

Is competition good or bad??

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A continuing concern within physical education is the proper role and level of competition. Many of the abuses associated with organized sport are assumed to be the result of an overemphasis on competition, of a win-at-all-costs perspective. It is not uncommon for physical educators to advocate reducing competition, to replace competitive activities with cooperative activities, and to modify competitive activities in ways that reduce competitiveness.

In its most extreme form, this kind of criticism within the physical-education profession suggests that competitive activities are harmful for children. The issue can be viewed from another perspective. The issue is not whether competition is all good or all bad, but rather is how we can eliminate bad competition and emphasize good competition. Good competition creates a festival atmosphere, with all the attending traditions, rituals, and celebrations.

Good competition creates a forum within which children and youth can test themselves against accepted standards of excellence. Good competition involves rivalry, but never the kind of rivalry in which one side can win only to the extent that the other side loses. Good competition also means striving within the rules and traditions to do the best you can and then, when the competition is over, understanding that the winning or losing have little meaning outside the competition itself.

Bad competition, on the other hand, should be eliminated. Using the rules to gain an advantage, assuming that the only way to win is to have the best score, disregarding the traditions and rituals of the activity, and letting the outcomes affect you after the competition is over are all indications of

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inappropriate competition. Students in physical education should learn the differences between good and bad competition. The only way they can do this is to have these things pointed out to them as they experience good competition.