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Do they still have captains choose teams anymore?

Thursday, May 02, 2013

Many sparkers have described that experience as a personal trauma.

Sports is big business in the USA. How does this correlate with the activities of childhood?

I know that competitive sports for kids is serious stuff. Two of my 3 children and 2 of my grandchildren have been/are participants in this.

35 million children in the USA play organized youth sports yet we know that the obesity rates in children and adolescents have increased dramatically in the last 30 years and are still on the rise.

A comparatively small percentage of the most gifted are encouraged to train seriously to gain advantage at the next level. Articles about injuries, burnout and even steroid use in HS are common. Occasionally videos of parental rage and assault make the news.

What about everyone else? Isn't sports and physical activity worthwhile for everyone?
Is it FUN anymore?

I've watch kids' sports change over my lifetime.

I remember when we would choose teams and play without keeping score. Each side was "at bat" until 3 outs, but the score wasn't important. Stickball, kickball, punchball – but nothing organized. There were basketball hoops in concrete covered playgrounds but not much room for real games.

"Little League" must have been around then but it never made it to anyone I knew in South Brooklyn. I do remember seeing T-Shirts for PAL (Police Athletic League) although I'm not sure exactly what that was. Some must have participated in organized athletics, since they had T-Shirts, but most of us were just out there in the street.

I don't mean this to be a biased memory of the "good old days" but a thoughtful look at what part sports and athletic activity in general play in the lives of children. I would appreciate the perspective of sparkers regarding this.

SP encourages us to "get moving."

What if we had kept moving from childhood on?

What if everyone was encouraged to improve?

Kids mature at different rates. The biggest, fastest, strongest at age 12 doesn't always maintain that advantage.

What if it was actually FUN?

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BARB4HEALTH

F-inding
U-s

N-ow FUN! We are ever changing in an ever changing world. What I thought was fun as a child, usually isn't FUN now. But every phase of life has something to be gained from just having FUN.

F-reedom
U-nleashed<
BR>N-ever ending! FUN!



Let's do something FUN everyday!

2963 days ago



TIME-4-TINA

so true!

Pick Me, I'm Good!!!
2963 days ago



AUSFAM

I have similar memories of playing all kinds of unorganized sports as a kid, and picking teams could be quite traumatic. I'm not sure what ever made us stop--I guess the pressures to be 'cool' and not do 'kid' things was the first reason. Then came driving, which in-turn necessitated a job. Jr high and high school meant organized activities and less time to just play. I miss the 'play' time and I guess that's why I run races--it's my time to just go out and have fun with other like minded adults.

2963 days ago



MISCHAKEO

Youth sports have become too organized and competitive. Parents scream at referees and coaches. Many kids drop out. Only the best kids are played. I wonder about the fun element...where did it go? Sorry to be so negative. There is a real benefit to sports, but I served years on soccer boards and observed the rising emphasis on winning and not enjoying the game.

2964 days ago



WATERMELLEN

I had very little in the way of "organized" sports as a kid (other than swimming lessons: got my lifeguard qualifications . . .) but we played pick-up baseball daily all summer, had wooden skis, ice skates, tennis rackets, badminton set, croquet set, bicycles, roller skates, skipping ropes, basketball for the playground hoop: basically never stopped moving. Had perpetually scabbed knees and elbows: no helmets of course. The fact that we had to organize our own games also meant we endured quite a bit of squabbling and unfairness and bullying. Parents did not coach or referee or organize in any way, and we had to figure out how to get along. It wasn't always fun: there were bruised psyches along the road too. So NOT the "good ol' days" entirely. But there were opportunities that kids today just don't get.

2964 days ago



GINIEMIE

Well we lived in the country and in a poor area, so if there was organized sports...I'm not aware. I do know that in our neighborhood we played softball, kickball, badminton, volleyball and croquet. We also walked in the woods, climbed trees, read books in the trees and rode bikes-when we could afford them.

We did not get a television until I was in the 8th grade, we had to play outside, work in the garden, feed the chickens and pick fruits and berries, hang the laundry on the clothes line. I'm not complaining, I learned many skills and even though I'm overweight I do know how to move...

As I got older, I had to mend/darn socks, iron, cook, bake and I learned how to sew and knit. I was never bored. I read under the blankets with a flashlight for my quiet time-of course I was supposed to be sleeping.



