Title Ix Essay, Research Paper

In chapter four of the book titled, ?Sports in Society?, Jay. J. Coakley examines some of the differences between ?power and performance? sports, versus ?pleasure and participation? sports. The ?power and performance? model is geared for more of a ?die hard? athlete, while a ?pleasure and participation? model stresses a relaxed, laid back attitude. For the most part, the majority of the sports games played today seem to fall in the gray area of these two extreme models. Sports attract a wide range of people with different skill levels as well as different motives.

?Power and performance sports?, as Coakley has illustrated in chapter four of the reading, has seemed to emerge as the dominant sport form in today?s society. Sports such as football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, soccer as well as many others seem to fit under the ?power and performance model?. These sports are highly organized as well as extremely competitive. They tend to push athletes to their maximal limits in strength, speed, and agility while stressing the motto, ?no pain, no gain?. The idea that ?losing is not an option? or ?second sucks? all fit the criteria of this model. An example of this type of model might be a gymnast who has been forced by his or her parents to compete in gymnastics. The parents pay all this money for the training of the athlete and expect the child to be the best. The reality of this situation is that the child hates gymnastics, but is scared to share his or her feelings with the parents.

I think a huge reason why these ?power ?sports seem to dominate our society is directly due the extensive media coverage of sports and sports figures. In the past twenty or so years, the media has portrayed these performance sport elite athletes as gods and goddesses with million dollar salaries. As a kid growing up in society today, he or she will pick up that to be an elite athlete one must obey by this model in order to make it to the top.

On the other side of the coin, Coakley then went on to talk about the other sports form, ?pleasure and participation sports?. These sports tend to be in a more relaxed environment with the common goal of ?enjoyment, growth, good health and mutual concern and support for teammates and opponents.? (Coakley 99) These sports may or may not involve competition. In either case, the main objective of these sports stresses the participation and ??connections between people.? (Coakley 98) An example of this type of model might be a family pick-up game of volleyball. Everyone playing may not know how to play, but they don?t care. They are there to have a good time with people they care about in a nice social setting.

I think Coakley is correct in that there is a definite separation between sports, but I also think that there is a common ground that these two models share among each other. The two models described by Coakley are both very extreme. The first model stressed the ?eat, drink, sleep? sport attitude while the other stressed a more relaxed, laid back attitude. Put these two together and you have the ideal model for most sports.

Anyone who loves being involved or playing sports tend to share a common interest of a certain ?love? for the game. No matter what type of sport it may be, the enjoyment or satisfaction one accomplishes when playing his or her game is what drives us to play these sports at any given time of any given day. At the same token, this love for the game has instinctively driven us to want to get better and improve upon the skills needed to succeed in sports. Take for example, Jerry Rice. This man has done so much for football both on and off the field. He truly loves to play football, and like most athletes he is a competitor and loves to win. He has set numerous records and fits the perfect model for ?power and performance.? However, at the same time, this pleasure or love for the game of football has lead him to become this high profile competitive athlete with ?an ethic of personal expression, enjoyment, growth, good health, and mutual concern and support for teammates and opponents.?(Coakley 99)

From my experiences with sports, I have found that I play simply because I enjoy interacting with my friends and having a great time. I also love the thrill and adrenaline rush before a game as well as the ultimate feeling of spiking a volleyball, or hitting a baseball or softball. Of course like most athletes, I also love to win. This competitiveness in me is what drives me to become the best I can be. I know that I am not the greatest volleyball or baseball athlete, but I am very dedicated to the games I love and know that it brings me lots of joy every time I play the game. The game could be as simple as a pick up game of volleyball or a volleyball tournament. In either case, I would love to win, but for the most part, I am there simply to relax and have fun.

The type of athlete involved in the sports game is really the determining factor as to why he or she is affiliated with that particular sport. For the most part, no matter what the skill level is, the athletes engaging in sports seem to fit in this gray area of two extreme models. That is, that they seem to mix and match the criteria?s between the two models as to how they fit in with the sport. From my experiences with sports, I would have to say that the main motive for most athletes is that special ?love? for the game