

Top Issues for Sports Parents

by Rick Wolff

Be careful of having your child specialize in a sport too early in life. The majority of professional coaches and athletes do not feel that a kid ought to play just one sport when they are growing up. Why? Because playing one sport will lead to burnout by the time they're thirteen or fourteen and even worse that one sport all year round will transform from being fun to being just a job. Bottom line? Let your kid play a variety of sports when they're kids. They don't have to start to even thinking about specialization until they are fifteen or sixteen.

Don't be in a hurry to show them how you used to play the sport. No kid ever wants to have Dad show him or her how "I used to do this..." The truth is your child wants to be their own man or woman and they really aren't that interested in how you performed a certain move or skill. What they really want is to develop their own signature moves.

Get a reality check. The stats don't lie. Very few kids go on to play college sports. Do you think the stats don't apply to your kid? If the odds are that less than 5% of all high school varsity athletes ever go on to play collegiate sport why do so many parents think that their kid is going to be that special one? Let involved as a coach or assistant coach. Rather than stand on the sidelines at the games and criticize the coaching strategies, if you think you can do better, then offer your services and become either a head coach or assistant coach. Once you find yourself on the die of the fence, you'll discover that coaching is a little tougher than you had thought. And if you can't coach, then get outside and practice with your child. Get involved that way.

About the Author: Rick Wolff has written widely on the subject of sports psychology and kids, including "Good Sports: A Concerned Parent's Guide"; he also hosts a radio show called "The Sports Edge" on WFAN.