Paintball: The Safe Sport Essay, Research Paper

Paintball: The Safe Sport

So, your son, daughter, or husband is begging for your okay to buy the latest paintball equipment. It’s surprising, but after only one or two trips to the paintball field, folks just get hooked! While you’d like to share their enthusiasm for the sport and give your much needed “go ahead,” you are concerned with your loved ones shooting paintballs at other players and being shot at. Don’t feel like you’re alone. These are common and serious concerns that deserve a thoughtful response. The following paragraphs will hopefully explain why our sport is the fastest growing sport in the world and that it doesn’t have anything to do with people hurting one another.

Paintball has had an astounding safety record. Medical and insurance statistics show that paintball is safer than bowling! This is a strong testimony to the game and they players who play it. Paintball is a safe sport as long as rules are followed. Insurance statistics also show that paintball is much safer than golf, jogging, downhill skiing, snow boarding, tennis, swimming and many other more common sports.

Safety is highly stressed at most fields. The majority of fields require goggles be worn at all times unless in designated areas. In addition to this fields also require that barrel plugs (plastic inserts that prevent projectiles from leaving your gun’s barrel) be used while players are in certain areas. Ignoring safety is a good way to get yourself ejected from a field.

Men and women of all ages and life-styles play paintball in over 30 countries. From schoolteachers or high school students, professionals or technicians, all paintball players share a love for adventure and a strong competitive team spirit. Paintball is similar to the childhood games of “tag” and “hide and seek”, but much more challenging and sophisticated. There are various game formats. Usually, a group of players will divide into two teams to play “capture the flag”. The number of players on a team varies from four or five players, to as many as 100 players on each side, limited only by the size of the playing field.

The object of the game is to capture the other team’s flag while defending your own flag station. Players compete to eliminate opposing players by tagging them with a paintball expelled from an airgun. Games usually have a time limit of 20 to 45 minutes. Between 10 – 15 games are played during one day. Between games, players may check their equipment, reload paintballs or have a snack and share stories about the thrills of victory and the usually funny agonies of defeat. Win or lose, everyone has a great time!

A paintball is a round, dime-sized gelatin capsule with colored liquid inside. Paintballs are similar to large round vitamin capsules or bath oil beads. The liquid is non-toxic, non-caustic, water-soluble, and biodegradable. It rinses out of clothing and off skin with mild soap and water. Paintballs come in a rainbow of colors. When a paintball tags a player, the gelatin ball opens and the liquid leaves a “paint” mark. A player who is marked is eliminated from the game.

Paintball guns come in a variety of styles. Some are small stock pistols, powered by small 12-gram CO2 cartridges that need to be changed after 15 to 25 shots. Other paintball guns are rifle-like, with shoulder stocks and longer barrels. These are powered by larger, refillable CO2 cylinders that supply hundreds of shots. Some paintball guns are pump-actions. Each time you shoot, you must first cock the paintball gun by using a pump. Other paintball guns are semi-automatic, which re-cock automatically. Just squeeze the trigger!

Paintballs won’t hit hard enough to cause an injury as long as proper safety procedures are followed. Protective covering with multiple layers of clothing is recommended. To protect their eyes, all players must always wear approved-for-paintball goggles in every area where shooting is allowed, even at the target range. Barrel plugs are required anywhere off the playing field. Professional referees on the playing field control the games, enforce the rules of fair play, and monitor safety rules. Most paintball fields have a staff of trained referees that allows them to conduct several games simultaneously.

Paintball is a sport where women and men compete equally and where age is not dominated by youth. Size and strength are not as important as intelligence and determination. Being able to think quickly and decisively are what makes a great player.

Paintball is a character-building sport where every decision and every move counts. Players learn the importance of teamwork and strategy and can gain self-esteem while developing quick-thinking leadership abilities. Paintball is an exciting way to shake off day-to-day responsibilities and take a chance on a new adventure. When the game begins, the adrenaline starts pumping, and all players, from the meek and mild, to the bold and brave, strive for the irresistible thrill of victory.

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