



# ESPN TAKE BACK SPORTS

YOUTH SPORTS MOVEMENT

POWERED BY 





# IT'S NO SURPRISE YOUTH SPORTS LEADS TO **HEALTHIER, HAPPIER KIDS**



Sports improves physical health, balance and coordination. Children who participate in team sports tend to have increased cardiovascular fitness. This means stronger heart function, lower body fat, greater muscle mass and stronger bones.

Physically active children:

- ✓ 1/10 as likely to be obese
- ✓ Up to 40% higher test scores
- ✓ Less smoking & drug use
- ✓ Lower levels of depression
- ✓ High levels of self-esteem





# YOUTH SPORTS PARTICIPATION **IS ON THE DECLINE**

**39.8%**

Only 39.8% of children ages 6–12 played team sports on a regular basis in 2023. In 2008, 45% of kids played on a regular basis.

**age 11**

The average child today spends less than three years playing a sport, quitting by age 11.

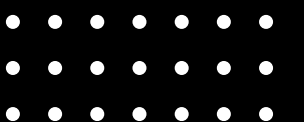
**\$1,016**

The average U.S. sports family spent \$1,016 on their child's primary sport in 2024, a 46% increase since 2019.

*1. Sports and Fitness Industry Association*

*2. Aspen Institute & Utah State University Families in Sports Lab*

*3. Aspen Institute, Utah State University, Louisiana Tech University and TeamSnap youth sports parent survey 2024*





# WE NEED TO EXPAND THE AUDIENCE



**BY GETTING KIDS  
PLAYING**

- Youth who play sports are **14x more likely** to become an avid fan.
- The younger sports fandom begins, the higher **likelihood of adult avidity**.



# ESPN'S STRATEGY **TO GET KIDS PLAYING**



ESPN has launched a comprehensive youth sports initiative aimed at getting kids back into sports. This year-long campaign soft-launched at the CFP National Championship Game, pulsed at NBA All Star Weekend and fully launched at the Project Play Summit, the largest youth sports conference in the U.S.

In partnership with the professional leagues and athletes, we'll use key moments in sports to bring awareness to the critical issues in and around youth sports to get more kids playing.

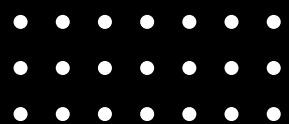
**The initiative is geared at parents and coaches of kids ages 5-11.**







# PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS



- ✓ **Community Rec Leagues**  
Ensure kids of all abilities have access to community programming (travel teams don't have to be the only option)
- ✓ **Train All Coaches**  
Get more coaches into the youth sports system (especially females) and get them trained in key competencies to help kids thrive
- ✓ **Multisport Play**  
Help prevent injury and burnout by promoting the importance of not specializing too early
- ✓ **Having Fun**  
#1 reason kids play sports – need to bring the fun back and help coaches with mental health training



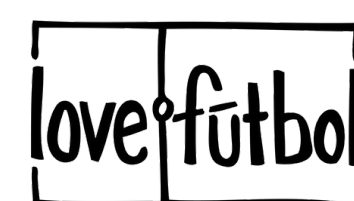


# CREATING IMPACT TOGETHER



ESPN has invested millions to remove the barriers to entry and help kids get access to sports. Investments are targeted toward those with the least amount of access.

In the first year, Take Back Sports grants have impacted more than **650,000 youth**.





# ATHLETE AMBASSADORS

## VIGNETTES

ESPN is teaming up with athletes from across different leagues and sports to join us in spreading the word about the joys and challenges in youth sports.

A vignette series highlights these athletes across ESPN platforms.



