**Center of Attention**

Sports take precedence over many activities such as academics or the arts. Many high school students put too much emphasis on sports which results in poor academics, overshadowing of the arts, and unnecessary drama. If this is not changed many high school students will face a rude awakening when attending college.

As a high school student, witnessing a classmate place academics after sports is not an uncommon occurrence. Many players put homework on the back burner as soon as sports begin. Many students become so involved in sports that grades suffer horribly and the teacher suffers too. Teachers work hard to help students learn and succeed in life. Then many students thank them by not turning in homework or cheating. How ethical is that? Some students attain the “I don’t want to be here” attitude and don’t try at all! Is that rewarding to the teacher? Rewarding no, disappointing yes. Students need to become more focused on school or they may not receive scholarships for college or be able to attend college. More scholarships for academics are given than for sports. Many high school boys strive to be a NFL football player when grown. Now let’s be realistic here, how many people grow up to play professional football? Not meaning to crush dreams, but very few men grow up to be professional football players. Now there are many students who are involved in sports that succeed in school; however, many students are so worried about how much playing time they will receive, that they become distracted. Some students use sports as a motive to do well in school, however, high school sports take students out of the classroom and can affect grades even if they try hard.

Secondly, sports overshadow the arts. The art programs in many schools don’t receive any attention! Sports receive more funding in many school districts and art is the first to be cut in times of economic distress. Arts and academics are more likely to help a person further themselves in life than sports are. Arts are important because they broaden the interests of the students. An athlete can be an artist; it is not a crime. If high school students don’t participate in the arts, they could graduate without learning about different types of cultures. High school students need to broaden their horizons, so they know what activities they would like to participate in while attending college. Now, it is understandable that everyone is an individual and has different interests; however, students need to try multiple activities to figure out what they are truly interested in.

Additionally, high school sports add drama and stress to the life of a high school student. High school sports are full of cat fights and unwanted drama. In many cases upperclassmen take advantage of underclassmen since they have seniority. Now, this may be true, but what about treating others the way we want to be treated? Many students hold grudges against each other if one plays more than the other. Drama is also the culprit of teams losing games. Teams need to realize that if they fight, they will never be able to work as a team or win. Sports also add enormous amounts of pressure on the team and on the coach. For instance, some parents yell at their kids if they make mistakes playing sports. Then the coach also gets criticized by parents if anything goes wrong. Many parents pressure children when playing sports, so students become stressed and don’t feel good enough. If parents add too much pressure, their child can become depressed and unconfident. Now it is understandable why high school sports are valued, they bring in money, teach individuals to work together, and are exciting; however, people need to realize that the drama is unnecessary and adds unneeded pressure to the lives of students.

High school sports are an enjoyable part of the high school experience, but students need to realize that academics, arts, and self-confidence are critical, also. As a high school student, I am challenging all readers and students to exit their comfort zone and explore new territory. As a concerned citizen, I am asking all people to reevaluate the priorities in their lives. Go out and explore!