

A THESIS

COMMITTEE

Dear of the College

A STUDY OF PARENT ATTITUDES TOWARD PEWEE FOOTBALL
IN GAUSE PUBLIC SCHOOL

A Thesis
Submitted to
the Faculty of
Sam Houston State Teachers College

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Master of Arts

by
Fletcher A. Wilson
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

Even though Pee wee football has been an apparent success in Gause, Texas, the author has been interested in determining just how the boys' parents feel about their sons playing at this elementary age level. There has been so much controversy from different educators, as to the advisability of boys eleven to fourteen years of age playing football, that the author has decided it would be worth while to make a study of the situation in Gause and compare the attitudes of these parents against the attitudes of some other authorities on this subject. The author feels that the parents' attitudes on this question is the paramount consideration; and as far as he can ascertain, no research has been done along this line. As far as the author is concerned, this thesis, in helping to prove the advisability or inadvisability of Pee wee football, may determine his course of action in future coaching situations. It also may give someone else something to review before setting up an elementary school athletic program.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem. Pee wee football originated in Gause, a small community in central Texas, in 1949. Gause's

population is approximately fifty per cent white and fifty per cent colored. The Gause white high school students are transported to another town, therefore, there is only one elementary school for whites, including eight grades, although the colored school has both elementary and high school. The enrollment in the white elementary school is usually about one hundred and fifteen students in the eight grades. Pee wee football is played with a weight limit as well as age and grade limits. A boy must be in elementary school, (grades one through eight), not over fourteen years of age, and must not weigh over one hundred pounds. Since weight is considered, a boy will never have to play against another that out-weighs him to a great extent. Practically every boy in the age, grade, and weight limit participates in Pee wee football in Gause, and the girls, with few exceptions, are in the Pep Squad, thereby having a part in all games in which the boys play. In the author's personal opinion, Pee wee football is beneficial to elementary boys in any school, but it is his belief that it has proved of particular benefit to the school in Gause and to the town itself. Until 1949, Gause had no athletic program of any kind, nor did the school or community provide any type of supervised recreation for its young people. Pee wee football has helped to solve this problem for both the boys and girls and has provided a mutual interest in which both the school and community can share.

This study has been made (1) to find out how the attitudes of the boys' parents compare with the attitudes of educators on boys from eleven to fourteen years of age playing Peewee football; and (2) the effect, if any, that playing football has upon the grades made during the time the boy is playing football, compared with the grades he makes when he is not playing football.

Importance of the study. By gathering data from the parents of boys that have already played from one to three years of Peewee football in Elementary school, and also the opinions of the different writers that have done research, the author can thereby compare varying opinions on this question. There is a doubt in many peoples' minds whether a boy from eleven to fourteen years of age should be allowed to participate in football activity as played in Peewee football. As far as the author can ascertain, there has never been research done on this particular problem, and very little has been written on it in any form; therefore, almost all of my information will be taken without the aid of prior opinions and research. It will be important to find out just how the parents feel toward their boys playing Peewee football, and through the author's interviews with them, and presenting them with the questionnaires, that information will be found.

Delimitation

This study is limited to Peewee football players in Gause and their parents, and articles that have been written

on the subject of boys of from eleven to fourteen years of age playing interschool athletics.

Source of Data

The data for this thesis was acquired by sending out questionnaires to parents of football players to determine their attitude toward their children participating in the football games and what good, if any, their boys derived from this participation. The Peewee football players' grades were obtained from the school records of Gause to determine the grade average of the Peewee football players before and after-football season, and these grades compared. Other opinions were received from articles in magazines and other papers, and were compared with the opinions of the parents of Peewee football players in Gause, Texas.

Procedure

Most of the data was secured from Gause, since Peewee football originated in Gause three years ago. A brief history of Peewee football, why it was started, and information received from E. C. Weafer, the director of the Milk Bowl Inc., and the man responsible for the beginning of Peewee football in Texas, will be given to explain to the reader why the author felt that Gause should be the place to make a survey of the attitudes toward Peewee football. Most

of the parents have a boy that not only has played one year of Peewee football, but three years, therefore their opinion should be rated highly. The author has been coach of the Gause Peewee team the last two years and he feels the need of finding out the attitudes of the people of the community, to determine the advisability of continuing this sport in the elementary schools. The author personally interviewed every parent of Peewee football players, and had them answer a questionnaire.

