

Chapter 6

Toward a More Complete Youth Leader/Coach

Introduction

The preparation of youth coaches, whether paid or volunteer, can cover many areas as was noted in the first part of Chapter 4. The previous two chapters emphasized teaching or coaching methods plus knowing your own self. This chapter will introduce certain factors that influence the players on and off the fields and courts. They have the potential to influence youngsters day-to-day and year after year.

Traditional sport for youth generally is male-dominated, conservative, hard-nosed, and dictatorial. It is assumed that, under this style, youngsters will become tough, do as they are told, and win. In turn, those who come out on top receive their rewards. The material that is presented in this chapter may cast new light on the questions that professionally prepared youth leaders have been asking for over two decades now. The following pages include sections on: attention, discipline, motivation, awards and rewards, psyching, girls playing, winning and losing, sportsmanship, safety and the major causes of injuries, developing cardiovascular fitness, and a concluding section about our fat kids - - chubs.

Professional preparation programs are giving much attention to answering the issues just identified. The application of these principles by youth leaders in the day-to-day operation of their programs will demonstrate how sport activities can be made more popular and safe for children. It rounds out the information that volunteers should possess in order to make the sport experiences of youth something to continue for the seasons to come as well as throughout life.

Picking Up Loose Ends

Attention

Learning cannot occur until coaches and teachers have the attention of their players. Some adults like to yell and scream at players to get their attention. This is not wise and is demeaning for the coaches and the players. In addition, the players will learn quickly not to pay close attention to until the coach has run through this "routine." Instead, try this.

Teach your players to respond to hand signals. For instance, a hand high in the air means: "Quiet please. Here is something for all of us to hear. Stop everything." At first, some will comply but others will go on being active and inattentive. Continue to hold your hand up. With calm gestures, motion to those who see you to be seated. Wait on the rest without yelling and screaming. Those who are seated will help get the

attention of the others. Do not start talking until the complete attention of everyone is gained. After this has been done several times, the players learn that nothing will occur until quiet prevails. The same technique is effective in restoring quiet during stirring sideline lectures. The benefit to the players is that they will get back into their naturally occurring reward, activity, quickly when they listen.

Discipline

One of the best forms of discipline in any activity setting is to ask players to sit out. When players become disruptive, they detract from the learning and enjoyment of others. Yet, most players do enjoy participating. Follow the steps outlined in Table 6-1. This will help the youngsters learn to control their mischievousness and receive more enjoyment from sports.

Table 6-1
STEPS TO HELP UNRULY YOUNGSTERS

1. Ask them to stop what they are doing.
2. Next time, ask them if they know what they are doing. If they do not know, tell them. Then, ask them to stop.
3. The next time it occurs, ask the player to sit out in what is called a "time out." (S. Hutslar, 1980) They should be seated alone, out of the direct view of others, and without equipment. These times out should be short and administered without undue fanfare and attention directed to the troublemaker. Frequently, youngsters can be told to return to play when they feel they can behave and not interfere with the learning and enjoyment of others. This is very effective punishment for most youngsters. You may repeat this procedure any number of times before going on to the next step. You be the judge.
4. When the same or similar misbehavior persists, expel the player from the activity for the remainder of the day. Be clear. Explain to the player and parent why this has occurred. Again, ask the player to return the next time ready to play and behave.
5. Expel the player from the next practice session, game or week. Be sure to ask the player to return at a specific time ready to play and behave. Speak with the parents about misbehavior. Coaches will probably learn this misbehavior is a problem elsewhere.
6. If misbehavior still persists, it is time to sit down with the individuals and help him or her make a written plan that will help them follow the rules of the group. This is regarded as a contract between the player and the team or coach. Work with the parents.

7. If players cannot follow the contract, they must be expelled permanently from the group. (Stewart, 1981:6) This should be a last resort. Coaches can do nothing for a youngster under these circumstances. However, they should be invited to join the group again next season.

It is not enjoyable to remove youngsters from sport permanently. However, when their actions continually disrupt the learning and satisfaction of others, this may be the only remaining course of action. Nevertheless, try to remain calm and objective about the situation. Do not take the disruptive actions personally. Youngsters like this may be having difficulties in school, at home and elsewhere. Treat them well and help their parents find professional counseling.

Be reminded that getting to play is a naturally occurring reward. It is what players want to do. Running laps and doing push ups, traditional punishments to force compliance, are not recommended as was noted in the previous chapter. In addition to being hazardous when done in excess and legally punishable, these “conditioning” activities or exercises are vital to good sport performance. Associating conditioning with punishment teaches players to avoid them. Exercises contribute to good performance and are essential in sport. They should never be used as punishment. The most effective punishment for disruptive youngsters is not playing.

Motivation

Motivation is a popular topic among coaches. Psyching is a form of motivation to get players emotionally high for big events. On a long-term basis, this is most difficult. Nevertheless, the trained coaches seem to search eternally for ways to get their elite players to play at their best. It is ironic that so many people are trying so desperately to get highly skilled athletes to do something that kids do naturally - - play. The answer exists within the player.

The difficulty is, of course, that Revenue Sports people play 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Understandably, that much of anything may become routine and boring. When working with school and college teams, every day practice sessions must be well planned to maintain the interest of the players. The motivation to play ball can come from two sources - - external and internal.

External. The external sources come from the coaches and involve planning good practice sessions, fun at practice, and getting to participate. Other forms of external motivation occur when coaches use fear tactics or drive the players with various incentives. In the long run, it appears that players can become dependent on being driven to perform by their coaches. This is not good. When “driven players” are free of the coaches’ control, who will see that they perform. The answer is, no one. This type of coaching method appears to produce dependence. It seems that if we want to teach our players about life, we should teach them to function independently and freely. This agrees with the previous generalizations comparing democratic and authoritarian leadership.

Internal. The other source of motivation is internal. Both sport and industry search for people who are self-starters, people who make themselves go without prodding and guidance. The stations approach to teaching coupled with democratic coaching methods provides players with opportunities to learn and practice internal control and motivation. Youngsters who can manage their own actions have opportunities to become self-directed and internally motivated adults

Awards And Rewards

Up to the 1960's, sport leaders were rather frugal in how they handed out awards and trophies. They were used to identify people who made exceptional contributions. Many players could not meet the standards. Then, during the 1970's, both school and volunteer leaders began giving out awards as if they were candy. It reached the point that a large trophy for each player came with the uniform, figuratively speaking. During the 1980's and the 1990's, the practice of handing out expensive awards and other incentives to youngsters was questioned very seriously. A serious problem developed. According to both school coaches and researchers, kids would no longer play without getting something tangible in return. To illustrate, coaches would complain that when they ask players to come out for their teams, the first words the players uttered in response were: "What do I get?"

A former high school player provided another example of the failure of the award system. In his central Ohio high school, the varsity letter was highly prized. Players would work very hard as freshmen and sophomores to earn one. Once achieved, the players no longer put forth the same effort. They quit, as coaches like to say, despite being on the team. The incentive to play was gone.

