



Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is Sandlot Sports all about?

A1: Positive youth development! Some youth do not have interest in the project-based 4-H experience, and it is still within our mission to reach them in new venues. This approach is research-based and fun...should be a win, win!

Q2: You talk about the research behind all this. Can you say more about that?

A2: I could bring in a lot of different pieces on this one, but others have done an excellent job. John O'Sullivan has collated a number of the research pieces at this link. <http://changingthegameproject.com/is-it-wise-to-specialize/>

Q3: Are you afraid that if people don't have to put any "skin in the game," that they won't come regularly enough to sustain the program?

A3: These days parents and youth commit to programs that are meaningful and worthy of their time. It is awfully hard to say no to a child who wants to do something fun.

Q4: Why not just have the entire program in one central location like Cadiz?

A4: Just like in our 4-H community clubs, OSU Extension is a county-based program, so it is important that we spread the wealth throughout much of the county. If (when!) we ever got to a point where we had so many folks clamoring for weekly events in their hometown, we'd get highly trained volunteers to make it happen. That is a worthy challenge.

Q5: How did you pick the age range of 6 to 11?

A5: Starting at the top end first, it was important to stop by age 12. That is when sport specialization is okay to begin and we want to provide youth that chance to move on. The young age is primarily derived from the level of physical maturity necessary to play the majority of the sports we will offer. Our first priority is safety.

Q6: Have you thought about offering a more specialized program for older youth?

A6: I think our hope is that enough Sandlot Sports alumni will see the benefit of our way of doing things that they will demand changes to existing sports programs for older youth. Many coaches in the county have room for improvement.

Q7: Why only once per week?

A7: There is an entire culture of busyness that is negatively affecting today's families. We did not want to contribute to that. Once a week is plenty for this age group.

Q8: You talk about being family-friendly. Can you tell me more?

A8: This one is hard to define unless you have seen one of our events in action. Unless your family has a dog, toddler, or mean grandma that wants to join in, we can probably accommodate you most of the time! We openly welcome extended family, neighbors, etc. to get kids out and about through this program.

Q9: Is Sandlot harder for the kids or the parents?

A9: Parents, no question. Kids instinctively know when they are a part of something good. Parents often get caught up in the pictures on the mantle and water cooler discussion at work. Parents experience more social pressure than kids at this age.

Q10: Wait, I thought there was a t-shirt?

A10: Sure thing, it's just a hands-off approach and is completely un-required. If it helps your child feel more "normal" about their sports league, then by all means, get one. [Shirts available for order any time after June 2014; see website]

Q11: This Sandlot thing almost seems too easy. What are the hidden requirements?

A11: I can only think of two things that might qualify: 1.) If the adult who brings the child doesn't want to stay for the event, a small health form is required (only one time per summer). 2.) At each event, we will have an optional sign-up sheet. It will ask for an email address to receive Sandlot Sports notices.

Q12: Is there a code of conduct for youth or parents?

A12: Good programming typically generates good behavior. If we see a shortcoming, we will address it directly.

Q13: Why don't you play any of the "normal" sports? Why all the variations?

A13: Great question! The simple answer is that most "normal" sports are not designed for youth participation. Shocking? Not really. Think about a typical baseball game. How often is each youth involved in the action? Think about biddy football. Given the new research about youth brain injury susceptibility, why is tackle football even legal for kids? It is far more important that youth are active outdoors, having a good time, and developing useful skills along the way.

Q14: What is your goal for this program?

A14: Positive youth development. Period.

Q15: I want to help out on a regular basis...what should I do?

A15: Let Tim know @ tanner.128@osu.edu. He will walk you through the steps to become a certified 4-H Sandlot Sports Volunteer. [The process typically takes about a month, so don't delay too long if you are considering becoming a volunteer for the 2015 season!]

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