

## To Be the Best at One Sport, Play Several

An article, available on NFL.com, provides parents a good understanding of the need for kids to have a variety of sports experiences. The article cites Paul Hornung a football Heisman Trophy winner, member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame and recognized as a widely skilled player. His advice for young athletes is to delay specialization for as long as possible by playing a variety of sports for the following reasons:

- Each sport develops different physical skills, coordination and conditioning -- all of which will result in overall athletic growth.
- Each sport requires a different mental approach, yields a variety of experiences, and breeds discipline which can be applied to other sports.
- A variety of coaches, in different sports, can provide a broader background of fundamentals, strategies and performance tips.
- Playing different sports can help youngsters avoid mental burnout, injuries and a sport becoming work, instead of fun.
- Playing different sports early on can give athletes an edge when they are forced to specialize later on because of their well-rounded experiences.
- Besides playing different organized sports, young athletes should have time to play plenty of pick-up games for fun and peer competition, with no adult supervision, because these promote creativity and freedom to improve, instead of the pressure to always perform successfully.

The sports learning process should be similar to the one that kids go through in school where class time is divided among many subjects. Parents should encourage their kids to seek this variety of sports education knowing that the more well rounded they are with all skills, the better kids will play in any sport they choose.

(source: [sportsesteem.com](http://sportsesteem.com))