JOURNAL OF AMATEUR SPORT

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Mission and Purpose

The overarching mission of the Journal of Amateur Sport (JAS) is to provide scholars an outlet in which to share scholarship relevant to the amateur sports realm. We define amateur sport as those who participate and govern at the youth, recreational, community, international, and intercollegiate level. We acknowledge the tenuous debate surrounding the amateurism of intercollegiate athletics, thus at this time we welcome examinations that are focused on the less commercialized avenues of college sport participation and governance (especially NCAA Division II, III, and other less publicized governing bodies and settings). Submissions from all disciplines are encouraged, including sociology, communication, and organizational behavior. Similarly, we welcome a wide array of methodological and structural approaches, including conceptual frameworks, narratives, surveys, interviews, and ethnographies.

As an open-access journal, submissions should be of interest to researchers and practitioners alike. In all, the content published in JAS should advance the collective understanding of the participants, coaches, administrators, and/or institutional structures that comprise amateur sports worldwide. We challenge authors to submit creative and nontraditional manuscripts that are still high-quality in nature. Authors are encouraged to email the editors before submitting if they are unsure if their manuscript is a proper fit within JAS.

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Thank you for considering the Journal of Amateur Sport (JAS) for your scholarly work. Please follow the guidelines laid out below when submitting your manuscript to JAS. Visit http://www.jamsport.org and click "Submit Now" to begin the submission process. To aid in the double-blind review process, please include three separate files: (1) a title page with corresponding author information, (2) an abstract of no more than 500 words with no identifying information, and (3) the full manuscript with no identifying information. The manuscript should not have been simultaneously submitted for publication or been published previously. Manuscripts should follow

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The Impact of Role Conflict on Job Satisfaction of Independent School Athletic Directors

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Role conflict and job satisfaction were measured for 56 independent school athletic directors whose schools were members of the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC). Simple linear regression analysis was used to test if role conflict significantly predicted the NEPSAC athletic directors' ratings of job satisfaction. Results of simple linear regression revealed that role conflict significantly predicted job satisfaction. Results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences between the levels of programs served (middle school, high school-only, or combined middle and high school) for role conflict, but not for job satisfaction. It was also determined that no significant differences existed between athletic directors working at boarding schools versus day schools, or co-ed schools versus single-sex institutions, on either role conflict or job satisfaction.

Athletic directors have seen their jobs enlarge to encompass multiple educational roles within and outside of school. Weight and Zullo (2015) described how, at the intercollegiate level, modern-day athletic directors have absorbed many of the responsibilities and challenges typically faced by chief executive officers, educators, and politicians. At interscholastic public high schools, athletic directors must respond to mandates from state and local governments and athletic governing bodies, in addition to leading their respective athletic programs. As public school systems responded to mandates such as No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2003) and more recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (Every Student Succeeds [ESSA], 2015) for increasing academic rigor, funding for other school needs diminished (Patzkowski, 2008). This means that many athletic directors at public schools are also responsible for locating and maintaining alternative funding sources.

At independent schools, athletic directors must contend with the pressures of managing the expectation levels of parents who have a vested financial interest in their child's experience (Mayes, 2007). Many of these schools offer extensive programming, state-of-the-art facilities, and top-notch educators, and as a result, their tuition rates can rival those of private colleges. Northeastern states have some of the priciest independent schools, and the highest tuition costs are at schools in Massachusetts and Manhattan (Zeveloff & Galante, 2011).

The position of athletic director has many common roles and responsibilities, regardless of the institution or level. Schneider and Stier (2001) noted that it does not matter if one is an athletic director at a high school, a junior college, or a college/university – the elements of administering the sports program are essentially the same. The increased expectations and expanded roles for interscholastic athletic directors (Ha, Hums, & Greenwell, 2011; Hoch, 2008; Kalahar, 2011; Nagel, 2012; Schnieder & Stier, 2001; Sullivan, Lonsdale, & Taylor, 2014) as well as intercollegiate athletic directors (Robinson, Peterson, Tedrick, & Carpenter, 2003; Ryska, 2002; Weight & Zullo, 2015) have been documented in the literature. However, there is a paucity of research on independent school athletic directors in general, and specifically, there exists a gap in the literature on the impact of the increased expectations and expanded roles of athletic directors at independent schools.

