

Are club teams hurting high school sports?

By Dave Zook, Moonshine Ink

That Tahoe/Truckee kids have a good amount of sporting options would be an understatement. There are the traditional ball sports that most Americans grow up with. And then there are the sports unique to a mountain town, such as mountain bike leagues and skiing – alpine, big mountain, and Nordic, with multiple competitive disciplines each – which all also vie for time with the endless list of recreational outdoor activities.

And if that weren't enough, within the arena of traditional sports there is the increasing role of club sports as an option outside of official school leagues. These associations are organized independently of schools, and are commonly seen in soccer, volleyball, basketball, and baseball. They are available to kids barely out of preschool, and can steer a kid's athletic direction for life.

Clubs draw in parents and kids with the promise of high competition levels, top-tier coaching, and exposure to the eyes of college recruiters, but they also require heavy travel and time commitments, and substantial cost to participate. With the increasing appeal of club teams, is club sports' influence changing the youth sports landscape as we know it?

Read the whole story