Ultimate Objectives

1. To find out various attitudes toward the relatively new field of Peewee football, as played in Gause.

2. To compile data for readers who might be interested in the reactions and attitudes of the players' parents in Gause, the first town to initiate this type of football, so that they might be governed accordingly, if they planned to start football in the elementary school under similar circumstances.

3. To determine, as far as the records show, if playing Peewee football effects the players' grades.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since the football program in elementary school is a relatively recent idea, there has been very little research done on the subject. However, it would appear from the limited number of articles which have been published that the authors are united in their viewpoints against the idea of boys of this age engaging in a competitive football program.

In an article entitled "Objections to Competition," Edwin B. Henderson states the following points regarding elementary boys participating in competitive sports:

One objection to instituting even a minor competitive form of competitive sports is the fact that the plan may involve the 'varsity' type team. This implies the selection of the best players in the school for the team monopoly of the playfield or court for use by the team, and the entire time of the teacher-coach for this one group. Many educators envision inheriting the evils of this form of specialization, such as exploitation of the team in the effort to produce winners, encouragement of spectatorship, and undue emotional tensions.¹

Mr. Henderson² cited a plan of competitive athletics

¹ Edwin B. Henderson, "Objections to Competition," American Association for Health and Physical Education and Recreation Journal, 22:21-22, June, 1951.

² Ibid., p. 24.

with which an elementary school of Washington, D. C. has successfully experimented the past six years. There is no "varsity" team representing the school. The organization of the plan in part is as follows:

1. Prior to each sports season a "team" is formed in each upper-grade homeroom. Of the boys in such a classroom, most of them become players or substitutes. This team remains intact as a playing unit throughout the season of the sport. One strict rule is observed--there can be no borrowing of boys from any other room.

2. An intramural schedule of play is set up for the teams in each grade level. These teams play at recess periods or during physical education periods or at close of school. By a certain date the best fifth grade team and the best sixth grade team must be chosen. These two teams represent the school in a simple elimination series arranged for the schools within a nearby area or region. A date is set early in the season for the regional championship of each grade to meet in a simple elimination for the city championship. Each losing team plays only once, while the city winner would play not more than four or five games.

3. The organization for elementary school athletics consists of representatives from each building who meet in September, elect officers, organize committees, and plan for the year's schedule. Besides the athletic experiences gained

by the boys and the skills approved, other most valuable outcomes have been demonstrated. Many a boy has been rehabilitated who was a truant or careless about school activities. A sampling case study has revealed that hundreds of boys have found greater interest in school and have shown remarkable individual character reformation.

Mr. Henderson³ feels in order to spread the time of physical education teachers equitably among all children, it is essential to develop a balanced program which reaches the child who is physically below par, the average youngster, and the physically gifted youth. He believes that interschool athletics will tend to direct major attention to the school team and allow it to monopolize teacher time and physical education facilities.

Regarding this problem, Mr. Henderson states:

Coaches should give serious thought to the educational implications of choosing the best material for developing winning teams while side-stepping their responsibility for the average and low-skill students. This cannot be justified. Interschool athletics are not for the glorification of coach any more than they are for the glorification of any one player. Any man who develops and exploits the skills of a few selected students to build up his own reputation while neglecting the needs of many students, is guilty of a crime in the name of education which should not be tolerated.⁴

³ Ibid., p. 21

⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

There seems to be general agreement that the practice of highly competitive athletics for elementary school pupils is contrary to sound educational principles and is often detrimental to the health and safety of the participants. Taylor Dodson wrote the following concerning elementary boys playing football and other sports at this early age:

Interschool athletics should be confined to senior high schools. They are inappropriate in the elementary and junior high schools. From the point of view of health it is important to remember that children of this age are in a period of rapid change in size and in emotional and social adjustment. There is at this age only partial ossification of bones, with a healing hazard after injury that cannot be disregarded. Reliable observers feel that this is also a time when the individual is particularly vulnerable to injuries.

