

# SIDELINE SESSIONS

THE VERY-FAR-FROM-DEFINITIVE GUIDE ON PREPARING FOR COMPETITION  
FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF CHILD COMPETITORS

BY  
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WITH CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FROM  
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# COACH TEAM AND SUPPORT ROLES

*Someone told me I fight like a girl...*

*... I told him if he worked on technique and  
moved a little faster he could too.*

## Coach/Team/Support Roles

### Question for parents... Who's idea is it to compete?

Was is the competitor's idea or were they requiring a nudge? Coaching and support are a little different depending on external versus internal motivations. A child competitor that is competing by the request of a parent or coach will require much more parental involvement than a child competitor that is doing it because it was their idea.

The question of why we compete is also very important during and after competition (or how we compete and if we do it again). When it comes to the first tournament it is probably more wise to focus on the experience more-so than the win. Try your best with little attachment to the outcome of the match.



### Listening to the Coach

- You know your child better than anyone, your coach knows BJJ
- Reinforce the coach's lessons at home
- **Refrain from sideline coaching** (unless you are specifically trained in BJJ), but not over their coach. This is confusing to the competitor and creates bigger problems at tournaments. Your child needs to recognize when the coach is addressing them. This can be difficult as a parent, at the very least repeat what the coach is saying.
- Your coach wants your competitor to be successful.
- Your coach will understand the rule-set for the competition and develop strategies for the competitors based on the rule-set. Knowing that your competitor is good at a particular submission that isn't allowed... you could get them disqualified by encouraging them to use their go-to move if it is against the rule-set.



### The Team... it's how BJJ works!

- This is an individual sport that can't be practiced without a team.
- All team members are at different levels and there is something to be learned from all skill levels
- All team members are equally important regardless of their skill level
- Encourage your competitor to encourage and elevate the team. This can be tough for some children especially if they perceive that they are better than a teammate who may have better success at a tournament.
- The Team is competitive, but for the improvement of the team as a whole... to make each other better for it.
- **As teammates get better, the improvements generated are reciprocated.**
- The team will help the competitor by adhering to the rule-set of the competition.



### Support... the most important role

- The role of support at home is essential to competitive success and should not be overlooked
- You are the gatekeepers to the competitor's success
- You make sure they are on time to class, their gi is clean, they have shelter, food, sleep... essentially the other 95-98% of the work that goes into building strong competitors.
- Be supportive emotionally
- Be a good example with your behavior, health and daily activities
- If you are unfamiliar with BJJ take some classes to show your support and better understand what your competitor is going through
- Even when your child is struggling in class, when speaking with them highlight what they did great at. We all have ups/downs/plateaus through progress.
- **If you need help, let the team know... we are all a part of this team.**
- You should familiarize yourself with the rule-set for the specific competition (these are not universal rule-sets)

**Rule-set for upcoming June 5th Newbreed Tournament:**  
<https://newbreedbjj.com/rules/>



# NUTRITION AND HYDRATION

*The only easy day was yesterday.*

*Aftermath following a competition team training led by Master Roberto Traven*

## Nutrition and Hydration

### Question for parents... When do you think you should begin hydrating for a competition?

Right now is probably the best answer. Competition training will deplete your hydration reserves very quickly. I am always behind the curve on hydration as I am always the sweatiest guy on the mats, so the best time for me was yesterday.

What you put in the tank is also very important. I'm not going to tell you what to feed and not feed your kids, but as a competitor, speaking to other competitors... one of the easiest ways to properly fuel the competitor's tank is with real whole foods. Parents... unless your children do the grocery shopping, you drive the menu at home. So drive with the intention of fueling a competitor.



