

Craig Whitnack

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WHAT YOUTH SOCCER HAS MEANT TO ME

Growing up in California for fourteen years, soccer has always been one of my favorite activities to watch and play. I began playing youth soccer when I was only five years old and ended up playing nine years before moving to Oklahoma. Having also been an active basketball and baseball player for seven years, I was uncertain if soccer would be the sport that stayed with me during my transition. But as soon as I realized how incredibly competitive Oklahoma soccer was (and that it was played year-round), my choice of what to keep was simple. Staying with soccer was one of the greatest decisions I have ever made. Only soccer could have given me all the great qualities that I have today.

Soccer has not only taught me how to be a good sportsman, but has also taught me some of life's most important lessons. Through soccer, I have learned how to forgive teammates and coaches, making me realize that I make just as many mistakes as everyone else. It has made me learn how to lose, but at the same time, it has taught me to never quit or give up. Discipline is another extremely vital lesson that soccer has to offer. The only way to succeed is to play as a team and be compatible with your coach. Aside from these, soccer has also given me an exceptional reason to stay healthy and to not even think twice about taking drugs or smoking. With soccer, you can make lifelong friendships; you create a brotherhood on the soccer field that carries over into school and other extracurricular activities. Soccer is a way for me to just enjoy what life has to offer.

This sport has meant so much to me over the past thirteen years. It differs from every other sport because there are no set plays and no time outs; you don't know what is going to happen next, and it is the spontaneity that keeps me interested. There is no reward or gift big enough to repay what youth soccer has given to me.