In general, medical personnel and educators are agreed that there are real values in properly conducted physical activities. Not only are these activities an aid to physical development, but they also offer a fine opportunity to teach cooperation, loyalty, leadership, and other worthwhile qualities. However, in a democracy one cannot justify restricting these benefits to the few who will get to play on the first team. The primary obligation of the public school is to provide opportunity for all children to learn the lesson to be taught on the playing field and in the gymnasium. This does not mean that the physically gifted child should be neglected. It merely indicates that such children should not be given a disproportionate share of the time and facilities available.⁵

Mr. Dodson⁶ believes that the solution to the problem lies with school administrators. They must secure only

⁵ Taylor Dodson, "Elementary Interschool Athletics," School Activities, 23:35, October, 1951.

⁶ Ibid., p. 36.

qualified physical education teachers to handle the athletic program in the high school and the elementary school, when specialists are employed to assist the classroom teachers with physical education. The administrator must also provide adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies with which to conduct a broad program of physical education activities, such as rhythms, games, relays, stunts, and outing activities for all boys and girls. Mr. Dodson further states as follows:

The program of instruction in the basic skills of many activities should be supplemented by supervised free play and recreational opportunities of the child's own choosing. To satisfy the competitive urge of elementary school children, an extensive intramural program should be planned and conducted with ample opportunities provided for student leadership in such capacities as squad leader, captain, scorers, umpire or referee, grounds keeper, and tournament manager. It is through such learning-by-doing activities that we develop the true democratic spirit of leading and following in turn, according to the demands of the situation. Only by positive action on the part of administrators and teachers can we meet the need of safe, sound and sane educational opportunities for each child according to his maximal potentialities.⁷

Elmer D. Mitchell expressed his view in the following statement:

The case against Junior High School interscholastic athletics contends that physiologically, psychologically, sociologically, economically, and educationally, the movement is wrong. In 1938 the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, after consultation with the National Education Association and the American Medical Association, passed a resolution condemning

⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

the practice of inter-school athletic competition below the senior high school. This resolution, approved again in 1946, states the case: 'Inasmuch as pupils below the tenth grade are in the midst of the period of most rapid growth, with the consequent bodily weaknesses and maladjustments, partial ossification of bones, mental and emotional stresses physiological readjustments, and the like. Be it therefore, Resolved, that the leaders in the field of physical education should do all in their power to discourage interschool competition at this age level because of its strenuous nature.'⁸

Mr. Mitchell⁹ states that physiologically, the growing boy is apt to be harmed, since his heart and powers of endurance have not as yet caught up with his increase in size and weight. He states that sociologically, the elementary school athletic movement is regimenting our youth in their early teens. Economically, Mr. Mitchell feels the system is wrong, since the selection of a few early-maturing athletic stars is made at the expense of a sports program for all the pupils. Educationally, Mr. Mitchell believes that the elementary period is one of orientation and introduction to all subjects, leaving specialized pursuance to the senior high school and college years.

⁸ Elmer D. Mitchell, "The Case Against Interscholastic Athletics in Junior High School," The Education Digest, 17:46-49, March 1952.

⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF PEEWEE FOOTBALL

Listeners to the broadcasts of Radio Station WFAA, Dallas, recently heard Ralph Widman, sports director of the station say, "A city is not measured by the size of its buildings, but by the quality of its people. In my books, the biggest city in the world is Gause, Texas, U. S. A." Gause, an almost forgotten hamlet in central Texas and almost untouched by the prosperity of recent industrialization, thus reached a point in fame that had been undreamed of as several generations of Gause folks watched first their bank then other businesses disappear.

What was the cause of the revival of the community? It was The Milk Bowl, which was described by Jinx Tucker, sports editor of The Waco News-Tribune as "just about the most important sports event in Texas for many years." The Milk Bowl was the first annual bowl game for "small fry players," played at Cameron, Texas on December 10, 1949. All players were required to be under one hundred pounds and not over fourteen years of age. Two teams of rural youth played, one from Gause, Texas and the other from San Saba: the final score 20-7 in favor of San Saba. All the features of a big-time bowl game were present--play by play broadcast over a major station, half-time activities, and other colorful features. Significantly,

a national manufacturer paid for the radio time, and bidding now goes on for radio rights. NBC tie-ups is in prospect.

