



2017/2017 Debate Research Package Topic 1

Topic 1: THBT children under the age of 18 should be prevented from competing in combat sports.



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This research booklet is intended as a starting point for both junior and senior high students. Debaters are expected to conduct their own additional research. Ideas presented are intended to be a starting point for inspiration and debaters should broaden the scope of the debate to encompass other areas of discussion beyond what is presented here.

Model and Definition

Proposition team should create fair and balanced definitions for the debate.

A model may clarify to the judges a team's position and can be a valuable tool. If proposition team would like to implement a model, they should consider important questions such as how they would enforce this policy and potential punishments for infractions.

Combat sports encompass a variety of one-on-one activities where the objective is to physically disable your opponent or score points, usually via inflicting physical injury (ie. boxing, mixed martial arts, and wrestling). Currently, children as young as four both train and compete in combat sports such as mixed martial arts.

Potential Proposition Points

1. There is a risk of long-lasting brain injury

Given that the objective of sports like boxing is to knock your opponent out (meaning that hitting your opponent's head hard is encouraged and not accidental/rare), children who participate are at a higher risk of sustaining head injuries such as concussions. These injuries, suffered at an early age and repeatedly due to vigorous competition, increase the likelihood of impaired brain functioning as adults.



2. **Combat sports normalize violence at a young age**

Encouraging children to efficiently inflict physical injury to their peers normalizes violent and aggressive behaviour, leading to an increased likelihood of violent tendencies in the future due to an ingrained perception that violence is a rational and impersonal.



3. **Children cannot meaningfully consent to participate in these sports**

Children are inexperienced and often unaware of the potential for long-term brain damage and behavioural changes due to participation in combat sports. Therefore, they cannot make decisions about participating in these sports (and neither should their parents who would be unduly putting their children at risk).

Potential Opposition Points

1. Parents and/or guardians are made aware of the risks associated with combat sports before their children take part.

As the legal caretakers of their children until they are 18, parents and/or guardians are responsible for making the decision to put their children in combat sports. Just as they make other decisions for their children, such as where they go to school, this decision should be up to the parents of the child. By allowing freedom of choice, parents are aware of the risks and then decide what they believe is best for their child.

2. Combat sports, such as martial arts, teach valuable life lessons for the protection and future safety of these children.

By participating in combat sports, children are trained to be self-dependent and are able to protect themselves in a dangerous situation. Living in a world where crimes constantly happen, mastering a combat sport can be beneficial.



3. The benefits outweigh the risks, such as brain injury, associated with participating in combat sports.

Combat sports allow children to socialize and mingle with peers their age through a mutually rewarding activity. They are learning a life skill while also acquiring the values of discipline, respect, and humility. Combat sports are an excellent way to incorporate physical activity into their lifestyle.

Helpful Links for Research:

https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2013/09/21/kids_getting_involved_in_mixed_martial_arts.html
<http://www.artsite.tv/why-combat-sports-is-good-for-children/>