

Such a statement raises quite a few points regarding the question of whether or not a girl should play on a boys' team. The first point to consider is the statement of the physiological differences between boys and girls around the age of ten. This argument is used to show that young girls are somehow handicapped because of an innate frailty. This is blatantly untrue. Girls are usually more physically developed than boys between the ages of nine to thirteen and can compete equally at all levels of sport. The municipalities cannot use this characteristic as a reason for eliminating girls from the boys' teams.

The second point discussed by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association is the idea about 'effective competition'. It is true that when the players are ten years old competitive aspects should be expected. But surely the emphasis should not be totally on competition? Rather it should be on enjoyment, team work and cooperation. 'Children at this age are not miniature adults, they are boys and girls in the process of maturation into adults', (Orlick, 1975, p. 168). And girls and boys playing together can learn the skills of the sports, have fun, compete, learn to win and lose, without feeling bombarded by the adult world's concepts of *win at all costs*.

The view that the home situation will be 'less stable' if girls play with boys on a team is a loaded statement with little supportive evidence. In fact a totally opposite viewpoint seems the most obvious. If we eliminate some of the role-playing from our sports perhaps future relationships between men and women will be more positive and family life can begin to be based on the concept of equals sharing a common bond in all areas of their relationships, intellectual, emotional, physical and psychological. Sports are very much in the public eye. Sports heroes are idolized and many young people try to identify with them in some way. What a challenge for the municipalities to seize on this opportunity and introduce a different concept of sports at a very early level. If they answer the challenge we could see role-playing between the sexes diminishing and finally being eradicated and if this could happen on the playing fields it would carry over into other areas of life.

The final point to be made from the statement by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association is that boys' egos will be harmed if they lose a game to the girls. At the ages of nine to thirteen I feel it is the parents who are perhaps instilling the idea of

having to win into the boys' minds. What difference does it make if a boy loses to a girl or a girl to a boy? Surely it is the authorities of the organizations — the adults — who feel that egos will be bruised. So often I hear from the young girls involved that the boys on the teams 'don't mind if I play'. It's the people who were running the organization that are opposed to the idea. In his book *Every Kid Can Win* Orlick quoted Marie Pepe as saying; 'It isn't the boys who don't want me to play and little league is for kids. It is only the grown-ups who made the mess' (Orlick, 1975, pp. 122). It is the parents who take the cases into the court room situation (though this may be the only recourse they have), and the head advisory boards or organizational groups who put the restrictions on activities such as minor league baseball and hockey. All the kids want to do is play, learn and have fun!

Keeping these points in mind the municipality can react in a number of ways. If there is a sufficient number of girls and boys to create two different leagues OK — but at the ages of nine through thirteen learning and enjoyment should be the main objectives. Alternatively the age limits may have to be lifted in the girls' leagues allowing all those with relatively the same ability to play together. If this suggestion doesn't solve the problem (because of the under-developed skills of the young girl) then other alternatives must be considered. Either co-ed inhouse leagues must be formed or the girls should be able to play with the boys. WHY NOT? The children do enjoy playing with each other and in fact can be seen as the authors of their own destiny. They could be the catalyst we're waiting for. They could touch off the breakdown of structural roles in society at large — a much bigger game than even hockey — and much deadlier. And who knows the city fathers might even save some money and reduce scheduling conflicts — something that the city mothers have long known how to do.

#### Bibliography

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#### Child Eating an Egg

Don't watch, I said  
if it bothers you

if it takes her a day, a year  
let her pick with a fingernail, the moon's crust  
smithier with a spoon, the crackling bald white shell  
to alabaster dust,  
Ringed green sulphur golfball  
aeons of light  
incubating baby chicks and spacemen

But he took the egg, adult fashion  
peeled it, cut it wedgewise  
precisely

Maara Haas