

Coaching the Generation Z-athlete

This article is an extract from an article by **Dr. Celesti Jansen van Rensburg** which was written for the **Free State Academy of Sport**. Comments are added by **Rudolph Cloete**.

Coaches must know the athletes who they work with! The problem is that there is usually a big generation gap between coaches and the athletes. Therefore, the coach must take into consideration what makes his athletes tick!!

Different generation has different characteristics! Working with school athletes means that the coach is working with the so called Generation Z (born after 1996) – while he/she falls into the category of Generation X or Millennial!

Characteristics of Generation Z:

More practical – less theoretical

Show, don't tell

Open-minded, but impatient

Creative and Innovative

Up for a challenge

Happiness is very important

Friends are very important

More face to face communication

More global in their thinking

Less structured education preferences – use alternative methods

More individualistic

More technology dependant

More parented – they have “helicopter parents”

More early starts – in work, sport, education

More disruptive – they are multitaskers

Very short attention span

More entrepreneurial

Personal responsibility is high in some

Outcomes focused

Mentor seeking – don't care for academics

Difference makers – 60% of them wants to make a difference

Some comments for coaches on these characteristics:

1. Make use of technology: cellphone video clips and YouTube etc. Take video clips of their technique and show it to them when explaining something.
2. Work individually with each athlete when explaining something important. Don't explain important things to the whole group of athletes. They prefer that the coach pull them to the side when he/she wants to explain their mistakes.
3. Keep explanations short. Get to the point.
4. Don't give 3 or 4 orders simultaneously.
5. Set realistic goals – they strive on positive outcomes.
6. Be creative in your training schedule – change and mix up the exercises on a regular basis. Don't let them become bored.
7. Don't yell! The Generation Z-athlete will take this as a sigh that the coach is angry at him/her! They want the coach too consistently remain calm and in control of

himself!

8. Be aware of your gestures – the athlete may interpret it as a negative attitude towards them/him/her. They prefer a coach who shows positive interaction and feedback.

Coaches must change the way they think about and deliver the information he/she wants the athletes to hear.

Challenges coaches are facing:

1. Athletes and parents who think they have a free pass to act disrespectfully because they are paying the coach.
2. Athletes and parents who think they have a complete monopoly on coaches' time (even personal time).
3. Athletes and parents who want to blame a lack of progress on the coach, instead of looking at themselves or their potential.
4. Parents who interfere with the coaches' methods and/or program.

A negative experience with a coach is likely to have a greater impact on the coach-athlete relationship; hindering the positive youth sport experience

Talentidentifikasie in skole

Deur Rudolph Cloete, ASA Vlak III en VSAAV Vlak III

Talent ID het eintlik twee bene, nl. identifisering van nuwe talent en, tweedens, die identifikasie van wat 'n gevestigde atleet se beste item gaan wees!

Die **eerste identifikasie**, nl. identifisering van nuwe talent vind primêr in die primêre skool plaas. Wanneer 'n laerskoolleerder die regte ouderdom bereik, sal die skool "kyk" of hy of sy in 'n spesifieke item die mas sal opkom. Baie talent gaan egter verlore wanneer atlete al as 0/8's in naellope mag deelneem, maar later eers as 0/10's aan o.a Verspring of Duskusgooi mag deelneem. Baie keer is die atleetjie klaar gevestig in die naellope en wil nie oorskakel nie. Die gesoute Atletiekhoof by die skool sal dit in gedagte moet hou dat die atleetjie wat in die naellope uitgeval het, miskien oor 2 jaar die uitstaande verspringer kan word.

'n Goeie idee is om alle 0/8's aan al die "atletiekitems" bloot te stel – al kan hulle nog nie aan sekeres deelneem nie: tennisbalgooi is 'n goeie manier om sien of 'n atleetjie 'n "arm" het, staande verspring sal 'n goeie aanduiding gee van 'n atleet se horisontale veerkrag – klap teen 'n muur sorg as toets vir vertikale veerkrag! So kan inoverende "toetse" uitgedink word om talent te identifiseer.