Originally, young kids played because it was fun. The game was the thing and they needed no "other reason" to play. Once they entered the formal sport system, kids found that they were rewarded for doing what they had formally done for fun. As a result, players learned, informally through the award system (i.e., caught), that you do not play unless you receive something for playing. Program directors found out that they had to surpass last year's awards in order to maintain the players' interest. As it turned out, the expensive external awards and rewards had destroyed the internal incentive for the kids to play.

In some programs today, the response to extensive award systems has been the elimination of all awards for the players. However, even when all agree that there will be no awards given, some parents invariably "sneak out" behind the coach's back and buy trophies for everyone. The award tradition in sport dies hard, despite the findings. Eliminating awards "cold turkey" may be difficult for many players and parents to tolerate.

At this time the sport authorities recommend that expensive awards for the players be reduced. Instead, they suggest that the players be given inexpensive awards

that have some symbolic meaning for the recipients. Awards need not be expensive to be of value. When players know that they have accomplished something, they will feel as though they have “earned” their award, regardless of the cost. Here are some examples of what an inexpensive certificate, ribbon, badge, pin, key ring, small trophy or T-shirt might symbolize. The player: came to every practice session; came to every game; played in every game; participated in 100% of every practice session and game.

In years ahead, the current players will try out for many other teams. The awards given now may be very important to you, but the players will be comparing past and present trophies. Therefore, keep your incentives small, inexpensive and symbolic. This will allow the next set of coaches and directors to match, if not exceed, your giving. In organizations that cover a wide age span, it would be wise to put the award and reward system on a graded scale, dollar and size. Allow incentives to increase with the players' age. Set limits at each level to prevent excessive awards. Do not allow good intentions (i.e., big awards) be the reason the players do not play next season. If it is determined that incentives are needed to get the players moving, make them positive verbal words, smiles, and pats. When tangible awards are given out, make them small, meaningful league symbols. Then, take the money that would have spent and donate it to the organization for officials, equipment, facilities or trees and shrubbery to honor those who should be memorialized.

While on the topic of awards, banquets and ceremonies deserve special attention. In the life of many people, formal and semi-formal programs with inspirational speakers are as exciting as cleaning out the garage and painting the house. These gala celebrations are a reflection of our adherence to the traditions of Revenue Sports. Many people suggest that these formal ceremonies exist primarily for the adults to pat themselves on the back rather than to honor the accomplishments of the players.

We would suggest that if you must honor and recognize the participants for their contributions and accomplishments, try something besides a formal banquet. Consider offering players the option to plan picnics, swim parties, miniature golf outings, bowling or skating parties and hayrides. These are the types of “award ceremonies” that can be enjoyed, not endured.

Make organizational back patting for players, coaches and volunteers an enjoyable activity. It invites participation while developing good thoughts and memories. Have a party. Pass out the league symbols, and let everyone mingle. It will be good for the participants in the organization to see others outside the sport situation. It will foster communication. It allows coaches to chat about their players, past and present. The participants can learn more about one another without taking sides. In doing this, award ceremonies become another way to achieve one of the goals previously stressed - - have fun. It will also help de-emphasize the importance of the “major award” like first place and most-valuable this and that, while reducing the usual envy.

Informal ceremonies provide opportunities for the leaders to interact with each other with “nothing on the line.” Give it a try. We believe that you will like the change it promotes among your participants.

Psyching

How many times have we tried to get our team “psyched up” for big games only to find that the players fall apart and play worse than if nothing had been done. The “psych up” turned out to be a “psych out.” This has happened to many of us personally, just like that math test back in school when you drew a big blank.

There were at least two things that caused you to bomb the test and cause your players to fall apart. First, the test material and game skills may not have been well learned and practiced. When the test and game were viewed as “big events,” they assumed great importance. Scholars who study this would predict a high likelihood of “choking” when novices are put in big events. Add to these factors, an attempt to “psych up” the players and then put them before an audience, another psyching factor, and you have the basic elements for coming unglued.

Players differ dramatically in their individual make-ups. Some players react to psyching positively. Others come unglued, but it may not become apparent until the action starts. A big audience or a big payoff may be enough to make anyone nervous. Think how you would react when someone wagers you \$25 on a six-foot putt. Better yet, what if your clubs were taken away IF you missed a six-foot putt. We put our players in comparable positions regularly. Some respond. Others choke. If we do not know how individual players will react to psyching, it is best not to get them stirred up. This is particularly true if it is a big game. Players are already pumped up over a big game. If anything, we want them to calm down and slow down. This can be done effectively by helping the players focus on and concentrate on the skills they are to perform. This takes their minds off winning and losing, the opponent’s record or reputation and other considerations that interfere with play.

The next time there is concern about psyching up the players, think about whom the individual players are, whether they are well skilled or beginners, the opponents, and the size of the audience. Do not arouse players who are already excited. Know your players.

Girls Play Too!

If it is good for boys, it is good for girls. As you read Beyond X’s and O’s, have you been thinking boys? Well, change your tune. Think boys and think girls.

The encouragement that young girls receive to participate in sport activities, compared to boys, is minimal. We even discourage girls from playing. It is commonly accepted that when girls and boys grow up playing together, girls can play as well as boys. Some better. For young girls and boys, physical differences are small or non-

existent. Where there are great differences in size, strength, speed, endurance, or weight, the players and not just the girls alone, can be placed in separate groups. If one group of players is more skilled than the other players, two groups can be formed. In soccer, this has taken the form of beginner, challenge and select leagues. This will permit each to enjoy their games without detracting from the play of the others. The safety of the players, not their gender, is the primary factor. Apart from this, there is little need to separate girls and boys in sport, except for religious or other special social reasons.

Skill differences can be great at any age level, both for males and females. Boys are not always the more skilled nor are girls always “the weaker sex.” Dick Young, sports columnist, wrote: “It isn’t whether you’re male or female, but how you play the game.” For the most part, this is correct. Whether to separate or not separate kids may require individual decisions. Give your players a voice. Allow them to decide where they want to play.

The development and enjoyment that girls receive from sport can be increased when they receive the same attention and encouragement to play as do our sons. In addition to playing sports with our daughters, it would be helpful if more women would “get active” as players and become youth coaches. This would give young girls more females after whom to model. Active mothers would help set the stage for their daughters to be active. Both would benefit. Sport is neither male or female. It is fun for everyone.

Winning And Losing

Due to our emphasis on participation and learning, some people may feel that we are opposed to winning. On the contrary, winning is one of the essential characteristics of sport. It cannot be eliminated, nor should it be, without changing the nature of sport. However, there is no reason to feel that winning is the only reason to play. When we are around youngsters under the age of 10 or so who have not been involved in sport activities, we find that many of them are unconcerned about winning. Compare this to how little ones are equally unaware of time and distance. Feeling bad about losing, something that coaches value, must be learned. By the time most players become teenagers, they come to see a value in winning. They understand when it is important to themselves, their coaches and parents, and how it can boost their own self-esteem. They also know how to avoid situations where people make them feel bad about losing.

