

Building the Value of Sports

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Hands off?

The monstrous acts of child predators has made coaching youth sports more challenging than ever for those caring individuals involved for all the right reasons. How prepared are today's coaches for this dramatically altered youth sports landscape?

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National
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Coaching Clues

Use these tips to help young athletes avoid having their seasons cut short and their experiences sabotaged by pain, discomfort and injury.

Why is it that dedicated athletes between the early and mid teenage years give up sports? Is it the tantalizing temptation of a high school social life or simply the loss of interest due to a rigorous time-consuming sports schedule?



These may be the cases for some promising young athletes, but not for the truly dedicated young athletes who live to play. There is no social activity more important than their chosen sport.

So why do they stop? The answer, simply put, is pain – chronic pain. It takes the fun out of sports and causes athletes to question their involvement. It is an unfortunate circumstance, especially since the factors that cause chronic pain may be easily avoided by coaches who are armed with these “Coach’s Clues” for preventing injuries:

Clue #1: Overtraining

The teenage years are when competitive athletics become more intense. It’s the time when coaches expect more out of their athletes and the athletes expect more out of themselves. Many youngsters are on multiple teams as well as participating in personal training and private sports training, resulting in insanely high activity levels. It’s essential to spot the early warning signs of overtraining to prevent injuries. Early symptoms of overtraining, such as decreased mental focus, mild body aches and fatigue, often go unnoticed.

So why is it that some young athletes develop symptoms of overtraining and others do not? It’s because the problem is not so much the amount of activity as it is the teenager’s individual body

type, growth spurts and technique flaws.

Clue #2: Body types

The early teenage years are when growth spurts occur and children’s body types become more evident. It’s important for coaches to know the three basic body types and to notice which athletes are going through growth spurts. The three basic body types are Endomorph, Mesomorph and Ectomorph.

Kids with Endomorphic body types will appear stockier with more prominent midsections, due to their

affinities to gaining fat weight. This increased weight will adversely affect both their ability to jump and their cardiovascular capabilities. In their early teens, they should be eased into increased activity levels.

Kids with Mesomorph body types are muscular with shorter tendons; they quickly bulk up with muscle. In their early teens, their muscles have more tendencies to tighten; therefore, they have higher chances of straining their muscles. Coaches should educate these athletes in advance stretching techniques to offset the effects of hard training.

Kids with Ectomorph body types are thin and usually tall, with long tendons. In their early teens, they are susceptible to rapid bone growth; however, their

Clue #4: Dehydration

It is imperative that kids consume enough water to compensate for the demands of their sports as well as the environment (hot sunny days or stuffy gymnasiums).

The myth of eight cups of water per day has been debunked. Think about it, a kid may weigh 75 pounds and his or her coach may weigh 200 pounds – shouldn't their water intakes be different?

A good rule of thumb for water consumption is to consume half your body weight in ounces. That is, weigh the child in pounds and divide the weight in half to find out how many ounces he should drink. For example, let's say a teenage soccer player weighs

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ligaments, tendons and muscular growth lags behind. Their muscles will fatigue quicker and ache more. Since ectomorph athletes have higher incidences of joint sprains and stress fractures, during times of growth spurts or injuries the intensity of their activity level should be decreased.

Clue #3: Technical flaws

It doesn't matter which sport it is, every coach tells their athletes to "practice the basics." These techniques not only increase kids' skills and abilities, they prevent injuries by maintaining proper biomechanics.

Since these techniques are continually put to the test during practice and competition, flaws may lead to overuse injuries or even traumatic injuries. Technique flaws accompanied with growth spurts will lead to a greater risk of injury.

100 pounds; divide it by 2 and the new weight is 50 pounds. Now just substitute the pounds for ounces and the soccer playing youngster should drink a minimum of 50 ounces of fluids a day. That's right, a minimum!

The new water rule only takes into account the differences in kids' body weights; however, it does not take into account their activity levels or their training environments. Depending on the type of activity and the temperature of the climate, the young athlete may need to drink up to double the calculated amount.

By maintaining a keen eye on teenage athletes and by adhering to these Coach's Clues it will be within your power to prevent the pains and injuries associated with sports as well as make training a more pleasurable experience for everyone. ✨



Jack R. Giangulio, D.C., B.S., is a Newport Beach, Calif.-based chiropractor and one of the leading authorities in the field of dance injury and youth sports. For more information visit www.danceinjurydoctor.com.