Sources of Information for Youth Sport Leaders

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Sport has been a popular activity since before the Ancient Greeks recorded their first Olympiad in 776 B.C. Formal non-school programs began for youngsters with the creation of Little League Baseball in 1939. In the past twenty years, organized sport programs for children have undergone incredible growth. There are now estimates that over twenty million youngsters between the ages of six and eighteen participate. They are supervised by over 4.5 million adults. In North Carolina there are probably over 600,000 young athletes and at least 100,000 adult leaders, but there are no exact data.

A common feature of non-school sport programs is that many rely on volunteer leaders, some of whom have little or no training or experience in sports, coaching or leadership. Some programs do conduct training sessions while others rely on highly trained, professional leadership.

Many people have complained that the people who are involved in youth sport programs just imitate what they see in the highly visible educational and professional sport leagues. These highly entertaining and attractive sport programs, that are based largely on some type of “revenue model,” are sometimes imposed on youth programs. This frequently leads to a heightened emphasis on the “trappings” of the revenue sports, including winning.

The youngsters in these programs are capable of sophisticated sport performance, perhaps to the point that their techers might envy the near perfection their coaches are able to achieve. Of course, these well skilled youngsters spend much more time at sport than they do at any one subject in the classroom. In contrast to those youngsters who are well pleased with their performance in sport, some of these young players indicate that they are dissatisfied with their sport experiences. They “drop out,” some as early as age eight or nine.

Youngsters know when they are not enjoying themselves. They turn to other activities. It is sad that children must stop participating in such a fun-filled activity as sport. Many adults are just now finding the enjoyment that can be gained through activities like tennis, racquetball, and running. Many people have known this for years, but some youth sport leaders have little concern for the present or future participation of their players. They actually drive youngsters out of sport with a “survival-of-the-fittest” ethic.

Through the years, educational reformers have attempted to improve school and non-school sport programs but without lasting success. Youth sport has been undergoing another reformation period over the last five years. The effort has not been unified by one specific organization, but the leaders have been directed by some common goals that promote fun, participation, learning, effort and physical fitness. This most recent initiative has come from a handful of sport researchers from across the nation, by some youth sport associations, and by a few physical education and sport organizations.
The recent work that has been done to evaluate and improve youth sport programs is now recorded for broad dissemination. The material includes how-to-do-it books, sport skill books for youngsters and their coaches, diaries, coaching manuals, research reports and anthologies. They have been written by teachers, coaches, parents and researchers. There is no longer any reason for youth sport leaders to be uninformed about the most appropriate paths to follow in sport for children.

The accompanying bibliography lists the major sources of information on youth sport programs. The starred books are sources that are recommended to start basic collections. Librarians are encouraged to share this bibliography with your local youth sport leaders.

YOUTH SPORT BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Athletic Educator’s Report. Physical Education Publications, P.O. Box 8, Old Saybrook, Conn. 06475. $28/year.


The Athletic Institute, now located at 200 Castlewood Drive in North Palm Beach, Florida 33408, publishes a series of books like this (i.e., basketball, ice hockey, et cetera) with a player’s edition and a parallel but more detailed coaching edition.


Coaching Review. Coaching Association of Canada, 333 River Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1L 8B9, 6 issues for $15.


Many helpful chapters on organizing for effective teaching and specific sport skills for those unfamiliar with sports.


Contains much useful material on the characteristics of children and the sport activities they play.


An excellent collection of articles that anyone involved in youth sport programs can and should read.

The Bill of Rights for Young Athletes is described and explained in detail, and some of the major issues in children’s sports are discussed. People in youth sports should read this.


An easy book to read that deals with what children think about sports and what adults do in youth sport programs for kids.


The author presents a general view of coaching with specific information about qualities of the coach, ethics, and issues plus other valuable material.

The author presents technical information the professional would need including growth and development, personality, social forces and learning. Best suited to the experienced coach.


**Sports Coach.** National Coaching Journal, The Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation, Perry Lakes Stadium, Wembley, 6014, Western Australia, Australia.

*Sport Scene.** North Carolina Youth Sport Institute, 4985 Oak Garden Drive, Kernersville, N. C. 27284, 4 issues for $4/year.

**Sportsline.** Office of Youth Sports, 117 Freer Gymnasium, Department of Physical Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill. 61801, 6 issues for $2/year.

**Spotlight.** Youth Sports Institute, College of Education Women’s Intramural Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich. 48823, 4 issues for $2/year.

**Technical Manual.** Canadian Soccer Association, 333 River Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1L 8B9, 4 issues for $5/year.


This prominent baseball historian recounts his experiences as head coach in an interesting and moderately irreverent style.

**What Research Tells the Coach About Soccer.** Washington, D. C.: AAHPER.

There are six books in this series including distance running, football, soccer, sprinting, swimming and tennis. The material is technical and well suited for the more advanced coach.

**Young Athlete.** P. O. Box 246, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054, 6 issues for $7.50/year.

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