### Nutrition – Fueling a competitor

- Fueling an athlete with whole foods like the ones pictured above will make an incredible difference in athletic performance (Plants, Animals, Healthy Fats, Nuts and Seeds)
  - Adult competitors** – start eliminating processed foods from your diet, these are not doing you any favors. Not only will they impede progress in weight goals, but they also will reduce your ability to heal and recover from training as well as exacerbating inflammation issues. You are going to hurt enough after training, so don't make it worse!
  - Kid competitors** – eat to be strong, as you are still growing. I would still recommend choosing foods like the ones pictured above (unless food allergies apply).
- Making weight for competitors -
  - Adult competitors** – choose a reasonable weight class goal that you feel comfortable making.
  - Kid competitors** – stick to what your walking around weight class is, this is your weight on any normal day. Weight cutting is not recommended.
- Adult competitors** – If you choose a lower weight class, develop a plan to get there and commit to it. Removing processed carbohydrates and sugar from your diet is an excellent way to cut weight. There is a lot of sugar in fruit, so go easy on it or avoid it altogether. If you need help reaching your goal, I am happy to assist.

### Hydration – Not too complicated, drink water

- Drink water (in case that wasn't obvious) - personally I prefer room temperature water over cold or iced water.
- Another great thing to do as a human of this planet is to get a large reusable water bottle. We really don't need more single-use water bottles filling up landfills, especially with all the water you are going to be drinking.
- Soda, sweetened/bottled teas, sports drinks, energy drinks are all detrimental to athletic performance, rest, recovery and can lead to dehydration. The sugar in these drinks lead to insulin spikes which in turn increase cortisol production (the stress hormone). LMNT is probably one of the cleanest electrolyte mixes for you water, but it does have a touch of Stevia.
- Add some lemon or lime juice to your water if you would like some added flavor.
- Alcohol**... talking to the parents here. Please don't drink before or during a tournament. You can celebrate when you get home! This should go without saying, but it has come up at tournaments and is worth the mention. We will most likely not be able to (nor want to) have your back if you start mouthing off to a competitive 3rd degree black belt because you had a few too many while cheering on little Suzy/Johnny like you're at an ultimate cage fighting event.

My go-to food/shopping list when preparing for a tournament:

<https://www.marksdailyapple.com/uploads/2019/10/PDF-Primal-Blueprint-Shopping-List.pdf>

# **SLEEP REST AND RECOVERY DON'T FORGET FUN!**

*If you want to succeed in anything you do,  
you have to find some fun in it.*



## Sleep, Rest and Recovery... Don't forget FUN!

### Question for parents... How much sleep does your competitor typically get?

Getting sleep and getting good sleep are very different things. This may sound like a joke to many people, but I have a set bedtime. Yes, I am a 46 year old with a 10:00 PM bed time, because sleep is non-negotiable for me. Many times I am out by 9:30 PM and up by or before 5:00 AM. That is not to say I never have a late night, but it is very rare. On the rare occasion that I deviate I pay the price. That price for insufficient sleep is much more steep than you may realize, especially when you are asking so much of your body.

Another big part of the recovery process is having active fun that doesn't have anything to do with BJJ!



### The importance of Sleep, Rest and Recovery

- Sleep is critical to performance and recovery, not to mention the overall improvements in mood and brain function.
- The human body does most of its repair and maintenance work during sleep. Sleep is a healing process.
- Aim for 8 to 9.5 hours of sleep depending on the time of year, these numbers are suggested as a reference to the circadian cycle, a natural response to daylight or the reduction of it in winter months.
- Avoid television and device time at least 2 hours prior to bedtime as the blue light emitted inhibits the bodies natural melatonin release (the melatonin produced in the body is far superior to any supplement)
- Your sleep environment will have a very big impact on the quality of your sleep. There is almost no artificial light in our bedroom and we have a comfortable bed. We keep our room temperature nice and cool with little clutter to disrupt the calm, modest nature of the room.
- There should be at least 1 rest day per week, this does not mean lay on the couch all day... have fun doing something active that isn't BJJ (the beach is a great option)

### Don't forget FUN!

If your competitor is having fun at this point, congratulations! This is where training is getting pretty tough.

- Make sure competition is not the only topic being discussed at home. This can be extra difficult as a family of competitors, as one of a BJJ practitioners favorite things to talk about is BJJ.
- Let your competitor demonstrate their techniques on you. My kids always enjoyed the opportunity to demonstrate a tight choke on me.
- On rest days, make sure your competitor does something out of the ordinary fun. My family is a water family, we recharge when we are near, on or in the water. The vitamin D that we get along the way from being outdoors and absorbing the sunshine, is also very useful in recovery as well as helping to boost our immune systems.
- If your competitor is showing signs of stress, it's time to bump up the fun-o-meter to support your little bad-ass!!!
- It can be easy to lose sight of the fun during comp training sessions. Sometimes the kids need the tough love on the mat and that's good timing for the parents to make up that difference, especially on the days when Professor and other coaches can't be all hugs and sunshine.