In sommige oorsese lande word veelkampbyeenkomstes gereël om jong talent te identifiseer.

Die hoërskoolafrigter moet ook in ag neem dat kinders wat in die primêre skool uitgeval het, nie noodwendig vir ewig uit atletiek is nie: kinders ontwikkel deurlopend en goeie atlete is al op 'n Gr.8-kleurebyeenkoms "ontdek" of op die stoepe raak gesien!

Die **tweede identifikasie**, nl. identifisering van watter item die beste sal wees, is 'n meer ingewikkelde proses! Hierdie identifisering gebeur meer op hoërskoolvlak, waar die Atletiekhoof 'n kardinale rol speel.

Die Atletiekhoof is o.a verantwoordelik dat die skool se atletiekspan kompetender is! Kom ek gee u 'n voorbeeld van wat ek bedoel: As 'n 0/15 seun die 100m in 12.00sek hardloop, help dit nie om hom in te skryf vir die 100m op die

Interhoërbyeenkoms nie! Die feit dat hy die skoolkampioen is, is geen rede om hom daar in te skryf nie! Hy gaan nêrens kom nie en die naelloopafrigter gaan nie uit sy eie hierdie seun wegstuur na 'n ander item nie!

Dit is waar die Atletiekhoof inkom – hy moet nou 'n ingeligte besluit tot voordeel van die atleet neem! (en sodoende ook die skool bevoordeel) Hy kan 'n prestasietabel raadpleeg of uitvind wat die provinsiale kwalifiserende tyd vir die 100m is of na die 100m tye op vorige Interhoërbyeenkomstes kyk! 'n 12.00sek mag nie genoeg spoed vir die 100m wees nie, maar dit mag in die 400m of 800m meer as genoeg vir 'n wen wees! Verspring kan ook goeie 'n opsie wees!

Hierdie identifisering moet so vroeg moontlik in die jaar gedoen word – en ook so vroeg moontlik in die atleet se hoërskoolloopbaan plaasvind! 'n Mens moet in ag neem dat die nuwe item nuwe uitdagings, bv. die aanleer van nuwe tegnieke, aan die atleet kan stel wat tyd gaan neem om onder die knie te kry.

Die Atletiekhoof moet hom ook nie blind staar teen 'n Gr8-leerder se laerskool= items nie ...kinders ontwikkel en groei teen verskillende tempo's! Dis veral seuns, wat groter as hul maats is, wat in die primêre skool presteer...maar in Gr 10 is hulle nie meer die grootste in die klas nie! Daar is 'n paar nuwe items – Driesprong, Hamergooi, hindernis, ens – wat eerder oorweeg kan word.

Die meeste top-atletiekskole maak van bogenoemde sisteem gebruik om sodoende die beste van hul beskikbare talent gebruik te maak. Kinders wil presteer – en as dit nie gebeur nie, hou hulle op met deelneem. Op hul eie sal atlete nie sommer na 'n ander ietm verander nie – en as hulle dit wel doen, is dit gewoonlik 'n oningeligte besluit! Die Atletiekhoof, met al sy/haar atletiekkennis, is die ideale persoon om die regte item aan te beveel!

Ken jou Sportiewe-kind

Hoekom neem jou kind aan atletiek/sport deel?

deur Rudie Stockhoff, VSAAV Vlak III



1. Eerstens, om dit te geniet.
2. Om te verbeter, en nuwe dinge te leer.
3. Om te oefen, en om fiks en gesond te bly.
4. Om iets te doen waarin hy/sy goed is.
5. Om deel te wees van n span/oefengroep.
6. Vir die opwinding en uitdaging van die kompetisie.
7. Om te wen....

