

5 Reasons Kids Lose Their Love of Sport

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One of realities of sports is that everyone who plays eventually reaches a level where they do not have the physical ability to compete. Even the pros eventually get to an age or level where their skills do not allow them to continue. But when working with young athletes we have found that there are five things that cause them to lose their natural love of playing a game besides ability.

1. Consistent Defeats

The best coaches have learned how to create victories in practice allowing young athletes to experience success. Small successes lead to more aggressive, confident, fearless athletes.

2. Negative Coaching

This is why so much of our published materials are focused on character-based coaching. Coaches are the key to both positive and negative athletic experiences.

3. Mental or physical tiredness

This happens most often when athletes focus and compete in one sport all year. For example, what was fun and exciting to be chosen to play year around select soccer at age 9 or 10 for many young athletes turns into forced labor at age 14 or 15. Watch closely for signs of burnout.

4. Making the game too complex

This is the result of adults trying to teach too much too soon. Teach the kids to love the game; then start teaching them how to play it. Keep the game simple and instinctive so kids can play without paralysis by analysis.

5. Outside pressure

This is mainly the result of parents who are pushing too hard or living through their kids. When it is more important to the adult than it is to the athlete, that is a red flag. Never invest more in a sport than your child. As I heard a high school sophomore say lately, "I wish my parents had a hobby other than my sports".

Every time we have a parent or coach say to us, "he/she seems to have lost their love of the game", we go right back to this list and say it is either one or a combination of these factors.