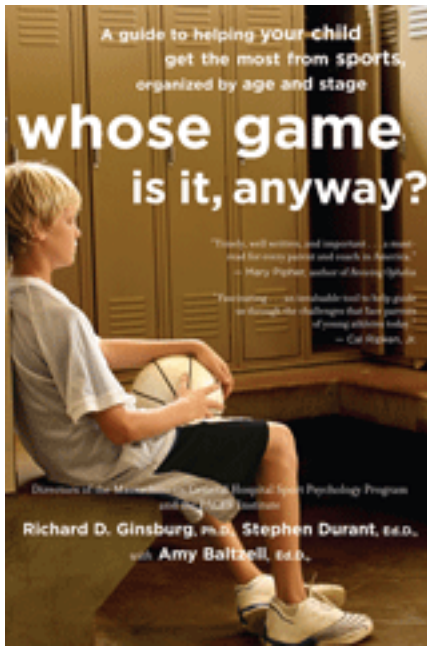


Press Release



Whose Game Is It, Anyway?

by Richard Ginsburg, Ph.D., and Stephen Durant, Ed.D., with Amy Baltzell, Ed.D.

- [About the Book](#)
- [About the Authors](#)
- [Advance Praise for *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*](#)
- [Tips for Parents from the Authors of *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*](#)
- [Topics Covered in *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*](#)

A Guide to Helping Your Child Get the Most from Sports, Organized by Age and Stage

"Timely, well-written, and important . . . a must-read for every parent and coach in America." — Mary Pipher, author of *Reviving Ophelia*

"Fascinating . . . an invaluable tool to help guide us through the challenges that face parents of young athletes today." — Cal Ripken, Jr.

About the Book

In our overly commercialized and highly competitive sports culture, parents need expert guidance in order to ensure a positive sports experience for their children. In *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*, two of the country's leading youth sports psychologists, Richard Ginsburg, Ph.D., and Stephen Durant, Ed.D., team up with a former Olympic athlete and expert on performance enhancement, Amy Baltzell, Ed.D., to provide that guidance, helping parents to maximize the benefits that sports have to offer and avoid the many pitfalls.

The authors present a breakthrough three-step program designed to help parents develop emotionally sound goals for their children while they pursue their best in athletics and life in general:

- Know Your Child
- Know Yourself
- Know Your Child's Environment

The only book to examine the various athletic situations that arise from early childhood through college, *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?* looks at groups of children, from ages one to twenty-one, identifying the physical, psychological, and emotional issues unique to each group and clarifying what parents can expect from and desire for their kids at every

stage. Through compelling case studies and in-depth analyses, the authors illustrate how one simple approach will not be successful throughout the development of any given child; at different ages and stages, children need different things.

The authors also explore hot-button issues such as parental pressure, losing teams, use of food supplements and steroids, relationships with coaches, quitting and burning out, and other challenges and headline-making issues we see in sports today.

Unique in its message, format, and scope, *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?* should be required reading for anyone raising — or educating — a child who plays sports.

About the Authors

Richard D. Ginsburg, Ph.D., and **Stephen Durant, Ed.D.**, are faculty members at Harvard Medical School and directors of the Massachusetts General Hospital Sports Psychology Program and the Performance and Character Excellence in Sports (PACES) Institute. **Amy Baltzell, Ed.D.**, is a professor at Boston University, a former Olympic-level athlete, and a recognized expert on performance enhancement.

For more information, visit www.whosegameisitanyway.com.

Advance Praise for *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*

"Timely, well-written, and important . . . a must-read for every parent and coach in America." — **Mary Pipher, author of *Reviving Ophelia***

"Fascinating . . . an invaluable tool to help guide us through the challenges that face parents of young athletes today." — **Cal Ripken, Jr.**

"These guys get it right. Based on my experience as a one-time professional athlete, now as a parent of a professional athlete and also as someone still involved in the game as a fan, broadcaster, and commentator, I fervently believe that strong character is an absolute must for young athletes. The more parents understand this, the better for all involved. This is a must-read for parents and coaches alike." — **Bill Walton, basketball legend**

"What Dr. Spock was to child rearing, this trio of authors will be to youth sports. A marvelously authoritative and accessible guide covering everything of concern to parents, coaches, and children, with commonsense tips for each age and stage. *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?* belongs on the night table of every soccer mom and hockey dad." — **John Powers, *Boston Globe***

"Sets the standard for parental resources on youth sports. Adopting its philosophy and detailed approach will ensure our children benefit from the many positives that sports have to offer. From both my professional and personal experience (as a father of two) I have never read anything in scope or prescriptive detail that provides a road map through the often murky waters of youth sports . . . I highly recommend this book as a crucial resource for any parent with children involved in sports." — **Mark Shapiro, general manager, Cleveland Indians**

"If you are the parent of a child athlete, if your child has a terrible coach, if you are struggling with whether to push or hold back, to go for Division I or Division III, then read this book! In the high-pressure world of youth sports, the authors of *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?* are the voice of wisdom and experience." — **Michael Thompson, Ph.D., coauthor of *Raising Cain***

"Compelling and eye-opening . . . a must-read resource manual for parents and coaches alike." — **Thomas Gill, medical director, Boston Red Sox**

"I recognize and identify with the wisdom offered in the book . . . recommended." — **Dawn Riley, first woman to manage an America's Cup sailing team**

"An essential book for all coaches and for any parents whose children are participating in town or school sports. Insightful, developmentally sound, and filled with down-to-earth examples. Especially relevant to the parents of a potential varsity or college athlete, parents who are either too intense or have concerns about the impact of a sport on their child's self-esteem." — **Michael Jellinek, president, Newton-Wellesley Hospital**

