

Violence in sports, morally questionable values for children.

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



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Abstract

At present, nobody doubts the importance of sport in our society, both in its facet of spectacle and in its practical dimension in the field of leisure. Although traditionally it is recognized as a great educational potential in the acquisition of desirable social values, the truth is that, examining some of the images of contemporary sport, we can see its conflicting nature, as it can be a vehicle for the transmission of morally questionable values. The objective of my research paper is to examine the characteristics of sport in a critical way and to question ourselves about its contribution to comprehensive education and to the strengthening of the moral and social capacities of school-age children.

Introduction

The traditional belief makes us think that from participation in games and sports arise qualities such as loyalty, cooperation, self-control or willpower. Especially the collective sports, can provide formative situations that favor the equality, the tolerance, the resolution of problems within the group. In fact, it is recognized as an integrating element of immigrant groups, as a means to teach responsibility to at-risk youth, for the prevention and treatment of drug addiction, social recovery of marginal neighborhoods or enhancer of various functions in people with disabilities.

Sport can be a source of development of democratic attitudes and behaviors, but also foster conflicts, violence, social segregation, intolerance and

exclusion. And from this point of view, if we want to defend sport as a formative element and to means effective democratic socialization, we must address the messages that the different socializing agents are pouring over children of school age, precisely because it is a stage Especially sensitive in the formation of character and identity.

Although socialization is a process that lasts throughout life, primary socialization, that which occurs in childhood, is decisive for the construction of the identity of children as it is a period in which the human being can be especially influenceable. Socialization in sport is carried out through three main agents: the family, the school and the media. However, there are other elements with a huge socializing impact such as friends and colleagues and sports organizations (clubs, federations, coaches). In a world as complex and dynamic as the current one, it is difficult to determine the degree of influence of each socializing agent in the construction of sports culture, so it is necessary to assume the participation of all of them. From the first ages, people enter a field of social, sports, whose dynamics produces and reproduces messages that generate certain habits, emotions, ways of thinking, in short, a culture within the sport that contributes to the development of his personality and his way of seeing the world.

Morally Questionable Values for Children

Socialization through sport occurs through messages that are transmitted from different social perspectives. Thus, in a complex society where there are innumerable motivations and sources of information, I consider that

responsibility is shared. It is usual to point out certain agents as the “villains” in this socializing game, criticisms that are usually expressed from other sectors equally involved. The schools usually criticize the lack of involvement of parents in the education of their children, while families direct their views to the professionals of education. Physical education teachers complain about the lack of social support for sport, when in their practices they continue to reproduce segregating models. The competitive environment, clubs, federations, coaches ... do not feel competent to carry out an educational task, among other things, because they are technicians who teach a sport. And the media are governed by the values of the market and the tyranny of the audiences, bringing to light the spectacle version of the sports phenomenon and neglecting other more formative tasks.

In my opinion, children’s sporting experience often remains far from the transmission of democratic values. Messages that are reproduced by many different social agents, that interact and complement each other providing a global vision of the sport that deviates from our training objectives. In a concrete way, I will analyze the following topics: Competition, success and segregation / Tribal emotion and violence.

- Competition, success and segregation

The sporting event, as it is conceived, is a confrontation, a structured competition according to certain rules, where there is a winner and a loser. And in this situation, we need to question to what extent sports practice provides adequate means for social and democratic education.

The competitive nature of the sport would not have to harm the moral development of the contestants if we used it as a means and not as an end. Values such as effort, discipline, the attempt to improve and surpass oneself do not have to enter into contradiction with others such as solidarity, respect, tolerance or equality. However, in order to merge both valuation tendencies in the same experience, an effective intervention is necessary, since the social messages that bombard children focus on excellence and superiority over others, which inevitably leads to segregation and discrimination of the least gifted.

The media, meanwhile, collaborate in the promotion of values of success and ideology in sport. Professional sport, a mirror in which many children look, provides an ethical model in which the most important thing is to win, even at the cost of injustices or violations of the rules.

Of course, in a sporting world in which clubs are small businesses, it seems normal for results to work. The problem is the injection of this professionalized vision of sport in boys and girls when, in addition, the rest of social agents also reproduce this perspective. This sneaks among the younger ones, especially when they reinforce deceiving or cheating attitudes, if it is for the good of the team or if it is to win.

- Tribal emotion and violence

In the sporting act, the desire for victory and the fear of defeat unleash great emotional tension. In fact, in order to maintain interest in sports competition it is necessary that this involvement exists. Among the athletes and among

the followers of course. The sports regulations are the normative that direct the competition towards the ultimate goal of victory (eg in basketball it is forbidden to score in the basket itself, that is, “ throwing the game”). And the more emotion and drama in the result is presented in a sport, the greater is its follow-up.

