



# The Minnesota Youth Sports Research Consortium

Helping Create Change Across Youth Sports

**S**port, currently one of the most powerful societal institutions, impacts Minnesota children, youth, families and communities.

**Y**outh sports can provide a positive, meaningful context for youth development, family engagement, and nurturing social skills. However, the impact can often be negative and the challenges facing thousands of Minnesota children and families as a result of their involvement in youth sports are broad and complex. These include burnout, drop out, overuse injuries, cheating, violence, over-scheduling, inequalities, inadequately trained coaches, parental over/under involvement, oversight and policy issues.

*Positive youth development is not an automatic by-product of sport participation*

**T**he quality of youth sport experiences and outcomes are determined by adults—the coaches, administrators and parents who create, manage and influence youth sports. These adults are often searching for help in making policies and appropriate developmental choices for children and youth in sports, but fail to find accessible, centralized research-based expertise.

**Y**outh sport is in dire need of research, resources and appropriate policies to support its rapid growth and relative place of importance in society.

*Current youth sport practices and policies are formed without any contribution from the sport science community. (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004)*

**A strategic investment must be made to ensure adults create and nurture high quality youth sports.**

**T**he University of Minnesota is uniquely positioned to play a critical role as a change agent in youth sports for *all* children, families and communities. The School of Kinesiology faculty are among the best and the brightest in their fields. A sampling of the faculty’s collaborative and interdisciplinary youth sport research efforts include:

- Antecedents and determinants of parental sideline behavior
- Ethical implications of sport policy
- Influence of peers, coaches and parents on youth sportsmanship
- Bio-psycho-social predictors of athletic injury
- Minnesota **PLAYS**<sup>™</sup> (Parents Learning About Youth Sports)
- The influence of adult-created background anger on youth athletes

- *The 2007 Tucker Center Research Report: Developing Physically Active Girls. An Evidence-based Multidisciplinary Approach*

- Factors influencing bone health of youth athletes

The purpose of the **Minnesota Youth Sports Research Consortium**, housed within the School of Kinesiology is threefold:

To centralize youth sport expertise across the University and build collaborative multidisciplinary partnerships within the U of M, and externally with community partners

To raise public awareness of the role of youth sport in youth development and help parents, coaches and policy makers understand their role in creating healthy, family-friendly youth sport opportunities that benefit everyone in the community

To examine youth sports across the spectrum, from policy decision-makers, to the influence of coaches and parents, to those most affected by decisions, policies and the climate created by adults – **the children**