# EMOTIONS AND PRAISE

*A fight is going on inside me," said an old man to his son.  
"It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil. He is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other wolf is good. he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you."*

*The son thought about it for a minute and then asked,  
"Which wolf will win?"*

*The old man replied simply, "The one you feed."*





## Emotions and Praise

### Question for parents... How do you handle preparation for stressful situations?

Everyone handles preparation for stressful situations differently. Does your competitor typically handle testing in school well or do they struggle with their emotions. Do they use negative self-talk when discussing difficult tasks that they may be fearful of?

We all have reactions to stressors, but it is how we deal with these stressors that make the difference between a positive, winning mindset versus a negative, self-limiting mindset.

Sincere praise of the effort your competitor is putting in should be a regular household conversation.



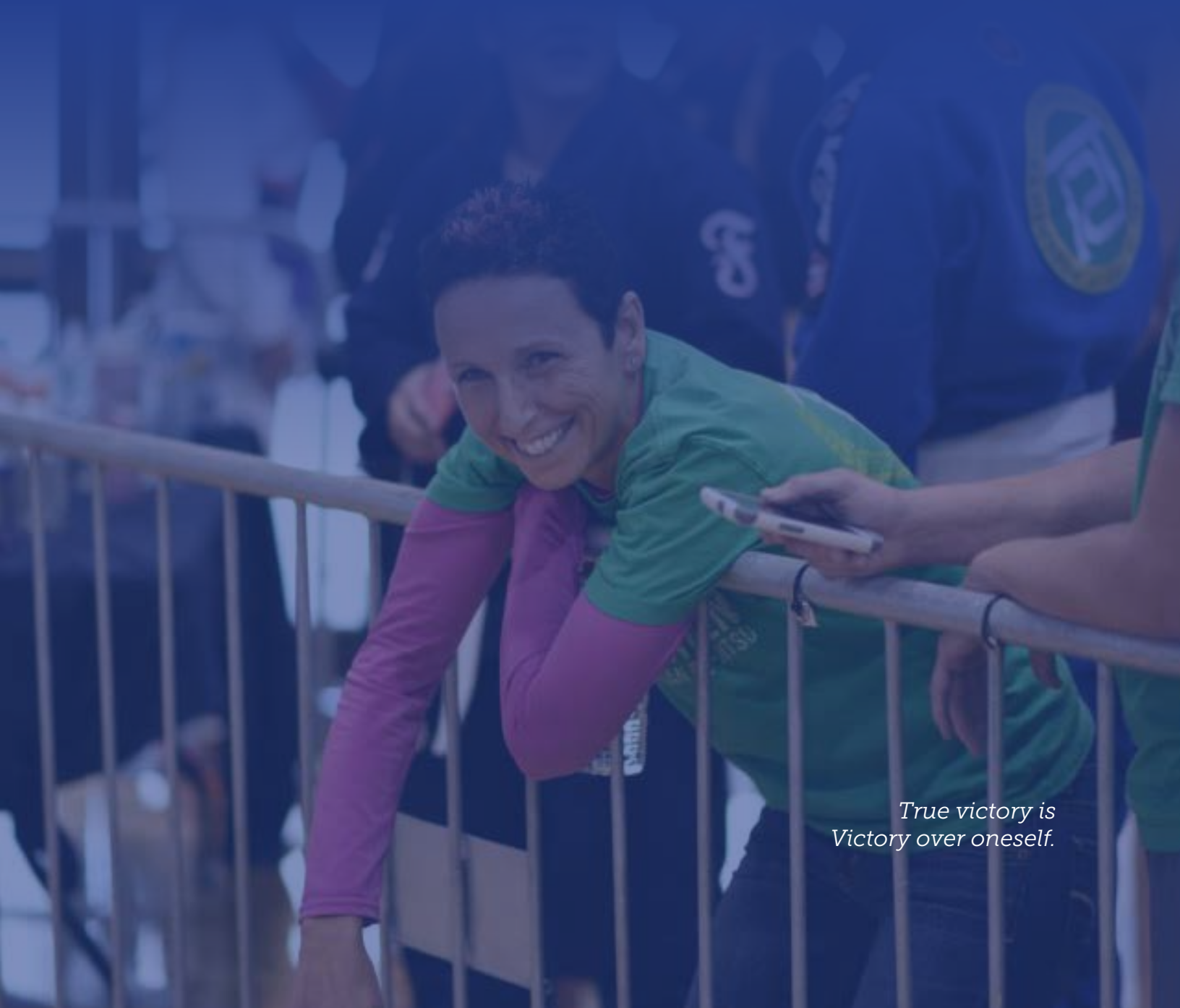
### Emotions - There will be tears

- Emotions run high with competition training and especially at the tournaments. Be patient with your young competitors.
- Breathing and meditation techniques are very useful in helping to deal with the stress of training and competition. Sometimes, something as simple as closing your eyes and focusing on your deep breaths for a minute can help reset a stressful mind.
- Adrenaline dump - sometimes equals brain fog and sluggish movement. The timing of an adrenaline dump is typically right after your first match in a tournament and the severity has significant impact on following matches.
- Stomach issues (vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) are very common before and during training and tournaments, which usually disappears immediately after competing in the first match.
- Tears are natural so respect the process of your competitor's development. There is pain, frustration, anger and disappointment that they may be dealing with. They will be ok. Some even cry because they don't know what else to do or how to process the emotions of the moment.
- Refrain from criticism of emotional releases of your competitor and their opponents.
- Respect should be shown to the coaches, parents, competitors and teammates at all times, even when emotions are high.

### Praise, praise, praise

- Your competitor wants you to be proud of them – Praise what they got right, find ways to help them with what they struggle with. If you can take some classes so you can help them understand what they are struggling with, please do (this is why I started BJJ). Private lessons are also available.
