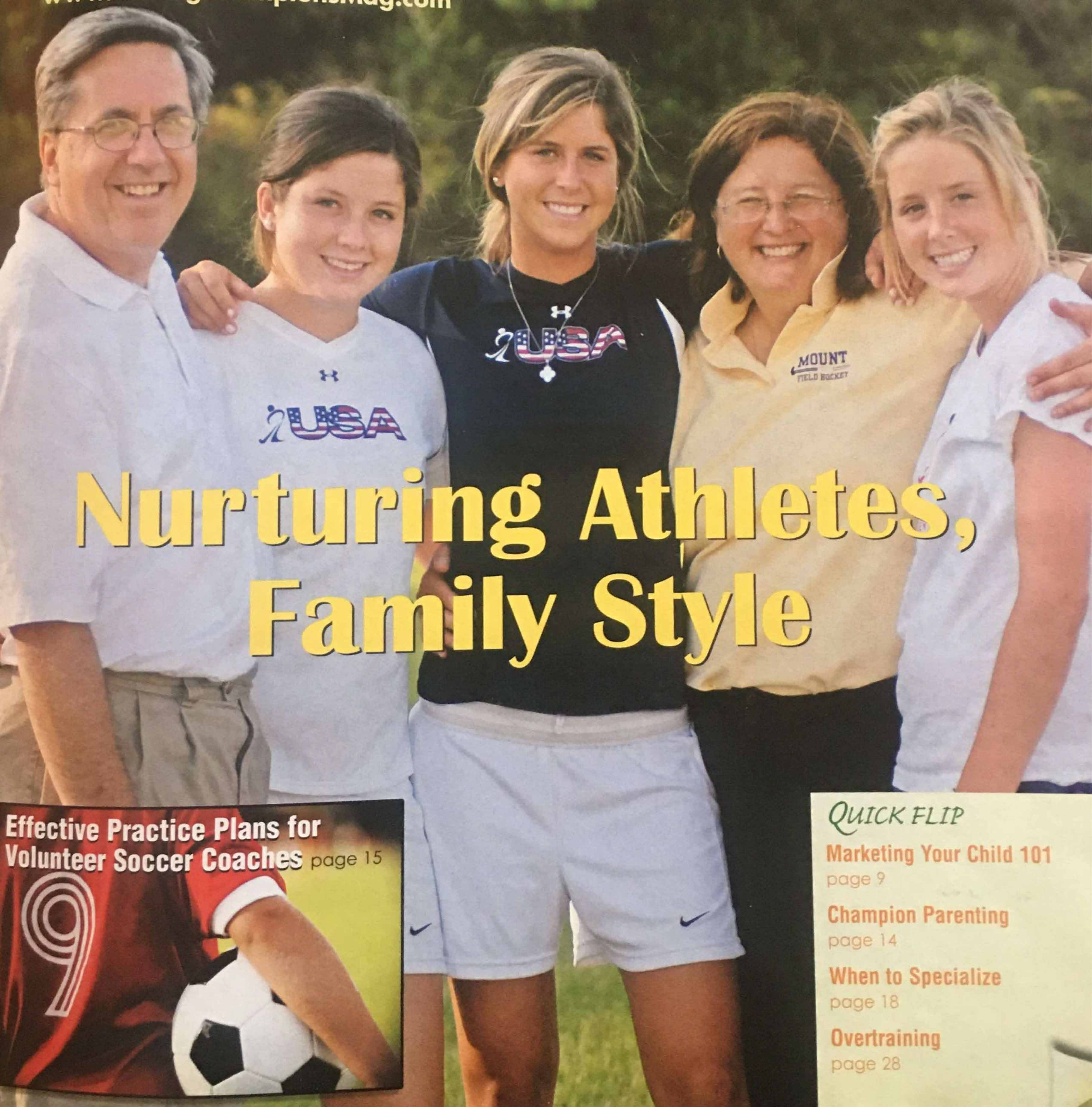


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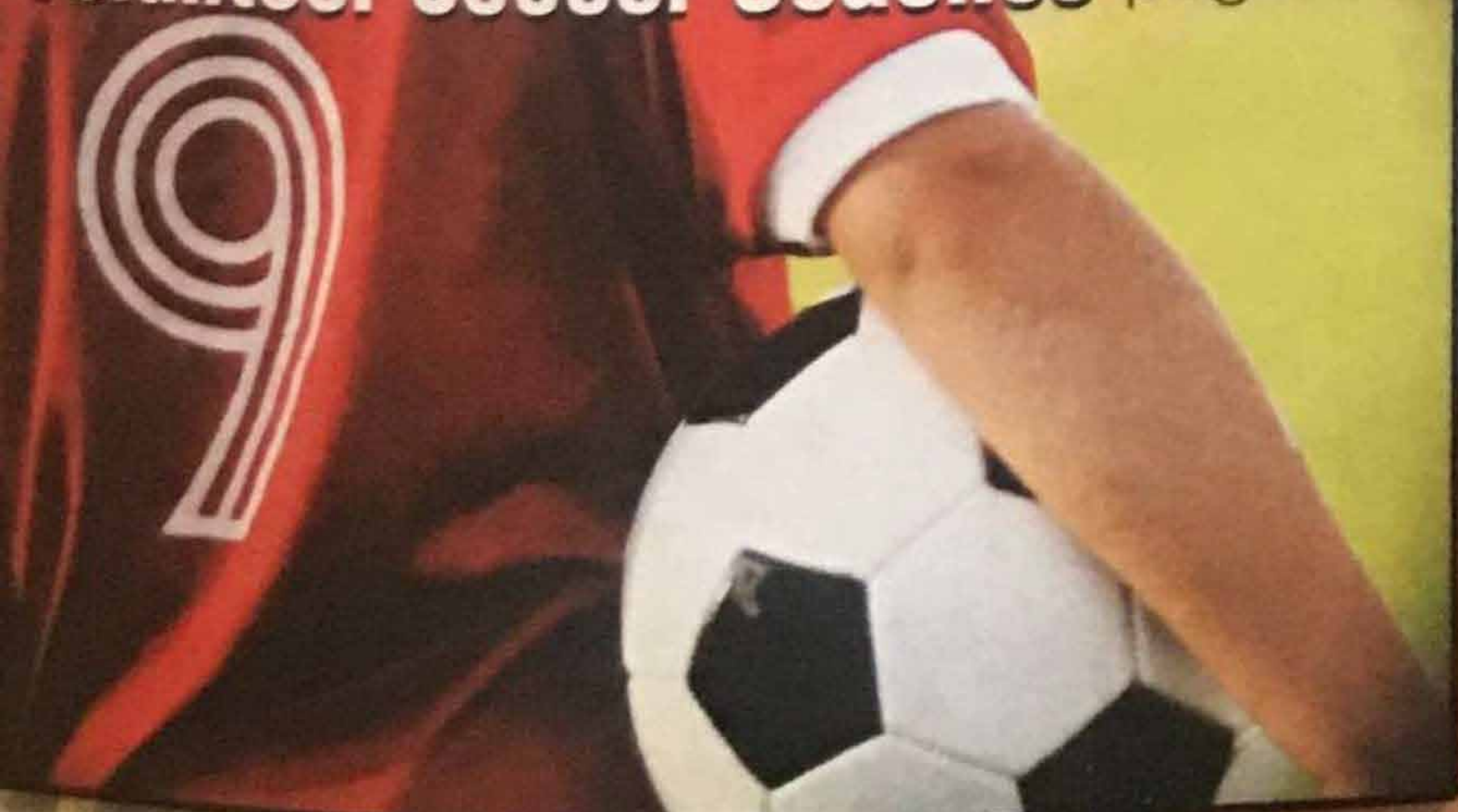
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**Effective Practice Plans for
Volunteer Soccer Coaches** page 15



QUICK FLIP

Marketing Your Child 101
page 9

Champion Parenting
page 14

When to Specialize
page 18

Overtraining
page 28

Talented Trio + Mom = National Success

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LONGSTRETH
DEFINING THE WOMEN'S GAME

"When you coach your children you see them in a different light. You see how they interact with their friends, how they deal with challenges and successes. It helps you be a better parent."