Kids learn how adults feel about winning and losing. However, it may take a number of years in sport, and an intense interest in the outcomes of contests, before youngsters adopt similar values. Kids can put winning in perspective, perhaps better than some adults. Kids are able to dismiss a loss and get on with other activities in life. Coaches, however, prefer to suffer, brood, and feel bad about not winning. For some coaches, winning and losing are the most important things in their lives. That is unfortunate. Professional athletes do not get trapped into this type of thinking. They

realize that “trying to win” is AN important part of sport. They recognize too that if winning were their only goal, few would play. In Revenue Sports, if the players do not win, they fire the coach. In youth sport, the kids pay the price for losing. It seems as though the situation should be reversed.

What is the importance of winning in youth sport? In the most elementary view, we probably want our players to understand winning and know how to play to win. Playing against those who do not try to win is uninteresting. Going against another full tilt is fun. It is a mental and physical test of persistence, but it should be left on the field of play after the game. It should not disrupt personal relationships. Trying to win is something that youngsters will learn. Winning and losing, however, has no bearing on whether a person is good or bad, right or wrong, strong or weak. One has nothing to do with the other. In youth sport, it has a lot to do with skill and ability plus coaching.

Winning is an outcome of sport participation. It appears not to be something that can be coached. It is the result of being able to perform sport skills well. When John Wooten was coaching basketball at UCLA during his last year there, his practice sessions were monitored. The researchers wanted to find out what he was doing that lead to such successful performances by his players. They found that he spent 75% of his time instructing, 12% urging the players to hustle, 7% of the time praising them, and only 6% of the time scolding them. He also had some of the most capable player to be found. He did not coach winning. He taught his players how to play.

How do young players feel about winning? When they have been given the choice between sitting or playing, their responses have been impressively consistent over the years. Kids prefer to play for a loser than sit on the bench of a winner. The next time you have the opportunity to discuss the merits of winning and losing, think of the following diagram. See Figure 6-1. Better yet, ask your players for their preferences. Draw the following figure on a large piece of paper. Ask them their first choice. Ask them their least preferred position. Now, the next two selections will give you a true indication of what is important to your players.

	PLAY	NOT PLAY
WIN	:-)	:-) :-(:-)
LOSE	:-) :-(:-)	:-)

*Figure 6-2
Play or Win?*

Ask yourself what you prefer. What are your first two choices? How long will you sit at the first tee, on the bleachers at the tennis courts, on a sideline bench, or on the dock waiting for a fishing spot before you leave and call it quits? I suspect that many, if not most adults, will not wait more than about 45 minutes for anything that is not Rated X. How then, in good conscience, can young players be asked to wait one more game

or one more season before receiving an opportunity to play, or just get a turn. The answer that the kids give us is that they will not wait to get to play. They go where they can participate. Winning is an important element in sport, but for kids and most adults, getting to play is more important.

We have an explanation for this fascination with winning. Consider first that every game day around the world, one-half of those players lose. Second, note that our leagues and conferences, unlike a cruise ship, are set up so that few champions exist. Therefore, in sport, as in business, the more scarce the commodity, the more it is in demand. The more winning is prized, the more people seek it in this Zero Sum Game.

Most of our American football seasons involve a limited number of contests. Baseball season, in contrast, involves hundreds of games per team at the professional level. Therefore, one defeat is much worse in football than in baseball or basketball. Likewise, wins are more valuable in football than in baseball. They are valued, in part, because the participants have six days to dwell on them. At playoff time in all sports, the importance of wins and losses increases.

Here is the point. The influence of Revenue Sports, and football in particular, has imposed its values on youth sport. This has been done, not because it is appropriate but through socialization. That is, it has been caught, not taught. We have adopted winning as an all too important value in youth sport simply because it is so highly valued by the Revenue Sports owners and announcers. Winning is valued in Revenue Sports because it is directly linked to income. In a few instances, a good revenue stream is fairly constant so winning is not too critical. Where revenue is down, winning becomes a primary goal. In youth sport, nothing rides on winning or revenue. If it does, it has been invented by misdirected adults who have determined the only measure of importance is that which appears in the "win column."

Winning or success in sport is possible other than by the verdict of the scoreboard. Getting to play, having fun, and learning a new skill can be considered winning. Wanting to come back and play again because playing makes you "feel good" is winning. Kids and adults play sports for many reasons and winning is just one of those reasons. Do not give it more importance than it merits. Teach your kids about it, but do not judge them by it alone. (Orlick and Botterill, 1975; Leonard, 1975)

What About Sportsmanship?

An initial concern of volunteer coaches is to develop sportsmanship, according to Eugene Brown. (Cox, 1982:38) Sportsmanship is our manners in the sport situation and it is nothing more than being human in sport. It would appear that our youth exhibit poor behavior because they see it on television and at the places where they play. There are several ways we can address and improve our manners in sport based on what researchers know.

First, good sportsmanship does not “just happen.” It must be planned for by developing instructional objectives. (Sheehan and Alsop, 1972) Form player groups who write specific tasks that must be performed at each practice and game. Sample objectives might include:

- Shake hands after every game
- Help fallen opponents and teammates to their feet
- Thank the coaches and referees after every game
- Shout only positive cheers for your team while saying nothing negative about your teammates

Second, devote time to sportsmanship. Make special “chalk talks” about sport manners. You might even erect a special message board like those found in front of some factories. These boards can indicate that “We have played 20 or 30 games or days without incidents.”

Third, adults must model good sportsmanship. This author refereed in a youth soccer program. One team always picked on certain players and “sniped” at the referees. However, the players never started this until the coach made their first remarks. The players “caught” it and repeated it.

Players copy what they see and hear. Adults need lessons in sportsmanship so they will set good examples for their children. Related to this, teams might also identify “team sportsmanship leaders or models.” These players and adults would be given job descriptions that involve leading the way in good behavior for everyone to see. In some places they are called captains.

Last, leagues might examine more closely why conflicts over sportsmanship occur. Intramural sport leaders note that as the size of the award or reward goes up, the amount of conflict goes up. It may be that the league or program award structure is the source of poor behavior. Reduce the financial cost of your awards and rewards and see if this reduces conflict.

Prevention: Safety And The Major Causes of Injuries

Safety is a goal in youth sport that should override all other concerns. The first step in safety is understanding what causes injuries. This is illustrated by the story of a fellow in the middle of the forest who heard cries in the distance. He listened, searched, and found a stream where a man was yelling for help. He jumped in quickly, pulled the man out and began giving him assistance. No sooner had he been rescued that the cries for help from another person were heard. Again, he jumped in, pulled the person to safety only to hear the cries of another person. Time after time, rescue was followed by more cries for help. He was so busy saving people that he was unable to see how the poor fellows were getting into trouble in the first place. The prevention of injuries is the first step in sport safety.

Many factors contribute to injuries in the sport setting. Some inherent risk exists in sports that are not present in other activities. However, sport need not be dangerous. There are many school physical education programs and community sport leagues where injuries are minor or rarely occur. Sport participation can be safe for all participants when certain precautions are observed. Study these injury prevention procedures. Incorporate them into your pre-season meetings with players, coaches and parents.

