



# Youth Sport and Spirituality: Catholic Perspectives

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Unsportsmanlike behavior by student athletes or parents at youth sporting events happens with regularity these days. Much recent research reveals that young people are dropping out of sport at alarming rates due to the often toxic elements in the culture of youth sports. The timely, innovative essays in *Youth Sport and Spirituality* present a wide-ranging overview that draws on resources from Catholic spiritual and theological traditions to address problems such as these, as well as opportunities in youth sport in the United States.

The book consists of two sections. In the first, prominent scholars in philosophy, psychology, theology, and spirituality reflect on how youth sport contributes to the integral development of the person and his or her grasp of spiritual values. The second half of the book consists of chapters written by coaches, athletic directors, and specialists working with youth coaches. These practitioners share how their approaches to working with youth in sport contribute to the integral development of their players and their openness to transcendent values. The essays examine coaching as ministry, youth sport and moral development, and how parents can act as partners in youth sports, among other topics. The book will interest coaches, athletic directors, and youth ministers in Catholic elementary and high schools in parish settings, as well as undergraduate and graduate students in education who are preparing to teach in Catholic schools.

"This is a much-needed and very important book. As the first book of this kind in the English speaking world it will be welcomed by a range of individuals involved in sport. The book's unique contribution is that it is the first time academics, coaches, and others have explicitly drawn on Catholic accounts from a range of disciplines to inform ideas on youth sport. We already have some excellent work on this topic informed by ideas from secular accounts and those of other Christian denominations; a Catholic perspective will be of great interest to those of that faith and of great importance to others who have little awareness of or do not fully understand this view." —**Mark Stephen Nesti, Liverpool John Moores University**

"Fr. Patrick Kelly offers a prophetic voice reminding us that balance, ethical values, and joy should be at the heart of youth sports. Offering both academic and practical inspiration, this book calls all athletes, coaches, and parents to integrate competition with character, winning with wisdom, fitness with fun, and sports with spirituality." —**Mike Hughes, Athletic Director, Jesuit High School, Portland, Oregon**

"A delightful, practical, and inspirational collection of essays on the spiritually formative aspects of youth sports: the ways they might teach self-transcendence, build character, and allow participants to experience the sheer creative joy of play, a crucial dimension of spiritual maturity too often ignored in 'serious' treatments of both spiritual formation and sports." —**Wendy M. Wright, Creighton University**

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