The lack of research on independent school athletic directors is surprising, considering the number of independent school athletic programs nationwide. The report "Independent School Facts at a Glance for: The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)" 2014-15 edition, included 1098 NAIS member schools in the United States, with a total enrollment of over 556,643 students (National Association of Independent Schools, 2015). Yet overall, the research focus has been almost exclusively on interscholastic athletic directors at public schools or intercollegiate athletic directors.

While there are commonalities between the positions of athletic director regardless of the school type, there are also differences between public schools and independent schools (Braun, Jenkins, & Grigg, 2006). The defining distinction between public and independent schools is the different sources of support (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Public schools depend primarily on local, state, and federal government funds, while independent schools are usually supported by tuition payments and sometimes by funds from other nonpublic sources such as religious organizations, endowments, grants, and charitable donations. In the NAIS (2015) "Facts at a glance" materials, the average median tuition for an independent day school, grades 9-12, was $24,402. For

boarding schools, grades 9-12, the average median tuition was $50,811 (NAIS, 2015).

In marketing materials produced by the NAIS, there is an emphasis on "The strong sense of community beyond the classroom" (NAIS, 2004, p. 14) that serves as a distinction between independent schools and other K-12 institutions. These community-building activities include lunches and dinners proctored by faculty who sit at the head of every table, to frequent school assemblies, art shows, theater groups, school trips, and weekend sporting events that bring the whole school together (NAIS, 2004). At independent schools, athletic directors are expected to take part in all of these community activities, in addition to their role as the individual in charge of the athletic program.

College preparation is another potential area of distinction for athletic directors. In terms of college enrollment post high school, the percentage of public school students enrolling in college in the fall immediately following high school completion was 65.9 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). However, at independent schools, nearly 100 percent of students go onto college (Chubb, 2016). An independent school athletic director, therefore, might be faced with additional expectations and responsibilities regarding college counseling as well as athletic recruiting. Based on these distinctions and given that an examination of independent school athletic directors could yield similar or possibly very different results to previous studies of intercollegiate and interscholastic athletic directors, the need for further research on independent school athletic directors is compelling.

There is an understanding among independent school athletic directors that "wearing many hats" is an expectation and a reality (J. McNally, personal communication, December 6, 2015). On the NAIS website, the essential duties and responsibilities of the athletic director are detailed, along with other duties that may be required of the position. These other duties include coaching responsibilities, dorm duties, advising, evening and weekend duties, or public appearances on behalf of admissions (NAIS, 2016). With the possibility of multiple roles and expectations being assigned to an independent school athletic director, it is easy to imagine how they could become overwhelmed, or possibly less satisfied, in their positions. At some point, it is feasible that having too many roles, or more specifically too many competing roles and responsibilities, could take a negative toll on an athletic director.

A perspective on an employee having too many competing roles and responsibilities is role theory. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) proposed a model that suggested that organizational factors (the employee's environment) affect the expectations of individuals concerning role behavior. Role theory posits that when the behaviors expected of an individual by others in the organization are inconsistent, he or she will

be in a state of role conflict and will experience stress, become dissatisfied, and perform less effectively than if the expectations did not conflict (Hamner & Tosi, 1974). A key insight of this theory is that role conflict occurs when an individual is expected to simultaneously perform multiple roles that have conflicting expectations.

According to Kahn et al. (1964), role conflict is defined as "the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other" (p. 19). Moreover, role conflict tends to reduce an employee's general satisfaction with their job (Kahn et. al., 1964). While independent school athletic directors likely experience some role conflict, the impact of such role conflict on job satisfaction is not well understood. That is, it is unclear if job satisfaction levels vary depending on factors such as the type of roles, and/or the number of roles.

Role of Athletic Director

According to the annual High School Athletics Participation Survey (National Federation of High Schools, 2015), the number of participants in high school sports in 2014-2015 increased for the 26th consecutive year, totaling 7.8 million high school athletes. More athletes means more teams, more coaches, and more games. The additional athletes in athletic programs could mean additional responsibilities for athletic directors. For example, in their study of high school athletic directors from a Midwestern state, Sullivan, Lonsdale, and Taylor (2014) noted that in addition to growth in participation, there has been a corresponding expansion of responsibilities and expectations for the high school athletic director. The concept of expanding responsibilities was also examined by Eckman and Kelber (2010) who, in their study of high school principals, reported that as school size increases, so does the magnitude of instructional and management issues.

