

Name: _____

Directions: Read the article below and answer the questions completely at the end of the article. (Each question is worth 2 points)

Sports are a great way to have fun and stay active. Kids have lots of choices about which sports to do and whether to compete in sports or just play them for fun. One kid might be happy to shoot baskets at the park, whereas another kid may prefer being on a basketball team that competes against other teams.

Competition can make sports more exciting. But because somebody wins and somebody loses, competition also can make kids feel pressure. A little pressure can be OK. Too much pressure is bad news.

Does your mom or dad yell from the sidelines? Does your coach want you to practice every day instead of a couple of times a week? What if you thought you'd like being on the hockey team, but now you want to quit? Read on to learn more about sports pressure.

What Is Competition?

There are different kinds of competition in sports. You may compete by yourself, as part of a team, or both. For instance, a swimmer or a wrestler might compete individually, but the person's score may also contribute to the team score. If baseball or soccer is your sport, you might be the lucky one to score a goal or a run, but it usually takes a team effort to win the game.

What all sports competitions have in common is that all of the competitors want to win. But usually only one person or team does.

Why Do I Feel Pressure?

Do you ever have "butterflies" in your stomach? It's that nervous feeling some people get when starting a new school, taking a first airplane ride, or gearing up for a big soccer match. In sports, almost everyone worries about playing well and doesn't want to make a mistake. Believe it or not, the best player on your team and the teenagers who

play on high school teams get nervous before a big game. Even professional players feel nervous sometimes!

Feeling a little excited or nervous is OK, though. This helps your body and mind get ready to compete. Your body makes **adrenaline** (say: uh-**dre**-nul-in), which is a hormone that gives you extra energy. But if you're getting so nervous that you aren't having much fun, it's time to figure out why.

(Each question is worth 2 points)

1. Why would a kid feel pressured while playing a sport?
2. What can happen to an athlete's motivation to play a sport if there is too much pressure?
3. What are two things that a kid can do to take the pressure away from playing sports?
4. Define "competition" in your own words. What does competition mean to you? (use between 10-25 words)

