



YOUTHFIRST

Volume 1, Series 6

7th and 8th Girls

Motivating Girls To Start And Stay With Sports

What do you think are the biggest issues in getting girls to get involved with and stay involved in sports? If your thinking to yourself, "I'm not sure, competitive sports is different for boys and girls," your not alone. In a study conducted by the Youth Sports Institute at Michigan State University, it was found that of the group studied, girls between the ages of ten and eighteen, that they had some very real concerns.

1. Girls want to have fun.

This is the big one. The main goal of parenting and

coaching in youth sports should be to create an atmosphere where girls can have fun doing physical skills. It's fun for girls to be active, a total shift away from academics where they're confined to a chair and required to succeed. Beside experiencing the total joy of movement true pleasure comes from the challenge of mastering a new skill. Be a savvy consumer as you evaluate the philosophy of recreation programs. Make sure the focus is on player development instead of the win-loss record. In this way, your daughter will want to

return to practice because she can look forward to succeeding on her level, and on her terms. If only we could allow this one concept to be our guiding light, we would see the sunny side of our girls more often.

2. Girls want to get exercise and stay in shape.

Playing sports certainly beats exercise for a fun way to stay in shape, in particular during the teen years. Sports has a couple of benefits all girls can understand—the development of shapely muscles and of self-confidence. One of
SEE CONCERNS PAGE 2

Coaches Learning
about Youth Sports
The Sports
Education and
Leadership Program
at UNLV

For more information:

© Check out www.raisingadaughter.com

© Point your mouse to: www.101waystopraiseachild.com

© Click on www.motivation.com

©

PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE...The Best Motivator

Are you ever stuck for something to say to a child after they have done something right? Try any one or all of these...WOW! Way to go! You're special! Outstanding! Excellent! Great! Good! Neat! Well done!!

Remarkable! I knew you could do it! I'm proud of you! Fantastic! Super Star! Nice Work! Looking good! You're on top of it! Beautiful! Now you're flying! You're catching on! Now you've got it! You're

incredible! Bravo! You're fantastic! Hurray for you! You're on target. You're on your way! How nice! How smart! Good job! That's incredible! Hot dog! Dynamite! You're beautiful!
SEE PRAISE PAGE 3

For all the
updated news
click on
www.YouthFirst.info

CONCERNS Continued...

teens talked about how she was able to handle an emergency by knowing she was in good shape. One day a man followed her in a car as she was walking home. Because she was in good shape she knew she could run if she had to get away. Her comments? "What would I do if I was overweight? I know I could handle myself because I am used to handling my body." This single event demonstrated to her the depth of her own self-confidence. Body image is a huge issue for girls as they mature because it determines their self worth. Sports helps girls get used to and appreciate the body shape they have inherited. It makes them realize that their self image isn't all about weight. Eventually girls learn that building muscles means building a new and improved shape.

3. Girls want to learn and improve skills.

Most girls want to get better at sports when they see skillful players fully living the experience. They want to copy them, to experience the fun gained by being competent. If an activity looks appealing, the girls will want to try it. If she believes she can learn sports skills, (which stems from having a broad base of fundamental movement skills), she will want to improve sports skills. Having skills makes playing a sport easier and more enjoyable.

4. Girls want to do something they are good at doing.

We all feel best about ourselves when we're doing something we're good at. It's just part of parenting that you help your daughter explore her athletic potential. This means that starting around age five or six,

you should introduce your daughter to as many sports as you can over the next several years. Having a broad based sports background will serve her well. Eventually she will find a sport that she enjoys and or makes her tick with excitement. When school boards and administrators commit to a PE program, there can be significant impact. This is especially true for families who can not afford even local recreation classes.

5. Girls want the excitement and challenge of competition.

The competitive spirit starts very early, and without much provocation. It seems that the excitement of "me against the world" or "I won" is already part of early childhood motivation. Some girls like individual sports where they compete against themselves, and some like to be on a team that gives another squad a run for their money. As an athlete, the first time competition is really understood and shown to be exciting is when the skills are there to be a challenger. There is definitely no thrill to entering competition when there was not significant preparation. As skill bases grow, the excitement grows with the progression from beginner to advanced levels of competition.