- A small criticism after praise negates the praise. I'm sure all parents are guilty of this at some point, I know I am. So try to avoid the "You did great at \_\_\_\_\_, BUT you could have done \_\_\_\_\_ better."
- Re-frame your competitor's negative self-talk by having them tell you about the things they know they do well. If they are having a hard time with this, have a few ready for them to use. Let them use your positive self-talk as an example.
- Even if tying their belt was the only thing they got right let them know how incredible that is. BJJ is not easy.
- The outcome of a match is irrelevant and both the winner and the loser are equally brave, very few people are brave enough to even step on the mat. Let them know how brave they are, how proud you are of them and make sure they are proud of themselves. Pride in themselves will help develop their internal motivations, as well as their positive champion mindset.

# PACKING FOR A LONG DAY



*True victory is  
Victory over oneself.*

## Packing for a LOOOOOOOOONG day.

### Question for parents... What snacks are you bringing, and can I have some?

If you have ever taken your kids on a long road trip or made your way across the country via a 12 hour flight with layovers, realize that this is going to be a very similar situation (but with grappling space). We always try to show up as a team and leave as a team, but understand that it may not work for everyone and their particular situation. There is something very exciting about walking in to the tournament in force. Leaving together will also make it possible for plenty of debriefing time while everything is fresh.

There is also typically an after tournament celebratory meal, that often consists of things we've been telling competitors to avoid for the past several weeks. Feasting after battle like a Viking warrior is perfectly acceptable!



### Packing and Shopping for competition day

- The tournaments rarely have food available and if they do, it tends to not be very healthy.
- Pack healthy snacks as it could be a very long day. Some venues allow coolers inside but check their website for details.
- Stick with water for hydration.
- Your competitor may be dealing with some pre-tournament jitters, so don't put junk in the tank. I've seen many people vomit prior to, during and after competing. Go light.
- A change of clothes isn't a bad idea (maybe a towel too)
- 1 or 2 competition legal gis with patches (make sure the patches are securely sewn). Rash guard and shorts or spats for no-gi
- Competition legal BJJ belt.
- Mouthpiece.
- A hoodie is nice to have, as many arenas are very cold.
- Don't count on WiFi or cell data. Every person in the building is likely to be glued to their phones trying to text each other, live stream, or check brackets.
- Phone batteries die. Power bricks are a good idea.
- Some team parents like to bring extra snacks and/or goody bags for the competitors and it is always appreciated.