The game has resulted in a wave of enthusiasm for junior football in Texas. More than that, it has caused Texas farm folks to take an interest in the extra-curricular activities of the schools, and has brought about a study of the recreational and community needs of rural communities. It may soon cause a state-wide, official study and a series of conferences on what may be done in rural Texas to develop community-centered activities for persons of all ages. By beginning with the interest in football, the promoters of the bowl have done more for farm youth than has been accomplished, thus far, by consideration of "blue prints" for community unification and recreation.

In 1949 the famous Milk Bowl began in a small way but with a big purpose. The Gause school had been without men teachers for over a decade. There were no athletics. The passing of the Gilmer-Aikin Bill and subsequent raising of salaries brought in men teachers. Soon the "cow pasture campus" was cleared and football practice was begun. When the community saw its boys playing in overalls and sweatshirts (many of the people and most of the boys had never seen a football game), a collection was taken for uniforms. Even though several lads were inclined to run the wrong way with the ball and one of them actually did, the rural boys played

against city teams and won smashing victories. Then, Mrs. Weafer, twenty-four year old housewife and mother of five children, suggested a bowl game for pee-wees to Ralph Widman, sports director of WFAA: with the support of that station, The Dallas Morning News, The Waco News-Tribune, and other agencies in Texas, the bowl was promoted and won enthusiastic acclaim through the state.

Two significant developments have taken place recently. Several Southwest Conference athletic directors have indicated willingness to have pee-wee games played as preliminaries to the regular games of the conference, thus opening the way to the promotion of pee-wee football to rural recreation on an unprecedented scale.

The Gause Pee-wees have played three years of football, playing a schedule of eight games per season. They have made bus trips as far as one hundred and seventy miles to play opposing teams. One trip was made to Kilgore in East Texas, taking many of the boys out of Milam County for the first time, and giving all of them their first sight of "the world's largest oil field." They were impressed with the city filled with towering oil derricks, as well as with their first experience of an overnight stay in one of the local hotels. These new experiences were made complete by the Gause team's decisive victory over the Kilgore elementary team, Kilgore being undefeated in three year's of football play. The trip

made by the Gause team to San Saba in West Texas, which took them farthest from home, also provided the boys with more "first" experiences and thrills, highlighted by a police escort into town, complete with sirens. The game was played in the San Saba Pecan Bowl, and consisted of elaborate half-time activities, including the crowning of a diminutive "queen" who presided over the bowl festivities. A reception and "feed" following the game completed the entertainment for the Gause aggregation. These two trips are sighted as examples due to their unusualness in elementary school circles. Overnight trips and football fanfare of this type have in the past been reserved for only high school and college teams.

Since the original Milk Bowl game, the bowl classic has been played in a different city each year. The 1950 Milk Bowl game took place in Baylor Stadium under the sponsorship of the Waco Junior Chamber of Commerce. A Mexia Peewee team played against a New Orleans Peewee team.

The 1951 Milk Bowl had all the fanfare of a "big league" football game, bringing together a colorful Indian team from Sequoyah Vocational School, Tahlequah, Oklahoma and the Red Raiders from Thorndale, Texas. These two outstanding teams met on McQueen Field in Marlin, Texas. There were bands, full press coverage, broadcasts, and even motion picture and television cameras. Jacques A. Jaccard, movie writer, producer and director, was present, making scenes from the game

to be used in "The Milk Bowl Story," a film based on the junior classic which is now in the making. Several outstanding figures in the sports world witnessed the games as guests of the Marlin Junior Chamber of Commerce, the most notable of whom was Jim Thorpe, Olympic star and all-time football great. The game also attracted many Southwest Conference football stars, and such well-known industrial and political figures as Jesse Jones and H. R. Cullen. The Gause Peewee team was also a bowl guest, as it has been at each successive game since the original one in which it took part.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data From Peewee Football Players' Grades

