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THE FAILURE OF COED SPORTS

Adults who resist fashions in social experimentation demanded by the avant-garde liberals have a way of shoving those styles on little children who can't fight back.

Thus, adults acquiesced in allowing their children to be forcibly bused across town in order to participate in the racial integration which their parents abjured. They rationalized that forcing this practice on little children would change the habits and attitudes of the next generation, presumably for the better.

The same pattern emerged in forced coed sports, which became the socio-educational fashion starting about 1975 when Title IX regulations went into effect (mandated by the Education Amendments of 1972). Adults and even teenagers, who had no intention of engaging in coed sports themselves, acquiesced in allowing this fad to be foisted off on grade school children.

The liberal theory is that "separate but equal is not equal," that any sex-based separation represents discrimination against females and, in any event, is an obsolete stereotype. The liberals assured us that coed sports would ultimately produce good results in making females more assertive and males more sensitive. A few were frank enough to talk glowingly of producing a gender-free or even an androgynous society.

Of course, the physical difference between girls and boys is so great and so self-evident by age 13 that the coed-sports enthusiasts postponed testing their theories at the high school level. The brunt of this experiment in changing centuries-old attitudes and behavior was born by grade school children.

When parents protested at the way their children were forced into competition and close contact with children of the opposite sex, they were ridiculed into submission. Some children were allowed to be exempted from coed physical education classes if they produced a letter from their pastor; but none was allowed to be exempted on the basis of common sense, parental preference, or a decent respect for the wisdom of the ages.

Law-abiding parents were cowed by the strong arm of the law. When schools or

teachers dragged their feet in forcing coed sports on the youngsters, their "sexism" was "exposed" by feminist organizations, operating with grants from tax funds wrapped in the jargon of "sex equity."

Finally, the magazine Psychology Today has dared to publish an article entitled "The Failure of Coed Sports." It's as refreshing as the day the boy dared to cry, "The emperor has no clothes!" The writer of this article has discovered that children, when faced with the choice of coed competition or no competition, are massively choosing the latter.

The lawyer for one 11-year-old girl brought a test case and litigated her way onto a Little League team. But after years of equal opportunity in Little League, girls overwhelmingly choose to play on all-female Little League softball teams; there is only one girl for every 200-300 boys on the "coed" Little League teams.

Pop Warner Football has only 24 girls among its 200,000 7- to 15-year-old competitors, and almost all of those are under age 11. When Minnesota passed a state law enforcing coed sports for 11 years old and younger, Minnesota boys "voted" with their feet: more than 1,000 basketball players (one-third of the program) simply dropped out.

Recent evidence from the Youth Sports Institute of Michigan State University indicates that boys can already outrun girls by the age of 2-1/2; male toddlers also excel in mobility, aggression, and exploratory behavior. Another study of 550 equally-trained children from the ages of 2 to 18 found that, in five out of eight standard tests, boys demonstrated their superiority by the age of 7-1/2 to 8.

Physical differences are only one of many reasons why coed sports are undesirable, even at the grade school level. There are psychological reasons, too: boys are three times more apt than girls to name winning as their primary reason for competing, as opposed to values such as fair play and group participation.

Psychiatrists, sports psychologists, and pediatricians are now saying that coed sports produce new fear and confusion at a stage when girls and boys alike are desperately in search of some firm sense of competence and sexual identity. Nobody has ever proved that the breaking down of the polarity of the sexes is healthy.

The bottom line is that girls and boys don't play the same game. When they are forced to play the same game, only a few outstanding girls can play, while the overwhelming majority cannot and do not want to participate at all.