

Investing Where It Matters Most

America's Big Miss in Leadership Mining



This cover feature of TIME magazine reveals an intriguing phenomena in America that has nothing—and everything—to do with young leader development.

Below is a gist of the feature article.* The stats of where we're investing our time and money in youth athletics is numbing. As you read it, think of how different our world would be if we made the same investment in the life-long skills of leading.

- * U.S. youth sports industry is now a \$15.3B business
- * 10-year-old Joey Erace practices hitting in his \$15K backyard batting cage, paying \$100 for hour-long coaching sessions; his baseball career thus far has cost more than \$30K
- * Families can spend more than 10% of their income on registration fees, travel, camps, and equipment
- * Volleyball parents spent \$20K a year for daughter's club team
- * An Ottawa family sent their 13-year-old to NJ for a year to increase his ice time on a travel hockey circuit
- * Softball rankings begin with teams age 6 and under and baseball

starts at age 4

- * College coaches are now courting middle-schoolers
- * Basketball site middleschoolelite.com evaluates kids as young as 7
- * Joining a high school travel team can cost families upward of \$3K per season
- * Cost to families per sport: lacrosse- \$7,956; hockey- \$7,013; baseball/softball- \$4,044; football- \$2739; soccer- \$1472; basketball- \$1,143
- * SportsEngine launched a directory of >100K youth-sports camps, teams, and leagues
- * Sports Illustrated Play's apps now have 17M monthly unique users

Odds of playing competitively after high school are slim:

- Only 2% of high school athletes go on to play in NCAA Division I programs
- Basketball: 541K boys play in high school; 1 in 99 go on to NCAA Div I; 1 in 1860 play in NBA
- Soccer: 417K boys play in high school; 1 in 73 will play Div I; 1 in 835 will play in MLS
- Baseball: 483K boys play in high school; 1 in 47 will play Div I; 1 in 764 will play MLB (There are less than 1K MLB major league players in any year; usually 800-ish.)
- Football: 1.1M boys play in high school; 1 in 41 will play Div I; 1 in 603 will play in NFL

While the frenzy for both athletic and academic achievement prevail in our culture, what is shockingly absent is interest in leadership ability. We assume leaders are adults and that effective and ethical ones will emerge on their own. If nothing else, consider that leaders consistently make more money, experience greater job satisfaction and an increased sense of purpose and autonomy than non-leaders. At the end of the day, we're dramatically derelict of duty in mining the leadership gifts among our youth. LeadYoung Training Systems is dedicated to changing this trend and is committed to the students and their families who demonstrate an aptitude for executive-caliber leading.

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*Gregory, Sean. "Kids Sports Inc." Time. September 4, 2017: 42-51. Print.