The problem arises when an uncontrolled, irrational emotion is unleashed, and the symbolic struggle of sports practice becomes an expression of real violence. Any sports fan has been able to contemplate how the emotional defense of a team has given way to a violent confrontation between fans, which sometimes ends with dramatic results. In these moments, the detractors of sport as a social phenomenon find enough arguments to eject it and call it irrational, primitive and not very educational.

Around the competitive model sponsored by sports institutions, emotional involvement is encouraged to the point of encountering many situations that could be described as violent among athletes. The attitude of the coaches of boys and girls of school age stimulates the desire for success and the exaltation of triumph. It is intentionally sought that the participants raise their level of excitement, which often leads to attitudes and behaviors that are not exactly clean.

In the physical education environment, it seems that the issue of violence in sports is rejected, but I do not think it is being sufficiently examined. From the school, emotional involvement and the desire for victory and success are also stimulated, as I mentioned earlier. Competition and rivalry must give

way to cooperation and solidarity in all the socio-emotional circumstances of children.

From training to sports education: from competitive ends to educational and recreational purposes

Despite the objections I have been denouncing, I continue to believe in the potential of sport as a means to a social transformation or, at least, as a formative moral experience with great depth in childhood. But for this, all social agents should invest the ends of sport, starting with analyzing oneself, what I believe in, what I feel, what I want for society and for children. Thus, considering social change involves the definition of the goals that are considered most appropriate for the maximum individual development of people, within the framework of a social project that favors prosperity and quality of life. In this sense, personal and social development are presented as two sides of a single vital project, because I believe that individual fulfillment can only be achieved within the contours of a fully egalitarian and plural society, democracy being the sociopolitical organization that can best meet those purposes.

Now, transforming society through sports practice implies, in the first place, changing those values of sports culture that are not coherent with our goal. If democracy is the best social system for humanistic development, we must promote and exercise the values of equality, tolerance, cooperation, integration and justice in each of the areas in which we develop our daily lives; in our work, in social and family relationships and, of course, in sports.

Therefore, we must build a sports culture within the contours of the democratic culture, without betraying the basic principles of the more global sociocultural system in which it is included. Sports leisure will be a useful element for transformation when it transforms itself.

Solutions

Below I describe some specific situations that are directed to the purposes reviewed above. I must insist that this proposal is based on a change in the sports culture that, inevitably, should

start with the coach assuming his role as educator.

As will be seen, the basic principle is to consider the experience in sport in childhood as an opportunity to learn to share and live, beyond the simple results and purely technical learning. It is not about eliminating the learning situations of each sport, but about dedicating attention and time to improving self-esteem and personal abilities, together with democratic values.

The educator must start from the present, from the situation at the moment in which it is being developed. Take advantage of the emotions of children, the state of mind, the interest in a weekend news, the conflicts that are generated in a certain moment.

Every human relationship is a framework of social learning that we adults can use whenever we maintain awareness, attention and proper attitude to make it a formative use.

- Stimulate body awareness and knowledge of the capabilities and limits of each. Improvement of health through sports practice.

In this case, we must prioritize that the motor tasks of sports are carried out with consciousness, that is, with control of the body and attention to the information that the body and the environment provide us. It is not about automatically repeating sports gestures, but providing sufficiently diverse situations that suppose a problem to solve.

- Sports practice as a means for environmental education.

In this case, although most team sports are carried out in facilities and with conventional equipment, situations can be offered in the natural environment that help to become aware of the precariousness of the environment and the need for proper use and sustainable development.

- Sports education as a means to promote personal development and emotional intelligence.

All human beings share basic emotional responses, such as fear, joy, sadness, anger and anger, surprise, excitement, fear of failure, etc. All of them occur to a greater or lesser extent in a sporting situation. Having as an objective education, I believe that the educator should propose activities and maintain a dialogue with the athletes that favors the development of positive emotions.

conclusion

These proposed solutions are not usually easily accepted and transferred to daily practice, since sometimes the professionals involved in working with

children perceive them as out of context, difficult to apply and with an excess of work on their part or just manifest not being educators (especially in the field of sports clubs) or moralizing. Forgetting that ethics and morals are part of human affairs as they guide the good daily actions of people as members of a society and are necessary for fully enjoy human capabilities. In any case, educational models will not work if they are continually counteracted when they are not confronted by the messages of other sports environments such as sports spectacle so spread by the media.

Therefore, education in values that has been predicted for years, still lacks of a low degree of coordination even within the sports system and even more if we consider the other socializing agents. If we intend to use sport as a means of promoting democratic values, none of these potential agents should ignore their burden of responsibility.

References

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