

As a coach dedicated to developing young athletes, I strongly believe that homeschooled students, such as Ruby Ross, should be given the opportunity to participate in high school sports. Sports are about more than just physical competition; they provide students with vital life skills, such as teamwork, discipline, leadership, and perseverance—skills that are invaluable both on and off the field. These benefits should be available to all students, including those who are homeschooled.

In my experience, sports teams serve as a microcosm of the larger community, where athletes learn to work together toward a common goal, face challenges, and celebrate successes as a team. Homeschooling offers a unique and individualized learning experience, but it should not limit a student's ability to be a part of this community. By opening high school sports teams to homeschooled students, we provide them with a platform to grow, not only as athletes but as individuals.

Homeschooled students like Ruby bring a fresh perspective and a high level of dedication to the table. In my experience, homeschooled students tend to be highly motivated, disciplined, and possess a strong work ethic—qualities that are essential for any team's success. These students have a lot to contribute, both in terms of athletic ability and character, and would enrich the team culture.

Furthermore, homeschooled students are often members of the same local communities as their friends in traditional schools. Excluding them from sports teams due to their educational setting creates an unnecessary divide. By allowing them to participate, we foster inclusivity and strengthen the sense of community, both within the school and the broader area.

As a coach, my primary goal is to help all my athletes grow—both as players and individuals. Participation in high school sports teaches invaluable life lessons about dedication, hard work, and resilience. It provides students with an environment where they can form friendships, gain confidence, and develop a sense of self-worth.

Over the past several years, I have witnessed significant personal growth in Ruby and other homeschooled students while playing on a softball team together. A huge benefit for these athletes has been learning how to cope with challenges and understanding their ability to learn, grow, and push forward. All homeschooled students deserve the same opportunity to participate alongside high school peers.

In conclusion, I strongly encourage decision-makers to consider the long-term benefits for all homeschooled students by allowing them to participate in high school sports. The opportunities for personal growth and community-building are too valuable to exclude any student based on their educational path. I urge you to adopt a broader perspective and recognize the immense value in offering these opportunities to homeschooled students. The positive impact on their development, as well as on the community as a whole, is undeniable.