

Position on Dodgeball in Physical Education

Position Statement by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education

The Weak Shall Inherit the Gym

Opinion Piece by Rick Reilly

Are all GAMES worth playing?

KEY IDEA Games are supposed to be fun, right? But have you ever watched a customer at a carnival game spend 20 or 30 dollars trying to win a cheap stuffed animal? Seeing this might make you question not only how fun it is, but also whether or not all **games** are worth playing. You're about to read two very different opinions on whether the game of dodgeball is fun or torture for those who play it.

LIST IT Work with a group to make two lists. On the first, list five or more games you think are worth playing. On the second, list five or more games you think are not worth the time, money, or risk. Compare your lists with others'. Were there any games that appeared on both the good and not-so-good lists?



● ELEMENTS OF NONFICTION: PERSUASION

A logical, well-supported argument can be very persuasive. But writers often rely on more than facts to convince readers. Sometimes they express an attitude, or **tone** toward their subject, in order to win your support. Writers might also use **persuasive techniques** such as these:

- **Emotional appeals**—the use of words, descriptions, or images that call forth strong feelings, such as pity, fear, or anger.

If this law doesn't pass, innocent puppies will continue to be horribly mistreated in puppy mills.

- **Ethical appeals**—attempts to gain moral support for a claim by linking the claim to a widely accepted value.

We need this law because animals deserve decent treatment.

As you read, notice the ways the authors try to convince you.

● READING STRATEGY: SET A PURPOSE FOR READING

When you **set a purpose** for reading, you decide what you want to accomplish as you read. In this lesson, your purpose is to compare and contrast the persuasive techniques used in two selections. Filling in a chart like the one begun here can help. Use line numbers to tell where the appeals are.

	"Position on Dodgeball in Physical Education"	"The Weak Shall Inherit the Gym"
What emotional appeals does the writer use?	Appeal to pity: lines 34–35	
What ethical appeals does the writer use?		
What is the writer's tone? How does it affect you?		

▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The boldfaced words help to convey opinions about playing dodgeball. Try to figure out each word's meaning.

1. If you witness someone cheating, report the **impropriety**.
2. Students are not **adequately** prepared for competition.
3. We were able to **eliminate** the other players one by one.
4. One great player can **annihilate** an entire opposing team.
5. Is dodgeball a safe way to take out **aggression**?
6. The school is going to **ban** the game.

Funny Man with Serious Talent

Many *Sports Illustrated* readers turn to the last page of their magazine first in order to read Rick Reilly's weekly column "Life of Reilly." The column, along with his novels and essay collections, has earned Reilly the reputation as "one



Rick Reilly
born 1958

of the funniest humans on the planet." Reilly has written about everything from ice-skating to the Iditarod, the Alaskan dog race. His adventures include facing fastballs from eight-time All-Star pitcher Nolan Ryan, cycling with seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, and playing 108 holes of golf in one day. He began his sports writing career as a sophomore at the University of Colorado, taking phoned-in high-school volleyball scores for his hometown newspaper. After graduation, he moved on to stints at the *Denver Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, eventually landing at *Sports Illustrated* in 1985. He has been voted National Sportswriter of the Year 10 times.

National Association for Sport and Physical Education

The NASPE is made up of gym teachers, coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers, sport management professionals, researchers, and college faculty. The association provides a way for all of these professionals to help one another to improve physical education in schools. By researching, developing standards, and spreading information, NASPE helps students learn about fitness and stay active all their lives.



MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Rick Reilly and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, visit the Literature Center at ClassZone.com.



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impropriety

(ĩm'prə-prĩ'ĩ-tē)

n. an unsuitable or inappropriate act or quality

With the recent release of both a movie and television show about dodgeball, debate about the game's merits and **improprieties** has escalated in the media and on the NASPE listserv.¹ Thus, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) would like to reiterate its position about including dodgeball in school physical education programs.

NASPE believes that dodgeball is **not** an appropriate activity for K–12 school physical education programs. The purpose of physical education is to provide students with:

- The knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to be physically active for a lifetime
- A daily dose of physical activity for health benefits
- Positive experiences so that kids want to be physically active outside of physical education class and throughout their lifetime

The goals of physical education can be obtained through a wide variety of appropriate physical activities. **A**

A PERSUASION

What is the NASPE's position on dodgeball in school physical education programs?

Getting and keeping children and adolescents active is one of the biggest challenges facing parents and youth leaders.

