

A negative shift in youth sports

Filed under [Sports](#), [Sports Columns](#)

A negative shift in youth sports



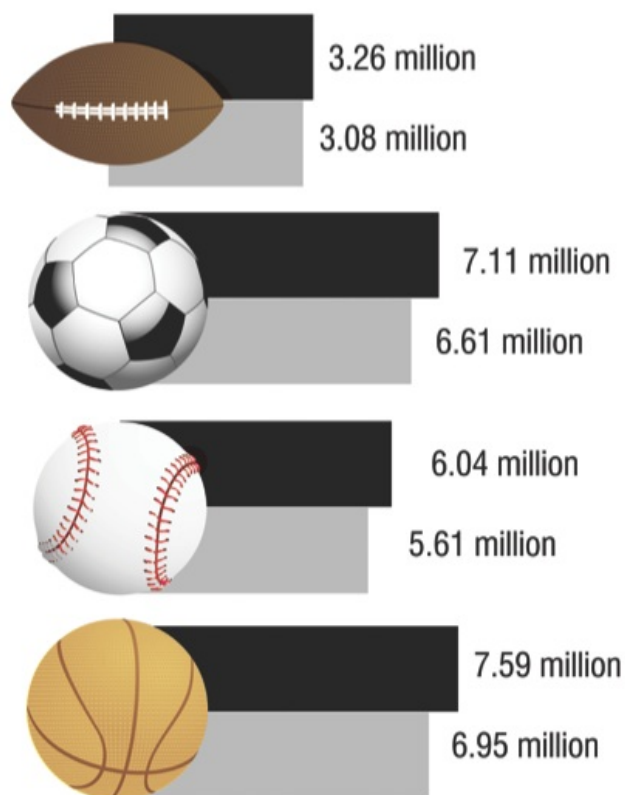
A subtle change in American youth sports is corrupting the system in which we learn teamwork, and the way to compete. If not recognized, it could be detrimental to the new generation of Americans.

Specialization is defined as the act of limiting one's ability to one facet of an opportunity, and it could very well be ruining youth sports. Kids are being forced to pick one sport at an age as young as 7. This is not acceptable.

Overuse injuries, widely thought to be caused by single sport specialization, are at an all time high. Elbow injuries in baseball and softball have increased five fold in the past decade according to StopSportsInjuries.org. Even more frightening is that the average number of overuse injuries per year is increasing, while the mean age is decreasing.

Athletes, mainly children, that are specialized in one sport account for around 50 percent of overuse injuries according to the "[Project Play](#)" initiative. Overuse injuries, as opposed to acute injuries, are due to a long process where the bones or ligaments wear down over time and finally give way.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED SPORTS: 2008 VS. 2012



INFORMATION FROM: THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Rusty Greer, former Texas Rangers outfielder and my former baseball coach, told me, “[The] repetitive motion of a single sport can have a negative impact because the muscles never really have a chance to recuperate.” Greer went on to say, “as you grow older and as the body develops, it can handle the repetition of a single sport.”

A study conducted by the National Institutes of Health stated that there was a linear relationship between athletes who participated in one year-round sport and overuse injuries.

Another offspring of sport specialization in adolescents is the burnout rate. When someone is burned out in a sport, they no longer enjoy the game and have fun, often leading them to quit the sport all together. One can point to the pressure a child faces to please their parent who may have spent thousands of dollars for training, as the reason burned out kids continue to play. Coaches may also make players feel like they have no choice but to specialize.

Proof of this increase of burnout in kids is highlighted in a 2014 article posted by the Wall Street Journal. The numbers show that from 2008 to 2012, there was an 8.3 percent decrease in youth basketball participants aged 6 to 18 years old; that is a decrease of over 500,000 kids. The three other mainstream youth sports in America (football, soccer, and baseball), experienced an average decrease of 6.6 percent in that same time.

These alarming numbers are an indirect reflection of the parental and coach-based urge for kids to choose one sport over others, and in many circumstances the athlete is not in favor of specializing.

When an athlete no longer has fun in the sport, it ceases its main purpose as an activity, a game. As a first person witness to kids who were burned out in a certain sport, they lack the drive that is not only mentally weakening to them, but also to their teammates.