Improper Equipment or Clothing

Player equipment that is too big, too small, too old or damaged contributes to injury. Discount stores and sporting goods stores sell a variety of inexpensive equipment. Some pieces will not withstand heavy use. Players can get hit in the face with a line drive when the lacing on an inexpensive glove breaks. Plastic helmets are not shock absorbers. Do not allow children do not use these Revenue Sports giveaways in real games. Other slow-developing overuse injuries can occur by participating in an activity with cheap equipment, like shoes and pads. Do not use cheap equipment when your kids are going to rely on it day after day.

Using the wrong equipment can also be dangerous. Baseball spikes and long metal track spikes are dangerous on a football field. Metal spikes of any type are good injury producers. This is why most programs now require their players to use the one-piece molded sole cleats. They are safe and less likely to cause ankle and knee injuries.

Another injury problem, perhaps less noticeable, occurs with the square heeled running shoe. Running shoes are designed for straight forward running. The squared heel helps stabilize the ankle to prevent twists and sprains. It is not a good shoe for basketball, tennis or racquetball where side-to-side or lateral movements are common. Running shoes do not give with quick lateral stops and starts, and may roll onto the side of the shoe. The ankle follows the shoe resulting in severe sprains. The standard gym or tennis shoe works like a radial tire. The rounded sole allows the foot to roll inside the shoe while maintaining good traction. It will enhance these lateral sport movements. Use the proper shoe for the activity.

Wearing the wrong clothes for the activity may lead to injuries. "Street clothes" as the gym teachers call them, are designed for looks, not action. They can be tight, restrictive, or baggy. Broken wrists have resulted from bowlers getting their legs wrapped together by baggy pant legs, falling and suffering the consequences. Jewelry has been responsible for torn ear lobes (looped pierced earrings), torn fingers and fingernails (rings and bracelets), and of course many cuts and scrapes. All participants are much more safe when wearing the proper clothing for the activity. Inspect them and have them leave their jewelry at home. In addition, make sure eyeglasses are made of safety material.

Poor Playing Surfaces

Our courts and field attract all types of users who are involved in activities that have nothing to do with the games normally played there. They leave bottle caps, tabs from cans, broken glass, needles and other debris. However, even regular use creates uneven surfaces such as are common at home plate, the pitcher's mound, down the middle of nearly any playing field, and in front of the soccer goals. If that is not bad enough, improper field maintenance can cause hazards. The grass-dirt line on a baseball infield can commonly be two or three inches away from being level. This is "bad hop" injury territory. Hoses, sprinkler heads and other equipment left out, both indoors and outdoors, are quite likely to be tripped over resulting in bruises and breaks. Animal holes, broken tile, protrusions, chairs, drinking fountains, unpadded posts and walls, and sharp fence tops are just a few more hazardous elements commonly found around the courts and fields.

It is the first responsibility of the coaches, officials, and directors to inspect their fields and courts before the practices and games. Find the hazards, and eliminate them immediately before starting play. Further, players should be taught to inspect their area for hazards and remove rocks and other foreign substances that might cause injuries. Unfortunately, it is common for people to ignore these pre-game rituals and daily inspections until someone is injured. Inspect the playing area regularly to prevent injuries. Fix it now.

An added note of caution concerns portable soccer goals. Soccer goals are an "attractive nuisance" for youngsters who like to jump, swing and climb. Goals will tip over when youngsters play on them. This has resulted in numerous injuries and deaths. Portable goals of all types should be fastened firmly to the ground, tipped over so they do not fall easily after practice and games, or placed in storage when not in use.

Use Of Improper Substances

The two most common and most dangerous substances connected with sport are lime and heat. Many outdoor activities use some type of field marking substance. Even today, authors write that fields should be marked with lime. Lime is a caustic chemical that can produce severe burns and blindness when brought in contact with the bodies' mucous membranes. Lime should never be used in sport. There are a number of commercial field marking substances that are inert and harmless. Use these substances to mark fields.

Many people use heat for the treatment of injuries. Soak it in hot water and it will feel better. This is the common yet erroneous axiom or principle. Use ice. Do not apply heat to new injuries. The swelling and black and blue areas that occur after injuries are caused by blood and other body fluids that rush into the damaged tissue. The application of heat expands these blood vessels and promotes the release of more

fluids into the injured area. Ice constricts these blood vessels and reduces or stops this fluid release. Ice is the proper treatment for 99.9% of all injuries, sport or otherwise, involving sprains, strains, and contusions or forceful blows.

The acronym ICER provides a quick reminder as to the proper emergency treatment for sport injuries. Some people use RICE but ICER indicates the order in which treatment should occur. It means apply ICE to the injured area. COMPRESS the injured area with a pressure wrap. ELEVATE the injured part to reduce further the blood flow. Both of these maneuvers help reduce swelling which is a source of additional injury and delay recovery. Then, REST the injured part. Rest is the coaches' enemy. Yet, putting injured players back into the line up too soon can result in additional injury at the primary location as well as new injuries caused by favoring or protecting the primary injury. It takes time for most sport injuries to heal. A cut will seal in two or three days while a sprained ankle will require four to six weeks for complete recovery to occur. Follow the ICER Principle and the recovery time can be kept to a minimum.

Water and heat. Water is an important part of every practice and game. Players should drink as much water as they want during games. About 30 minutes or more before the games start, they should drink 16 to 32 ounces of water. These procedures will help prevent cramps as well as more severe problems like heat stroke. Provide players with shade and water breaks every 20 minutes during the heat of the day when their shadows are shorter than their actual height. This is even more important when the humidity and heat are both high. But also, do as Australians have suggested: Slip. Slap. Slop. Slip on a shirt. Slap on a hat. Slop on some sunscreen.

There is no place in youth sport for the use of pain killers and ergogenic aids to enhance performance. Youngsters in particular should take medication only under the direction of their family physician.

Other substances that can cause problems in sport are known as "counter irritants." These substances are rubs and salves that promote "feelings" of warmth. Use them cautiously and with medical advice. It is best if they are used only after consulting with a certified trainer, physical therapist or physician who specializes in sport medicine. Under no circumstances should non-medical people become involved with administering deep heat (diathermy) or ultra-sound treatments to players. The use of ice, however, seems to be a safe emergency treatment under most conditions. Nevertheless, ice is an emergency treatment. Injured players should seek immediate medical attention for the diagnosis and treatment of all injuries and suspected injuries.

Improper Coaching Techniques

This aspect of coaching needs serious attention. Youngsters must know how to protect themselves from injuries. Here are some coaching points that can prevent injuries.

