you've just taught them the loss was bigger than they thought. Your calm gives them permission to move on.

5

The silent treatment.

Saying nothing is still saying something. A cold, quiet car reads as disappointment louder than any words. Silence isn't neutral — they will fill it in, and rarely in your favor.

DO THIS INSTEAD

Five moves that change the ride.

1 **Lead with six words.**

"I love watching you play." No "but." No coaching attached. Athletes consistently name this as the line they most wanted to hear — it separates your love from their performance, permanently.

2 **Manage your face before your words.**

Your athlete reads your expression at pickup before you say anything. Decide on the walk to the car: warm, steady, glad to see them. That look does half the work.

3 **Ask permission to talk.**

"Want to break down the game, or just put on music?" It hands your athlete control of a moment where they had none — and given the choice, they often start talking on their own.

4 **Reflect, don't fix.**

If they vent, be a mirror, not a megaphone. "That looked frustrating." "Sounds like a rough one." Naming the feeling lets it pass. Rushing to solve it keeps it stuck.

5 **Find one specific, effort-based thing.**

Not "you were great" — they won't believe it after a loss. Something true and small: "You sprinted out every ground ball." Effort is always true, and always in their control.

KEEP THIS ONE

The 5-Minute Rule

When you're not sure what to do, follow one rule: the first five minutes after a game belong to connection, not correction.

1. **First five minutes — connection only.** A snack, music, "good to see you." Nothing about the game unless your athlete brings it up first.

2. **Then follow their lead.** If they want to talk it through, listen more than you speak. If they don't, let it ride. Both are fine.

3. **Save the real review.** Any honest breakdown of the game waits — for tomorrow, or for the moment they ask for it. It will land far better then.

WHEN IN DOUBT, SAY THIS

"I love watching you play."

WHAT'S NEXT

One conversation handled. Now the whole system.

The car ride home is one piece of a much bigger picture: the mental side of sport that almost no athlete is ever actually taught.

APX Athlete is our 12-week performance mindset program — twelve lessons, a daily practice, and a set of tools that build identity, confidence, focus, and resilience in any athlete, any sport, any age.

It launches **August 1, 2026**. Join the early list and you'll be first through the door — with an offer reserved for families who didn't wait.

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Reset Performance (RST) — performance mindset coaching for athletes, families, and teams. This is coaching, not therapy.
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