Where has the fun gone? Spontaneous games of football or baseball seem to almost be extinct, when only a generation or two ago an adolescent could not go a week without playing a pick-up game.

As a high school and club athlete myself, I can tell you that the desire to go outside and play just for enjoyment is not always present. Exhausted by ever growing amounts of school work, and daily practice for my high school baseball team, the energy just isn't there.

But, I am in 10th grade, and although I am not fully matured, my body can take on more repetitive motion than that of a younger kid. The fact of the matter is, the number of middle and even elementary schoolers that could identify with the lack of desire for pick up games is outright insane.

The newfound demand for sports specialization at a young age is due to parents and kids convinced of the idea that focussing solely on one sport will refine their skills enough to move on to the college level. When in reality, most college athletes come from a background of playing multiple sports.

The American Medical society published a 2013 survey conducted with college athletes, and found that 88 percent of them played more than one sport as an adolescent. So, the common misperception that colleges are looking for recruits that only played their main sport as a child is false.

The conception that the earlier you single out the sport you play, the more work you can put into developing your skills to a higher level than others is just not true. While it may enhance the certain athlete's ability to become a 12-year-old superstar, this thinking is illogical.

Not only are colleges recognizing the value of multi-sport athletes, professional sports organizations, such as the Dallas Cowboys, acknowledge it as well. Chris Hall, the Assistant Director of College Scouting for the Cowboys, disagrees with the basis of it.

"Kids being forced to focus on one thing is widely thought to better develop them, when it actually ends up burning [them] out," Hall said.

“

Kids being forced to focus on one thing is widely thought to better develop them, when it actually ends up burning [them] out”

— Chris Hall, Dallas Cowboys Assistant Director of College Scouting

Hall also mentioned that he has recruits take a questionnaire, and he estimates that at least three out of four respond with having played more than one sport.

According to multiple Coppell High School athletes, positive effects come from participating in various sports.

“I wouldn’t have been as athletic,” sophomore Pierce McFarlane said.

He also later conveyed that the multiple sports he plays (football and baseball) develops skills like speed, coordination, and strength, leading him to be more prolific in both sports.

Parker Rodman, a sophomore basketball player at Coppell, identified with the fact that choosing one sport can restrict the potential of athletes.

“Specializing in one sport can prove to have a negative effect on adolescents, it limits their horizons to one specific area,” Rodman said.

Sport specialization is detrimental to kids, and it is ruining the very foundation of youth sports. The facts prove why this movement cannot continue, but the real question is, will anyone take action?

Through awareness of the facts, parents and athletes alike must recognize the epidemic that is youth sport specialization. Only then, will we recognize what we truly love sports for, enjoyment.

Facts trump feelings



Cartoon by Thomas Rousseau.

Before writing this column I would like to establish one thing: I am a journalist and I deal with facts.

What I am about to write is not going to be politicized or adjusted for the possibility that it may be “offensive” or labeled a “microaggression” or whatever word the liberal crowd has created.

Free speech is a right, not a privilege of a special, pre-determined group. Minorities, women or any other group that has historically been discriminated against, bears no right in claiming that other groups who are not *exactly* like them have the right to say certain statements that could be labeled “offensive.” The truth is the truth regardless of who speaks it.

I’ve written about political correctness before but it deserves to be repeated: society has become far too sensitive for it to be healthy. Many liberals have great influence on teenagers, most especially those who lack any real guidance in the political realm. Liberals tend to hold more sway because their tactics are pure sophistry that rely on emotion. Facts are no longer the foremost way to win an argument.

In any discussion about any political or social issue, whether it be gay marriage, abortion or gun control, liberals resort to character attacks rather than addressing the issue at hand. The minority groups of United States society

have found it to be their special privilege to end all honest discussion about facts or issues by simply saying, “You’ve hurt my feelings.” Or any other variety of responses that effectively end any type of logical and coherent discussion: “You’re a racist/homophobe/bigot.”

Debate is centered around facts, not feelings. Accusations about one’s character, such as: “You don’t care about the death of the children and college students if you don’t believe in gun control” are superfluous and quite frankly, bully tactics.

