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Character Education Through Sports

# CHAMPION PARENT NOTE

## Sports Injury Risk Profile: Recognizing the Factors

**Note:** This note is part of our Youth Sports Trauma Awareness and Responsiveness Series (Y-STAR). Look for more great posts coming soon.

Have you ever noticed that certain athletes seem more prone to injury than others? Is there such a thing as being injury prone? Why does sport injury happen, and what places one person more at risk for sport injury than another? Psycho-social factors are becoming increasingly recognized as significant factors in sports performance, injury prevention, rehabilitation, and management, but is there such a thing as an injury risk profile? The answer is *yes* and parents, coaches and trainers should be aware that one exists.



As far back as 1985 sports medicine experts have advised that "pre-exercise evaluations" should focus on the three body systems: musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, and *psychological*" (*Sports Medicine*, Vol. 2, Issue 6; emphasis added). *The Sport Injury Risk Profile* (SIRP) (Wiese-Bjornstal 2009) shows the many factors affecting sport injury risk. This gives athletes and their parents a means of understanding how psychological and socio-cultural factors operate interactively with physical and environmental factors within the larger context of sport injury risk, according to Susan Kay Hillman, editor of *Core Concepts in Athletic Training and Therapy* (Human Kinetics, 2012).

Divided into INTERNAL/Personal and EXTERNAL/Environmental factors, the SIRP identifies specific examples of elements within each of the four major contributors to the profiles that have been linked to sport injury risk. When these risks are identified, "interventions directed at better managing these aspects have the potential to reduce risk of sport injury in the same way in which other more common athletic training interventions, such as changes in training and conditioning protocols or the use of protective equipment, reduce risks," says Hillman.



We know from research that kids who fall on the Autism Spectrum have a 12% greater injury risk than children without ASD (*Academic Pediatrics*). We also know that compared to children without ADHD,

children with ADHD are more likely to be injured and often have more severe injuries ([Aboutkidshealth.ca](http://Aboutkidshealth.ca) and [LiveScience.com](http://LiveScience.com)). Take the following example: a child takes medication for his ADHD every morning before school starts; he hasn't been prescribed an extended-release (XR) form of his medication, so it starts to wear off right around the end of the school day, when practice is about to start. When the medication wears off, the athlete starts to feel tired, emotionally on edge and his focus wanes; hence, injury risk rises. Children and teens who have experienced trauma should also be added to the risk profile. In some instances, medications they take for anxiety and/or depression can impact performance. In other cases, stress from pressure to perform and (perceived) fear of what will happen if they fail can increase risk for injury, by drawing attention away from the task of performing.



The SIRP model has guided much of the research on psychological and socio-cultural influences on vulnerability to sport injury. According to this model, there is a psychological influence on the occurrence of sport injury. Hillman writes about the stress response:

*"Essentially, the more 'stress' participants perceive, the more vulnerable they are to injury, particularly if they do not have sufficient coping resources for managing the stress. Stress-related changes that occur in attention and cognition (e.g., tunnel vision, attention turning inward toward personal thoughts rather than focusing outward on the risks in the sporting environment) and physiology (such as increased muscle tension and increased heart rate) can negatively affect [young athletes'] behaviors and performance, which in turn increase the risk of injury."*

Sports parents, take the time to discuss the Sports Injury Risk Profile with your child athletes, particularly focusing on the psychological factors.

- Has your child had an event that is a life stressor?
- What have you done to help your child work through this trauma?
- Does your child have coping skills in place to manage stress?
- Is your child's mood challenged?
- Do you encourage your child to have a positive mindset?

Discussing psychological challenges as a family, seeking assistance when needed and communicating with your child's coach about factors that may impact the athlete may significantly reduce the risk of sports injury for your child.

## **We Champion Female Coaches**

The Saint Peter's Cross Country team (right) is just one of several partners who have begun sending in pictures demonstrating their support for female coaches. Check out our [website](#) as well as [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages to see more photos using the [#WeChampionFemaleCoaches](#).



**Join the movement and get your community involved today!**

## Upcoming Webinar



A reminder that the Play Like a Champion Today Educational Series is beginning a *Quarterly Collaborations* webinar series. Titled "Improving Youth Sports through Partnerships", the fall session is Wednesday, October 25th at 12:00 pm EDT. [Register now by clicking here and join us for this great event!](#)



## Don't Miss Out!

Follow us on your favorite social channels now. Whether you 'Gram or Tweet, use Facebook or watch videos on YouTube, subscribe and follow *Play Like a Champion* so you stay up-to-date on and off the field!

## Competing for Christ

*It is a privilege to compete on a team. You are blessed with God-given talents and a healthy body. Be thankful and enjoy competition.*

*Playing on a team requires the knowledge that you cannot do it alone. Jesus' primary message to us is to love. When you learn to trust your teammates you are conveying a message of community strength that is central to us as Christians. Competing on a team is just a microcosm of your life. If you are successful at being a team player your life will be abundant with support through the ups and downs of life's journey. Critique, compliment, and convey interest in what your teammates are executing on the court, field or in life. When you have a vested interest in one another the bonds of your team will become like one beautifully balanced machine with passion to do the absolute best...for God, for yourself, for your team!"*



**This wonderful meditation was created by Play Like a Champion Coach Emily Harrington from Denton, TX.**

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