YOUTH SPORT SPECIALIZATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION: PUSHING KIDS OUT OF THE GAME FOR LIFE

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JOINT COMMISSION ON SPORTS MEDICINE & SCIENCE
Minneapolis – February 28, 2020
MY GOAL WITH THIS TALK

CALL TO ACTION
Single-sport specialization amongst youth today is troubling. Let kids be kids. They'll become better all-around athletes & have more fun.

I played everything. I played lacrosse, baseball, hockey, soccer, track and field. I was a big believer that you played hockey in the winter and when the season was over you hung up your skates and you played something else.

(Wayne Gretzky)

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®
America’s approach to the development of the youth athlete is broken.

As a leader in amateur sports, the NCAA is committed to supporting and promoting solutions to healthy, sustainable, long-term athlete development strategies in youth sports.

**NCAA DIVISION I COACHES TAKE A STAND AGAINST EARLY RECRUITING**

*Louisville, Ky.* - The NFCA has announced that its Division I membership has submitted a response to the NCAA on current early recruiting proposals in the legislative cycle. Division I college softball coaches have asked for all recruiting contact to begin September 1 of a prospective student-athlete’s senior year.
#dontRETIREkid

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TInFe337gZQ
DID YOU NEED CONVINCING THERE IS A PROBLEM?
SO WHATS THE SOLUTION?

CLINICAL REPORT  Guidance for the Clinician in Rendering Pediatric Care

AOSSM Early Sport Specialization Consensus Statement

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Sports Specialization and Intensive Training in Young Athletes

Joel S. Brenner, MD, MPH; FAAP, COUNCIL ON SPORTS MEDICINE AND FITNESS
INFOGRAPHICS AND EDUCATION?

SPORTS SPECIALIZATION AND INTENSIVE TRAINING IN YOUNG ATHLETES

Benefits of Youth Sports:
- Leadership
- Fun
- Self-esteem
- Teamwork
- Physical activity skills
- Peer socialization

By the Numbers:
- As many as 70% discontinue playing organized sports by age 13
- Only 1% high school athletes who receive any scholarships
- Between 3-11% high school athletes compete at the college level
- Between only 0.03-5% high school athletes reach professional level sports
- At least 50% athletic injuries related to overuse

GUIDANCE

Recovery:
- Taking 1 month off from a sport at least 3 times per year allows for physical and psychological recovery

Primary Focus:
- Learn lifelong physical activity skills and have fun

Play a Variety of Sports:
- Participating in multiple sports decreases the chance of injuries, stress, and burnout

Injury Prevention:
- Having at least 1-2 days off per week from a sport can decrease the chance for injuries

Specialization:
- Delaying specializing in a single sport until late adolescence may lead to a higher chance of accomplishing athletic goals

Early Diversification & Later Specialization:
- Provides a greater chance of lifetime sports involvement, lifetime physical fitness and possibly elite participation

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YOUTH ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODELS?

5 STAGES TO A BETTER SPORT EXPERIENCE

The American Development Model is meant to explain an athlete's advancement through a pathway supporting a healthy sport experience based on their physical, mental and emotional level and potential for growth.

STAGE 6
Thrive & Mentor
Age: For Life

STAGE 5
Excel for High Performance
Age: 15 +

STAGE 4
Participate & Discover
Age: 15 +

STAGE 3
Train & Compete
Age: 13 – 19

STAGE 2
Develop & Challenge
Age: 10 – 18

STAGE 1
Discover, Learn & Play
Age: 9 - 12

YOUTH 2025
Planning for the sporting excellence and well-being of Canadians.

