

Being a great sports parent has never been more difficult than it is today. There are so many myths and challenges out there that it's difficult for parents to know what is best for their child. For the topic of my article I have excerpted several items from the top ten sports parenting myths from award winning author Rick Wolff's book, *The Sports Parenting Edge*. I thought this list provided some great thoughts for helping parents make more informed decisions when it comes to their child's sporting experience.

- 1) **The younger you can get your kid on a traveling team, the better.** There is no guarantee that having your child play on a traveling team at an early age will lead to later success. No study has ever shown this to be true. On the flip side, there are lots of studies that show that burnout is a real concern for kids that play one sport for a long time on a traveling team. How much excitement can there be to get on an old yellow school bus and drive an hour to play a ball game on their high school team when they grow up traveling all over the country, eating out, and staying in hotels?
- 2) **The sooner your child specializes in just one sport, the better their chance of advancing to a higher level.** Besides the obvious concern of burnout. Children develop at different rates. Because a child is good at a sport at a young age doesn't mean that will be their best sport. Who knows what might be their best sport when they mature. Most professional athletes don't specialize until after high school.
- 3) **A youngster who is a top athlete among his peers at age 8 is clearly destined to be a star when they're 18.** There are exceptions but more often than not, early success is no indicator of later success. In fact early success is often due to early maturity. Kids that mature early are often disillusioned by their early success (as are their parents). The early success often gives them a false sense of security and they fail to develop the kind of work habits that will allow them to be successful when their peers catch up to them.
- 4) **Kids will be happy as long as they are part of a winning team.** Kids want to play above all else. They would rather play a lot on a losing team than play a little on a championship team.
- 5) **The vast majority of moms and dads tend to be honest and fairly objective about their child's ability in sports.** While we tend to think we are – the fact is we aren't. Most parents see their child as being better looking, smarter, and more talented than the other children. This won't change but parents must learn to take off their rose-colored glasses when it comes to making decisions that pertain to their child.