

Children and Competitive Sport – Is this a ‘good thing’?

BMPE6003

Initial thoughts?

Children and Competitive Sport

Identify the following:

- Benefits
- Issues

- Are you influenced by your own experiences of this?

Human rights: Sport and human rights

- When practising sport is not a free choice
- Elite athletes and sports players have to begin training early - in most cases, before they are considered old enough to make their own decisions.
- This means children are vulnerable to exploitation by competitive parents or coaches. Equally, because of poverty or unavailability of sporting facilities, some children who wish to take part in sport are unable to.

In response to problems like these, the following Bill of Rights for Young Athletes was suggested by the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports at Michigan State University. They say a young person has these rights:

'Bill of Rights for Young Athletes' (Martens and Seefeldt, 1979)

- States that children have the right to:
 - participate in sports (which includes an equal amount of game time – coach organised?)
 - participate at a level commensurate with maturity and ability (age groups – elite training up an age group)
 - have qualified adult leadership (coaches working with children should have appropriate education)
 - play as a child, not as an adult (level of physical and emotional maturity – not mini adults)
 - share in the leadership decision making of sports participation (an opportunity to make decisions - autonomy)
 - participate in safe and healthy environments (physical and psychological health – injury risk)
 - proper preparation for participation in sport (basic skills before being competitive)
 - an equal opportunity to strive for success (effort and development before winning)
 - be treated with dignity (insensitive adults have no place in children's sports)
 - have fun in sport (this will spontaneously occur if the above are realised).

Children Getting Adult Sports Injuries

ACL tears in kids on the rise

○ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Av9XkfjMeo>

Injuries:

- A child's rights?
- 'participate in safe and healthy environments' (physical and psychological health)

IS INJURY PART OF SPORTS?

A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE (Turkeri-Boskurt, 2018)

- The purpose of this research was to examine the injury experiences of children involved in volleyball and determine the violation of their rights and the link with injury.
 - Research data was collected via in-depth interviews with 13 male and 8 female players aged between 13 and 18 years
- The research was conducted in the context of the Bill of Rights for Young Athletes

IS INJURY PART OF SPORTS? A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE.

(Turkeri-Boskurt, 2018)

- The findings revealed that a significant proportion of the athletes stated that they did not think much about injuries, thought injuries were normal, and continued to play despite being injured.
 - Others said they felt sad when they were first injured and had experienced intense fear of another injury.
 - Injury risk for later in life?
- A telling phrase was, “there were times when I did not tell anyone about my pain”.
- One of the main themes that emerged was a violation of the ‘rights’ that included the lack of qualified leadership, especially in relation to playing through injury.
 - This is also tied in with the right to a safe and healthy environment with coaches encouraging children to play through injury and the right to play as a child, especially involving playing in specialised positions.
 - Normalisation of this?

Benefits of sport...

- However, on the positive side the participants felt that there were major benefits in participating in sports.
- They felt that thanks to sport they,
 - 'learn to behave'
 - 'expand their social circles'
 - 'see different places'
 - 'acquire social status'
 - 'stay away from bad habits'
 - 'acquire leadership skills'

- They also felt that sport helped them to deal with the challenges of life by making them:
 - 'psychologically stronger '
 - 'the ability to look at events differently'
 - 'learn to compete'
 - 'self-confidence increases'
 - 'develop the skills for self-expression'
 - 'develop problem solving skills'
 - 'learn discipline and tolerance'
 - 'develop thinking skills'
 - 'stand on their own feet'

A Dangerous Game: The Truth About Youth Sports | Nikhil Verma | TEDxChicago

Dr. Nikhil Verma, Director of Sports Medicine, Midwest Orthopedics at Rush, serves as Team Physician for the Chicago White Sox and Chicago Bulls. Dr. Verma runs a busy clinical practice in Chicago and recently received funding for his sports medicine research from Major League Baseball. His talk examines how intensified youth sports have caused unprecedented injuries in child athletes.

○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_Slxq7qajs

○ Watch: 6 minutes – 9 minutes 30

Parents?

When do parents become an issue?



Specialisation – one sport all year

- What are the implications of specialisation?
- Parents aspirations
 - Competition / advantage over others / fun???
- Issue - Overuse injuries
 - Boredom
 - Failure to achieve standards – everyone
- Long term adherence to sport?

Looking after children in sport...

- Suggestions to manage the issues?