1. In baseball, the catcher's "meat hand" should be kept behind the catchers mitt or behind the back when receiving the pitch.
2. When sliding into a base, runners should slide feet first and throw both hands into the air to prevent abrasions or getting stepped on by fielders. Head first slides should not be permitted.
3. Power is developed in baseball pitching and in tennis serving by putting the entire body into the movements. Improper skill in these activities will lead eventually to shoulder and elbow problems. See overuse syndromes. Have competent coaches explain the differences between throwing and serving with the arm (the improper skill) and doing so with the entire body (the proper skill).
4. In some activities like tennis, hockey and racquetball, the "tool" can be a hazard. Players should always wear the recommended safety guards and appropriate padding for the activity. Eye guards, glasses straps, mouth guards. and other protective pads are a necessary part of good sport safety.
5. Inexperienced players move in awkward and erratic patterns. Well skilled players move as if dancing. They know where to go and how to avoid others who are making their moves. Inexperienced players hurt themselves and others by making the wrong moves at the wrong time. In addition, they can try to move or play "beyond their capacity." Coaches should show players how to play up to capacity without going beyond the point where loss of control occurs. Playing under control is the safe way to play.
6. Falling is common in many sport activities. Too many players attempt to break a fall by extending their arm. This can result in hyper-extended elbows and dislocated shoulders, particularly when the falling person is on the bottom of a pile. Players should be instructed to fall by tucking their arms and elbows against their sides as they go down and roll. That is the safe way to fall.
7. In soccer, players should tie their shoe lace "knots" anywhere but on the top of the instep. That knot can lead to bruises when it is between the instep and the ball at impact.
8. There are many inherently dangerous injury situations in implement sports such as tennis, field hockey, baseball and ice hockey. Be sure that coaches have regular safety discussions about the proper rules of play. High sticking, throwing rackets, bats, and balls in despair, and unsafe kicking in activities like soccer can be kept to a minimum with constant reminders.
9. The head is not a weapon. Avoid head and neck injuries by following the rules of the sport to the letter.

Each sport has its own potential hazards that arise from not knowing or not teaching the proper skills. Put skill development sessions into your pre-season schedule, both for the players and the coaches.

Improper Conditioning Exercises Or Dis-Exercises

This section is not devoted to proper conditioning. Instead attention will be drawn to the inappropriate dis-exercises that persist despite medical efforts that bring about change.

1. Do bent leg sit ups, curl ups and crunches. Straight leg situps are not useful exercises and can, in fact, lead to back problems.
2. Do not do leg lifts, a traditional punishment in sport. They too can lead to back problems associated with spinal fractures.
3. Give your players all of the water they wish to drink, particularly in hot and humid weather. Dehydration that comes from profuse sweating can lead to fatal heat problems. Do not withhold water from your players to “make them tough.” Give them all the water they desire. The so called “sport drinks” are no better than plain water in activities of short duration. Do not be fooled by their claims. Water is fine, and will prevent cramps from developing. In activities lasting over 1.5 hours, diluted sport drinks are valuable performance aids.
4. Allow air to get to the skin so players can perspire freely. Covering the body to increase sweating is as dangerous as withholding water. Wet clothing and rubber suits become water barriers that prevent sweating and raise body temperature. Wear light, airy, mesh clothing particularly in hot and humid weather. Change perspiration-soaked clothing frequently. Let the body breathe.
5. Walk down hills and steps. Running up steps and banks are good punishment, we mean conditioning exercises. Running down these same inclines lead to knee problems from the increased force of landing hard. Run up but walk down.
6. Pace your conditioning activities so that they will have both intensity and duration. Do not run players into the ground. Provide them with intense, but sub-maximum, work bouts with regular rest periods. Both intensity and duration are needed in exercises for the best conditioning effects to occur. If you burn them out with exercises that are too intense (e.g., too fast, too much weight), then the players are robbed of the duration (e.g., time) it takes to build strength and endurance effectively. Build strength and endurance slowly with paced, sub-maximum exercise programs.
7. Keep conditioning and punishment separate. Do not use your conditioning drills as punishment to force compliance. Players need to appreciate the value of exercise when it comes to top performance. Using conditioning as punishment turns them away from that which is essential to reach top performance. To punish players, make them sit out.

If sitting out is a treat instead of punishment, then review your planning, content and teaching methods quickly.

8. Build neck strength with progressive resistance exercises or isometric exercises. Do not do neck bridges. These dis-exercises lead to spinal problems in the cervical area.

9. Allow players to eat a balanced diet. Water and food deprivation in combination with severe exercise programs to lose weight or keep weight down are believed to contribute to growth reduction or impairment. In certain sports like wrestling, gymnastics, ice skating, dance, cheering and riding, it is beneficial to be small and light. Until more research evidence is available, it is highly questionable whether youngsters should have to live with starvation dietary regimes in order to compete at the most advantageous weight class. In the case of wrestlers, it is recommended that they be permitted to lose no more than 10% of their normal body weight "to make" a lower weight division. This standard can be used in other sport activities where weight is a coaching tactic.

Proper conditioning can be achieved through (1) the time honored yet inefficient method called "playing your way into shape," or (2) some type of systematic training such as is used in the stress-rest approach in interval training. There is no reason to risk the safety and welfare of the young players by exposing them to improper exercise and diet plans with built in hazards. There is nothing in sport worth risking your health for, nor is there anything in life comparable to good health. A balanced diet and three to six hours of vigorous physical activity per week contribute to a good minimum health plan for nearly everyone.

Overuse Syndromes

There are two common tendencies in sport. First, we over-practice certain skills. Then, when we have good players, such as a good pitcher, we use them at every opportunity because of their talent. Go through a neighborhood in the Spring and see how many fathers are out in the yard playing pitch and catch with their sons. If asked, we would estimate that eight out of ten have a game that evening. Couple this with neighborhood games and "real" games, and the potential of overuse problems increases. But even in formal practice session, there is a tendency to take youngsters who are good pitchers, for instance, and have them pitch batting practice as well as the games. When these kids play in other leagues, the potential for overuse grows even more. Similar overuse problems occur in sport activities like serving tennis balls, swimming meter after meter, and running 20 or 30 miles a week.

Overuse syndromes are problems that develop slowly. Young players who perform the same skill over and over may not feel any severe or acute pain, this year or even next year. Some bodies are able to withstand the stresses of repeated sport skills better than other bodies. However, this stress, particularly when the skill is improperly performed, will eventually lead to pain, discomfort and even immobility.

Rubic's Cube thumb was just one past example of a stress injury. Carpal tunnel syndrome associated with repetitive computer keyboard use is the current malady.

Check with any current or former player. Ask them about their physical ailments. Swimmers have shoulder problems, as do pitchers. Football players, particularly linemen, have shoulder problems that restrict their overhead movements. Baseball catchers have arthritic hands while pitchers have arthritic elbows. Dancers have hip, knee and ankle problems. Making the same sport movement year after year can be biologically harmful. It exacts a toll from the body, particularly if the movement is mechanically incorrect. The problems start in the youth programs where the kids spend too much time in one sport and one position.

To prevent overuse problems, players should be encouraged to play several positions in two to four sports. This will allow their bodies to recover from the wear and tear of one sport activity. Specialization should not be permitted in youth sport. It is not medically sound. Balance is a preferred goal in youth sport.

Mismatches

In sport, a 20 or 30 pound weight difference can put one person at a disadvantage against another. This is particularly true in youth sport where the youngsters generally do not have the strength that adults sometimes have to overcome weight disadvantages. If weight disadvantages are combined with height and maturation differences, then it is obvious how the outcomes of our contests can be decided before the games are ever played. What fun is that, the kids say.