Nagel (2012) explained that the work for interscholastic athletic directors involves a variety of duties, including scheduling and supervising games and events, hiring and supervising coaches, scheduling transportation to away events and game officials for home events, maintaining facilities, and ordering equipment and uniforms. Nagel shared the example of an Ohio public school athletic director who calculated that in the first six months of the 2011-2012 academic year, he worked 155 out of 174 days, including 83 days that involved evening events where an athletic administrator must be present.

Fund-raising has become an additional responsibility that is increasingly requiring more time and energy from interscholastic athletic directors. As Patzkowsky (2008) noted, athletic directors are at the mercy of their school districts, which often struggle with maintaining levels of funding. Van Milligen (2013) observed that the pressure to generate more revenue on the high

school level has continued to increase, forcing many athletic directors to get more involved in the fundraising process. McGrath (2015) asserted that raising money for high school athletics seems to get tougher every year. At many schools, athletic booster clubs exist to help athletic departments fill the funding gaps. While athletic directors are grateful to the time and money that the booster clubs members donate to the athletic department, attending meetings and assisting with logistical planning are additional responsibilities which occupy an athletic director's time.

In some cases, athletic directors are not just responsible for running the athletic department. At the interscholastic level, there has been a trend of combining the athletic director with other duties. In a 2005 National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) national survey of interscholastic athletic directors, 45 percent of the athletic directors who responded to the survey reported that they were also responsible for tasks outside of a school's sports program (NIAAA, 2005). A smaller survey ($N = 24$) conducted by Kalahar (2011) of interscholastic athletic directors in Michigan revealed that 8 of the 24 athletic director positions were combined with the role of assistant principal. Five athletic directors reported they were responsible for teaching classes, and three athletic directors in the survey were also the school principal or co-principal.

Larson (2007) reflected on the past 50 years of independent school athletics and concluded that there has been an explosion of afternoon athletic offerings. Athletic programs have gone from having nine or ten sports in the past to programs that now have 30 or more different sport team options, plus activity class offerings. For example, at Miss Porter's School, an independent boarding and day school in Connecticut for girls in grades 9-12, there are 321 students, and the athletic department offers 18 different sports, totaling 32 teams over 3 levels (varsity, junior varsity, and thirds) and 12 fitness activity classes (Miss Porter's School, n.d.). Also located in Connecticut is Kingswood-Oxford School, which is an independent day middle and high school for boys and girls. There are 508 students total, and the athletic department offers 24 different sports, totaling 55 teams over four levels, including middle school (Kingswood-Oxford, n.d.).

As a frame of reference, the average NCAA Division III athletic program offers 18 sports and the average percentage of the student body participating in sports is 21 percent (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014). At independent schools, most if not all students are often required to participate in team sports, intramurals, or activities each of the three sport seasons. Independent schools typically offer a wide range of athletic opportunities for students and they encourage students to try a variety of sports (AISNE, 2016).

Role Conflict

Role conflict was defined by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) in terms of the dimensions of congruency-incongruency or compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of a role, where congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards or conditions which impact role performance. When faced with role conflict, people have to make choices. Feeling forced to choose among competing roles is not a new problem, seeing that among the teacher-coaches interviewed in Sage's (1987) field research nearly thirty years ago, there was consistent agreement among the participants that they gave priority to their coaching and that as a result, their classroom preparation got shortchanged. In Paul's (1974) study of high school teachers, the author noted,

> Role incumbents use a variety of adjustment mechanisms to accommodate conflict. When there is a choice among conflicting role pressures, the choice is most influenced by perception of legitimacy of instructions received and perceptions of sanction attached to the conflicting claims. (p. 241)

