



**Is there too
much adult
domination in
children's
sport? ▶**

Most adults can remember shinny hockey and sandlot baseball. It was a time when children developed a true love of sport because they played for sheer enjoyment.

A lot of things have changed since those days. As Dr. Murray Smith writes in *Recreation Canada*, “... adult involvement in kids’ sports is deeper and more influential than it used to be. This deeper involvement has resulted in a shift in emphasis from helping ‘where they could’ to a pretty clear domination of kids’ sport by adults.”

Although unsupervised sport may have become almost a thing of the past, today’s children should primarily be having fun in any sport they play, with winning and losing a by-product. Whatever the role of adults, it should always be encouraging, supportive, and positive.

The following comment by David Gey first appeared in *The Christian Athlete* in December, 1976 and was reprinted in *Joy and Sadness in Children's Sport* (1978). It reminds us that sport is for kids to enjoy.

I believe the youth league idea is a great one with some minor changes: Put an eight-foot board fence around the playing area and only let the kids inside; take away all uniforms and let the kids wear street clothes; let them choose teams by the one potato, two potato system; let them play until it gets dark or until the kid with the ball goes home.

To that, Dr. Geoff Gowan adds the final note. “Let us not as adults take the game away from children and mould it to adult standards. Let us encourage children to enjoy being active through enjoyable play and appropriately designed competition which meets their needs. If we do this, we will have made an important contribution to their development through sport.”

Reference Notes

- 1 Evans, J. (1993) The odd angry parent: what are the coach's options. *Sports Coach*. (April-June), pp. 13-18.

References

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