Gereelde foute wat ouers maak by oefeninge:

- **Woon oefeninge van kinders by.** As Ma/Pa daar is, sal Sannie baie vinniger moeg word, **makliker opgee**, nie opdragte of oefeninge korrek uitvoer nie, min/geen dissipline toon, probeer om oogkontak te hou met Ma/Pa, om hulle erkenning te kry.
- **As jy toegelaat word om n oefening by te woon, bly stil!** "Vinniger Pietie!!!" ... help glad nie!, veral as Pietie teen 80% moet hardloop, of om vir Kosie te laat wen om Kosie se selfvertroue te versterk daardie dag, want hy voel bietjie bemoeid.
- **Inmeng, of opinies lig oor Afrigter en/of oefenmetodes.** Afrigters leer ook nog elke dag nuwe dinge en moet elke kind binne sy eie vermoë afrig en ontwikkel. Alle kinders verskil: emosioneel, fisies, intellektueel, deursettingsvermoë, konsentrasie, gemoed, ens.
- **Laerskoolkinders oefen te veel, en te lank.** 2-3 keer per week, 1,1/2 ure. Daar moet meer op korrekte opwarming, tegniek en afwarming gekonsentreer word, want ek glo hulle het nog natuurlike spoed en stamina, wat net onderhou moet word.

Gereelde foute wat ouers maak by byeenkomste:

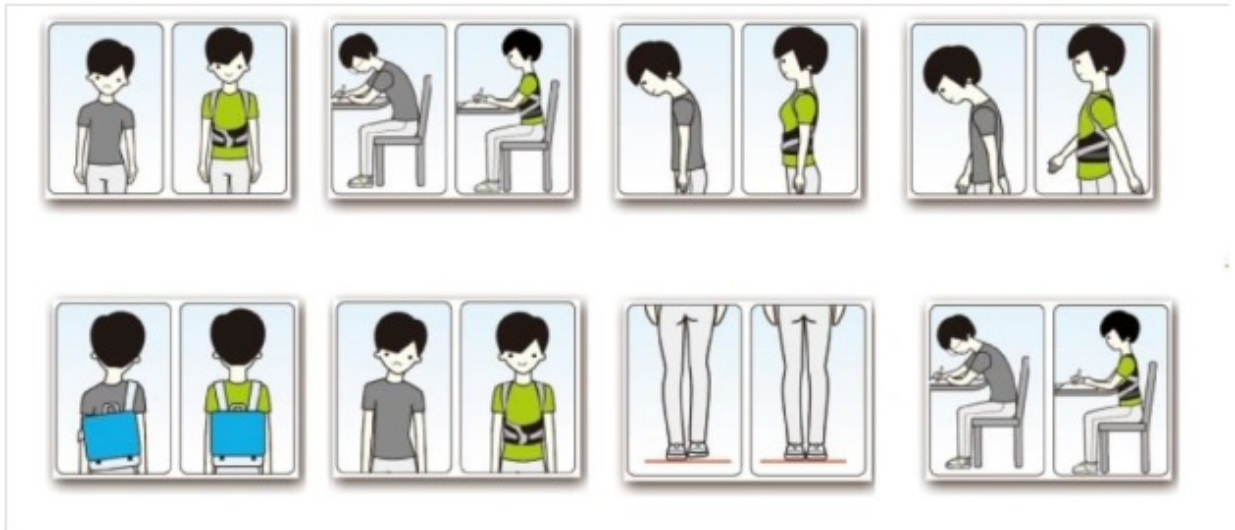
- **Jaag om by 'n byeenkoms uit te kom.** Wees eerder te vroeg, rustige kinders presteer beter.
- **Het nie genoegsame inligting oor hoe lank voor die tyd, waar die opwarmings area is, of wat se opwarming daar gedoen moet word nie.** Afrigters kan nie altyd teenwoordig wees nie. Vind uit by afrigter wat die opwarming behels, wat en wanneer ge-ëet moet word en hou jou kinders gehidreer.
- **Plaas te veel druk op kinders om te presteer.**
- **Kwaad wees vir kind omdat hy/sy n fout gemaak het.**

Verander sy/haar toekoms..

