



STATUS SYMBOL OF THE MONTH

## No Pain, No Allowance

For wealthy fitness freaks, even an already active kid is a kid who needs a personal trainer. By Kris Frieswick

If your local peewee football players look more buff than usual, we think we know why: They've been working out with personal trainers. Life as a pint-size jock is just not strenuous enough in the eyes of some überfit parents, who feel regular practices don't provide sufficient cardio-pump sessions to get their budding athletes into peak shape.

Personal training programs for kids are springing up everywhere to meet this new demand. Train Boston in Wellesley offers private, sports-specific workouts for young athletes with big plans and flush parents at \$65 to \$140 an hour, or group training sessions at roughly \$25 a pop. The Newton branch of the Wellbridge Athletic Club chain has no fewer than four staffers who specialize in working with kids. Kristin Moore, a 39-year-old stay-at-home mom who exercises at the club daily, signed up her eight-year-old twin daughters with one of them. Although both girls play team sports and take gymnastics classes, she thinks they could still be more active. "Today, the way the world is, you can't say to your kids, 'Take off and be back at dinner,'" she says. "You have to watch your kids every minute, and mothers' schedules aren't set up to do that. My time is limited as far as how much I can do with them."

Private training is for more than sports studs-to-be. According to Wellbridge athletic director Shaun Harrington, one of the trainers on his staff takes a young client outside to play catch and kickball, and "just run around." Some parents, apparently, are even outsourcing play time to the professionals.

### THE MODEST PROPOSAL

## CROSSING THE LINE

Why Downtown Crossing doesn't need an extreme makeover.

What's this nonsense about overhauling Downtown Crossing? The boomers move back to the city, Filene's gets set to move out, and suddenly the cognoscenti think the shopping district—with its bottom-rung retailers, delinquents, and general grittiness—doesn't work anymore. The mayor's ordered a new marketing campaign. The *Herald* suggests recruiting Nordstrom, as if what Boston needs is more high-end retail. The *Globe* recommends . . . bringing back cars? Really, Downtown Crossing is fine the way it is. The performers, the commotion, the fact that it's one of the few public spaces frequented by every one of the city's races and classes—they all add up to make it function just as it was built to. (It's also home to the wondrous Falafel King, reason enough for everyone to back off.) "If you look at the demographics of the actual city, that's what Downtown Crossing looks like," says Lajos Héder, the urban designer who helped plan the district in 1976. Go ahead and bring in middlebrow retailers like Target, and more security. Update the façades if you want. I can live with that. But please, God, no Nordstrom. —John Wolfson



DOWN AND OUT? Not this district.