

Weston AYSO Region 644



April 28, 2005

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the AYSO Region 644 bi-weekly newsletter.

In this week's edition, Section 1 is designated as the AYSO Region 644 roundup which will highlight what has been going on in our region over the past two weeks and what is up-coming.

Section 2- "High Kick Ref" discusses and provides examples of what constitutes dangerous play. It may not be what you think. A must read for all of us Monday morning midfielders.

In Sections 3-6 we have four articles outlining different aspects and activities related to the game of youth soccer. In the Keepers Corner we give three examples of agility drills which you should consider in your goalkeeping sessions. In Section 4 "Build Up Drill" we discuss a game that works on finishing, conditioning, teamwork, defense and even has a little bit of fun. Really competitive players will have a great time and really benefit from this drill. Section 5- Soccer Activities- provides another "game" option that promotes the use of patterns and combinations in order to apply proper offensive pressure. Section 6 discusses the art of juggling. Although not thought of as highly important, it does provide a player with the ability to feel comfortable with the ball, an important aspect in becoming a better soccer player.

Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around The Country. Our first article is from Reuters and discusses the ongoing investigations into the Italian soccer league, it's member clubs, players and agents. The second article from the Stanford Daily Online, "Cheating Bleeds Into Youth Sports", Christopher Anderson discusses how we as a society have tolerated and even glorified cheating in order to succeed while we half heartedly argue that sports help develop our children to be better more productive adults. Finally the last article from the Noblesville Daily Times in Noblesville, Indiana "Summit looks at needs for youth sports" Katie Wampler reports on a conference held in Hamilton County Indiana in which the participants discussed issues affecting youth sports such as a lack of space, communication and cooperation between youth sports programs.

Section 8- Young Athletes Advised to Be Wise: Don't Specialize – Diversify, Ed Thomas article in the Agape Press in Tupelo Mississippi interviews Dr. Todd Fowler who states that an unfortunate aspect of the new habits of training for this group of athletes -- i.e., year-round participation without moving to alternate sports that make use of different muscle groups -- has led to a rash of reconstructive surgeries and repetitive-use injuries. He says physicians like himself all across the country have seen a near epidemic of physical injuries in youth that were once confined to college or professional athletes.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the AYSO 644 Newsletter. Everything we do here in AYSO is ever evolving. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to email to me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com.



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Section 1- AYSO 644 Roundup

On Saturday April 23, 2005 we held our first registration date of the season. We received 358 registrations that day and currently have enrollment of over 600 players with five onsite registration dates upcoming. Our next registration date is on Saturday May 7, 2005 from 9am until 12pm at the Weston Regional Park soccer field 4. Then we have our first weeknight registration date on Wednesday May 11, 2005 from 6pm-8pm at the Weston Regional Park soccer field 4. You can obtain registration packets at the Weston Regional Park Community Center as well as at Soccer Max in Plantation. You may also download a registration form from our website at www.ayso644.org. For further information please visit our website or you may call us at 954-349-9786 or email to me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com.

Please consider coaching and assistant coaching as we are always looking for coaches. We have training courses lined up for May 21, 2005 from 9am until 4pm at the Weston Regional Park Community Center. At this clinic we will help you learn the game of soccer, teach you the fundamentals and show you age specific activities to instruct the kids.

The AYSO soccer friendly bus continues on to our City of Weston on Sunday May 22, 2005 at the Weston Regional Park. Teams from throughout AYSO in the State of Florida are beginning to sign up for these friendlies.

Registration dates for the fall 2005 season have been set. Registrations are all at the Weston Regional Park at the soccer pavilion by soccer field #4. Dates and times are as follows: Saturday May 7, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Wednesday May 11, 2005 from 6pm-8pm, Saturday May 14, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Tuesday May 17, 2005 from 6pm-8pm and Saturday May 21, 2005 from 9am-12pm. Other important dates are: First day of practices Monday August 29, 2005, Regular Season begins on Saturday September 24, 2005 and Picture Day is Sunday October 2, 2005.

Our region, AYSO Region 644, would like to personally thank all the people from the AYSO region in Boynton Beach for the great time that our teams had in the friendlies over the past two weeks.