2964 days ago



LINDAKAY228

Great blog. We didn't play that much as kids on a block just for fun, but I did ride my bike a lot. A number of us did. I was still overweight, but it's gotten much worse now. I was not good at sports, and in gym classes in school I would be the last one chosen and the one that some team got stuck with. I would like to see it be just fun. When one of my kids was in soccer as a kid, he was not great but in soccer they really tried to get everyone involved and equal chances and encouraged each other. Little League was much more competitive and the "best" players were



chosed and the others had it harder. That's why I liked the kids soccer. It was so much more encouraging for those who weren't the best players. I would like kids to have much more fun with activity than they often do.

2964 days ago



SUNSETSMILE



That is exactly how I feel. I remember as a kid that all the kids on the block pretty much played sports together. From young to old. That is how us youngsters learned, from the older kids. We would have pickup baseball games where we would split in 2 teams (each one have both young and older players). Of course the older kids were picked first and the younger later but so what. We all got to play. We all got to bat. Everyone had fun and we had alot of good memories. Heck we even played dodgeball with the older kids. Yeah that ball could hurt if you got hit. It was part of growing up. We never had official scorekeepers. I also remember letting a team have more outs if some of the kids weren't as good so that everyone could bat. Heck us girls used to dance while we were in the in & out fields. Now all kids have to be split by age group and everything is so structured. My kids do not have near as much fun playing outside since they even play outside by age group. On the few times they all pack together and have water fights or tag football all the kids are having fun. Great post.

2964 days ago



DESERTJULZ



I remember losing interest in tennis when the opposing player stopped trying to hit the ball *to* me and instead starting trying to hit it where I couldn't reach to return the shot...

2965 days ago



JAHINTZY



I was just talking with my fiance the other day about how sad it was to me that I really enjoyed playing softball as a kid, I was pretty terrible at it and I have next to no sense of competition, it was just fun. I tried playing in my school team one season and never got to bat or field a game, not one, because I wasn't good enough. I didn't care to become good enough, I just wanted to have fun - so I quit. I often wonder how different of a physical situation I'd have been in if there had been an opportunity for me to be active and fun instead of being pushed to competition. Every once in a while I've gotten a friend to join me at a tennis court and run around and goof off, or throw a frisbee poorly (and have to run after it), or even grab a baseball and a bat and some old gloves and go find an open baseball diamond in the park. It is pretty hard to get people to agree to go do that now though... at least most of the people I know.

2965 days ago



COACHMOMMY



I'm at both ends of the spectrum. My oldest daughter and my youngest daughter (17 & 12) didn't like organized sports. My middle daughter (14) played 3 sports (volleyball, basketball & softball) and is now playing in the competitive world of High School sports (stopped softball to "concentrate" mainly on basketball).

I was very athletic growing up and played softball (still do) and basketball. Our neighborhood would also play softball & kickball in my backyard until it got too dark to see. These days, kids (including mine), don't exercise much unless it's organized. They now have the allure of more than just TV - computers, smart phones, hand held video games, video games, etc.

I'm all for both types of sports - highly competitive and the more relaxed "rec leagues". Unfortunately in both "arenas" the parents can be very obnoxious (I'm sure I have on occasion too).

We try to encourage all 3 daughters to get exercise and eat healthy (mainly by trying to do it ourselves). Right now DD#1 is a sometime runner (has school, work & boyfriend), DD#2 does "crazy" exercise and DD#3 proclaimed a couple of weeks ago that she wants to tryout for track next year, so she's started running. As a 12 year old, she still "plays" in the yard.

It's tough to get a balance of exercise on a daily basis for kids (hence the NFL's Play60 campaign, etc.) and I try not to be a "nagging Mom" about it!

2965 days ago



CD13099273



One off my granddaughters had her first softball game last night , mind you she is only seven , no child sat on the bench. Everyone played , this is park district league that is very organized and recognized the selecting process in early 80's to avoid issue of being unfair , and to encourage young athletes to participate . It was at that time I coached soccer - so I thinks it depends on who and the where.

2965 days ago

Comment edited on: 5/2/2013 9:59:48 AM



DR1939



I used to do a lecture on school sports and the problems associated with them. Beyond the selectivity/exclusivity which is a problem in many ways, in most team sports you spend more time on the bench than you do moving. Because they involve a group of players they are difficult to transfer to postsecondary times thus are not played by many people as adults. There is a movement to bring back teaching activities that are transferable to adulthood.

2965 days ago



COCK-ROBIN



An insightful blog. Thank you.

2965 days ago



HELEN_BRU




Good Thoughts!
2965 days ago



SWEETNEEY




2965 days ago

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