— Tina



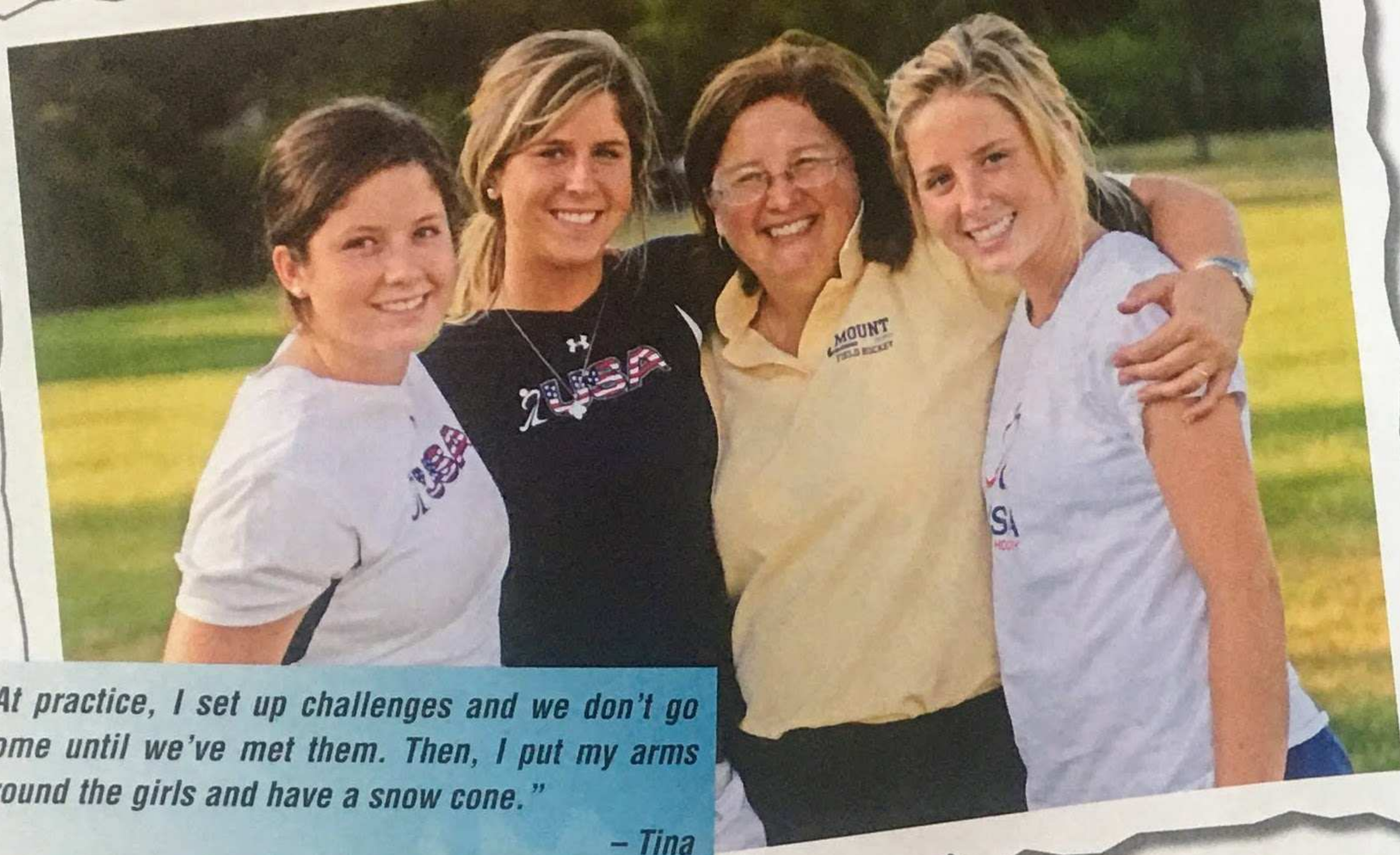
by Kathleen Harte Simone

"I wanted to be an Olympic athlete. I've obviously come to terms with the fact that I won't," shared a jovial Tina Reinprecht, field hockey coach and mother of three very talented field hockey players. "But I never sought to live this dream through my girls. I've been there to help them get where they are, but I've always wanted the girls to pursue their dreams."

Such words of wisdom seem to be the underlying theme – and driving force – behind the success of the Reinprecht clan. And, in a society where so many parents micromanage, over schedule, and demand high caliber performance of their children, particularly in sports, Tina and her husband Jim have taken a different approach: let the kids try different things early on, find quality programs with excellent coaching, get involved, set high yet realistic standards, provide positive and constructive support, and let the kids flourish.

And flourish they have. Tina and Jim's three daughters have all played at the national level and have traveled the globe with hockey sticks in





"At practice, I set up challenges and we don't go home until we've met them. Then, I put my arms around the girls and have a snow cone."

– Tina

hand, clad in red, white and blue. China, the Netherlands, Australia, Italy, and Argentina are a handful of international destinations where these spunky, pony-tailed young ladies have had the opportunity to play.

But with opportunity first comes commitment, hard work, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. Lucky for the girls, their mother has always been an integral part of their field hockey success, not only as a sports mom but also as their coach.

"I expect from my daughters what I expect from all of my athletes: that they give 110%. And I expect that of myself. I want my program to be better than a college program so I've got to do my homework every day."