AYSO Region 644 is proud to announce that in September 2005 we will be beginning our initial VIP program. AYSO VIP Program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams. VIP Teams may include those who are blind or visually impaired, amputees or conditions that impair mobility, mentally or emotionally challenged, autistic, downs syndrome and cerebral palsy. Kids with special needs are estimated to make up approximately 10% of the school-age population. Special schools and classrooms can isolate these children so the VIP Program has been structured to integrate the children into the rest of AYSO by using "buddies" to help the player both on and off the field. Our goals for every participating player are: 1) Have fun playing soccer, 2) Understand the fundamentals of the game, 3) Learn teamwork and fair play, 4) Increase positive self-esteem, 5) Become more physically fit, and 5) Meet and be comfortable with new people.

The VIP program helps more than just the players. Buddies and other volunteers increase their appreciation and understanding of individuals with special needs. They find their lives greatly enriched by their involvement with their new VIP friends. For parents thinking that they would never see their children playing a sport or making new friends, VIP gives them joy and hope. They are able to relax and enjoy watching their children having fun like other kids, perhaps for the first time.

It is our goal to make this program free of charge beginning in September, 2005. We will be looking for sponsors to offset the costs of the VIP program. Please contact our AYSO Region 644 hotline for further details and sponsorship opportunities. Our hotline number is 954-349-9786 and ask for Valeska.

Coaches, do you want to lock in your practice times and days? Avoid the long lines for picking your practice days at the coaches meetings and don't get locked out of coaching next year by not getting your volunteer application in on time by just emailing me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com . Please indicate your child's name, birthdate and the days and times you would like to schedule practices for. I will email back to you a confirmation of the time and field location, and you are all set. It is that easy.

Our region has grown to an amazing 2,575 players. But with this growth is a need for more volunteers. If you have the time or can make the time available and want to help the children in our community, please contact me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com and we will get you on the road to the most satisfying thing you can do in your life....volunteering.

Finally, we are always looking for sponsors. Our sponsors help defray the cost of running the program. Everyone in our region is a volunteer, however there are a lot of costs such as instructional books, uniforms, trophies, medals, city fees, etc. Please consider being a sponsor. Sponsorship packages can be sent to you if you are interested. It is great exposure for your business and the 2,575 children and families from AYSO that will see your banners, website listings, t-shirts, newsletter designations will greatly appreciate it.

Section 2- "High Kick, Ref!"

But is it dangerous play?

Following are two play situations, along with graphics, that are frequently disputed by coaches in terms of how they are interpreted by referees. They appeared in Referee magazine under the headings "Gray Decisions on Dangerous Play" (August 1999) and "Kicking or Tackling?" (July 1999) and were reprinted with permission in the March/April 2000 issue of Soccer Journal.

If your first thought as soon as you saw Play Pic A was to shout, "high kicking," join the thousands of parents who watch their sons and daughters every weekend. The foot is high, almost seven feet off the ground. However, the absence of an opponent nearby dictates that no call is made. You must not punish a player for displaying the skills that are a part of the game. It does not matter that the cleats are exposed. No. 3 is in no danger in that play. Do not whistle to stop play simply because you see a dangerous act.

The potential for injury exists whenever feet come in close proximity to heads, mistakenly called high kicking by many. It may occur when heads sink too low to the ground, trying to play the ball in an area where most players would use their feet. Since safety is one of the three major tenets of the spirit of the game, you must stop play and penalize the person who creates the dangerous situation.

Advice to referees: Rule 12.13 lists three important criteria to help you determine if dangerous play should be whistled: The action must be dangerous to someone, it was committed with an opponent close by and

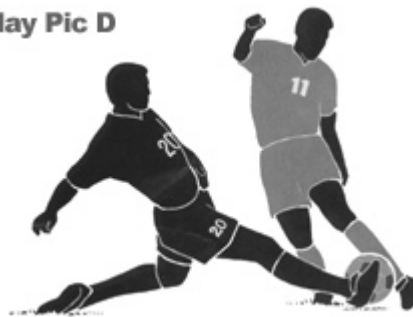
Play Pic A



Play Pic C



Play Pic D



the dangerous nature of the action caused the opponent to cease active

play for the ball or be otherwise disadvantaged.