- **Kinders moet gereeld buite speel.** Dit ontwikkel en versterk die nodige spiere, ligamente en sensings, van

hulle voete af , dwarsdeur hulle lyf.

- **Maak seker hulle het die regte postuur.** oefen dit van klein tyd af, hulle is kinders ...en vergeet.

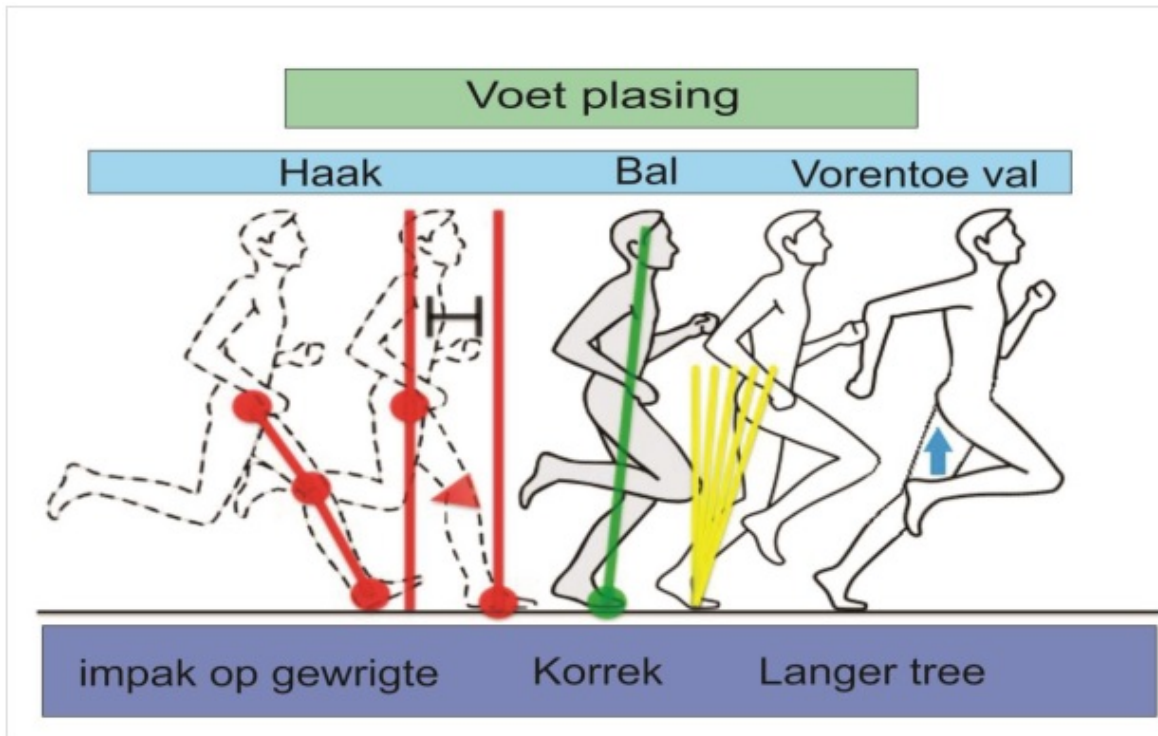


- **Maak seker hul voet-, enkel- en beenspiere ontwikkel gelyk en reëlmatig!** Dit kan toekomstige beserings, groeipyne, “shinsplints” ens., voorkom.



- **Doen moeite en kies die regte afrigter.** Gesles met sy/haar atlete en ouers voor jy kies. Onthou, 'n goeie afrigter gaan jou kinders help opvoed en hulle mentor wees. Dit is 'n voorreg om 'n afrigter te wees.
- **Afrigters en tegnieke verskil, maar goeie afrigters sal min of meer dieselfde siening hê oor postuur en hardlooptegnieke.** Dit is moeilik en vat tyd vir 'n afrigter om verkeerde tegnieke en maniere van ander

afrigters te verbeter en/of reg te stel.