As much as practical, even if it means changing the nature of some of the games, the players should be matched closely in age, weight and height plus skill level and maturation. Age is usually a sufficient grouping criterion for players under the age of 12 to 14. Then skill will eventually become the overriding factor along with speed and strength. Match young players as much as possible by age. Put them on equal ground with one another. It makes the games much more safe and fun.

Pressure To Play With Pain

It is common to hear the Revenue Sports players and announcers say: "You have to learn to play with pain." If you were paid \$300,000 or more a year to play, and know that your Revenue Sports Life, mistakenly called a career, would last five years or less, perhaps it would be all right to make this statement and live by this principle. However, pain is a natural warning signal the body emits. Playing with pain slows, stops or retards the recovery process. Compensating for pain may lead to new injuries. Unfortunately, the Revenue Sports players and announcers tell the kids that they have to learn to play with pain. Seldom do they warn the youngsters of the consequences of this.

The rate of injuries for youngsters in sport seems to vary from about 2% to 15%. (Galton, 1980:188; Southmayd and Hoffman, 1982:38-39) However, as the players get older, bigger, stronger, faster and more powerful, the injury rate increases.

In North Carolina, Al Proctor, former head of the state's sport medicine program for the Department of Public Instruction, reported these statistics. The school sport injury at the high school level was 50% with a disturbing 71% reinjury rate. Then, athletic trainers were introduced into the high school sport system. In 1978 and 1979, when the sport medicine program was implemented, the injury rate was reduced to 22 to 39% with a reinjury rate of 3 to 11%. (Lewis and Appenzeller, 1981:70) Estimates indicate that 50 to 75% of the college players are injured. At the professional level of sport, the injury rate is 75% to 100%. Virtually every professional athlete is injured each year. (Galton, 1980:186; Southmayd and Hoffman, 1982:38-39)

At the high school level, a medical or athletic trainer is a strong advocate for the players. Their position, in contrast to that of the coach, is that players should not return to action until they are properly healed and rehabilitated. Southmayd used the 95% rule. Injured players should be 95% rehabilitated before they return to practice and play in games. (Southmayd and Hoffman, 1982:40)

It takes time for injuries to heal. Pressuring youngsters to get back in there and play, particularly with ridicule and sarcasm, is not a good tactic for coaches or parents. Playing with pain can be the first step toward further injury and overuse problems. It results in movement limitations, compensation, and chronic medical problems like tendinitis and arthritis. Permanent discomfort occurs. Safety and lifetime participation are two worthwhile goals that should be kept in mind when deciding whether it is time to reenter the arena or wait. As Grandmother said: it is better to be safe than sorry.

Overstimulation And Overemphasis

There is little or no research available on this topic, yet there are examples to show how overstimulation and overemphasis on winning causes injuries. Compare the "winning is the only thing" program with those that place goals like participation and fun first. In the win first programs, yelling and screaming coaches and parents are common just as is seen in the televised Revenue Sports contests.

In these programs, the players are strongly prodded into going for the ball or the player "with reckless abandon." "Sacrifice your body for the team" is a favorite expression, but this type of stimulation leads to players running "out of control." Charging mindlessly into a group of players in response to vocal coaches and parents will lead to injuries.

This type of overstimulation, which takes the concern for the individual out of the game, is personally dehumanizing and biologically hazardous. Several former Revenue Sports players wrote about these negative influences within sport. They felt that coaches and athletic administrators regarded players as "meat" or animals. There was

little concern about players as people. Their purpose was to win games. (Meggsey, 1970; Parrish, 1971; Hoch, 1972; Shaw, 1972) In general, this situation seems to have improved today.

We have seen more players injured in one evening in a community soccer program than we have experienced in a year as teachers. Why is there such a difference? It is simple. As a physical education teacher, our concerns for safety override all other situations that may develop. In wrestling, for instance, when a player gets into an awkward position and the sound of pain is heard, students are directed to stop immediately. This rule has been applied to other sport activities.

Another situation arises that indicates too much emphasis is being placed on winning. Some coaches teach “dirty tricks” to their players. Young players, perhaps not old enough to know better, are taught how to cheat and get away with it. Pulling on opponents’ clothing, grabbing or pinning them with illegal moves, brush back pitches, and retaliatory moves are a few examples of “tricks” in Revenue Sports that are illegal, but common.

In some instances, coaches are not aware that they are teaching their players illegal maneuvers. Some coaches teach tactics based on their most recent level of play. When this was at the adult or at the Revenue Sports level, then some skills are “unofficially accepted” at those levels but totally unacceptable at the youth level. Players grab clothing, clamp legs and arms when the play is close, and use their bodies and sport implements with the deftness of skilled surgeons. These types of problems can be reduced through proper training.

Overstimulation and overemphasis results in injuries but the Revenue Sports model does not offer helpful guidance in safety matters. Adult players are always hurt or recovering from injuries. It is fortunate that our youngsters are small and seldom develop sufficient power or force to really injure one another seriously. However, as they mature, they develop the power to inflict real damage. This alone become sufficient reason to teach the players proper and legal sport skills. It is unfortunate, however, if young players must stop playing because injuries have forced them to the sidelines. When winning, the clock, and the scoreboard are placed above the safety of the players, then our goals and value system need reexamination. There is no justifiable reason to put anything before the safety and welfare of the players. Make sport a safe place for youngsters. Keep the players’ health a prominent facet of their games.

Injury Reporting System

The injury rate can be controlled through study. Consider adopting a system of injury analysis for your team, league and organization. An injury reporting system can be easily computerized and it will become a valuable step in identifying the sources of injuries. This will assist in taking measures to prevent and reduce injuries.

The first task is to define an injury. We can say that an injury is: "a bio-medical event that requires a player to be removed from, miss or be withheld from any portion of a practice or game." Be as liberal or restrictive with this definition as necessary. However, if a player misses some action due to a bio-medical problem, it is an injury. Everyone should operate under the same definition to make the reporting system effective.

In developing a reporting system, classify or reduce the types of injuries into the smallest number of categories. Then obtain accurate injury details about where, what, when, how, why, and who, just as is done in journalism. It is helpful also to indicate what action was taken, by whom, and provide space for open ended comments, as well as suggestions about what would have prevented the injury in the first place.

A standard form can be used to collect information on each sport-related injury, whether by players or other participants including spectators. Coaches and league supervisors are the people most capable of reporting injuries at practices and games. This should be their responsibility or that of their designated assistants. Teams might also consider having parents serve as safety monitors.

There are a number of people in every community who might help collect, record, and analyze this type of information. Among those who could be contacted, besides a computer analysts, are athletic trainers, physical therapists, sport medicine physicians, nurses, community education leaders, plus university people in the research areas of health, physical education and recreation. A youth sport council, explained in Chapter 8, could help develop this type of program on a community wide basis. A sample injury reporting form is presented below. It can be adapted for use in your program. See Table 6-2.