**Natasha Cloud**

NY Liberty

**Stephen Curry**

Golden State Warriors

**Luka Dončić**

Los Angeles Lakers

**Diana Flores**

MEX National Flag

**Zay Flowers**

Baltimore Ravens

**Coco Gauff**

USTA

**Derrick Henry**

Baltimore Ravens

**Max Holloway**

UFC Fighter

**Jordan Larson**

LOVB Omaha

**Sydney Leroux**

Angel City FC

**Francisco Lindor**

NY Mets

**Lamar Jackson**

Baltimore Ravens

**Eli Manning**

Retired, NFL

**Peyton Manning**

Retired, NFL

**Lexi Rodriguez**

LOVB Omaha

**Ben Shelton**

USTA

**Jordan Spieth**

PGA TOUR

**Tage Thompson**

Buffalo Sabers

**Francis Tiafoe**

USTA

**A'ja Wilson**

Las Vegas Aces



# PRIORITY STORYTELLING

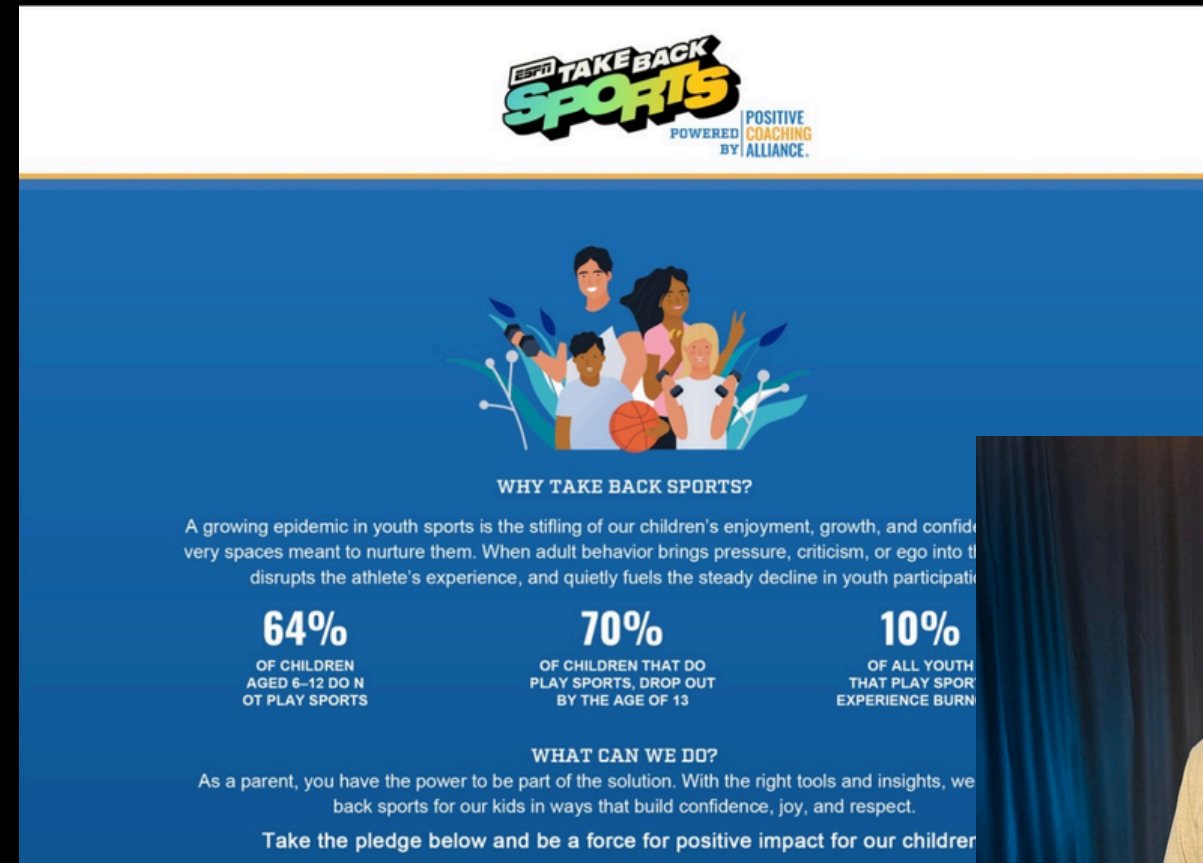
- **SportsCenter series** – An ambassador is interviewed in a regular segment on SportsCenter each week.
- **April Youth Sports Week** – Vignettes will run throughout the week; an NFL Draft integration, on-campus events, & more
- **PSAs** – Maximize placement of Manning and SVP PSAs





# PARENT RESOURCES

- A site with parent resources, **TakeBackSports.org**, with Positive Coaching Alliance's site
- A PSA featuring **Peyton and Eli Manning & Steph Curry**
- A PSA with **Scott Van Pelt**
- A ESPN.com **parent quiz** that gives parents tips and resources





# ACTIVATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

- **Little League World Series** – Interviews, PSAs, press conference
- **Texans / PCA coaches clinic** – Featured on NFL Live
- **PGA Jr. Championship** – Vignette & announcer talking points
- **NHL Innovation Competition** – Solving youth sports issues; hosted at WWOS
- **CFP National Champ Game** – Day of Play / multisport clinic in Miami





# TIMELINE 2026

