

Recently during one of our clinics a director for a national college coaches society asked my thoughts on “travel ball” and what has evolved for participants. My response is what used to be a protection sport for our young athletes no longer prevails. Travel ball has no real policing factors. The national organizations that once had control of sports have either turned their head or no longer exist. If they do exist, money has taken priority.

There are some great travel ball organizations that I endorse and recommend to my students. These are organizations that have a policy of protection, both physically and mentally. They have recognized board members who always think of the child first.

There are travel ball coaches out there who brag about and use the advertisement, “we went to nationals.” The team was one of more than a hundred teams and they could have finished 65th. Raw parents believe this to be good for their child and it will help them get into college. They pay thousands of dollars just to say, “We went to nationals.” There are some travel ball organizations that hold tournaments and recruit ball players from a wide area and hold a made up tournament and then try to sign the parents to a contract to train and control the child as to games, training and college recruiting, which could place the child and the college in violation of national rules.

There is really no reason for a parent to believe these lies and waste large sums of money. Even the National Organization of Orthopedic Surgeons has guidelines for training healthy ball players. One of the rules states, “Every ball player, male or female, must rest and train their bodies for eight weeks after three months of playing.” Qualified instructors must do the training, with no playing ball during this time.

As to playing in college, a well-trained successful athlete who is well prepared academically has no problem getting a scholarship to a university. We should know. Ninety-eight percent of our seniors have received backing to over 120 colleges and universities by following a pure training schedule directed at each individual’s growth and maturity. As a Kinesiologist my lifetime doctoral application has been in adolescent growth development. I train to the natural motion of each child, it’s not a “one size fits all.” I train to the body’s maturity level first, and then train the under performance of the individual to develop a foundation for a successful athlete.

Yes, I will recommend a “travel ball” team when I know the coach is thinking of the child first, rather than how much money can be raked in. Most of all, I recommend parents keep a diligent watch on the coaching of their child.