

Equal Access: Homeschoolers and Pursuing Opportunity

Participating in organized sports is beneficial for students physically, academically and socially, regardless of how gifted they are at the sport. Through sports youth are able to be around peers who share common goals and learn important life skills such as time management, teamwork, leadership, strategic thinking, discipline, and honorableness.

Some famous athletes in U.S. culture are Bethany Hamilton, a professional surfer, Michelle Kwan, an Olympic medalist for figuring skating, Timothy "Tim" Tebow, a professional football player who was awarded a Heisman Trophy, Venus and Serena Williams, two sisters known for their incredible tennis playing abilities at Wimbledon, and Jason Taylor, a former Miami Dolphin defensive end and linebacker. All of these celebrated U.S. athletes hold something in common; none of them let anything hold them back on the water, court, field or ice, and all of them were homeschooled during their adolescence.

According to the Home Education Research Institute, more than two million students were homeschooled in the United States in 2010. However not all homeschooled students are granted equal access to participate in organized sports. Many school districts do not allow homeschoolers to participate in programs through the public school system, and in many parts of the country entire states, such as California, prohibit homeschoolers from playing on public school teams. Currently legislation is in place in only 26 states that will result in homeschoolers being allowed to participate in public school programs by 2015.

Some school districts or states believe that homeschoolers should not be allowed to participate because they believe it is not possible to have homeschooled children prove that they are academically eligible. However, most homeschoolers are required to send achievement test