Why are children quitting sports?

-Poll from ***National Alliance for Youth Sports***-around 70% of kids in the US stop playing organized sports by age 13 because…….

1. **Stopped being "fun"**
    i. 6 out of 10 kids say they quit sports because they lost interest

2. **Feel awkward because they lack physical literacy (being compared to others)**
    i. Lack of Physical Education time in schools
    ii. Increased reliance on computers, tablets, video games
    iii. Ways to help children become physically literate:
        1. Expose child to activities in a variety of environments (land, snow, water, ice, air)
        2. Expose them to swimming for water safety and ambidextrous movements
        3. Encourage FREE PLAY outside, tree climbing, jungle gym, backyard games
        4. Play catch with child using different balls and objects
        5. Provide opportunities to develop striking skills with bat and ball, racquets, sticks

3. **Parental pressure ("too enthusiastic", "too demanding")**
    i. Parents reliving their sporting lives through their children; desires for their child to earn an athletic scholarship.
    ii. Odds of a US High School Athlete Playing Football in College
        1. Football--(This year, there were 1,093,234 high school students who played football.
            a. 81,000 athletes played football in one of the 773 four-year universities. (7.4%)
            b. 19,369 football players on an NCAA Division 1 scholarship. (1.8%)
            c. 335 players invited to the NFL Combine (.03%)

d. 257 picks in the 2024 NFL Draft/Odds of becoming an NFL Draft pick: (.024%) or 2 student-athletes out of every 10,000 HS Football players.

4. **<u>Dreading the car ride home</u>**
   i. Don't be the parent who focuses on result only (Why did you do this? Why didn't you do that?)
   ii. When children are praised for EFFORT not results, they'll likely learn everything worth having is born of hard work.
5. **<u>Coaching--How is the game being presented to your child?</u>**
   i. Is your child's coach?
      1. Registered, background checked and SafeSport Compliant
      2. Knowledgeable about teaching, youth development and sport-specific education
      3. Familiar with age-appropriate guidelines and equipment/stays current with effective coaching methods ***(Do they know the difference between coaching a 7 year old and a 12 year old?)***
      4. Promoting a safe, fun and growth-focused culture ***(Can you tell the players are having fun? How is practice ending each day? With gassers and conditioning or a fun, upbeat drill or activity??)***
      5. Modeling/encouraging a positive attitude, open communication, respect for others/self ***(What is the body language/word choice of coaches?) Watch not only for "what" is said but "how" it is said.***
   ii. Many kids have a poor experience because they never get to play for a properly trained coach.
      1. Research has shown that only 5% of children who play for a properly trained coach quit the next season, while 26% drop out after playing for inadequately trained coaches.
      2. According to 2012 research, of the 6.5 million youth coaches in the US, only 19% had been trained in proper communication and motivation for the children they were coaching, and only 1 out of 3 was trained in the skills and techniques they were supposed to teach.

6. **<u>Sports Specialization Facts</u>** (American Medical Society for Sports Medicine):
    i. 88% of college athletes played more than one sport in high school.
    ii. Children who play multiple sports tend to be more physically developed than those who limit themselves to 1 sport.
    iii. Athletes who play just one sport are 70-90% more likely to get hurt.
    iv. Children who specialize in a single sport are more likely to experience "burnout" and stop participating altogether.
    v. Playing multiple sports statistically produces longer playing careers, better confidence, improved athletic development, and less chance of burnout.
    vi. 91% of the 2024 NFL 1st round draft picks (29 of 32) were multi-sport athletes.

7. **<u>Culture</u>** no longer supports older kids playing just for the fun of it
    i. Pressure to raise "successful" kids often means we expect them to be the best. If not, they're often encouraged to cut their losses and focus on areas where they can excel.

8. There is a ***<u>cost</u>*** to be competitive and not everyone is willing or able to pay it. ***<u>(Both in terms of the commitment level it takes to compete and in terms of the costs of being involved in sports.)</u>***