Play Pic B



In Play Pic B, as player 5 realizes player 8's leg is coming up, she reacts by drawing her arm in to protect her body and retracts her head and neck to avoid injury. Had 8 not lifted her foot so high, 5 would have headed the ball toward the goal or a teammate.

Player 8's actions put 5 and the dark team at a disadvantage, so you must stop play and award an indirect free kick.

That points out a rule difference between the various codes of play. Under the Laws of the Game and NCAA rules, if 5 and 8 were teammates, there would not be a stoppage. Under Federation rules, that is an offense and the opposing team would be awarded an indirect free kick.

Kicking or tackling?

As player 22 throws his body into a defensive position in a desperation slide tackle, the potential for serious injury exists. Player 22 started his tackle too late or too close to 11. He has strong lateral momentum and will not contact the ground until he is under where 11 is standing now. The wide expanse of 22's body leaves 11 little escape. All 11 can hope to do is get airborne before contact to minimize injury. If 11's cleats are buried in the grass as 22 makes contact, the torsion on the ankles and knees is extreme.

That mis-timed tackle is at least reckless (unnatural movement designed to intimidate an opponent) and might be an example of a player using excessive force (placing the opponent in considerable danger of bodily harm). The key to determining excessive force is to watch 22's hips as he starts the tackle. If he throws the hips upward into the opponent, he is after the opponent's body. If the hips drop toward the ground where the ball is, he simply mis-timed the tackle while going for the ball.

Referees no longer judge a player's intent. We don't know if 22 wanted to hurt 11 or just clumsily started the tackle one step too late. You simply make your judgment based on what you see the player do. In Play Pic C, 22 was high and late and that is a foul. The determination that the foul was reckless or used excessive force leads to the display of a misconduct card. Inevitably, players will exclaim, "But ref, I got the ball."

Advice to referees: 12.8 is clear: "Making contact with the opponent after touching the ball while performing a tackle does not necessarily mean that a foul has not been committed. The declaration by a player that he has in fact played the ball is irrelevant if, while tackling for the ball, the player carelessly, recklessly or with excessive force commits any of the prohibited actions."

While the two Play Pic graphics are nearly identical, there are vital differences. In Play Pic D, 20 dropped his hips toward the ground. As 20 nears 11 and contests for the ball, both feet are on the ground. The friction of sliding along the surface will stop his momentum before he contacts 11, giving 11 the possibility to jump over 20's outstretched leg.

Those minor but important differences become a part of your foul recognition. Skills that take you years to perfect are witnessed by coaches and spectators who cannot read those subtle differences. They hear the whistle when their player mis-times a tackle and note the silence as a ball is cleanly stripped from their striker. Then they cry out that you are not being consistent. Be strong.

Section 3- Keepers Corner

Today's edition is about agility drills. I will be writing about a couple of my favorite drills and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The first drill I want to discuss is probably my favorite drill of them all. It's called spaghetti or triangle drills. This drill requires 4 people, which is best if it's one coach or trainer and 3 keepers. Make an equilateral triangle with each side being 8 yards. This essentially makes 3 full sized goals. The first keeper starts in the middle of the triangle and the other three people are on the outside of the triangle lined up 10 yards from the middle of each goal. Each of these servers has a ball in her hands. The keeper will run to the outside of each goal and save a simple serve with a collapse dive. As soon as the save has been made, the keeper runs through the triangle to the next ball being served. Each save must be made outside the triangle. This will go on for a one-minute period. As soon as the minute is up, the next keeper will start. If the makeup of the group is 3 keepers and one trainer, each keeper will go hard for one minute and then rest for the next two minutes. After each keeper has gone through this process, the next step would be extended dives. It's important for the servers to make sure that each one is not serving to the same side each time. Try to get the servers to alternate each serve. There are many options for sets to do in this series including running through balls, forward dives, high balls, backward tips, and parrying. Then you could build in forward rolls, knees to chest jumps or burpees between each save and this becomes a wonderful drill for conditioning, agility and technique. The reason it's sometimes called a spaghetti drill is after each one-minute period; the keeper's legs start to feel like they have the stability of spaghetti. This is a high intensity drill that requires a lot of concentration. While the conditioning in this drill is incredible, the technique used in each set is what has to emphasize. One of the reasons for the rolls and jumps is to tire out the keepers to force them to really concentrate on the technique. This drill will show how fundamentally sound a keeper really is. The only negative of this drill is the need for 4 people.