Table 6-2
YOUTH SPORT INJURY REPORTING FORM

1. Name of injured person _____
2. Date _____
3. Time _____
4. Location _____
5. Age _____
6. Gender _____
7. Address _____
8. City _____
9. Home telephone _____
10. Who was notified _____
11. Describe the injury _____
12. Witnesses to the injury _____
13. Emergency care provided _____
14. Who provided the emergency care _____
15. What would have prevented the injury _____
16. Length of time since player's last injury, _____

sport (in months) _____

non-sport (in months) _____

17. Comments _____
18. Follow up remarks _____
19. Name of the sport _____
20. Position played _____
21. Team name _____
22. League name _____
23. Coach's name _____
24. Coach's telephone _____
25. Team record _____
26. Attendance at injury site _____

Activity in which the injury occurred (check those that apply)

27. _____ practice
28. _____ game or match
29. _____ scrimmage
30. _____ drill
31. _____ break
32. _____ unsupervised activity
33. _____ other (specify) _____

When did the injury occur

34. _____ before practice or game
35. _____ early in session
36. _____ middle
37. _____ late, toward end
38. _____ after practice or game

Injured player is

39. _____ infrequent player
40. _____ regular substitute
41. _____ regular

The skill level of the injured player is

42. _____ excellent
43. _____ average
44. _____ poor
45. _____ good
46. _____ fair

Person completing this form is _____

Date _____

Review

There are elements of risk inherent in the sport situation, but the injury rate varies considerably from sport to sport and program to program. There appear to be both high and low injury rates within the same sports, but in different programs. Factors that contribute to injuries can be identified and eliminated. The safety and welfare of the players and other participants should be placed above other considerations. Safety in youth program is a reflection of the program philosophy, how coaches are trained, plus how safety information and records are gathered. Use safety information for the betterment of your participants. It might also save your program a few insurance dollars.

The previous material outlines the major causes of injuries and how to prevent injuries. Training programs for coaches and other youth sport participants should include basic first aid, the major medical emergencies, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. Take the initiative and make safety an active part of your program.

For more specific information about health, safety, first aid, conditioning and nutrition, refer to these sources in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3
SPORT SAFETY REFERENCES

Care and Prevention of Sport Injuries, (a directed, home study course). United States Sports Academy, P.O. Box 8650, Mobile, AL 36608

Coaching Theory, Coaching Association of Canada, 333 River Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1L 8B9, (3 books)

Level I, 1979, pp. 1-3 to 3-18 and 5-1 to 5-11;

Level II, 1979, pp. 3-1 to 3-30 and 7-1 to 7-28;

Level III, 1981, pp. 2-1 to 9-16.

Galton, Lawrence, *Your Child in Sports*, New York: Franklin Watts, 1980.

Lewis, Guy and Herb Appenzeller, *Youth Sports: A Search for Direction*, Greensboro: Sport Studies Foundation, 1981, pp. 69-76.

Martens, Rainer and others. *Coaching Young Athletes*, Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1981, pp. 111-163.

New Guide to Year Round Fitness for Everyone, Tea Council of the USA, 230 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10169.

Smith, Nathan J. (ed.). *Sports Medicine for Children and Youth*, Columbus: Ross Laboratories, 1979.

Sports Health Series, National 4-H Council, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

Sports Injuries in Children, Hoffman-LaRoche, Inc., 340 Kingsland Street, Nutley, NJ 07110.

Sports Injury Care. Cramer Products, Inc., Gardner, KS 66030.

Thomas, Jerry R., (ed.). Youth Sports Guide for Coaches and Parents, Washington, D.C.: AAHPERD, 1977, pp. 63-73.

Thygerson, Alton L. The First Aid Book. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982.

Developing Cardiovascular Fitness

The most healthful and beneficial type of conditioning activities, both for children and adults, are those that develop the cardiovascular system - - heart and lungs. These exercises are continuous movements that elevate the heart rate and keep it high. Exercises that do this are walking, rope jumping, running, swimming, cycling, dancing, and other rhythmic aerobic activities popular today. Follow these steps to design a cardiovascular fitness program for yourself and your children. A medical examination is recommended.

1. Cardiovascular fitness training occurs when the exercise plan involves intensity, duration and the systematic repetition of the exercise.
2. The Predicted Maximum Heart Rate (PMHR) for most people is 220 beats per minute (bpm).
3. Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) decreases as your age increases. Subtract your age, whether 15 or 40, from the Predicted Maximum Heart Rate (PMHR).

220 PMHR	220	PMHR
-15 Age	-40 Age	
205 MHR	180 MHR	

4. The MHR for a 15 year old is now estimated to be 205 bpm.

5. The cardiovascular fitness training effect occurs when your exercise heart rate is elevated 50% to 85% toward the MHR. To find this exercise heart rate range, multiply your MHR, 205 bpm in this example, by both 50% and 85%.

205 MHR	205 MHR
x50%	x85%
103 bpm	174 bpm

6. Cardiovascular fitness can be developed when you maintain your exercise heart rate between 103 and 174 bpm. Training will occur slowly at the lower exercise heart rate.

7. Next, identify your Target Heart Rate Range (THRR) or intensity level. To do this, add 10% (17 bpm) to 174 bpm, and subtract 20% or 30% (34 to 51 bpm) from 174 bpm.

174 bpm	174 bpm	174 bpm
±17 10%	-34 20%	-51 30%
191 bpm	140 bpm	123 bpm

8. For a training effect to occur, exercise must occur within the Target Heart Rate Range (THRR) of 123 to 191 bpm for 15 to 20 minutes. This is duration, the second important principle of fitness training.

9. Next, exercise must occur with systematic repetition, the third principle of fitness training. This is accomplished by employing a three or four day per week “workout schedule” using the Stress-Rest Approach.

10. You may not be able to work in your THRR for 15 or 20 minutes the first time you go out to exercise. If you cannot do this, work up to it. Here is a sample schedule you can follow:

Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Min	Rest	12 Min	Rest	14 Min	Rest	12 Min
2	Rest	14 Min	Rest	14 Min	Rest	16 Min	Rest
3	14 Min	Rest	16 Min	Rest	16 Min	Rest	18 Min
4	Rest	16 Min	Rest	18 Min	Rest	18 Min	Rest
5	20 Min	Rest	18 Min	Rest	20 Min	Rest	20 Min

11. Avoid doing too much. Do not overstress your system. Cut back On intensity in order to get duration. Slowly increase intensity through a systematic repetition of the workout.

12. This example is based on time, rather than heart rate. Monitor your heart rate immediately after exercise by counting your pulse for 10 seconds and multiplying that figure by 6. This will give provide a reasonably accurate estimate of your exercise heart rate.

13. If you wish to monitor heart rate rather than time, exercise so that you can go for at least 20 minutes while staying within your THRR. When your heart rate goes beyond 191 bpm, used in this example, slow down or stop and rest. Do not push your heart rate higher. After a short rest, perhaps one minute, begin exercising again. Stay within the THRR. Decrease the rest intervals and increase the work intervals.

The most beneficial type of exercise for healthful living is that which improves the heart-lung system. Exercises such as this are essential in diet and weight control. In addition, they help maintain good body functioning while retarding the age process. Cardiovascular activities speed the recovery process among coronary patients but these exercises should not be neglected by youngsters. Children as young as seven to 12 years of age have been found to have coronary risk factors. (Forum Booklet, 1982:6)

It is recommended that, when putting your players, your children, or yourself through a conditioning program, that you plan a cardiovascular fitness training program. Develop a systematic exercise plan. It will be the most efficient plan you can develop and have the greatest short term and long term health benefits. Make the exercise plan enjoyable, not torture. Cardiovascular exercise is lifetime exercise. Enjoy it.