According to Brown, Jones, and Leigh (2005), when juggling too many demands, some employees may feel forced to stretch their attention, effort, and resources, which could impact even high performers' estimates of their self-efficacy, acceptance of challenging personal goals, and subsequent performance levels. For professionals working in the field of athletics, role conflict has been examined from many perspectives, including teacher-coach (Figone, 1994; Richards & Templin, 2012; Richards, Templin, Levesque-Bristol, & Blankenship, 2014; Sage, 1987) physical education teacher-athletic directors (Ha et al., 2011), and certified athletic trainer-clinical instructors (Henning & Weidner, 2008). Schmidt, Roesler, Kusserow and Rau (2014) reported that role conflict leads to a psychological conflict in which employees will not be capable of fulfilling every expected role at the same time. Henning and Weidner (2008) reported that the athletic trainers in their study felt strained professionally as their role obligations increased to include clinical instruction, health care provision, and administrative responsibilities.

Role conflict can also occur when pressures from an individual's professional role are incompatible with the pressures from their personal roles. In Dixon and Bruening (2005), the researchers noted that in general, the sport industry is characterized by working long hours (including nights and weekends) in which face time is strongly valued. For the mothers in Bruening and Dixon's (2007) study of Division I women's basketball coaches, role conflict was a constant struggle. The coaching profession, especially at the Division I level, necessitates long hours, working nights and weekends, and traveling away from home. Such working conditions were in direct conflict with many

parental roles and responsibilities, and often caused the mothers in the study great emotional strain. More recently, research on the work-family interface has expanded to include the experiences of coaching fathers, who like their counterparts in other professions, perceive tension between work and family (Graham & Dixon, 2014).

According to Kahn et al. (1964), the presence of role conflict tends to reduce an employee's general satisfaction with their job. For the principals in Eckman and Kelber's (2010) study, there was a statistical correlation of role conflict with job satisfaction for the group. The authors stated "As role conflict increased for these principals (N = 102), job satisfaction decreased" (p. 214). In a study of job satisfaction in intercollegiate Division III athletic directors, the presence of role conflict could be inferred in a comparison of intercollegiate athletic directors. Specifically, the job satisfaction levels of those athletic directors with multiple functions and job responsibilities were compared to those of Division III athletic directors who devoted all their time to athletic director duties. Notably, the study raised concerns that Division III athletic directors with multiple roles and responsibilities were more prone to job dissatisfaction than those Division III athletic directors who devoted all their time to athletic director duties (Robinson et al., 2003).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been defined as the perceived equity between expected and actual job rewards (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974), the affective reactions that an employee has to a job (Fields, 2002), the way that employees feel about their jobs (McChesney & Peterson, 2005), as well as a positive emotional response resulting from an employee's job expectations being met or exceeded (Mathis & Jackson, 1991). Issues surrounding job satisfaction exist in every profession, noted Terranova and Henning (2011), and the nature of the profession might influence the degree of satisfaction.

After reviewing previous studies involving the topic of job satisfaction in the workplace, it can be inferred that job satisfaction can be influenced by a variety of factors, including role ambiguity (Blalack & Davis, 1975; Paul, 1974), role conflict (Eckman & Kelber, 2010), role conflict and ambiguity (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Dhurup & Mahomed, 2011; Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Schmidt et al., 2014), and role stress (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1991; Faucett, Corwyn, & Poling, 2013). Job satisfaction has also been studied from the perspective of contributing to the overall function of work organizations. According to Spector (1997), this is important at least partly because it appears to contribute to positive job attitudes and work behaviors such as job involvement and organizational commitment. In the field of higher education, increased job satisfaction and better retention of faculty

reduces the need for costly faculty selection and hiring. Additionally, higher retention adds financial stability in the institution (Froesche & Sinkford, 2009). Faculty job satisfaction and its relationship to retention in higher education are business related issues, as a 5% increase in retention can lead to a 10% reduction in costs (Wong & Heng, 2009).

Terranova and Henning (2011) studied the job satisfaction of intercollegiate athletic trainers and found that athletic trainers who reported less job satisfaction also reported greater intention to leave their jobs. McChesney and Peterson (2005) noted that a lack of satisfying job attributes can lead to gradual burnout in an employee, or gradual distress, which can lead to absenteeism and turnover. According to Smith (1992), job dissatisfaction because of high workload, lack of control, and lack of recognition and reward can affect marital, family, and leisure satisfaction.