This expectation to demand so much of oneself has transpired to sheer field hockey success for Tina herself, beginning with a long list of collegiate field hockey records at Ithaca College, where she is also member of the Sports Hall of Fame. After a short hiatus when the girls were young, Tina returned to the game on many levels: as a youth coach and field hockey administrator for a township club, as founder and director of Mystx Field Hockey Club based in Feasterville, as co-coach of the Mount St. Joseph field hockey team in Flourtown, as a long time employee of US Field Hockey in Development and Futures, and most recently as co-owner of National Field Hockey Showcases and creator of Field Hockey America (www.fieldhockeyamerica.com). Not surprisingly, the high school team where Tina co-coaches vied for the state title last year and her club, Mystx Field Hockey, consistently captures first place finishes at top caliber national tournaments.

But the role Tina is most proud of is that of mother to Sarah, Katie and Julia. "When the girls were little, we tried it all: karate, gymnastics, tennis, piano lessons. We could have been a tennis family, really. What we

found is that the key is to identify what your child really likes – and what they are good at – and to get involved, whatever it is. Often people just write a check and drop the kids off at practice. It's not about that. Don't expect the youth coaches to do everything. There are lots of great coaching resources out there; you just have to find them. Then, you can be a part of your child's passion for something. If you don't, you're really missing out on something special."

Tina's fervor for coaching coupled with her smart approach to being a good sports mom

"I see other athletes whose parents aren't supportive. They fear making a mistake. But my mom has always believed in me. She's taught me that you're never going to be better if you don't take risks. And I don't just mean on the hockey field."

– Sarah

has not gone unnoticed by her daughters.

"My mom has been my coach for...forever," shared Sarah. "She works on her knowledge of the game every single day and it shows in her teams and in us. I know that ultimately my love for the game is because of my mom." Sarah, a two-time high school All-American, is now a junior at Princeton University where she was named Ivy League

"There have been a couple of times when I haven't made certain selections. My mom comforted me and confirmed in me that I'm a good player. She told me that this isn't the end of the world and that we'll get through it together. It means so much."