The next drill is also done with a triangle although this one is much smaller. This equilateral triangle should be between 3-4 yards. You also need at least 4 people although the more the better. Field players can be used, as there is a benefit to them as well. In this drill the working keeper must stay outside the triangle at each time. The players on the outside would stay around 10 yards back surrounding the triangle. They would pass the ball around the triangle trying to create an angle to pass the ball through the triangle. The working keeper must stay outside the triangle and use their footwork to navigate their way around the triangle trying to keep everything outside of the triangle. This can be turned into a competition between keepers to see who can be scored upon the least in a one-minute period. Each time the ball goes through the triangle it's a point and each time the keeper runs through the goal it's also a goal. The keeper who has let up the fewest number of points wins. This drill requires a lot of balls and the more field players the better since it requires some skill to pass the ball around and through triangle. This is very strenuous and again the only negative is the number of people required plus the number of balls.

The third drill I want to discuss involves fewer people. It's done in front of a goal with two servers and one keeper. The servers stand approximately 10 yards from the goal even with the posts. They will pass the ball back and forth either with one or two touches and the keeper must move with the ball in order to cut off the angle. Any time the servers feel the keeper has not gotten there quickly enough, the ball can be shot into the goal (either near post or far post). This requires a great deal of movement and conditioning. The keeper, while going back and forth between the posts does not really run in straight lines but rather almost makes a U in their movements going back to the line in the middle and then attacking the ball when it's at the feet of the servers. The advantage of this drill is the servers can be keepers, coaches or just bystanders and it only requires one

ball.

Each of these drills is high intensity and should last for one-minute periods. Emphasize the fundamentals and realize these are extremely simple but intense drills.

Section 4- The Build Up Drill

Today's newsletter will describe a neat drill I saw the other day called the Build-up Drill.

This drill was being run by Liz Woodrow at Marshall University.

Start with a small field approximately 40 X 30 with two full sized goals on each endline. Have two teams of 5 competing against each other plus a keeper in each goal. Each game starts with a 1v1 situation (plus keepers). Each player tries to score on the opposing keeper. Once a player scores, the other team gets to add another player so that it is now 2v1. Each time a team scores the other team adds on another player. The first team to score 5 goals wins. It is possible that one player can end up playing against anywhere from 1 to 5 players. This is a very fast paced drill (especially for the first players on the field. It would be advisable to play a number of games and switch the order that players enter the field (this means that the first player on the field in the first game would be the 5th player on the next game.

This game works on finishing, conditioning, teamwork, defense and even has a little bit of fun. Really competitive players will have a great time and really benefit from this drill.

I have made this an extremely short newsletter but I felt this drill was worth writing about.

Section 5- Soccer Activities

It's really not right to call this a drill but rather just another game. The idea is to simply play a regular small sided game of soccer with keepers and everything else being normal. The one rule (other than normal soccer rules) is that anytime a regular goal is scored, it counts as 2 points and anytime any pattern (or really any combination play involving three players) occurs, it counts as 1 point.

If a goal is scored off of a pattern or combination play, then it counts as 5 points.

One way to encourage these combination plays is to have a white team and a red team and then have two neutral blue players who are always on offense. In other words, when white has the ball, blue is on the white team and when red has the ball, blue is on the red team. This will allow the attacking team to always outnumber the defensive team which should make it easier to do things.

As it gets easier, get rid of the neutral players by assigning one to each team.

I end most of my training sessions with some type of game like this which encourages players to try to implement the learned tactic or technique into a competitive situation. If I end a progression without mentioning this, you should assume it's implied because the truth is that most player want to scrimmage during a training session and this allows them to scrimmage while staying within a theme of practice.