The author has compiled the grades made by the Peewee football players during 1950-1951 and 1951-1952 school year. The grades made during the fall semester and spring semester are tabulated on Table I. Football is played during the fall semester. It was found, for the school year 1950-1951, that the grades made by all of the twenty students did not vary enough to show any definite evidence that playing football affected their grades. The over-all total shows that the majority of the students made better grades after football season was over. Out of the twenty students who were checked, five made better grades during the football season, five made better grades after football season, and ten had no change in their grades. In the 1951-52 school year, out of the same twenty students, eleven made better grades after football season, eight made better grades during football season, and one had no change in his grades. The following table is based on points received during football season and after season. Some boys were carrying more subjects in the 1951-52 school year than other boys, but each individual boy carried the same amount after the season was over as he did during the season. Three points were given for an A, two for B, one point for C, and no points were allowed for grades below

C. Each boy's name is given and then a total of all grades is given at the bottom of the table.

TABLE I
GRADES MADE DURING AND AFTER FOOTBALL SEASON
1950-51 and 1951-52

Name	School Year 1950-1951		School Year 1951-1952	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
1. Wayne Jones	7	12	14	12
2. Dave Wilson	7	7	10	9
3. Donald Rains	10	11	13	13
4. Billy Ruddick	10	7	13	17
5. Wayne Alford	15	13	14	17
6. John T. Moore	19	16	13	17
7. Audie Crockett	16	14	16	14
8. Gene Shaw	11	14	14	16
9. Hubert Lange	16	17	11	10
10. Bobby Lindsey	21	21	21	21
11. Bobby J. Wilson	12	14	13	14
12. Joe Baggerly	14	14	15	13
13. Joe G. Moore	21	21	17	18
14. Don Mack Wilson	16	16	25	29
15. Donald Wyatt	7	7	15	19
16. James Todd	10	10	16	18
17. Walter Ruddick	8	8	16	17
18. Donald Alford	14	14	20	25
19. Garlan Lange	15	15	21	25
20. Edward Homeyer	15	12	20	9
Total	264	263	314	333

Data from Parents

Since the discovery of the parents' attitudes concerning this subject is the chief concern of this research, the author considers these opinions and their comparison of paramount importance. Since the parents are more familiar with the

child's reaction to outside influences, it is assumed that they can produce a more accurate picture of the situation as it exists for their child than can physical education teachers and coaches.

Parents indicate that they are in favor of continuance of Peewee football and feel that it is definitely an aid to the education of their children.

The first two questions in the questionnaire to parents deal with the interest element in regard to Peewee football. Tabulation of the results of the answers to these questions clearly indicates that Peewee football is enjoyed by the students. In fact, 100 per cent of the parents feel that Peewee football has helped keep their child in school.

In regard to student interest, it might be added here that the boys are not the only ones benefited in this respect. The girls, too, have received similar stimulation as a result of the sport which has greatly added to their school spirit and added zest to their school life. This interest is exhibited particularly in the sixth to eighth grade group of girls. With the introduction of football into their school, the girls immediately organized a pep squad; school colors were chosen, pep squad uniforms obtained, and yell practices and pep rallies inaugurated. The girls themselves took on new life, as did the entire school. A new and noticeable pride in their school resulted from this new interest. The

girls are the team's most ardent supporters. They are loudly present at each game, including those games played out of town. An extra bus is always provided for their transportation to and from the games.

Table II points out the interest shown by the students in Peewee football. It also brings out the fact that Peewee football causes the child to enjoy school more.

TABLE II

CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN PEEWEE FOOTBALL
AS GIVEN BY PARENTS

Question	Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per Cent	Num- ber	Per Cent
1. Is your child interested in Peewee football?	35	100	0	0
2. Does such athletics make your child enjoy school more?	35	100	0	0

The next three questions take into consideration the effect of Peewee football upon health. Table III which follows gives convincing evidence that parents feel Peewee football is valuable to health. Much of this information is based on observation rather than scientific experimentation. Since health is one of the leading features of a well-planned physical education program, leaders in the field should be

proud of the answers given in Table III. Aristotle¹ names health as the most important of all bodily virtues.

TABLE III
PARENTS' OPINIONS OF WHAT PEEWEE FOOTBALL
DOES FOR HEALTH

Question	Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per Cent	Num- ber	Per Cent
3. Do you think that Pee-wee Football causes injury to health?	1	2.9	34	97.1
4. Has a physician ever told you that playing football causes injury to health?	1	2.9	34	97.1
5. Do you think that playing football helps the health?	33	94.3	2	5.7

Question six asked the parents if they had attended a Peewee football game to watch their son play. Out of the thirty-five who answered the questionnaires, all but one parent had seen their son play.