– Julia

Rookie of the Year and All-Ivy her first two years. She and her sister, Katie, are currently members of the USA U21 National Team. "Sarah is an elegant player. She's poised and purposeful. She plays the midfield with such grace," Tina said.

Katie, now a high school senior at The Mount, has been named All-American since her sophomore year. She's also a member of the extremely select USA Women's National Team Development Squad. "Katie is a very creative player, and she has the innate ability to bring the whole team along with her," Tina shared. But hockey is not Katie's only passion. "I remember my first year in field hockey; it was extremely frustrating. It's much easier to move a soccer ball on the field and I wasn't sure if I wanted to play at all. My mom didn't really fight me with this. She wanted me to decide what I wanted. And my dad – he knows my soccer side – so he gives me so much support too and he's my number one fan." Katie has continued to play soccer on a premier level with FC Delco, which captured the State Cup Championship in 2006.

"My girls are not just hockey players. They're athletes," said Tina when discussing Katie's soccer and field hockey interests. "Playing on another team means another set of friends, another set of coaches, and another set of goals to accomplish. The physical, social and mental aspects of playing a variety of sports will help you be the best you can be."

The youngest of this dynamic trio, Julia, is a junior at the Mount who boasts equally impressive athletic achievements including participation at two Junior Olympic Games and on the U16 CanAm Field Hockey Team, which competed in Vancouver this summer. "Julia plays with simple brilliance. She perfects the small game. She's not flashy, she's consistent," Tina shared.

"My mom pushes us but in a good way. She helps us to reach our potential and to help our teammates be the best they can be. It's not just about us, it's about the team," Julia added.

Following in sister Sarah's footsteps, both Katie and Julia hope to play Division I collegiate field hockey. All three are also keeping their Mom's Olympic dream alive, but on their own terms. "We'll see," said Sarah. "It's exciting to be part of the system. I know"

(continued on page 38)

Tina's Suggestions for Raising Champions:

1. Let your child experience various activities early on. Many township programs offer balanced program commitments and seasonal sports. One team practice and one game per week are typical and manageable.

2. Play with your child or watch your child play. This is the best way to see and measure the enjoyment they get out of playing a particular sport and will give you insight if they are developing an affinity for the sport.

3. Commit, don't over commit. A trap many parents fall into with scheduling sports and other activities for their child is to think more is more. More is not always more in terms of practice and competitions. More is not always beneficial to the development of the athlete, the key to success, or how to improve. Kids (and adults) need down time to be kids – free and unstructured. We are losing creative thinking skills by micromanaging each and every practice, program, and curriculum. If your child asks for more, that is one thing. However, if you are the one answering "yes" about doing more, you are overworking your athlete.

4. Be fair and realistic. There is a program and level of play for every athlete. Recognize your child's abilities and desires and don't ask them to play well beyond their level or interest.

5. Be a positive fan and let the coach coach. You diminish your child and your child's team's efforts on the field with unsportsmanlike yelling. You embarrass your child. Instead, feed and nurture effort. Offer to have a catch with your son or daughter, or practice hitting with them. Afterwards, share an ice cream.

6. Get involved. Become a youth coach, help out with the administration of the township's programs, referee, help organize uniforms, etc. Youth sports are always looking for volunteers and you don't have to be an expert to lend a hand. So get involved...only positive people need apply.

7. Do not talk with your child about his or her athletic performance in the car on the way home from a game or match. It is not fair – your child is literally captured in that situation. If your child wants to talk about the game that's fine. Also, do not discuss other players/teammates performances.

8. Hug your child after the game, win or lose.

"My parents have opened me to so many opportunities. I can't imagine where I'd be without them."

– Katie

