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BRING YOUR A GAME

KEEP 'EM KICKING | Keeping children in soccer

PREMISE

- As Directors of Coaching, it is important to you that kids choose to
 - play for your club
 - play soccer
 - be involved in physical activity

QUESTIONS TO ASK

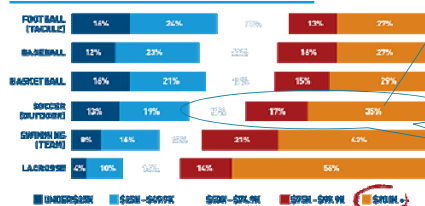
- What do we know about who is playing soccer?
- Are kids flocking to the sport of soccer?
- Why do children drop out of soccer?
- How can we keep children involved in soccer?

Questions

WHO IS PLAYING SOCCER?

INCOME IMPACTS SPORT PARTICIPATION

PERCENTAGE OF CORE PARTICIPANTS, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Certainly, this group has options about how they spend their leisure time (and money)

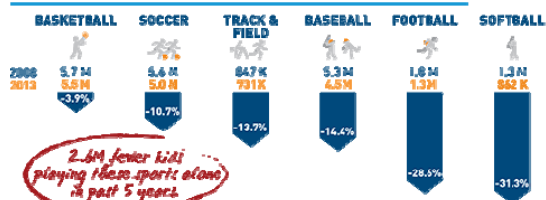
Defined by Kane & Kiersz as middle and upper class in NC

Families that can afford more, play more

ARE KIDS FLOCKING TO SOCCER?

KIDS ARE LEAVING SPORTS

SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN PARTICIPATION AMONG 6-12 YEAR OLDS

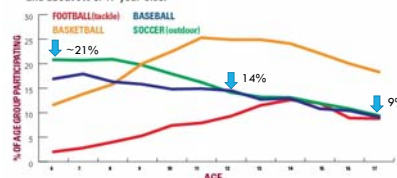


Aspen Institute based on data from Sports & Fitness Industry Association (2008-2013)

ARE KIDS FLOCKING TO SOCCER?

Sports participation rates by youths (ages 6-17)

Many youth start playing soccer at an earlier age when compared to other sports, but participation levels fall off quickly in future years. Nearly 21% of 6-year-olds play soccer in some form, compared with 14% of all 12-year-olds and about 9% of 17-year-olds.



Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association, 2013 Participation Study

WHY DO THEY DROPOUT?



WHY DO CHILDREN PLAY (IF WE ASK THEM)?

- To have fun
- To do something I am good at
- To stay in shape
- To learn new skills or improve existing skills
- To play as part of a team

THREE CONSISTENT THEMES FOR WHY THEY CHOOSE TO PLAY

1. To develop or demonstrate physical competence (e.g., to learn and improve, to have success against evenly matched competition)
2. To attain social acceptance and approval (e.g., to make friends, be a part of a group)
3. To enjoy experiences related to sport involvement (e.g., to have fun)

HOW DO WE HELP TO ENSURE THAT THOSE THREE THINGS HAPPEN?

How does your club ensure that you are meeting these needs of the athletes (consider this across competitive levels)?

1. TO DEVELOP OR DEMONSTRATE PHYSICAL COMPETENCY (E.G., TO LEARN AND IMPROVE, TO HAVE SUCCESS AGAINST EVENLY MATCHED COMPETITION)

15% drop out because they "are not good enough"

What does drop out look like in your club?

Is this something you would like to minimize and, if so, how do you do that?

What things does your club do to ensure that the E.G.'s happen?

SOME IDEAS (COACH EDUCATION)

Coach education is important -- Think about the coaches in your club at all levels

- Are the coaches in your club on the same page?
- Do they create a mastery-oriented climate that emphasizes learning and improvement?
- Do they help children learn to attribute performance errors to transient constructs (effort, focus) rather than permanent constructs (ability)?