The parent interest in Peewee football in Gause has been especially gratifying. These parents are avid spectators and followers of their team and attend all out-of-town games in great numbers. This interest is shared by the

¹ J. F. Williams and C. L. Brownell, The Administration of Health and Physical Education (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1940), p. 48.

entire community. Proof of their loyalty was evidenced this year in a parent-teacher sponsored football banquet with the Peewee team and pep squad as guests, plates being sold to parents and friends of the school. Red and white satin award jackets were presented, on the occasion, to each letterman. The entire community is benefited by an event of this sort. It serves to bring the school and community closer together as mutual interest is created and a closer bond of loyalty and pride established.

The seventh question lists fifteen conditions that might result from Peewee football. The listing includes several of the ten cardinal points of physical education as given by the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation.² It also lists the main criticism being directed against physical educators and athletics. The last group has been included to see if the parents agree with the critics in their accusations of the program. Table IV should be gratifying to physical education leaders as it points out that only a small per cent of parents checked those conditions that would not prove conducive to participating in Peewee football.

Out of the thirty-five parents, only two failed to check that Peewee football was educational. Many authorities argue

² Jesse F. Williams, Principles of Physical Education (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1942), p. 248.

that not only are athletics popular and enjoyable, but they are educative as well. Lee voices this belief in the following statement:

The real aim of an athletic contest should not be to win but to play one's best according to the rules, calling forth the best efforts of opponents and letting victory fall where it will according to the merits of the players. With this spirit there is zest in challenging opponents to play the better game if they can; zest in rallying team mates to cooperate in the challenge, pleasure in matching skill against skill;....and above all, spiritual refreshment in companionship with opponents, as well as with team mates....As long as the playing of the game has augmented health, not endangered it, has strengthened old and built up new friendship instead of destroying them, has refreshed and restored the spirits of the players instead of harassing them, the competition engaged in has been educative.³

TABLE IV

THINGS WHICH 35 PARENTS THINK APPLY
TO PEEWEE FOOTBALL

Item	Times Checked	Per Cent Checked
Provides clean sport	33	94.3
It is educational	32	91.4
Teaches fair play	33	94.3
Prevents loitering	35	100
Increases muscular efficiency	35	100
Interests the child	33	94.3
Interesting to see	35	100
Promotes ill feeling	0	-0-
A bad moral influence	0	-0-
Too strenuous exercise	2	5.7
Causes neglect of work	2	5.7
Takes too much time	1	2.9
Too expensive	0	-0-
Is too dangerous	0	-0-
A money-making enterprise	0	-0-

³ Mabel Lee, The Conduct of Physical Education (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1937), p. 561.

The last question contained in the questionnaire asked the parents to state briefly their opinions as to why boys should or should not participate in Peewee football. There was only one comment received which did not favor the elementary school child participating in Peewee football activities. As this was the only negative comment received, the author would like to quote the parent's statement as follows:

I do not think football should be played to the extent carried on in Gause. I am definitely in favor of a well-rounded sports program, but I feel that after-school practice, competitive games which make up a full schedule that involves night games away from home places entirely too much emphasis on football at a too-early age. Boys of elementary school age are not physically nor mentally equipped to assume the strain of school work and a heavily accented sports program such as this. Personally speaking, I have discovered that in most instances the school work suffers, as it becomes secondary in importance when football is allowed to become the center of school life at this period.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As has been stated previously, the elementary football program is a comparatively new idea. Therefore, there has not been a great amount of research done on the problem. The author has sought, however, in spite of limited material available, to present the case of the elementary school athletic program, referred to as Peewee football, in an effort to establish a comparison of attitudes and viewpoints, and accordingly, reach a comprehensive conclusion as to advisability or inadvisability of boys between the age of eleven to fourteen engaging in football activity of this type.

Questionnaires were presented to thirty-five parents, and with the exception of one, all contained affirmative attitudes concerning Peewee football, as it is played in Gause.