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- **Jou kinders moet opdaag vir oefeninge.** Elke dag word spoed, stamina, tegnieke ingeoefen en nuwe drills geleer. Kinders wat agter is ...bly agter!
- **Stel doelwitte (saam met jou kind) elke jaar.** Dit sal hulle toewyding gee om te oefen, ouers moet help!
- **Moet hulle nie opmeet teen ander kinders nie.** Hulle moet net, met elke byeenkoms en elke jaar verbeter, hulle tyd sal kom, wanneer dit bestem is.
- **NB! As jou kind deelgeneem het (maak nie saak wat die uitkoms was nie) groet hom/haar met 'n positiewe houding en woorde.** Dit gebeur baie, a.g.v. stress, dat hulle foute maak in 'n wedloop/tegniek. Hulle sal wel vir jou sê wat verkeerd geloop het.
- **Maak seker dat jou kind reg opwarm en afwarm voor en na elke deelname/kompetisie.** Kinders is geneig om die opwarming af te skeep a.g.v. senuwees, intimidasie van ander atlete, konsentrasie, ens.
- **Wees dankbaar vir wat jou kinders bereik het.** Fokus op die positiewe, nie die negatiewe nie.
- **Wees versigtig om jou kinders te vroeg te laat**

spesialiseer in sekere items. Laat hulle doen wat vir hulle lekker is.

- Onthou dat elke kind uniek in denkwyse, opvoeding, emosie, konsentrasie, determinasie en natuurlike talent is: Atlete moet met hierdie in gedagte afgerig word

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Eienskappe van 'n goeie Afrigter

EIENSKAPPE VAN 'N GOEIE AFRIGTER

Deur Rudolph Cloete, VSAAV en ASA Vlak III

Verskeie afrigters het al probeer om die goeie afrigter te definieer! Hierdie artikel is 'n poging om al hierdie eienskappe saam te vat...meet uself maar daaraan!

Kennis van die item

Die goeie afrigter moet 'n deeglike kennis hê van al die fasette van sy item, soos bv. biomeganika, fisiologie, oefenbeginsels, programmering en die aanleer van vaardighede. Hierdie basiese kennis kan slegs d.m.v. kursusse en simposiums verkry word.

Fotografiese krag van waarneming

Die goeie afrigter kan 'n beweging/poging waarneem en die

foute daarin uitwys. Baie afrigters kan 'n fout raaksien, maar slegs die goeie afrigter kan die oorsprong en herstel van die fout aanbeveel. Hierdie is 'n kuns wat slegs deur ervaring en oefening kan ontwikkel.

Geduld

Sukses in atletiek kan slegs bereik word deur 'n aantal jare se harde werk. Die goeie afrigter weet daar is geen kortpaaie nie en mors ook nie tyd om dit te soek nie.

Entoesiasme

Geen atleet wil 'n afrigter hê wat self sukkel om te hou van wat hy doen, of wat hy wil hê die atleet moet doen nie. Entoesiasme is aansteeklik en die goeie afrigter sal hierdeur sy atlete beïnvloed om opgewonde te wees oor atletiek en die harde werk wat daarmee saamgaan.

Vermoë om te motiveer

Hy moet instaat wees om belangstelling (by sy atlete) aan te wakker. Hy is altyd sensitief om alle vervelige oefeninge/werk om te skakel na gemotiveerde, positiewe oefen-aktiwiteite.

Hierdie laaste twee gaan hand aan hand: Die entoesiastiese afrigter sal sy atlete maklik kan motiveer om ook die slegte/moeilike werk in die oefenprogram te doen...of om vas te byt in die kompetisie as al die weersomstandighede negatief is!

Toewyding

Die afrigter moet bereid wees om baie vryetyd te bestee in die soeke na goeie atletiese kwaliteite in ander. As die afrigter toewyding toon, sal sy atlete meer geneig wees om ook vas te byt/volharding ten toon te stel.

Ervaring

Die afrigter sal foute maak, dit is menslik en onvermydelik. Die goeie afrigter leer egter uit sy foute en sorg dat hy/sy nie dieselfde fout twee keer begaan nie. Dus speel ervaring 'n groot rol, want nou sal die afrigter diesulke foute by die volgende atleet vooraf kan vermy.

