

YOUTH SPORTS REFERENCE LIBRARY

RESEARCH ON INJURIES AND RISKS

[Study cites youth football for issues](#)

Former NFL players who played tackle football as young children were more likely to have thinking and memory problems as adults, a Boston University study published in a medical journal found.

[Youth Sports League Trends for 2017](#)

Something happened in the sports world that many fans of a certain team hope becomes a trend: After 108 years, the Chicago Cubs won another World Series. Of course, for the incredibly patient 110-year-old Cubs fan, this was a continuing trend. For every other fan, it was something new, and something they hope will see again in 2017 and beyond.

[Youth sports leagues](#) are experiencing their own trends and changes, maybe not as momentous as the Cubs finally winning a world championship, but nonetheless significant to the directors, coaches, [parents](#), and kids that are affected. Here are some of those trends that will be making an impact in 2017:

[#SWIMTRENDS: 5 YOUTH SPORTS TRENDS THAT KEEP ME UP AT NIGHT](#)

Every Olympic year USA Swimming sees an Olympic “bump” of participation. It’s hard not to get inspired watching the crew of American stars. But the Olympics is a short-term phenomenon so that’s why programs such as SwimToday exist to drive interest every day, every year. But it won’t be easy the next decade.

[Youth sports participation is up slightly, but many kids are still left behind](#)

Good and bad news here. The percentage of children ages 6 to 12 who regularly play team sports increased nearly 3 percent in 2015, to 40 percent. But that’s still below 2008 levels, when participation was 44.5 percent. The chart above shows year-over-year increases in baseball, flag football, wrestling and field hockey. Soccer and lacrosse declined.

[How Utah's new pitch count rules could change everyday games and the state tournament](#)

New pitch count limits introduced in Utah following a requirement last summer by the National Federation of State High School Associations will, among many things, see coaches trot out a lot of pitchers this season including some players who might not have otherwise been asked to pitch.

[How many pitches is too many pitches?](#)

On a cold night in November 2015, Brecken Lewis felt a pop in his right elbow. The Dixie State freshman felt the familiar searing pain that many across the country in all levels of baseball have felt over the years.

[Hey Parents: Quit Raising Specialists and Start Raising Omnivores](#)

In the glossy heart of the 1980s, in the dimly lit halls of East Anchorage High School there walked a god. He was rangy, blond, and bore the cinematically perfect name of Trace Savage. And Trace Savage was awesome

[Injuries explode as youths specialize in a single sport](#)

There has been a fivefold increase since 2000 in the number of serious elbow and shoulder injuries among youth baseball and softball players, according to the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine.

[Kids Who Delay Sports Specialization More Coordinated and Physically Fit, Study Finds](#)

Boys participating in more than one sport before age 12 are more physically fit and have better gross motor coordination than those who specialize in a single sport early, says a new study by researchers in Belgium.

Whether they are more physically fit and coordinated because they play multiple sports or because the best athletes choose not to specialize early is unclear and requires further study.

[Study finds that parental spending on kids' sports may be misguided](#)

The days of furthering a kid's athletic career by telling him to go play outside are ancient history. Today, sports is big business, and moms and dads act accordingly. There are travel teams for their kids to play on, club memberships, clinics, individual coaching, expensive equipment.

[High school boys basketball: Lone Peak traveling to Dubai to take part in elite hoops tournament](#)

Lone Peak junior-to-be Frank Jackson thought his coach, Quincy Lewis, was joking at first. Dubai? Seriously?

Sure, Lone Peak, and its congruent AAU team, Utah Reign, has taken part in tournaments all over the country over the past few seasons. But the team's trip to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, this coming weekend will break new ground — and mileage records.

[The Race to Nowhere in Youth Sports](#)

"My 4th grader tried to play basketball and soccer last year," a mom recently told me as we sat around the dinner table after one of my speaking engagements. "It was a nightmare. My son kept getting yelled at by both coaches as we left one game early to race to a game in the other sport. He hated it."

"I know," said another. "My 10 year old daughter's soccer coach told her she had to pick one sport, and start doing additional private training on the side, or he would give away her spot on the team."

["Hey, data data -- swing!"](#)

COMPETITIVE YOUTH SPORTS may be as American as apple pie, but we know a lot less about youth sports than we do about apple pie.

