Group Activity on Youth Sports (September 2017)

Each class member has been assigned to a group to conduct this assignment on the topic of youth sports. The following resources are related to this assignment: (1) socialization into sport assignment (you need to have your completed assignment available for my inspection); (2) handouts pertaining to the two videos dealing with youth sports; (3) ppt slides posted on the course web site; and, (4) pp. 266-275 in textbook. Successful completion of this class activity will result in 5 points. **Members (print your names):**

1. Have a brief discussion pertaining to the socialization assignment: **list** the various agents and agencies that were influential in getting you involved in sport:

2. According to the National Council on Youth Sports, approximately how many youth are involved in sport (circle the correct response)?

A. 10 million, B. 12 million, C. 60 million, D. 110 million

3. According to a comprehensive study conducted by Seefeldt, Ewing, and Walk, what are the three reasons that kids cite in getting involved with sport?

5. According to research, identify the three reasons why kids disengage from sport:

6. According to the Gatorade’s *Playbook for Kids: A Parent’s Guide to Help Kids Get the Most Out of Sports,* review what kids want to tell parents and spectators. According to your group, identify three of the statements that seem to be most prevalent (this is in chapter 12).

7. Based on the video dealing with youth sports, identify a physical, psychological, and social dysfunction (negative consequence) that appeared in the video. Provide a brief description of each consequence.

8. What does it mean to provide developmentally appropriate learning?

9. Let us say that you are going to coach 9 to 11 year olds in baseball. Realizing the importance of developing an intrinsic satisfaction for these kids, how would you pursue presenting the skills encountered in baseball? Keep in mind the aspects of anxiety, challenge, ability, and the complexity of the skill.

10. What modifications would you make to accommodate 7 year olds in a soccer program?

Have your group react to the following critiques:

**Figure skating:** travel and commitment is great. When parents are coaches, children never escape their athlete identities. The emphasis on jumping in the new, co modified form of figure skating is leading to injuries on young developing joints and bones; hips, spines, ankles, and knees are especially vulnerable (the 2001 US National Championships had three of the top 6 “women” skaters out with stress fractures and spinal injuries; most of the men fell as they tried quads to meet emerging expectations that they must put their bodies on the line to score well). For girls the emphasis is on a petite body, the use of makeup, costumes, and smiles. Mom in the film dresses her daughter as if she is playing with a Barbie doll. The daughter is excited when one of her weekend exhibitions is cancelled, but the mother quickly rules out any spontaneous fun as an option for their weekend. The gender issues in figure skating are clear.

**Basketball:** How can someone say a basketball scholarship is worth $130,000?! (only if you go to the most exclusive of private colleges in the US). This is the myth that Nike and other pimp-like organizations use to encourage commitments from youngsters who don’t have enough information to raise questions about what they are dedicating themselves to. Players now have websites to tout themselves to recruiters, junior high and elementary school players are being contacted by colleges – often through programs sponsored by shoe and apparel companies. Athletes become known as Nike or Reebok, or Adidas athletes before they are 16, and it now affects where they choose to attend college: can a Nike player go to a university that has sold its athletic department and all its athletes to Adidas? The shirt that says, “I have no life – my daughter plays AAU basketball” is telling. It could also say, “My daughter has no life – she plays AAU basketball.” Children are very quick to understand what it is that elicits approval from parents and other influential adults in their lives. When children learn that “if you are going to play, you should work to be the best you can be” tends to create many dropouts and a few stars – is this what excellence is all about? Large transnational corporations want us to think this is so. When excellence is defined as being good in a highly specialized niche, who benefits?

**Hockey:** This is a good example of how a working class African American father sees sports as a way for his sons to have things that he never has been able to enjoy or achieve. His wife disagrees with him as he spends many family resources going to tournaments and buying equipment. If he invested that $5000 per year that he spends on hockey he could pay for his sons to go to college; instead, he sees hockey as the investment, and his sons have no choice in the matter even though they see what’s going on. The goal is Harvard and the NHL – if his sons don’t burn out and tell him to stick their hockey sticks and pads. Social class and race operate in sports in subtle ways.