Niemand is onmiddelik 'n goeie afrigter nie! Hierdie is 'n sleutelfaktor, want afrigting is 'n persoonlike verhouding tussen twee individue.

Organiseerder

Ook moet die afrigter pro-aktief wees in die kompetisie-situasie en altyd die nodige in sy/atleet se sportsak inpak vir net ingeval: merkers vir 'n aanloop, reënbaadjie/sambreel vir die atleet, 'n klein handdoek, hoed, maatband, ens.

Die goeie afrigter moet georganiseer wees. Elke oefensessie moet vooruit beplan word om die gewenste uitwerking te hê. Hy moet seker maak dat alle benodighede daar is om die oefening effektief te maak.

Die afrigter moet sekere standarde vereis

'n Goeie afrigter vereis stiptelikheid, aanvaarding van beslissings, samewerking tussen atlete, hulpverlening en ondersteuning van/aan spanmaats. Atlete moet ernstig wees oor oefentyd en dit nie mors nie, hulle moet gehoor gee aan dit wat die afrigter gedurende oefeninge vereis en hulle probeer leer.

Die afrigter moet 'n vertroueling en mentor wees

Almal is dit eens dat afrigting 'n kuns is wat nie in boeke nageslaan kan word nie! Kennis van die oefenwetenskap is belangrik, interpersoonlike verhoudings is belangrik, maar die goeie afrigter het die kuns bemeester om wenners te kweek!

Die afrigter moet toeganklik wees, MAAR daar moet gewaak word dat familiariteit nie die mooi verhouding tot niet maak nie:

in skoolverband is die afrigter die onderwyser/volwassene en die atleet die kind/persoon, wat iets wil bereik. Die regte aanmoediging op die regte tyd en plek kan selfvertroue versterk.

Die goeie afrigter sal 'n noue verhouding met sy atleet moet hê – dit sal bydra tot albei se sukses! Die afrigter moet saam met die atleet beplan en die atleet moet die afrigter vertrou dat hy/sy weet wat hy/sy doen. Hulle deel nie net die wenglorie nie, maar ook die verloorhartseer! Die wenner het nie die afrigter so nodig nie – die verloorder wel!

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[How to destroy your child's athletic future in 3 steps](#)

How To Destroy Your Child's Athletic Future In 3 Easy Steps

Posted by Matt Russ on December 10, 2015

[2.1K](#)

In over two decades of coaching athletes I have had the pleasure of seeing some of my junior athletes make it all the way to the professional level. Along the way I have developed a somewhat global perspective on what it takes to go from this

point A to the very distant point B. I worked with some wonderful parents that contributed greatly to their child's successes. But I unfortunately witnessed more parents, sometime unwittingly and always with the best intentions, sabotage their child's athletic future. If they had just heeded a few simple rules, or examined a few of their motives, not only would their child been a better athlete, they would have been a better competitor, happier, and healthier child.

If you are find yourself excited at the potential of your child's athletic career, I invite you take an objective look within. And if you catch yourself doing any of the three following things, I can all but guarantee your child will not end up where you believe they will.

1. **Imposing your own ambitions upon your child.** I find it interesting that some of the most accomplished athletes I have known are not the overbearing parents you might expect when it comes to athletics. In fact they may take a somewhat laissez faire attitude towards their young children's athleticism. My personal opinion is that these parents have a greater understanding of the developmental process. Laying the foundation, learning the skill sets, and graciously handling the pitfalls competition are put above awards and accolades. They are intimately familiar with the long timeline and sacrifices required to get to the top of a sport, and even the odds of getting there. They tend to be more respectful towards the coaches and patient with the coaching process. They in short have gained a perspective most of us do not possess.

