
OVERTRAINING – MANAGING YOUR CHILDS SPORT

As you have probably experienced as a sports parent when a child becomes hooked on a sport or a number of sports they want to play at every opportunity. Playing school hockey can lead to county hockey, club hockey, and regional hockey and in certain circumstances national and international hockey.

In many circumstances each coach involved with each of the squads has the interests of their own teams at heart, and considers their team to be the most important. In some instances this can lead to a conflict where there are clashes in training dates and competitions. In many cases the young athlete will attempt to combine them all and keep all their respective coaches happy. But whilst the child may have desires to play in all teams, this is unfortunately not practically possible, and could be dangerous to their health and their long-term development in sport. It is therefore the responsibility of the parents that they manage the expectations of all those involved for the best interests of their child... the problem is how to do this.

Step 1

Make a list of all activities the child is involved with – this must include all physical activities such as PE lessons, school sports club practices/matches, sports club practices/matches, county practices/matches, regional practices/matches, national/international practices/matches, additional training such as fitness.

Step 2

Ask your child to rank each activity in order of importance for them (remember youth sport is about the child not the adult).

Step 3

Discuss with your child what their (not your) long term sporting goals are (i.e. to play for England) Look at what their most important activities are and whether they could play a role in achieving their long term goals. If for example playing school hockey matches are of major importance to them, but in order for your child to develop as a player it would be more beneficial for them to go to county training which is on the same day as school matches, discuss the implications of this, ensure the young player understands that they cant do both and the impact of missing one rather than the other. But make it their decision.

Step 4

When you have decided with your child what their priorities are going to be, sit with them and work out a schedule, this will help the young person understand why they have had to choose, and also help to see where a person may be over training/playing

Step 5

Ensure that in every week they have at least one complete rest day

Step 6

Make contact with all the teachers/coaches involved with your child's sport; discuss with them the decisions you and your child have made and your priorities for the immediate future, so that everyone understands the decisions that have been made. When agreed with your child, make sure they stick to the plan, and monitor it often.