

The value of sport for boys

By Ian Lillico



Sport (done correctly) is a valuable way for your son to get life-skills that he may not get through other avenues.

Sport should teach our sons:

How to be a good winner

How to be a good loser

How everything improves through practice

How to give their best and work hard and

How to work towards his personal goals

When picking a sport for your son - you should actually pick the coach! Coaches transform boys from isolated competitors into bonded team-mates.

Young boys often prefer to work alone, but the right coach can assist him to work with others towards a mutual goal. The coach should be a mentor to your son and teach him the skills of getting on with others and striving for excellence. The wrong coach, however, can turn your son off sport forever. Coaches who put down boys or call them names when they do the wrong thing are to be avoided, as boys can be seriously affected by such negatives and often internalise these jibes.

One of the greatest things sport can teach our sons is how to fail or lose gracefully. Boys hate to fail or lose and a well-constructed team shares that sense of loss when a boy is bowled out at cricket or misses a goal in football. The loss becomes a communal one in a well-trained team and other team-mates share the sense of failure with boy - again though excellent team building by the coach. Dealing with loss or failure is a problem for males, generally, and if the boy is part of a good team this will help him throughout life.

A further advantage of sport is emotional expression where his sorrows, joys etc are refined through active participation. Close bonding should also occur between him and his team-mates and between him and his coach - giving him good peer and senior role models. With a good coach, boys become more trusting of adults and form closer associations with them. Boys often reminisce on their sporting teams later on in life as some of those bonds last a lifetime.