At the very end of practice, if there is time, lift all rules other than normal soccer and let them play. Make this a reward for working hard during the training session and you will find them staying a bit more focused knowing there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Section 6- Juggling

Today's issue will deal with juggling.

I find juggling to be an interesting topic simply because it seems that people either think it's invaluable or invaluable (meaning they think it's either vitally important to be able to juggle while others think it's a total waste of time). Personally, I feel it's somewhere in the middle.

First of all, we must understand what juggling is. It's simply the act of using various parts of the body to keep the ball in the air. While some people like to use their feet for juggling, others find that it's much easier to use their thighs or even their heads. The key is that no matter how you do it, the more touches on a ball you get, the more comfortable you will be with the ball.

One of the main disagreements regarding juggling revolve around whether there should be spin on the ball when you use your feet (if there is spin on the ball, it usually means you are pointing your toes upward as opposed to if there isn't spin on the ball, it's more a case of pointing your foot like you would be striking a ball). While I do encourage players to get in the habit of striking the ball without spin, the truth is that however, they want to start up is fine with me. You should try to use various parts of the body in juggling (inside of the foot, outside of the foot, instep, thigh, shoulder, chest and head) to get as comfortable with the ball as possible.

Ideally, the ball should start from the ground and be lifted up with the foot (the most typical way to do this is to place your foot on top of the ball and then drag it back quickly and then scoop it up to get the ball in the air. This is much better than starting with the ball in your hands and dropping it. However, if you can't do this, start with the ball in your hands and then gradually progress to where you can lift it up with your feet.

Once you get comfortable juggling, the next step is to challenge yourself somehow. I like the challenge of trying to juggle 1000 times in a 10 minute period. Or, simply set a goal of how many you want to do in a row.

Another form of juggling is to practice bouncing the ball with your feet. This is more like basketball dribbling with your feet. Start with the ball in your hands and drop it to the ground. Shortly after it hits the ground, knock it back down with the sole of your foot. See how many times you can bounce the ball like this in a row. There are numerous variations of this. You can add the rule that you must bounce with the ball. This means every time you make contact with the ball, you must be off the ground (jump right before you make contact with the ball). Or you can dribble alternating feet.

Each of these forms of juggling will help you feel more comfortable with the ball and will raise your level of confidence when you have the ball at your feet and are under pressure

Section 7- News From Around The Country

Antitrust probes Italian soccer business

Thu Mar 31, 2005 3:23 PM GMT

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ROME (Reuters) - Italy's Antitrust Authority has said it had opened a probe into the country's professional soccer league, its clubs and agents, bringing the country's national sport once again under public scrutiny.

The regulator said in a statement on Thursday that it would look into the state of competition in the market, the role of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), the national professional league, clubs and soccer players' agents.

The opening of a probe does not necessarily result into further action by the regulator, but Antitrust's move could deal another blow to the image of Italian soccer, marred in the recent past by police investigations and financial troubles.

"The analysis will focus upon searching for the causes that have led to the presence of several anomalies which may not be conducive to the development of real competition," the statement said.

The watchdog will also investigate the way soccer agents work and look into any business relations which agents may have with other companies working in the soccer sector.

Italian clubs, some of which are battling record debts and heavy losses, have come under increasing legal scrutiny in recent years following allegations of widespread balance sheet malpractice and transfer irregularities.

Just earlier this week, bourse-listed Serie A side SS Lazio averted bankruptcy by reaching a last-minute deal with Italy's tax authorities on a fiscal debt of some 140 million euros (96 million pounds).

In February last year, Italy's finance police searched the offices of all 42 clubs in the top two divisions as part of an investigation into suspected accounting fraud in soccer. All clubs denied any wrongdoing.

Two other Serie A teams are quoted on the Milan bourse apart from Lazio. They are Turin-based Juventus and Rome-based AS Roma.