6. Spotlight making new friends.

Advancing grade levels year after year in school can provide new friendships, but girls don't have the same interactions with their classmates as they do with their teammates. They look forward to meeting other girls that have similar interests and energy, to interact with and get to know them. As one seventeen year old athlete said, "being in sports is more like the real world then school. You really have to deal with people and can find out more abo-

ut their personalities, what other people value."

Here are some final thoughts from the mother of a long time softball player. I continue to organize and coach in the community even though my daughter no longer plays because I have seen the carryover to other areas of her life. She's learned how to learn, to work with other people, to be a leader and be able to speak her mind. I like that as a parent. You can see something has changed her.



PRAISE Continued...

You're unique! Nothing can stop you now! Good for you! I like you! You're a winner! Remarkable job! Beautiful work! Spectacular! You're spectacular! You're darling! You're precious! Great discovery! You've discovered the secret! You figured it out! Fantastic job! Hip hip hurray! Bingo! Magnificent! Marvelous! Terrific! You're important! Phenomenal! You're sensational! Super work! Creative job! Super job! Fantastic job! Exceptional performance! You're a real trooper! You are responsible! You are exciting! You learned it right! What an imagina-

tion! What a good listener! You are fun! You're growing up! You tried hard! You care! Beautiful sharing! Outstanding performance! You're a good friend! I trust you! You're important! You mean a lot to me! You make me happy! You've got a friend! You make me laugh! You brighten my day! I respect you! You belong! You mean the world to me! That's correct! You're a joy! You're a treasure! You're wonderful! You're perfect! Awesome! A+ job! You're A ok! My buddy! You made my day! That's the best! A big hug, a big kiss, a big smile or just say I love you! To me

you're a winner! Lucky me to have a kid like you! What would I do without you in my life! You are my perfect gift from God! You are the ray of sunshine warming my heart! You're number one in my book. You're the best! I believe in you! I trust you! I love your smile! You are the most beautiful (boy/girl) in the whole world! I am so lucky that God chose me to be your Mommy! Your smile lights up my world! You're nifty.

These are just a few wonderful examples of how we should be praising our kids each and everyday;

Motivating Today's Youth

As coaches do you ever think what would it be like to have coached when we were kids instead of now?

What do you do now to motivate U 11/12 girls for soccer? Is it much different than with boys the same age? I'd like to motivate and challenge them in a way that keeps them interested in soccer.

The best way to motivate U11/12 boys or girls is by creating a FUN learning environment. Training sessions should be short (1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes). Change exercises often. The term I use is: I "imprint" a concept rather than drill it into them. Imprinting is a consistent layering of a concept of play or technical skill. At first, hardly anyone understands or can do it, but it's important to keep moving on. Don't linger on a difficult concept because, your training sessions become tedious, boring and you lose that motivational edge. Slowly, one by one the players will start to understand and use the concept or technique. This is imprinting.

You used the word challenge and I think that is the foundation of my coaching. If you can create realistic

challenges for your players and then guide them to success, you have done them a great service. When any of us are challenged in anything we do and we come through the challenge successfully, we feel pretty good about ourselves. For me, it may be a corporate speech or presentation. If I hit it, I have a boost in self-esteem or confidence. Your players respond similarly. If you build their self-esteem, you also affect their performance on the field. It is that direct of a correlation.

I have found that boys and girls in this age group for the most part respond the same to coaching, good or bad. The girls are growing up physically faster and the boys are going into that awkward growth age. Both are going through a lot of changes, and it's important that any teacher or coach of this age group understands how difficult some of those changes can be. The egos of the boys start to play out, and the drive to establish oneself is evident. However, the similarities greatly outweigh the differences working with this age group.

Remember coaching isn't a feminine or

masculine thing...It's a HUMAN thing!