Confessions by a “Chub” . . . and Dumplings

“Chubs” and dumplings, just like many kids, like to get out on the fields and courts and play. The problem is that chubs play these games differently than do the trim kids. I spent most of my childhood and adolescence as a chub. I have been fighting the “battle of the bulge” or “waist control” all of my adult life. A waist is a terrible thing to mind. It is not a battle you win. It is a continual battle of opportunities to eat or not to eat and lifestyle.

As a chub, I was usually among the last chosen for schoolyard, playground and even some neighborhood games. In my somewhat biased view, this was ironic because I see myself as a reasonably well skilled player. Today, I have as much enthusiasm for sport as ever. However, as a kid, my skills and my desire to play could not overcome my soft appearance and how people “typed” me. When “chubs” try out for organized sports, people find ways to weed us out. They either cut us or punish us with those nasty exercises like push ups and running that chubs find difficult, if not impossible.

Chubs have problems in the sporting world of trim, muscular, fast people. We are slow. We jiggle. We rub. It is hard for us to get moving and it is not easy to stop. We cannot move rapidly or quickly and detest, not to mention fail, all of those things that depend on strength, speed and endurance. If that is not bad enough, chubs always find people who call us nasty names like fatty, blubber, and slow motion. Even some of our best friends, those we would never think of calling names, hurl thoughtless insults our way. Therefore, it usually takes quite a bit of persistence for us chubs to keep on playing with all of these obstacles in our path. Note however, that having the right build is not a prerequisite for wanting to play sports. For kids, wanting to play is natural.

It is important to know that chubs spend a lot of time thinking about food. I mean, from the time we get up in the morning until we are asleep, our thoughts revolve are about food. We make plans around food and eating. It is not that we try to think about food. It seems that we chubs just have this predisposition toward food like trim people probably think about cars, math, history or gardening. It appears to be something over which we have little control. Yet, we must control what others do not even thing about.

In some respects, being a chub and enjoying food is worse than being an alcoholic. We chubs like those non-health foods like pasta, chocolate and Vitamin J (junk food) plus the health foods. Alcoholics can abstain from alcohol and avoid both social and serious drinking. Chubs cannot avoid food for more than about 75 days.

I had very little to say about the selection of my parents or grandparents, despite what trim people might infer. Trim people do not appreciate the problems of genetic inheritance we chubs endure. It has been found that if both parents are obese, there is an 80% chance that the children will be obese. If one parent is obese, then there is only a 40% chance that the children will be obese. If neither parent is obese, there is just a 10% chance that the children will be obese. The lesson here is that children need to be careful about whom they select for parents.

I have a suggestion for trim people who are always telling chubs how bad the extra weight is for our circulatory systems. They could put their evangelistic zeal to work effectively if they would spend more time finding ways for us chubs to get into games and play ball. It seems that too many people are trying to weed us chubs out of sport. This eliminates an activity from our lives that is one of the best things we can do to fulfill the desires of all the trim people - - exercise and have fun.

Sporting activities are good for chubs and dumplings, not to mention trim kids. Sport occupies time that might otherwise be spent eating. It takes our mind off food. It fills the minutes and hours with good exercise that is as fun as eating. In fact, there are many sport activities that are fun regardless of your traits - - fat, inactive, slow, bright, disadvantaged, or aged. Active sport participation in practice sessions and games helps kids develop activity patterns and lifestyles that are carried into adult life. Not getting to play, even in practice, does not teach us chubs anything at all about liking sport and wanting to play more, now or in the future.

Fortunately for me, my father saw to it that I had ample opportunities to play, regardless of those who did not recognize my considerable talents on the fields and courts. I carry the ball myself now, thanks to him.

By the same token, the equally concerned female side of my family introduced me to some of the finest cuisine we have to offer. Both worlds are great. However, when we have no voice in selecting our parents, then someone has to make sure that we chubs get to play. Playing is fun. Not playing is fattening. Playing means fitness and fun. This confession about us chubs is just another illustration for parents and coaches to help you realize that getting to play in youth sport programs is far more important than other concerns. 1 (footnote 1)

I Jack Hutslar, the author, is 59 years of age and weighs 173 pounds right now. I weighed a soft 200 pounds in high school and a softer 230 pounds upon graduation from undergraduate school where I studied, worked and ate. I have weighed under 180 pounds several times, over 200 pounds another time, and up in the 190's a few other times. My past success in weight control involved counting calories daily and trying diligently to maintain a 30% monthly cardiovascular

activity schedule (10 exercise days a month) consisting of 11-15 hours to burn calories. I find it much easier to exercise than not eat. I am now on the Adkins' Diet which is the best one yet. When I get to be 100 years of age, I am going to say the hell with it all and do as I please. Until then, I will continue to wage the battle of winning some, losing some and gaining some.

Summary

Most people in sports, even those who are opposed to the highly competitive youth programs, feel that many good things can happen for kids through the sporting experiences. Coaches and other adults who have daily contact with the youngsters are most influential in this regard. With conscientious application of the principles covered in these last three chapters, sport can be a very nice experience for kids and adults.

Here are the major points or coaching skills that have been presented. Leaders, called coaches, should plan practice and game activities for 100% participation. Teach the basic skills. Most activities can be kept quite simple. Coaches will be effective leaders when they involve the players in team matters, be themselves, remain calm and cool even in times of stress, model good behavior for all to see, and treat others with positive human actions. Then, from time to time, we can remind ourselves that our players are only kids.

It is very important that this sport season be a good experience for the players. Many kids will have no other experience in formal sport programs in the years ahead, due to this experience and for other reasons. The chances are good that none of your youngsters will advance to high school, college, let alone, pro sport. With this in mind, it is quite important that we adopt a realistic view of what we are trying to do for our youth at nearly any level of play.

We urge strongly that youth sport leaders adopt a developmental and educational thrust. This will permit the players to learn as they grow while building their own lives. Some players will take great interest in sport, but few will move up and play at the Revenue Sports level. Therefore, it becomes sensible to treat each child, in a family way, as our own child. We can help them develop their individual talents and interests while making sport enjoyable, attractive and fun. As long as it is fun, they will return to play again and again. Where practical, the youth sport coaches can introduce their players to their own personal areas of interest and expertise. The youth sport coach, a buff, puts the players first and helps them progress toward a balanced life that includes many sport and non-sport activities.

The basis for becoming a good youth sport coach is to read and study, attend clinics, workshops and other educational programs, and then conduct activities that will attract the youngsters to practice sessions and games. "Youth sport buffs" continue to learn about kids and sport. This then gives the buffs the confidence to depart from the traditional ways of doing things without concern for what others say and do. Studying, knowing and using the material presented in these chapters allows the buffs to set their own courses, take winning and losing as it comes, and put the kids first.