- 61.5% of children aged 9–13 years do not participate in any organized physical activity during their non-school hours and 22.6% do not engage in any free-time physical activity.
- One-third of high school students are not **adequately** active and over 10% do not participate in any physical activity at all.
- 16% of U.S. youth aged 6–19 are overweight—triple the proportion of 25 years ago. **B**

adequately (ăd'ĩ-kwĩt-lē)

adv. enough to satisfy a requirement or meet a need

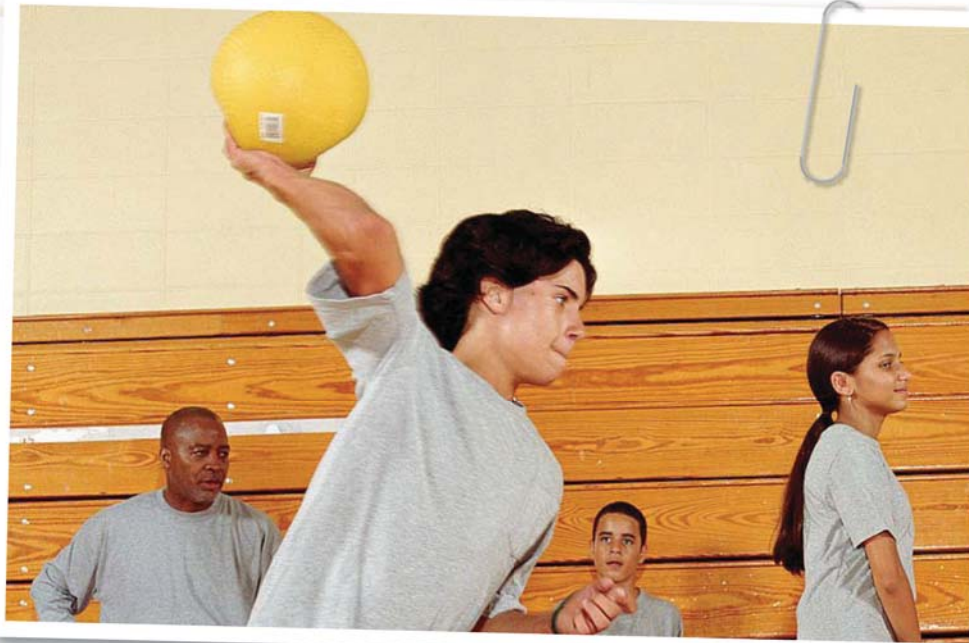
B PERSUASION

Reread lines 18–24.

Based on these lines, how would you describe the **tone** of this document?

According to NASPE's *Appropriate Practices for Elementary School Physical Education* (2000), "in a quality physical education class teachers involve ALL children in activities that allow them to participate actively, both physically and mentally. Activities such as relay races, dodgeball, and

1. **listserv** (lĩst-sũrv): an e-mail list that allows a group of people to hold a discussion by writing to each other via the Internet.



ANALYZE VISUALS

How many people pictured on this dodgeball team appear to be getting exercise?

elimination tag provide limited opportunities for everyone in the class, especially the slower, less agile students who need the activity the most.”

The students who are **eliminated** first in dodgeball are typically the ones who most need to be active and practice their skills. Many times these students are also the ones with the least amount of confidence in their physical abilities. Being targeted because they are the “weaker” players, and being hit by a hard-thrown ball, does not help kids to develop confidence.

The arguments most often heard in favor of dodgeball are that it allows for the practice of important physical skills—and kids like it.

- Dodgeball does provide a means of practicing some important physical skills—running, dodging, throwing, and catching.
- 40 However, there are many activities that allow practice of these skills without using human targets or eliminating students from play.
- Some kids may like it—the most skilled, the most confident. But many do not! Certainly not the student who gets hit hard in the stomach, head, or groin. And it is not appropriate to teach our children that you win by hurting others. **C**

In a recent article about the new GSN (games network) TV show called “Extreme Dodgeball,” there is talk of “developing and executing extreme strategies to **annihilate** opponents” and the use of terms such as “throw-to-kill ratios,” and “headshots.” NASPE asks, “Is this the type of game that you want children to be exposed to?”

eliminate (ĭ-lĭm’ə-nāt’)
v. to remove from consideration by defeating

C PERSUASION
Reread lines 42–45.
What kind of **emotional appeal** is being made?
What is the **ethical appeal**?

annihilate (ə-nĭ’ə-lāt’)
v. to completely destroy or defeat