[How not to Ruin a Prodigy](#)

Today's Wall Street Journal profiles Todd Schmitz, the coach of champion (and likely Olympics-bound) swimmer Missy Franklin. Franklin, 17, stepped into Schmitz's program at age 7. The curious thing about their relationship is that Schmitz's program isn't one of the elite Olympic feeder swimming programs. Indeed, the youth club Franklin swims with doesn't even have its own pool. Schmitz rents space in various Denver pools and lugs equipment like his digital clock around in his truck.

[In McLean, a crusade to get people to back off in the parenting arms race](#)

It's a simple white oval with three big, black letters: JMU. But to Wilma Bowers, who sports it proudly on her black Audi sedan, it's an act of subversion.

[Play now, pay later: Inside the rising injuries of youth sports](#)

Over 4.5 million children play youth sports every year. Many of them have dreams of someday playing in the big leagues. 3.5 million get injured each year and for some that dream ends too soon. Those injuries are up by 60 percent for baseball and football alone over the last decade.

[Youth sports injuries on the rise](#)

Your child may want to play sports like Peyton Manning, Alexander Ovechkin, or their favorite Olympic athlete, but sports injuries in children are on the rise—at The Children’s Hospital in Denver, doctors have seen its patient numbers for children with sports injuries double each year since 2007. And more than half of the [7 million sports and recreation-related injuries that occur in the U.S. each year](#) are sustained by youth between ages 5 and 24.

[Armed and Delicate](#)

Baseball pitchers throw far fewer innings and are treated much more carefully than they once were. So why are they getting hurt more than ever?

José Fernández is one of the most exciting young pitchers to have appeared on a Major League Baseball diamond in the last 10 years. Despite being just 20 years old when he made his debut for the Miami Marlins in April of last year, he put together a season that saw him win National League Rookie of the Year and place third in NL Cy Young voting. He was thrilling to watch, with a 98-mile-an-hour fastball, a wicked curve and a charismatic presence on the mound.

[Is it Wise to Specialize?](#)

The greatest difference between our children’s sporting experience and our own is the rise of year round, sport specific organizations that ask – even require – season after season of participation in order to stay in the player development pipeline. The pressure to have your child specialize in a single sport at a young age has never been stronger.

As a result, parents ask me all the time “When should my child specialize in one sport?”

[We're doing youth soccer wrong: The culture of winning hurts player development](#)

When it comes to youth soccer clubs, ask yourself this question:

Is the primary focus on what the club can do for the young player, or what the young player can do for the club?

Unfortunately in the U.S., our cultural beliefs idealize winning as the sole marker of success. As Paul Mairs and Richard Shaw note, many clubs are driven by an “insatiable appetite for winning, instantaneous gratification, and a premature focus on what is best for the team instead of focusing on the development of each individual player.”

[Study cites youth football for issues](#)

Former NFL players who played tackle football as young children were more likely to have thinking and memory problems as adults, a Boston University study published Wednesday in a medical journal found.

Researchers tested 42 retired players between the ages of 40 and 69 and found that those who started playing football prior to age 12 performed "significantly worse" on three measures: estimated verbal IQ; executive function, which includes reasoning and planning; and memory impairment. The study is published in *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology

[Healthy development of children and young people through sport](#)

Physical education and sport have an educational impact. Changes can be seen in (i) motor skills development and performance and (ii) educational potential. This shows the positive relationship between being involved in physical activities and psychosocial development.

[Allowing Youth Sports to be Child's Play](#)

The picture of youth sports today is far different from that of the early 20th century. Physical activity in the form of "free play" was a more common daily occurrence for most children then. This unstructured and spontaneous form of activity improved motor skills while developing creativity and encouraging interaction with others.

Today, the child-organized games in the neighborhood that many of us remember have given way to adult-organized youth sports. The experience that a young athlete has with a sport can be positive or negative depending on the focus of the league and goals set by parents and coaches.

[Youth sport: positive and negative impact on young athletes](#)

Organized youth sports are highly popular for youth and their families, with approximately 45 million children and adolescent participants in the US. Seventy five percent of American families with school-aged children have at least one child participating in organized sports. On the surface, it appears that US children are healthy and happy as they engage in this traditional pastime, and families report higher levels of satisfaction if their children participate. However, statistics demonstrate a childhood obesity epidemic, with one of three children now being overweight, with an increasingly sedentary lifestyle for most children and teenagers. Increasing sports-related injuries, with 2.6 million emergency room visits a year for those aged 5–24 years, a 70%–80% attrition rate by the time a child is 15 years of age, and programs overemphasizing winning are problems encountered in youth sport.