"One of the most important contributions in the field of parenting to have been published in years. This book is about much more than sports . . . *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?* provides adults with the tools, in clearly presented and practical terms, about how to bring out the best in young people in the small arena of sports and the big arena of life." — **Richard P. Halgin, professor of psychology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst**

Tips for Parents from the Authors of *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*

The Early Years (Ages 0–6)

- Introduce sports and physical activities in safe and enjoyable environments.
- Give your kids early exposure to a new sport in the safety of your home environment so they are prepared when they play with others.
- Older siblings or older peers in the neighborhood can be great allies in helping an anxious child try new activities.
- Introduce yourself and your child to new coaches and administrators before the beginning of the season, and use this time to raise any concerns or questions you may have about your child or the program.
- Parents of older children can be useful sources of information about the best coaches and leagues.
- If your children are unhappy with their sport, provide a dignified exit strategy before things reach the meltdown stage.
- Be wary of reading too much or too little into your child's current abilities.

The Elementary School Years (Ages 6–12)

- Encourage your children not to suffer alone. Urge them to consult with trusted adults when they are in pain.
- Preserve for your children a balance between organized sports and free, unstructured play.
- Create and preserve quiet time for your kids three days a week for at least twenty minutes without the distractions of radios, TV, videos, cell phones, and IM.
- Create positive post-game rituals, such as a trip to the local eatery, and avoid critical analysis.
- Try to keep at least a 5:1 ratio of accurate praise to constructive criticism and avoid all criticism for at least an hour following games.
- Focus on praise and instances in which your children persevere, overcome adversity, or demonstrate discipline, courage, responsibility, camaraderie, and good sportsmanship.

The Teen Years (Ages 13–18)

- It's natural for our adolescents to pull away from us, yet they still need our help and support.
- Allow coaches and teachers to assist our children in becoming stronger and independent, and help our kids find great coaches to play for.
- The brains and bodies of adolescents will continue to develop into their twenties, so don't expect them to think, perform, and behave as adults.
- Talented teen athletes do not always transition into talented young adult athletes. In fact, some uncoordinated or slow-developing teens can turn out to be the best athletes.
- A love of playing is the fuel for hard work and ongoing success needed to perform at the highest levels in sports.
- Sometimes quitting isn't a copout, but instead is a decision to pursue a more fitting activity.
- Two percent or less of adolescent athletes will receive scholarships or play Division I. Intense pressure to achieve these goals may actually decrease performance and increase the risk of dropping out.

The College Years (19 and beyond)

- Love and support your kids regardless of wins and losses.
- Have conversations about the pressure on them to perform and remind them that doing their best is enough.

- Teach children to accept disappointments and use them as opportunities to learn and improve.
- Keep your wants and needs separate from your children's performance.
- Emphasize factors your kids can control such as effort, focus, and attitude — all of which will build confidence.

Topics Covered in *Whose Game Is It, Anyway?*

- **An outcome-driven sporting culture can reate dangerous outcomes.** Two disturbing trends are developing in the wake of our increasingly outcome-driven sporting culture. First, a growing number of adolescents, even middle-schoolers, feel compelled to use life-threatening drugs such as steroids to keep up with or get the edge on their peers. Second, sports are becoming so competitive and exclusive that many kids are dropping out at alarming rates, leaving them in front of the television, sedentary and vulnerable to the dangerous spread of obesity, a disease that has increased one hundred percent since 1980.
- **Competition is OK.** Fun-focused sports programs have been the knee-jerk reaction to the headlines of violence and scandal that have plagued youth sports, but many believe this approach has diluted the benefits of competitive sports for kids. Ginsburg and his coauthors take a realistic point of view, arguing that that competition is not only "OK" but in fact essential to the healthy personal development of our kids — as long as it is introduced at the proper age and is not at the expense of fun and skill development, particularly for young children and adolescent athletes.
- **The "more is better" myth.** Does your kid really need to practice five days a week? We currently live under the assumption that more is better — more practices, more games, more training. This feeds into the overscheduled child epidemic. We are brainwashed to believe that if we don't enroll our children in every sporting opportunity, they will not be able to keep up with their peers, but Ginsburg and his coauthors argue that sometimes "less is more" in order to preserve the love of the game as well as the health of the body and the psyche.
- **The "character is soft" myth.** Does teaching your kids integrity and strong values in sports do anything more than make them good losers? In fact, quite the opposite is true. Teaching character in sports not only advances our children's psychological development but also increases the likelihood that they will perform their best in sports. Character enhances talent. Poor character leads to burnout.
- **Early specialization isn't so special.** Amid greatly increasing pressure to specialize, Ginsburg and his coauthors strongly encourage diverse athletic experiences over early specialization in almost all situations for children and young adolescents. There is no research to support that early specialization actually improves performance over time. In fact, overtraining can lead to injury and/or burnout. In contrast, playing for different coaches in different sports adds to the psychological and athletic versatility that constitute a well-balanced, resilient athlete and person.

- **Kids are not mini-adults.** Too many youth coaches (and parents) treat kids as mini-adults and do not have a working understanding of what kids are physically and psychologically capable of and what they need at different ages and stages. The results can be disastrous.

- **Adults are taking the play out of playing sports.** According to the Center for Disease Control, in 2003, seventy percent of children quit sports by the time they are thirteen. As youth sports continue to become professionalized, drop-out rates continue to climb for our kids. Youth who play sports in this generation suffer from premature competition, overtraining and overscheduling, and unrealistic adult expectations. Our kids quit because they are robbed of the joy of playing.