### It's GO TIME!!!

**It is most likely going to be a very long day for coaches, competitors and parents/guardians alike.**

- My first tournament started at 7:30 AM and went until 11:00 PM – this is not the norm but they have always been day long events.
- Pack some distractions – Book, cards, music and headphones, etc. Have things to distract the mind when needed (down time, pre-fight jitters, boredom, coping with outcomes). Technology is typically not best choice unless you need music for distraction. If you bring technology you have to lug it around or risk theft.
- Look out for each other. A designated “stuff watcher” is extremely helpful for adult competitors. Knowing your kids and personal possessions are secure is invaluable for mindset and focus.
- Engage with the team at the tournament.
- Absorb the surroundings and learn from the experience. It can get hectic and seem unorganized at times but it will work itself out but requires attention.
- Observe other teams, is there something you see that could help our team? Report back after the tournament, what did you think? How could these sessions be improved?
- What rang truest in your experience?

# PACKING LIST

Some of these are required and some are simply useful recommendations.

## COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS

- For Gi competition - 1 to 2 competition legal gis with patches (make sure the patches are securely sewn).
- Depending on the tournament, a rash guard or tight fitting T-shirt may be worn under the gi. Sports tops are also sometimes permitted for female competitors depending on the tournament.
- For No Gi competition - Rash guard or tight fitting T-shirt and shorts without pockets, zippers, buttons, etc. or spats for no-gi.
- Competition legal BJJ belt with a black tag end that is the correct length.
- Mouthpiece.
- Trimmed and filed finger and toe nails.
- Flip flops or slides for easy transition to the mat. Tournament organizers do not want competitors running around without shoes on and bringing that on to the mats.
- Proof of tournament registration.
- A clean, happy and well-rested competitor with a positive, winning mindset.**
- Don't forget your team, as we do all of this together. Look out for each other, cheer each other on, we win together and we lose together, but we are always stronger as a team!

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pack healthy snacks as it could be a very long day. Some venues allow coolers inside but check their website for details. Do not count on food being available
- Water and water bottle for hydration. Bring your own supply as water fountains may be turned off
- A change of clothes (maybe a towel too)
- A hoodie is nice to have, as many arenas are very cold and it can be difficult to warm up and stay warmed up.
- Don't count on WiFi or cell data. Every person in the building is likely to be glued to their phones trying to text each other, live stream, or check brackets.
- Phone batteries die. Power bricks are a good idea to have on hand.
- Some team parents like to bring extra snacks and/or goody bags for the competitors and it is always appreciated.
- Distractions for anxious competitors.
- A designated "stuff watcher" for adult competitors.
- Masks may be required for spectators.

The IBJJF tends to have some of the most strict rules regarding uniform. If you stick with their guidelines, you should have no issues with other organizations.

Here is a link to their current IBJJF uniform regulations: <https://ibjff.com/uniform>



# DEBRIEF

**There will be a lot going on during the tournament and attentions will have been divided in order to make sure everyone gets a coach. While it is fresh consider writing down some answers to these questions.**

**Was there anything during the competitor's match(es) that you thought went well?**

*These questions are for the Parents and the competitors alike.*

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**Was there anything during the competitor's match(es) that you thought didn't go as planned? Did you get stuck in a position or caught in a submission?**

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**Was there anything you noticed other teams doing that you think would be helpful for our team?** *We are always open to making this the best experience possible for our competitors.*

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**Did you enjoy the experience? Why or Why not?**

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**Would you be interested in competing again? Why or Why not?**

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**Was there anything you felt that should have been mentioned or explained better in any of the sideline sessions?** *Your feedback will help to improve the process for future competitors and their families.*

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# GOOD LUCK!

**WE ARE EXTREMELY PROUD OF  
THE COMMITMENT AND EFFORT PUT FORTH  
BY OUR COMPETITORS AND  
THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS!**

**THANK YOU!**