Football players' grades were compared before and after football season. This comparison resulted in proving to the author that football as played in Gause had not been emphasized to the detriment of the players' scholastic achievements. There were only slight variations of the two sets of compared grades. Actually, there was a small increase in grade improvement after football season during the 1951-52 school year

but in the 1950-51 school year the grades were the same. This showing, however, does not offer conclusive proof that the participation in Peewee football serves to lower player's grades. This merely indicates one isolated situation, which may or may not be typical. In the author's opinion, the sports program in any school can very easily be over-emphasized at the expense of scholastic achievement. The conclusion is hereby reached to the effect that if there is a satisfactory balancing of sports and curriculum, grades nor interest in grades need not suffer.

The author's next concern was with the attitudes and opinions of certain educators and other professional people regarding this debated question of an elementary school football program. As has been stated earlier, these people, as a whole, have voiced their disapproval of the idea. It is interesting to note the wide difference in opinions of the parents themselves, compared with those of these outstanding educators. One's first impression might be that the ordinary layman is not acquainted with the true facts of the situation; and yet, the opposition, composed chiefly of professionals, have not to date presented concrete evidence that would uphold their negative statements without fear of argument. So it would seem that both sides are at this point merely expressing opinions, more or less. The question of whether an elementary school football program should or should not be encouraged is still a very controversial one.

In summation, the author has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. That the average parent, who, after all, has the keenest and most personal interest in his child, is heartily in favor of Peewee football. The average parent believes this sport to be clean, healthful, interesting, educational, and a worthwhile benefit to the child's personal growth, both mental and physical. The average parent feels that his child is taught cooperation, fair play, and good sportsmanship through his participation in football play.

2. That poor grades may be the result of an over-emphasized sports program and a de-emphasized curriculum. The author's findings on the situation in Gause indicate that in a well-balanced program the child maintains a balanced interest in both curricular and extra-curricular activities of the school and is thereby benefited by his participation in both.

3. That the prejudices expressed by the majority of educators and other professionals, are, in general, merely opinions. And, honest though these opinions may be, the author feels that they fail to tell the entire story. As far as the author has been able to observe, the program has not and is not receiving the emphasis in the school program in the alarming proportions believed by this opposing faction. However, the author expresses his belief in

the validity of their assertions that over-emphasis in the program at this particular age may be harmful to the health of the child. The Medical Association states that a child's heart, bone structure, and general health may be impaired if the child's body receives too much physical strain at this crucial period of his growth. But the author concludes again that if there is a well-balanced program, adequate supervision and protection, there is no more danger of injury to the child because of excessive physical strain in football participation than could be expected from any other normally strenuous activity or sport in which the child might engage.

The author believes, finally, that perhaps a "middle-of-the road" attitude is safest concerning the subject. He feels, as a parent himself along with the other parents questioned, that Peewee football has many merits of value to the elementary age child. And yet he feels, at the same time, that coaches, teachers, and all those who are in any way connected with a program such as this must be keenly aware of their responsibility to the health and future welfare of this particular age group and be especially conscientious in their efforts to protect them at all times. Our youth of today are our leaders of tomorrow and we, as their leaders today, are obligated to provide them with keen and healthy mind, as well as strong and healthy bodies.

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APPENDIX

TO THE PARENTS OF PEEWEE FOOTBALL PLAYERS: I am writing a research paper on Peewee football. Will you please fill in the enclosed questionnaire and return it to F. A. Wilson, Gause, Texas.

Your child's name and number of years he has played Peewee football: _____

1. Is your child interested in Peewee Football? _____
2. Does such athletics make your child enjoy school more?
_____.
3. Do you think that Peewee football causes injury to health? _____
4. Has a physician ever told you that playing football causes injury to health _____
5. Do you think that playing football helps the health? _____
6. Have you ever attended a Peewee football game to watch your child play? _____
7. Check the things below that you think apply to Peewee football.

_____	Provides clean sport
_____	It is educational
_____	Teaches fair play
_____	Prevents loitering
_____	Increases muscular efficiency
_____	Interests the child
_____	Is interesting to see
_____	Promotes ill feeling
_____	Is a bad moral influence
_____	Too strenuous exercise
_____	Causes neglect of work
_____	Takes too much time
_____	Too expensive
_____	Is too dangerous
_____	A money-making enterprise

8. Please state briefly your opinion why boys should or should not participate in Peewee football. _____

Your Name: _____

Use back if necessary