Violence In Youth Sports Essay, Research Paper

In the United States today the age for a kid to start playing competitive sports continues to get lower and lower. Parents in America have started to get their children involved in sports at a much earlier age than they used to, hoping that their child will be the next superstar. Parents are placing too much emphasis on winning and being the best, instead of teaching their children how to have fun. Parents in the U.S. are also placing too much pressure on their kids to be the best. Parents in America are becoming much too involved in youth sports and are starting to get out of control, sometimes even resorting to violence and vulgarity.

Parents in the U.S. today are becoming too involved in youth sports and are getting out of control. In the July 24, 2000 issue of Sports Illustrated, there is an article by William Nack and Lester Munson about a father in Massachusetts who killed another father over a little dispute about youth hockey. On July 5, 2000 Thomas Junta, a father of two, got into what seemed to be a minor shoving match with Michael Costin, a father of four, over a play in a hockey practice. After a while the fight was broken up and Junta left the ice arena. A little while later Junta returned with clenched fists and pinned Costin to the ground. With Costin s children standing just a few feet away and pleading with Junta to stop, Junta pummeled Costin with punches to the face and slammed Costin s head into the hard rubber mats that covered the floor. By the time someone was able to pull Junta off of him, Costin s face was so badly beaten that even his own children could barely recognized him. Costin was left in a coma and died two days later. This shows that parents are way too out of control in youth sports. For a man to beat another man to death over something as miniscule as a youth hockey practice is just plain stupid and ridiculous. While not being as severe, incidents like this are happening all over the United States. In Ohio, a soccer dad punched a 14-year-old boy on the opposing team for getting into a scuffle with his son, and in Pennsylvania, a baseball dad gave a 10-year-old Little League pitcher two dollars to hit a batter with a fastball. In America today it has become commonplace to hear parents and coaches screaming and swearing at each other, the kids, or the officials at youth sporting events. Parents are slowly turning the playing of sports into a joyless, negative experience. According to a survey conducted by Michigan State University, a little less than three-fourths of American kids who participate in organized youth sports will quit before the age of 13 and they will say they dropped out mostly because of their own parents or adults in general. In a column in Sports Illustrated titled Ask the Coach , that appears in every couple issues, the Coach gives advice on sports, and in many cases the questions are about youth sports. The Coach answers questions on youth sports, like how much a parent should get involved in their child s sports, and in many other sports related subjects. In one of the issues a frustrated football father asks the Coach if he should push his son harder because he does not believe that his son is giving 100% effort. The man s son is a sixth grader. If this kid continues to be pushed to limits that he doesn t care to achieve then he will do what most kids do and quit the sport altogether. In another letter to the Coach a father is thinking of asking an official of an eight-ten-year-old youth baseball league to do an age check on one of the players in the league because the father thinks that the players skills are too advanced. This is another case of a parent wanting their child to be the best, so they are trying to cause trouble for an innocent kid who has just matured faster than the other kids. Parents need to stop getting too involved in their child s sports and let the kids play the games and have fun.

The amount of unnecessary behavior by parents at youth sporting events is increasing rapidly and is ruining the kid s experiences and their passion for the sports. Parents in the United States are becoming more involved in their children s sports than the kids themselves. The reason that so many young American athletes are quitting at such an early age is because their parents are making the sports a joyless experience and are placing too much pressure on the kids to win and to be the best. Parents have become out of control at youth sports and it seems that the kids are showing more civility than the parents these days. Parents need to get back to teaching their kids that sports should be played for fun and not just for showing who s the best.