SOME IDEAS (PARENT EDUCATION)

Parent education is important -- Their expectations and emotional responses have a big impact on their children

- Do the parents expectations match those of your club?
- Do the parents know how to focus on learning and improvement vs. winning?
- How do the parents respond to their child's (or the team's) performance?



ADVICE TO PARENTS ABOUT WHAT TO SAY

Before the Competition:

- Have fun.
- Play hard.
- I love you.

After the competition:

- Did you have fun?
- I'm proud of you.
- I love you.



EVEN MORE TO THE POINT



"I love to watch you play."

2. TO ATTAIN SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL (E.G., TO MAKE FRIENDS, BE A PART OF A GROUP)

16-18% of kids drop out from team sport because they don't like or get along with their teammates

18-22% dropout because they don't like or get along with the coach

Could this be happening in your club?

If not, what are you doing to minimize this?

If so, what might you do to help with this?

SOME IDEAS (COACH EDUCATION)

Do your coaches respond to skill errors with encouragement and corrective instruction?

What is the primary focus of the coaches?

Do the coaches understand how to foster enjoyment?



SOME IDEAS

Belief that social issues are only important for girls, no longer true....

Make time for social

"Team" should extend beyond the field



3. TO ENJOY EXPERIENCES RELATED TO SPORT INVOLVEMENT (E.G., TO HAVE FUN)

Lack of fun is the #1 reason children drop out of team sport (38%).

Do you know if your athletes are having fun?

What does your club do to help make sure that the kids are having fun (across levels of competition)?



SOME IDEAS

Fun matters even at the highest levels

Fun or enjoyment - is considered important to:

- young amateur athletes (Boyd et al., 1997)
- Olympic athletes (Werthner, 1998)
- professional athletes (Barbour, 1994)
- internationally renowned classical musicians (Talbot-Honeck & Orlick, 1998).

SOME IDEAS

Elite level alpine skier: "I like working hard and I have no problem with that, but you have got to enjoy it too. I improve usually lots when I'm having fun, even thinking less about my skiing."



THE PIZZA PARLOR PHENOMENON

Mistaken belief that fun happens after the hard work

Athletes enjoy challenging, rewarding practices that enhance sense of mastery.



SOME IDEAS

Julie Foudy – "I think the great thing about the '91 team is that they're a group of women that were completely committed to the game, but at the same time there was always laughter ringing in the halls, the bus, everywhere -- which is something we talk a lot about now. Everything we did was fun."



SOME IDEAS

Julie Foudy - It's killing U.S. National Soccer Hall of Fame member Julie Foudy to see so many serious faces when kids play soccer. She says it's not church or study hall. It's supposed to be fun.



SOME IDEAS (SELF-AWARENESS)

Self-awareness

- Are the children in your programs having fun?
- How do you know?

SOME IDEAS (COACH EDUCATION)

Coach education –

- How to structure a practice so that it is fun
- How to keep fun in the game even when competition becomes more intense
- How to help children focus on improvement and process rather than only on outcome

SOME IDEAS (TALENT DEVELOPMENT)

Bloom (1985)

- Romance phase – develop love for activity
- Precision phase – focus on mastery
- Integration phase – turned training and technical skills into performance through extensive practice

Cote (1999)

- Sampling years (6-13)
multiple sports for fun
- Specializing years (13-15)
more limited number of sports, still little pressure
- Investment years (15+)
deliberate practice for excellence

FINAL THOUGHTS

Children are playing fewer sports, and the less talented are left behind in recreational leagues with poor coaching, uneven play and the message that they aren't good enough.

70% of kids quit sports by age 13.

"The system is now designed to meet the needs of the most talented kids," Mark Hyman, professor of sports management at George Washington University. "We no longer value participation. We value excellence."

"The adults have won," Hyman said. "If we wiped the slate clean and reinvented youth sports from scratch by putting the physical and emotional needs of kids first, how different would it look? Nothing would be recognizable."



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THANK YOU