

Athletes with choices, athletes with voices: The ethics of supporting athlete autonomy and athlete well-being in youth sport

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Today's Discussion

The Daniels Fund Ethics Principles & youth sport

Why is athlete autonomy so important for athlete well-being

How ethics are a moving target in sport

What we did in HSCI 3310

How can these ethics principles help coaches and parents

Questions/Discussion



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PRINCIPLES

Integrity

Act with honesty in all situations

Trust

Build trust in all stakeholder relationships

Accountability

Accept responsibility for all decisions

Transparency

Maintain open and truthful communications

Fairness

Engage in fair competition and create equitable and just relationships

Respect

Honor the rights, freedoms, views, and property of others

Rule of Law

Comply with the spirit and intent of laws and regulations

Viability

Create long-term value for all relevant stakeholders

**What are some of our
most salient sport
experiences?**


















**Why do kids say
they play sports?**

Professionalization of Youth Sport

Youth sports is becoming professionalized in the sense that a shift is occurring from a focus on physical, social, and psychological development to more extrinsic goals such as winning, rankings, fame, and earning college athletic scholarships.

WEEK TWO

1	Atlanta Panthers (GA)	
2	Miami Gardens Ravens (FL)	
3	Southfield Falcons (MI)	
4	Dallas Patriots (TX)	
5	Atlanta Bulldogs (GA)	
6	Wilmington Pilots (CA)	
7	DFW Ravens (TX)	
8	Dallas Truth (TX)	
9	South Bay Spartans (CA)	
10	PPO Bengals (FL)	
11	Bonita Buccaneers (CA)	
12	Landover Seminoles (MD)	
13	Tampa Bay Jags (FL)	
14	Central VA Hurricanes (VA)	
15	Arkansas Rams (AR)	

TOP
15
RANKINGS
12U



**Healthy youth sport
environments that foster
joy, competence, and self-
worth have lifelong
implications**



Do what's right (?)



**The moral compass
in sport is often a
moving target**



Youth Athletes: Especially Vulnerable



**Vulnerable in
our current
sport culture of
“it’s just a
game”**

Adult-led win at all costs mentality

Developmentally inappropriate training

Autocratic sport adults (Vealey & Chase, 2015)

Our love affair with sport (Coakley, 2017)

**The ethical responsibility of all adults
in youth sport to center athlete
wellbeing**

**Have you ever
experienced or
observed an ethical
dilemma in sport?**

Ethical Decisions Case Study Discussion

- Do you bench your starting player who has been disciplined at school for bullying?
- You regularly observe a junior olympic coach berating and humiliating his players and using excessive physical training to “toughen them up” - do you say something or stay quiet for fear your athlete will lose playing time?
- A high school athlete collides with another player in the high school state championship and gets up looking off balance. Do you pull them from the game or have them checked by the team doctor after the game?
- A private soccer club requires athletes to travel 11 months out of the year and sells the \$10k/year price tag by telling parents that this is the only way they’ll get a look from a college recruiter - is this an ethical business plan?

Youth Sport Panel

Youth Sport Parent-Volunteer-Coach

Coach - High School and College

High School Head Athletic Trainer

Former High School and College Athlete - Current Coach Educator

Ethical imperative of youth sport stakeholders:

Athletes first

Athletes before winning

Athletes with voices

Athletes with choices

Ethics-based best practices for parents and coaches

Parents

- Let kids **choose** their activities, and teach them **accountability** by following through on their commitments
- Never hesitate to **advocate** for all children in sport when safety and wellbeing are not put first to ensure **viability** of lifelong physical activity
- Teach kids to advocate for their physical and mental safety - **trust** and **respect** are mutual and earned
- Teach **integrity** through sportspersonship, not gamespersonship
- Be **transparent** by giving kids realistic expectations of success and **unconditional love**

Coaches

- Be **transparent** about the *whys* of coaching choices
- **Respect** every athlete's autonomy over their body and mind
- Role model **integrity**
- Create a team culture grounded in **fairness** and **respect** and be consistent with appropriate **accountability** for **everyone**
- Give kids **choices** in the team structure and encourage peer leadership
- Hold peer coaches **accountable** to centering athlete safety and wellbeing

Questions/Discussion