

Tom Brady, as parent, sees changes in youth sports from his days as a kid

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FOXBOROUGH, Mass. – Tom Brady has said that two of the most important things in his life are his children and his job as New England Patriots quarterback.

Those two intersected Monday morning during Brady's weekly appearance on sports radio WEEI when he was asked by host John Dennis about his view on youth sports and the concept that everyone receives a trophy. Brady stepped out of his role as quarterback when asked about the hot-but-ton parenting topic, saying he hadn't thought much about it, focusing his remarks on specialization in sports.



Tom Brady sees kids “specializing” in a sport at a much younger age than he did, and he isn't sure it's the best idea. David Butler II/USA TODAY Sports “Youth sports, and what I remember from being in youth sports, everything was really localized. There were no travel teams ... well, there were a couple, but you really had to be the top, top kids to go on those teams,” Brady said on the program.

“My parents always exposed us to different things, different sports. It was basketball when it was basketball season. It was baseball when it was baseball season. I didn't play football until I was a freshman in high school. A lot of soccer. There were some camps, but I just played in the neighborhood in our street with all the kids we grew up with.

“It's just different now, and I'm experiencing it with my own kids with all the organized activities that you put them in. I've made a comment for a while now: ‘I hope my kids are late bloomers in whatever they do.’ Because they are going to be exposed to so much at such an early time that yeah, you do worry about what their motivation may be. As they get older or if they feel like they've been in something for so long and it's been hyperintense and hyperfocused for so long, I think that can wear out a young individual, a young teenager.

“It's just hard, because all the parents are doing it, it seems, and the competition feels like it starts so early for these kids -- whether it's to get into college or getting into the right high school or the right elementary school. I don't know how it's taken that turn, but you know, sometimes it's nice for kids to just be kids. At least that's just from what I remember from when I was growing up. I think that was a great opportunity for kids to develop lots of parts of their personality. Certainly for me, that's what I found ultimately; I found something I love to do at a young age. But the more you're exposed to, I think the better the opportunity is for all kids to figure out what they really want to do in life.”