Cheating bleeds into youth sports

BY CHRISTOPHER P. ANDERSON

Thursday, March 31, 2005

last updated March 30, 2005 11:45 PM

Although it has somewhat faded from the public memory, I still feel that a proper decomposition of the congressional hearing on steroids in Major League Baseball is in order.

The setup of the whole scene was downright ridiculous. Their ranks are stuffed with some rotten scalawags. (I'm referring to the Congress.) But they made some great points, some unintentionally, as they grilled MLB Players' Association head Donald Fehr about the "five strikes" testing policy and heard from parents whose sons had committed suicide from the psychological trauma of the drugs.

Two-time World Series winner Curt Schilling (who skipped steroids and went directly to never-before-done experimental ankle reconstruction for last year's postseason) claimed that substance use was "society's problem," not baseball's.

Rafael Palmeiro's finger-wagging declaration that he had never used steroids bore strong and eerie resemblance to "I did not have sexual relations with that woman."

Additional irony was added in that Palmeiro has admitted to using other performance-enhancing substances and in fact appeared in paid ads testifying to it. (I heard a fan at Tiger Stadium last spring taunt Palmeiro from the upper deck with chants of "Viagra!" I believe the fan may have been inebriated.)

Most farcical (or pathetic) was Mark McGwire, who in a pale green tie presumably commemorating St. Patrick's Day, said "It's not for me to determine" if using steroids is cheating. Visibly shaken in the opening statement, Big Mac also tried to turn the ghosts of McCarthy in his favor by saying he would not "name names." When he was less than forthcoming in one question, he was accused of taking the Fifth.

McGwire knows, though, that there is no Fifth Amendment in the court of public opinion.

For his part, Barry Bonds put on his best show at a spring training press conference, indignantly demanding that the media explain why they are demanding that he explain what happened to his strong but sleek body over the last decade.

Editorials pooh-poohed the hearings as grandstanding posturing by Congressmen, rhetorically asking if all of baseball was now to be considered tainted. I have a hard time believing baseball is on the up and up, steroids be damned, when I look at the long and distinguished history of rulebumping. Sharpening spikes to injure fielders, stealing signs, tarring bats, pinch-hitting midgets, All-Star third basemen slapping fielders' arms to dislodge the ball — people keep coming back, so I'm guessing baseball will be okay.

What seems more to be society's problem is people who don't respect the honor (for lack of a better term) of their authority.



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Presidents perjuring themselves to federal grand juries. Marine colonels lying to Congress. Tenured professors lying about going to Vietnam and selling books on it.

Closest to home for me are football coaches at the youth and high school level who rationalize cheating. Most often it's offensive holding — "it's not holding if you don't get caught" — but it also includes illegal contact below the waist and spearing (an illegal and dangerous form of headfirst tackling).

Some officials just can't keep up, but others play along; come to think of it, when was the last time you saw two consecutive holding calls?

How can we as coaches (a fraternity of which I am proud to be a part) claim that sports help turn children into adults and teach life lessons if we turn around and teach them to cheat while officials look on?

If every coach (and every ref) can decide which are the really important rules and which can be warped, then we don't really have a game, just an ad hoc set of pragmatics under which the players push and shove. That's one step up from anarchy.

I had a line coach who played center at Washington, and he told us he only once held a defender. It can be done.

But it can only be done if people are willing to make the effort to try to do things the right way. That means coaches teaching it, players doing it and refs enforcing the rules.

People ask what should be done about Gaylord Perry, the Hall of Fame pitcher who admittedly lubricated the ball to gain an advantage against the hitters. Should his plaque be taken out of Cooperstown?

I really don't care. That he is in at this point reflects on the Hall's credibility, not mine. At least everyone knows he was a cheater. Perry's name cannot come up on radio without the obligatory winking reference to his Vaseline-smear gold chain.

But nobody's winking today. Instead we get non-denial denials, non-apology apologies and cheeseburger stories (Jason Giambi claimed he slimmed down over the winter because he cut cheeseburgers out of his diet, not because of the institution of a steroid testing policy).

So what to do about the latest crop of alleged transgressions?

Don't ask me. I don't get paid to solve the league's public relations problems. At this point there are far more questions than answers anyway.