Parents that have not experienced competition simply never developed the mental skills sets required of an athlete. They may be experiencing athletic competition for the first time through the prism of their child; which can be a very slippery slope. Others believe their child represents a "second chance" at righting the wrongs of their not so illustrious

athletic past. At any rate the most important thing to understand is that a pre-adolescent child has three basic motivations for participating in a sport: to have fun, to socialize, and to please their parents. Too many children end up just doing the later, and that almost never works for long.

These kids seldom last in a sport to high level competition, and may even end up quitting their sport, after years of development, because it is an convenient way to rebel against a parent. Post- competition, often the first words I hear from parents are evaluative or criticizing when they should be simply "did you have fun today?"

2. **Over-specializing too early.** I once consulted with a somewhat anxious dad regarding his injured daughters training. The doctor had advised three weeks off of training to allow her injury to heal, but he felt this was too conservative and that his daughter would give up too much ground by taking this time off. She was NINE years old by the way. Obviously he had his own agenda in mind and not his daughters best interest. I seriously doubted that she would still be competing in her sport at twelve.

There has been an astounding rise in orthopedic injuries among children in the last decade. This corresponds with the rise in early single sport specialization. Kids are training too hard, too often, too repetitively and way too early without a proper foundation. Training and coaching programs have capitalized on this, often ignoring orthopedic guidelines for training children in favor of showing early results to the parents. Children do not have a stable enough platform to put high volume training upon, especially during growth phases.

Injuries to growth plates, vertebral discs, meniscus tears, and tendon/ligament strain can leave a child with *permanent* damage. The body is not designed to repeat specific movements over and over, especially at an early age. We are designed for multi-planer movements which is more akin to

“going outside and playing” vs. training. If you really want to develop an athlete from a young age you do just that-develop them. You develop skill sets and general coordination, strength, and agility that is *age appropriate*.

A good coach/parent should be charting growth phases and adjusting training load accordingly, monitoring rest and recovery, teaching and imposing proper nutrition, and developing mental skill sets. Yet these equally important areas of opportunity are often neglected. The bottom line is that if your child is getting chronically injured, or even if their team mates are sustaining a high level of overuse injuries, the coaching and training system is failing your child no matter how well their top athletes are performing.

- 3. Focusing on a Single Sport.** It is somewhat logical to believe that the more time spent training a sport the better an athlete will become over time. And no doubt the occasional Tiger Woods comes along. But this mentality more often leaves multiples of young athletes broken down on the side of the road. Developing an athlete is like unlocking a door. You must have exactly the right key, that engages all the tumblers of the lock, to open the door. Training is just one of the tumblers- not the key.

A child will not self-actualize in a sport until adolescence as I mentioned above. In order to find out what they are really good at, really enjoy, and really want to succeed at they must try a number of things. This is good, this is healthy, and it keeps them from burning out in a single sport.

But too many parents see a bit of talent or aptitude and want to call it their child’s “sport.” Participating in multiple sports or activities may even help prevent the injuries associated with over-specialization. You should be asking your child if they want to try different sports, or even gently prodding them to do so. Over time they can narrow their focus. Joining the traveling soccer team at an early

age may keep your child from finding out that they were more talented at (and passionate about) baseball.

If your child is under the age of twelve, and you find yourself on the sideline with the words “champion,” “scholarship,” and “phenom” swirling around your head you likely need a perspective check. One of the hardest lessons you will have to learn is that at some point *they* will get to decide if they want to continue in a sport. And there will be nothing you can do to *make* them compete if they no longer have the will or desire. It is a simple fact that all your hours in the car, thousands paid out for coaching, and years spent attending games and practices will likely, statistically, lead- nowhere. But that is not to say that they will get value out of the experience of competition. Sport can bring out the best (and sometimes the worst) in both athlete and parent alike. The values taught and gained on the athletic field will be far more valuable than any award; values such as sportsmanship, honor, integrity, fitness, hard work, and team work. Your relationship that you develop around your child’s competition will have a huge impact on their future. The decisions you make as a parent will have a tremendous effect not only on your child’s athletic development, but their health, well being, and ethics. Choose wisely.

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