

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

Champion Parent Note

Educating and Forming Champion Parents

Being a *Champion Sports Parent*



As this new year begins, it's helpful to remember the *purpose* of youth sports. Being a *Champion Sport Parent* is a wonderful opportunity to participate in the physical, mental, emotional, moral and spiritual growth of your child. In a broad sense, this is a response to a calling - a "summons" by God - to participate in the creation and development of the whole person your child is meant to be. Being a *Champion Sport Parent* means being a LIFE

Coach for your child. A LIFE Coach is someone who educates, instructs, guides and encourages the development of health and life-promoting skills. These skills allow each child to become as God intended, the very best person he or she can be. A parent as LIFE Coach is a loving potentiator, participating in the building of the Kingdom of God by lovingly "coaching" each child to grow to his/her health and wellness potential in body, mind and spirit. This includes modeling and encouraging **attitudes, beliefs and behaviors** which optimize performance on the playing field, in the classroom, in the home and in the community, while allowing one to experience the joy and fullness of life.

As 2025 begins, consider whether I am looking at my child's sport in a holistic way (see above) or simply in a transactional manner - i.e. can my child earn a college scholarship? If you are tempted to view sports in the latter way, we encourage you to intentionally broaden your approach.

ATTITUDE: Encourage your student-athlete to have a positive attitude in life, especially when times are difficult, looking at challenges as opportunities to grow.

BELIEFS: Remind your student-athlete to give glory to God for each one of his or her gifts and talents.

BEHAVIORS: Support your student-athlete and encourage him or her to place humility as a top priority, treating teammates, coaches, opponents and officials with the utmost respect.

Focusing on these core areas can prompt a healthy approach to youth or high school sports and help you to fully embrace the role of being a *Champion Sports Parent*.

The Probability of Competing in College

One of the issues with a transactional approach to youth sports is that we can develop unrealistic expectations. Youth sports is an estimated \$38 billion global

industry, a competitive market that has incentivized many to sell the dream of playing a sport beyond the youth or high school level. The chase for college scholarships has spurred big business, but the reality is not so easy.

According to a study by the NCAA, the odds of a youth sport athlete becoming a scholarship athlete in college are less than 1 in 1,000 (0.1%). Yet, it is not uncommon to find that 30% to 50% of parents believe their child has a good chance to play at the college level. Unfortunately, of the nearly 8 million students currently participating in high school sports in the United States, only about 530,000 will compete at NCAA schools. Only a fraction of those elite athletes will move on to compete at the professional or Olympic level. The NCAA regularly publishes the chart above, which provides a closer look at the statistics by sport.

Estimated Probability of Competing in College Athletics

	High School Participants	NCAA Participants	Overall % HS to NCAA	% HS to NCAA Division I	% HS to NCAA Division II	% HS to NCAA Division III
Men						
Baseball	478,451	38,849	8.1%	2.4%	2.4%	3.2%
Basketball	537,438	19,213	3.6%	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%
Cross Country	240,201	14,787	6.2%	2.1%	1.7%	2.4%
Football	1,028,761	77,204	7.5%	3.0%	2.0%	2.5%
Golf	150,175	8,602	5.7%	1.9%	1.6%	2.2%
Ice Hockey	33,013	4,388	13.3%	5.0%	0.8%	7.5%
Lacrosse	111,108	16,030	14.4%	3.3%	3.2%	8.0%
Soccer	450,455	27,284	6.1%	1.4%	1.7%	2.9%
Swim & Dive	116,741	9,945	8.5%	3.3%	1.5%	3.7%
Tennis	158,306	7,549	4.8%	1.5%	1.1%	2.2%
Track & Field	604,983	31,278	5.2%	1.9%	1.4%	1.9%
Volleyball	77,287	2,933	3.8%	0.7%	0.8%	2.3%
Water Polo	21,289	1,156	5.4%	3.1%	0.9%	1.4%
Wrestling	259,431	8,309	3.2%	1.0%	0.8%	1.3%
Women						
Basketball	373,366	16,668	4.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.8%
Cross Country	197,630	14,621	7.4%	2.9%	1.9%	2.6%
Field Hockey	52,962	6,456	12.2%	3.6%	1.9%	6.7%
Golf	80,970	5,733	7.1%	2.8%	2.0%	2.3%
Ice Hockey	8,601	2,888	33.6%	10.2%	2.1%	21.3%
Lacrosse	98,014	13,481	13.8%	4.3%	3.2%	6.3%
Soccer	377,838	29,959	7.9%	2.7%	2.2%	3.0%
Softball	344,952	21,646	6.3%	2.0%	1.9%	2.4%
Swim & Dive	140,711	13,259	9.4%	4.2%	1.6%	3.6%
Tennis	191,036	8,343	4.4%	1.5%	1.1%	1.9%
Track & Field	486,355	31,475	6.5%	2.8%	1.7%	2.0%
Volleyball	470,488	18,569	3.9%	1.2%	1.1%	1.6%
Water Polo	18,728	1,337	7.1%	4.4%	1.2%	1.6%

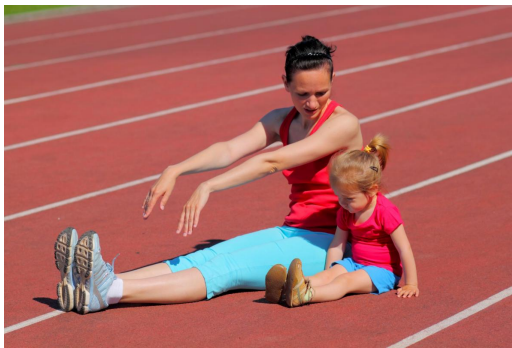
Sources: High school figures from the [2022-23 High School Athletics Participation Survey](#) conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations; data from [club teams](#) not included. College numbers from the NCAA [2022-23 Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report](#).

Last Updated: April 1, 2024

[Click here](#) to get a closer look at these statistics on the NCAA's website or [download the full 2024 report here](#). These figures serve as an important reminder that a transactional approach to youth sports simply isn't the best path for our children. While only some very rare student-athletes will have the opportunity to take their game to the next level, every child benefits from having a *Champion Sports Parent* who encourages holistic development and supports positive attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." ~ Proverbs 22:6

A Prayer for Sports Parents



Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of sport in our family's life. May we always be grateful for the opportunity our children have to be physically active and have a team experience to learn and grow from. Help me have the Fortitude to guide my child in setting Goals that develop physical skills as well as help my child to be a better person through sport. I pray that I have a deep sense of Justice in supporting the entire team that they may be safe and successful in their play while forming close Relationships with each other. Help me to have the Prudence to support

my child as s/he has challenges and failures, allowing my child the Ownership to work through these circumstances independently with my love and your guidance Lord. Finally, help me to have Temperance in keeping sports in the proper perspective by honoring the game and my child's play as praise for our Creator. Amen.

Play Like a Champion Today Educational Series

PO Box 72, Notre Dame, IN 46556 information@playlikeachampion.org
www.playlikeachampion.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