Christopher Anderson is not here to talk about the past. E-mail him at cpanders@stanford.edu.

Summit looks at needs for youth sports

By **Katie Wampler** | Staff writer

Posted: 03/31/05 - 11:38:49 am EST

A lack of space, communication and cooperation between youth sports programs were among the problems discussed at the Recreational Summit on Youth Sports in Hamilton County Wednesday.

About 60 youth sports and recreation officials from around the county attended the summit to discuss issues and network with each other.

Youth sports officials from coaches to commissioners assembled by sport and for an hour weighed the most pressing issues facing their division of youth sports. The discussion was only supposed to last 30 minutes, but the groups were so

engaged in the conversation they did not stop.

Hamilton County Parks Naturalist Chris McConnell collected feedback from the sports groups at the beginning of the summit on what issues most concerned them. At the end of the evening, he listed the top five most common responses:

- lack of space
- "us versus them" mentality
- field sharing
- communication
- lack of coaches and referees

McConnell and HCPR

Superintendent Al Patterson said the Hamilton Parks Association Web site, <http://www.hampa.org>, could rectify

some of those problems. HCPR could Coaches and commissioners countywide could publish contact information and space availability and needs.

But Brad Little of Carmel Dad's Club said until local school and government officials joined the discussion, many of the issues will persist.

"We need city and school board leaders here because they're the ones making the decisions that steer our future," he said. "If they don't get involved, we'll be sitting here talking about these same issues in five years."

Yet if mayors and town managers realized the financial potential of thriving youth sports programs, they would be quite interested, Brandon Bennett of Noblesville Parks and Recreation said.

The Hamilton County Convention and Visitors Bureau would play a part in organizing statewide youth sports tournaments, as well as offer potential grants, Marketing and Development Director Karen Radcliff said.

"Is it going to cover your whole budget? No," she said, "but it could be an opportunity to offset travel costs (among others)."

Helen Moser-Petersen of Hamilton County Community Tennis Association called the summit excellent and invigorating.

"It's so important to partner with other groups," she said.

HCPR Director of Marketing and Special Events Michele Dixon helped organize the summit.

"I think it was really good," she said. "Very successful."



Section 8- Children Specializing in Sports

Young Athletes Advised to Be Wise: Don't Specialize -- Diversify

By Ed Thomas
March 31, 2005

(AgapePress) - A Christian sports medicine doctor says the rash of injuries to minor-age athletes is a reflection of today's emphasis on winning and getting ahead of the game in sports. He says both are attitudes that parents need to take the lead in changing -- for the good of the athletes.

Dr. Todd Fowler is participating in a national information campaign by sports surgeons and trainers that is designed to teach about the necessity of cross-training among young athletes. Fowler says greatly expanded playing opportunities for female and male athletes than in the past have changed the dynamics of how often youth -- pre-teens and teens -- are participating in sports.

"They're starting younger in females, and [getting] more competitive earlier to try and get better so when [the athletes] get to high school, they can be seen and get a college scholarship," Fowler says. "And parents are pushing their kids because that's a way to financially make it [feasible] for their kids to go to school [at the collegiate level]."

He suggests that if more youth were participating in sports, and if the environment were less emphatic about winning, then the athletes would not push themselves so hard to win.

Fowler says an unfortunate aspect of the new habits of training for this group of athletes -- i.e., year-round participation without moving to alternate sports that make use of different muscle groups -- has led to a rash of reconstructive surgeries and repetitive-use injuries. He says physicians like himself all across the country have seen a near epidemic of physical injuries in youth that were once confined to college or professional athletes.

He explains that because young bodies are still developing in their connective tissue areas -- called "growth platelet" areas -- parents and their children must use a wiser course of cross-training and take a break from various sports at different times of the year.

"Cross-training is a great idea," he says, suggesting that an avid runner either take a day off now and then or substitute bicycling on the days off. "You do something different with different muscles instead of using the same ones over and over again," he explains.

Overuse of tissue areas, he says, can often cause permanent injury. Fowler says parents and trainers need to understand that and to avoid overuse, as well as heavy weight-training, for that reason.