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As discussed in class, there are many issues regarding youth sport specialization (YSS). These issues include the current system/structure currently in place is for the 0.011% of athletes, financial, parents/coaches’ relationships with players, to name a few, and qualified professionals (strength and conditioning coaches etc.).

When talking about the ‘0.011% athletes’ these are the athletes that play at the top level, collegiate and professional level. The current system for YSS is basically designed and structured for this percentage of athletes. The issue with this is exclusion. This excludes so many young adolescents who are wanting to play sports for fun, but also at a high level.

This is where the financial issue (funding) occurs. The system now works as a ‘pay to play’ at many levels. As discussed earlier in the semester, families on average are spending around $12,000 yearly on a single adolescent to play a single sport.

3.

This is then where parents/coaches’ relationship with their child has such a major impact. It is common in today’s society for parents to push their children to get involved in activities, the main activities being sports. There are then the parents who take this too far and start pushing their children to do more than they want in a singular sport. This not only can take the fun out of the game but can cause burnout (physically and mentally) on the child as discussed in class. Coaches also can play a key role in this if all they think about is the sport/game and not put the player first. As a current collegiate athlete, I like to call this situation (when a coach is driven on results and not making sure their players are okay (mentally and physically) the ‘number game’. In many cases athletes are just looked at as a number and play a certain role for the sport in order to win (at the end of the day ‘sports is all about winning’ , how ironic because when I was little it was supposed to be about ‘having fun’ – this links in with YSS).

4.

As an athlete it is extremely important to look after your body mentally and physically. This is where qualified professionals play a key role. For example, strength and conditioning (SC) coaches can play a MASSIVE role in an athlete’s development and well-being bot mentally and physically. Speaking from my personal experience, they are KEY to an athlete overall performance. They are there to help you get in shape for whatever the specific sport is, while giving you exercise to reduce injuries, and do help motivate you, all of this to help improve, and keep you playing/ on top of the athlete’s game (perform to the best of your abilities).

What can be done to help solve these issues?...

* (1) Spread awareness through social media, meetings, literally anything – the goal of this to be educating people out there that the system needs change
* (2) Create more opportunities and programs for people who can’t afford to currently play.
* (3) As discussed in class, maybe have certain restrictions for parents to where they can sit to watch their child play (so they can’t yell at their child), or maybe not let the parents interact with the child till after the game (once the child heads to the coaches for the game, the next time they get to see their child is at the end of the game)
* (4) Many schools for example need qualifies SC coaches, bringing awareness to what a SC coach is and what they can do for athletes and then fundraising so schools/places could higher one. (Come at it from the angle to parents as this is the best thing for your child, many parents are willing to do a lot for their child)