I worry about the emotional response you may have if you are my friend or family member. But in a discussion about politics, regardless of who you are, one’s feelings are useless in a discussion. Facts and evidence are what matter. I don’t care who you are, or what you represent, all I care about is your *opinion* and *solution* to an issue, and what *evidence* you have to back that up.

Once you label me homophobic for believing gay marriage should not be recognized by the government, or a woman-hater for being pro-life, then you have lost the argument. I do in fact, have a right to voice my opinion, on anything. Once you stray away from any actual arguments and attempt to shut me up because I’m a “bad” person, you have made sure the debate is futile.

Ideological fascism has taken a hold over many in this country, especially in educational settings. Regardless of what some may say, I do not have to be gay to understand what is homophobic and what is not, I do not have to be a minority to understand what racism is. That is one of the many lies that is being promoted among myself and my peers.

If someone’s opinion makes you feel marginalized and you decide to voice that marginalization rather than combat the opinion with contrary evidence, then I would suggest you read the First Amendment a few times and rethink how you present yourself. People disagree, and that is the beauty of discussion. So do not try and take away that right by spouting ad hominem attacks or citing “white privilege” trying to effectively eliminate that person’s opinion altogether.

So next time you meet someone who believes their feelings should be considered as fact and is thus necessary to a debate, politely reframe the discussion and choose to focus on facts.

Referee situation not just black and white

October 30, 2015

Filed under [Showcase](#), [Sports](#), [Sports Columns](#)

By Joseph Krum
@joseph_krum
Managing Editor

Whichever angle you look at the incident at the John Jay vs. Marble Falls high school football game in San Antonio, it does not look good.



For all who do not know, during a game on Sept. 4, a referee in a high school football game allegedly made racist remarks, which in turn caused the coach on the John Jay High School team to use explicit language to the point of 'He is going to (expletive) pay for this'. The football players, defensive backs Michael Moreno and Victor Rojas, took the matters into their own hands and blindsided the referee from behind during a play late into the game.

As a result, both of the players were suspended from the team for the rest of the year and from the school for an indefinite amount of time while being put on investigation with the school district and the county. The coach, Mack Breed, who allegedly told the players to hurt the referee has resigned, yet there has been no punishment handed out from the University Interscholastic League for the players or the coaches.

Throughout this incident, there are many people to blame. For one, it's the coach's fault for telling the players that the referee "needs to pay". In no instance should that be acceptable language to talk to a kid, especially one that looks up to you. However, the players should not have taken the matters into their own hands and blown the coach's orders way out of proportion. And even if the coach had told them to hurt the referee, some would hope that they would use common sense and not do it.

One last angle is to put some blame on the referee, who allegedly used racist remarks to hispanic and black players on the John Jay team. Whether or not it is in a game or in any situation, it is never OK to use that kind of language.

One aspect that could have played a factor in this reaction of the players is how players are growing up with a society that abuses and yells at officials. Whether it's a bad call or not, players, especially of a younger age, are seemingly more and more OK with the idea that they can yell and complain at a referee.

I cannot say that I am a perfect human being and I do not yell at the officials at one of my games every once in awhile, because I do. But yelling at someone for their mistakes is not something we should do. Especially in football, referees have to make snap decisions, and sometimes they are wrong. But it doesn't seem right that we should abuse them for a mistake that they make.

Yet there was a line that was crossed when the John Jay players slammed into the back of the referee from behind, blindsiding him. There was even a similar incident that also crossed the line in a Texas high school playoff game in 2008.

Former Eules Trinity player Elikena Fieilo, in a playoff game against the Allen Eagles, showed the same lack of sportsmanship that the two Jays players did. On the second to last play of the game, Fieilo streaked across the field

and slammed into the referee from behind. That one play had an effect that pulled multiple Division I offers away from Fieilo and changed his entire life.

Another aspect that played a role in this incident is how the players look up to their coaches and what they say. Even though what the coach said was absurd, the players took it to heart since he was their coach.

As a football player, even if you do not agree with what the coach is saying, you do it. You do not only do it because you look up to the coaches, but the fear of being chewed out and letting the coaches down makes you want to do whatever orders they bark out.

Players also look up to their parents, who can be much, much worse at yelling than the coaches.

In one of my games earlier this season, a questionable call was made by an official and the stadium erupted in boos and shouts. Later in that game, after the other team scored, a parent screamed at a player – who was not even his kid – to “wake up”, before proceeding to yell at the coaching staff for a bad play call.

Yet it's not just in high school that parents can get bad. Coppell Youth Soccer Association referee Ryan Storch has had some trouble in the past with dealing with parents.

“I was refereeing a 6-year-old game and I accidentally called the time for the end of the game 30 seconds short,” Storch said. “The parents yelled at me, saying that there’s still 30 seconds left, but the kids didn’t even notice. They were just trying to have fun. It was ridiculous.”

Whether the 30 seconds remaining in that game mattered or not, the parents should not be yelling at the officials about timekeeping like that. The parents’ jobs should be to encourage their kids to have fun, not to be a terrible example of how to act.

Overall, everyone has some fault in this, whether you like it or not. The referee, if the allegation of racist remarks is true, should never have said anything like that to the players. His only job is to regulate the rules of the game, not to affect the players.

The coach should never have brought up the referee while talking for the players, even if what the referee said was true. He could have easily just called the head of the Texas Association of Sports Officials and gotten the situation handled that way. And finally, the players should have never acted in such a harsh way, even if the coach had told them to. The players should have never retaliated at an official, the only thing that they should be worried about is playing the game.

Veliyathumally untangles Zentangle

Filed under [Student Life](#)

Veliyathumally untangles Zentangle



Coppell High School freshman Lucilla Veliyathumally has been drawing ever since she could pick up a crayon. Recently, however, Veliyathumally's main focus has shifted to creating [zentangle](#), which are repeating patterns that form beautiful images. She first began learning how to draw zentangle during Winter Break of her eighth grade year, and since has dedicated both an Instagram and an Etsy account to the complex artwork.

What's your favorite part of drawing?

I like to come up with the idea. I love the feeling that I get if I come up with an idea that totally inspires and excites me. If I'm inspired and passionate about the idea of the drawing, I will be excited to do the drawing.

How many years of art have you taken?

I took art in sixth grade and then again in eighth grade, but eighth grade was 3D art. I wanted to take art this year but I didn't have room in my schedule. I want to take it next year and compete in Visual Arts Scholastic Event (VASE). I

competed in junior VASE in eighth grade with two pieces and both of them medaled. One of them got a silver medal (the highest you can go for junior VASE). I'm already excited to compete next year because in VASE you can go on to national level and compete for scholarships. I'm really hoping if I keep practicing I can produce a piece that qualifies for that level.

In the future, do you see art more as being a hobby or as part of a career?

I plan to continue art as more of a career but also mixed in with a business aspect. Artists alone don't make much money, like many [occupations] in the design world. I'm interested in textile design. I want to put my patterns and designs on things and market them so that people will buy them. Ideally, my dream is to have a lifestyle brand like Kate Spade, Tory Burch or Anthropologie, but becoming an amazing designer like that is extremely difficult so I'm going to start small and work my way up.



Who is your role model in the art community?

I don't really have one. There are a couple artists I follow on Instagram that have amazing work, and I aspire to one day be able to produce the same quality or better.

If you could meet one artist, past or present, who would you choose?

I would choose Wassily Kandinsky because he was one of the first abstract painters of his time. I would want to make a painting with him so he could teach me how he did it. I would want him to teach me what he knows because knowledge is power. Plus I would like to expand my horizon and try different forms of art to give myself diversity.

How long does each drawing take you (on average)?

It depends on the size of the piece. Usually an 8x12 takes one to two hours depending on the amount of detail. The 11x17 usually takes three to four hours, but it can vary. And the 18x24 is usually 10 or more hours. All of the times can vary depending on the size, detail and complexity of the piece.

What has been the most challenging thing you've drawn?

I think it would have to be the 18x24 sunset I did over the summer. I think this challenged me so much because of the amount of time and effort it took to complete it. The piece took me around 15 to 20 hours to complete. It's full color and almost every inch of it is covered in zentangle.

You've started your own [Etsy](#) account – what are your plans for this?

I started this account to get people interested in my art and buy it. I plan to start marketing my designs and put them on products so the products would be more appealing to the consumer. I would love to print my designs on phone cases, key chains, lamp shades, fabrics/blankets, pillows and create a whole home décor line with my designs. I want to put my patterns on anything [I can]. I'm going for more of a textiles look but I'm also interested in maybe even clothes and bags. I'm interested in any way I can get my designs out to the world.



Veliyathumally displays two recent Zentangle artworks. She plans to finish the one with the outline of a person swimming that she is currently working on before moving on to a third related piece. Photo by Avery Davis.

Choi flies high with winning artwork at local aviation museum

Coppell High School Junior Julie Choi takes the first place win in a art contest, along with being rewarded two plane tickets to anywhere in the world of her choose. “Art is a passion of my life, and is the first thing I can remember doing”, Choi says. Photo by Chelsea Banks.

[Gracie Blackwell](#), Staff Writer

November 19, 2015 • [\(Edit\)](#)

Filed under [Student Life](#)

In mid-October, over 350 art students from the Dallas-Fort Worth area had the chance to participate in the 2015 More Than Plane Color Art Contest hosted by the American Airlines C.R. Smith Museum.



When Coppell High School junior Julie Choi first learned about the contest, she immediately knew she wanted to enter.

The contest contained four different themes of aviation for student to select: the history of aviation, places that we travel, famous aviators and artists, and aviation equipment and future designs.

Choi won first place for the More Than Place Color Contest grade levels 10 through 12.

“I was thinking more of the lines of the transformation of history over time,” Choi said. “I did the old style movie projector and the transformation of history from a bird, to Leonardo da Vinci’s flying machine, to the Wright Brothers, to the World War I fighter plane, to the World War II fighter plane and finally a commercial plane.”

Choi has been drawing from the time she could pick up a pencil. She has stayed with her passion ever since.

Her training evolved from private art tutoring, to Art I in eighth grade, and Art II in her freshman year of high school. Last year she took AP Drawing and is currently taking AP II Design and AP Art History this year.

Choi positively impacts many of her peers and motivates them to grow in their craft.

"[Choi] has always been a strong artist," CHS senior and friend Joshua Chow said. "I really got to see her in action last year in AP Drawing. She is skillful and is definitely impressive to watch at work. Julie inspires the people around her to work harder."

When Choi was younger, her art tutor was instrumental in the development of her artistic skills. Nowadays, it is CHS art teacher Tamera Westervelt who Choi turns to for art ideas. But ultimately, Choi's inspiration comes from her mom Teresa Kim, because she is the one who has supported her from the beginning.

"A lot of people don't want kids to go into the art field," Choi said. "It's unstable per say, but my mom has always supported me and always told me, 'You do whatever you want, I'm sure you can do it anyways.'"

Friends of Choi have seen her dedication as an artist throughout many years and realize how passionate she is about art.

"[Choi] has developed as an artist over the years ever since I met her during middle school," CHS junior Jayleen Li said. "She loves making art and is always involved in any art events, for example, right now she is the vice president of National Art Honor Society. She has always been a perfectionist in her creations, and over time her pieces just keep getting better and better."

It took Choi a total of 22 hours to complete her finished artwork, but ultimately was worth it.

"I got the email from [Westervelt] and I opened it," Choi said. "My first reaction was flailing around my arms and screaming."

Choi won \$300 worth of Prismacolor art supplies and two round trip tickets to anywhere in continental America. Choi plans on using the plane tickets to go with her mom to visit a friend in California.

"I was so surprised and excited when I received the email that day. Julie worked very hard on the artwork," Mrs. Kim said. "I felt proud that she was acknowledged for her hard work. As for the trip, we will probably visit museums because she specifically loves looking at the exhibits."

After college, Choi wants to pursue a career in illustration, animation or concept art.

"I'd want to [work for] either Pixar or maybe even a video game design," Choi said. "Concept art would be the people

who first sketch out the ideas that get flushed out so they can become animated so I'd be the one who would design the characters or backgrounds."

Choi's artwork, along with 100 other participants of the contest, is on display at the American Airlines C.R. Smith Museum in Fort Worth until January of next year.

Honorable mentions from Coppell include:

Grades 7-9:

Delany Bell

Raquel Gamboa

Ishita Rastogi

Su Hyun (Judy) Ro

Karina Teruya

Grades 10-12:

Lauren Mallette

Vasileios Papakis

Kore Siller