

Diversified Sports Exposure

A Healthy and Performance Advantage

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Diversified athletic exposure during the early stage of sport development provides young athletes with a breadth of experiences that lay the foundations for continued participation and sustainable performance in sport. An early sport involvement that is diversified includes alternating participation in multiple sports or different versions and complementary athletic activities of the same sport throughout the year, thus delaying the constant and intense involvement and competition in one sport until adolescence or later.

Too often, however, there is a misguided need (usually by parents and coaches) to focus on a single sport early and master the technical aspects of the sport through deliberate and extensive repetition – essentially engineering the fun, discovery and creativity out of participation! This approach can increase the risk of injury, burnout and dropout, while also interfering with achieving optimal youth development. Moreover, the premature selection or exclusion of a young athlete to a specific sport is often in conflict with unforeseen changes in and interactions of normal physical growth, motivation and individual development.

An early diversified sport exposure for youth:

- Encourages enhanced athletic ability and resilience
- Reduces overuse- and overload-related injury risk
- Enhances problem-solving skills and creativity
- Decreases boredom, burnout and dropout
- Builds on unstructured and structured inherent learning experiences
- Fosters development of a healthy identity

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Youth Sports of the Americas is dedicated to provide an unparalleled platform for promoting inclusive, sustainable, healthy, safe and enjoyable youth sports participation.