Active Start
Walls and Rounds

Fundamentals
March 1 - February

Learning to Train
Train a sound sport skills

Training to Compete
Perform a sport

Training to Win
Win a sport specific competition

Play for Fun
Participate in the game

Play for Health
Participate in physical activity

Play for Success
Participate in a sport

USA Basketball National Teams: 24

Source: Experian Simmons 2016.
REBUILDING ATHLETES IN AMERICA

ADM FOR PARENTS

The parent’s role in the sport experience can be one of support and guidance for the athlete’s benefit. The following are recommendations for parents to help ensure positive sport experiences for their children:

1) Understand your child’s sport pathway and recognize where they stand in terms of age and development.
2) Encourage sport sampling, in which your child plays several different sports up to age 12, at minimum, to help enhance physical literacy and to be sure they find sports they enjoy.
3) Encourage multi-sport/activity and cross-training to keep your child from burning out or developing overuse injuries.
4) Reward your child for sport development and proficiency over performance outcomes and winning.
5) Enroll your child in age-appropriate activities to ensure healthy progression and skill development before advancing to a heavy volume of competition.
6) Monitor the dose and duration your child is playing each week and encourage rest and recovery.
7) Ask for feedback from coaches and administrators on your child’s development and maintain interest in your child’s experience over performance outcomes.
8) Support and encourage your child to have fun. Don’t forget it’s about them.
## Sport-Specific Guidelines?

### Maximum Participation Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th># of Games Per Day</th>
<th># of Hrs. Per Week in Organized Basketball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 7-8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 9-11</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 12-14</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>10 hours**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>14 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rest Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Min. # of Rest Days Per Week</th>
<th>Max. Months Per Year in Organized Basketball</th>
<th>Recommended Hours of Sleep Per Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 7-8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>9-12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 9-11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>9-12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 12-14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>8-10 hours*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9-10 months</td>
<td>8-10 hours</td>
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</table>
ARE WE FOCUSING ON THE “RIGHT” PROBLEM?
How Kids’ Sports Became a $15 Billion Industry

The paradoxical success of the $17B Kids Sports Industrial Complex

The youth sports market has doubled in the last decade...
Recently hitting a staggering $17B in the US.

... But fewer kids actually play youth sports
The number of 6- to 12-year-olds regularly playing team sports fell from 45% in 2008 to just 38% today. Why?
What about kids who can’t afford to play on club, elite, travel team?

Are these kids given the message they shouldn’t participate in sports?

Are there even other opportunities for them?
EDUCATION

What's Lost When Only Rich Kids Play Sports
The income disparity in youth athletics has effects on health and success that stretch far into adulthood.

LINDA FLANAGAN  SEPTEMBER 28, 2017
This is a public health issue (not a “sports” issue)

- Excellence vs Participation
  - Social equity
  - Physical literacy
  - Lifelong physical activity
IS GOVERNMENT THE SOLUTION?

The Congressional Caucus on Youth Sports promotes the values of sportsmanship, civility, respect, health, safety, fun and physical activity among players and leaders, including coaches, parents and officials.

The purpose of this caucus is to educate members of Congress, the media, and the public on the need to restore a child-centered focus in youth sports that will produce immeasurable positive benefits for the well-being and character development among this nation's youth.

Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL)
The Strategy aims to unify U.S. youth sports culture around a shared vision: that one day all youth will have the opportunity, motivation, and access to play sports — regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, ability, or ZIP code.
A CALL TO ACTION: WHAT CAN YOU DO

• What part(s) of the “problem” can you address?
• How can you be a meaningful agent of change?
• Identify 3 specific Action Items
HERE ARE MINE

- Alternatives
- Intramurals
- "1% for Play"
- Parent Toolkit
- Active voice

- Carrot vs Stick
- Intramurals
- Research
- #silentsoftball
- "1% for Play"
I challenge YOU to do it!
WHAT IS A NEW, MEANINGFUL, SPECIFIC ACTION?

Project Play defines a new action as an action that will launch or take place after the opening of this application and before January 31, 2021. Meaningful and specific may include, but are not limited to:

- Grant-making or policies that encourage sport participation growth
- Alignment of organizational goals and strategy with the Project Play framework
- Deployment of resources to create or enhance a program
- Introduction of breakthrough solution (e.g., technology, media)
- Announcement of a new or enhanced partnership
- Leadership in rallying other organizations within its sector
- Creation of a public service announcement or communication campaign
- Distribution of Project Play resources
- Other interventions or programs
- Adoption/distribution of Project Play 2020 tools, including: