

Young people and sport

A Luke Hazleton

My mum is the team manager for the Olympic diving team and when I was a baby I used to go with her to the pool and jump in and out – now I practise diving every day after school and on Saturdays. I'm really too tall to be a great diver and my long legs make it difficult to do somersaults, so I don't think I'll ever make it to the top. But nevertheless, I find it exhilarating when I'm diving well. If it's a complicated dive, I have to concentrate very hard, which is difficult if I feel nervous. My dad's support is very motivating for me. I take part in about ten competitions a year, both national and international. The best thing about it is that you make new friends from different countries. I do trampolining for the regional team, which prepares me for diving – the moves are similar but you don't land in water! The one thing I don't like about it is that doing my homework takes up my spare time and I don't have much time to go out with my friends from school.

B Natalie Harris

Last year our netball team was promoted to the top league and so the coach became very strict. At that level, every move is scrutinised and discussed, which makes everyone feel very pressurised. There's a lot of competition to get chosen for the team and sometimes I got substituted. When I played last year, I would look at the subs sitting on the sidelines and not really care, but when I started to become one myself I had a whole new perspective on the game. Now I realise that when you're not the best at a sport it doesn't seem as much fun as when you're a top player. I left the team earlier this year, as the pressure of playing in matches was too much; it was becoming a frustration instead of a recreation. I still enjoy playing netball with my friends in gym classes, when I can

relax without worrying about impressing my coach all the time.

C Joanne Whittaker

I was good at football and I really enjoyed playing left back in the school team. Then one Saturday when I was 14, I went to watch the local ice hockey team play. It was so exciting and became a real turning point in my life. School football seemed so dull in comparison. I discovered that there was a local women's ice hockey team just being set up. At first, the coach thought I was too young and too inexperienced as I'd only done occasional fun skating on Saturday afternoons. But she agreed to give me a trial and I have been playing for three years now. I'll really find out what I can do in June when we go to take part in a women's international ice hockey competition in Prague.

D James Spiers

I knew I was serious about rugby when I scored a try in my first game. I was named 'player of the year' at my club last year and I'm also captain of my school team. My uncle often comes to watch me play. He's very competitive so that is probably why I am too. Losing makes me feel that I've done something wrong. It doesn't happen very often, though. I'm not normally an aggressive person but, on the rugby pitch, I am. I don't think girls should play rugby as it's so aggressive and they could easily get injured. Most of my schoolmates play rugby and all of them are sporty. I can't really imagine my life without rugby! I'm going to agricultural college when I leave school and eventually will take over my uncle's farm, but I hope there'll still be time for lots of rugby. If I have a son, I'll want to help coach his team and I'd be disappointed if he wasn't interested in sports. I'll definitely be a competitive dad!

Part 3

You are going to read an article in which four young people are talking about sport. For questions 16–30, choose from the people (A–D). The people may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Which person

thinks winning is the most important thing?

was inspired by seeing others take part in the sport?

feels their sport has both a positive and negative impact on their social life?

thinks that their sport may be inappropriate for a particular group of people?

was nearly refused a place on a team?

has changed their mind about participating in competitive sport?

has long-term plans which include continued involvement in their sport?

is realistic about their chances of being very successful?

feels that there is too much emphasis on analysing performance?

has learnt to be more sympathetic to less successful competitors?

thinks playing their sport changes their character?

uses a second sport to improve performance in their main sport?

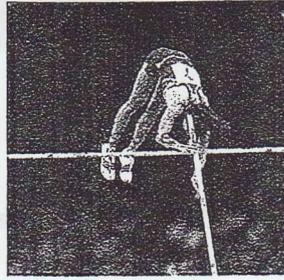
is looking forward to a new challenge?

has friends locally who share their passion for sport?

thinks it is easier to perform well in their sport when they are calm?

Part 4

You will hear a radio interview with a woman called Sandra Morelle, who is a champion in the sport of pole vaulting. For questions 24–30, choose the best answer (A, B or C).



- 24 According to Sandra, why have women started to take part in pole vaulting?
- A They like the sense of danger involved.
 - B They have already demonstrated their ability in team sports.
 - C They have developed strength they once lacked.
- 25 How did Sandra react when pole vaulting was first suggested to her?
- A She was willing to try anything new.
 - B She was unsure if it was a good idea.
 - C She worried that other athletes might disapprove.
- 26 How did Sandra feel when she first tried the sport?
- A Her previous training gave her confidence.
 - B It was not as hard as she had thought it would be.
 - C She found it an uncomfortable experience.
- 27 According to Sandra, her success in pole vaulting comes from
- A forgetting about the heights.
 - B concentrating on doing it properly.
 - C avoiding unnecessary risks.

- 28 How does Sandra account for her rapid progress as a pole vaulter?
- A She has done well because it is a new sport.
 - B She trains with people who are better than her.
 - C She is motivated by the competition.
- 29 According to Sandra, why have so many good gymnasts taken up pole vaulting?
- A It is not as physically demanding.
 - B It is better paid than many other sports.
 - C It is an easier sport to do as you get older.
- 30 How does Sandra regard her rival, Olga Karinova?
- A She doubts if Olga is ready to challenge her.
 - B She has respect for Olga's ability in the sport.
 - C She accepts that Olga is likely to beat her eventually.