In their study of job satisfaction among faculty members, Foor and Cano (2011) stressed that individuals such as department chairs, directors, deans and others involved in administration and supervision should be concerned with the job satisfaction of their employees. The supervisors of NCAA Division III athletic directors, noted Robinson et al. (2003), have a vested interest in improving job satisfaction in the hope of reducing organizational attitudes and adaptive responses that would be viewed as detrimental to the organization. More specifically, the researchers noted that organizational leaders need to be cognizant to the elements of a Division III athletic director's job that promote job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Robinson et al., 2003).

The focus of the current study is the impact of role conflict on job satisfaction. This topic has been the focus of studies in a variety of professions, including high school counselors (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011), high school principals (Eckman & Kelber, 2010), teachers (Paul, 1974), nurses and engineers (Bacharach et al., 1991), and United Methodist clergy (Faucett et al., 2013). In the athletic realm, Ryan and Sagas (2006) studied the impact of inter-role conflict on the job satisfaction and intent to leave of interscholastic teacher-coaches and found that the conflict experienced between the roles of teacher and coach can be detrimental to satisfaction.

For the purposes of this study, however, the researcher uncovered far fewer studies specifically focusing on the impact of role conflict on job satisfaction of independent school athletic directors. One such study was conducted of public school sport facilitators in South Africa. Dhurup and Mahomed (2011) reported that for the educators in their study ($N = 128$), role conflict had a significant negative impact on job satisfaction. Specifically, when the educators took on multiple roles (in this case, teacher and sport facilitator), the result was increased levels of inter-role conflict.

Less is known about the impact of role conflict on job satisfaction of independent school athletic directors. In particular, New

England Prep School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) athletic directors are a population that until this point has not been the focus of research studies in the field of Sport Management. For the purposes of this study, the researcher sought to examine the impact of role conflict on the job satisfaction of athletic directors at NEPSAC member schools. Within the present study the researcher included factors such as residence type (boarding or day school), school type (co-educational or single sex), or program level (high school only, high school and middle school combined, middle school only) in an attempt to examine what, if any, impact these factors have on levels of role conflict and job satisfaction of independent school athletic directors.

Hypotheses

The expanding roles of interscholastic athletic directors and intercollegiate athletic directors have been the focus of numerous studies. However, little is known about the impact of role conflict on job satisfaction for independent school athletic directors. The position of athletic director has many common roles and responsibilities regardless of the institution or level (Schneider & Stier, 2001), yet the independent school athletic director may also be expected to fulfill additional and/or conflicting roles not expected in public schools or colleges. For example, an athletic director at an independent boarding school might also be expected to live in the dormitory or have dorm duty responsibilities. An athletic director at an independent day school might be responsible for chaperoning or driving to weekend activities, in addition to coaching or supervising weekend athletic events (Powell, 1996). An independent school athletic director, especially at the high school level, could have increased college counseling and athletic recruiting pressures (Chubb, 2016). Working as an athletic director at a co-educational institution could mean offering twice as many teams, having twice as many athletes, and having twice as many coaches to supervise as opposed to serving as an athletic director at a single-sex institution. Taking these additional and/or conflicting roles into consideration, it is possible that role conflict may impact the job satisfaction of independent school athletic directors.

Hypothesis 1: NEPSAC athletic directors with high levels of role conflict will display significantly lower levels of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2a: NEPSAC athletic directors at boarding schools will experience more role conflict than athletic directors at NEPSAC day schools.

Hypothesis 2b: NEPSAC athletic directors at boarding schools will report less job satisfaction than athletic directors at NEPSAC day schools.

Hypothesis 3a: NEPSAC athletic directors at co-educational schools will experience more role conflict than athletic directors at single-sex schools.

Hypothesis 3b: NEPSAC athletic directors at co-educational schools will report less job satisfaction than athletic directors at single-sex schools.

Hypothesis 4a: NEPSAC athletic directors in charge of high school athletic programs, or combined high school and middle school programs, will experience more role conflict than athletic directors at middle schools.

Hypothesis 4b: NEPSAC athletic directors in charge of high school athletic programs, or combined high school and middle school programs, will report less job satisfaction than athletic directors at middle schools.

Method

Participants

Independent school athletic directors from the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) were selected. NEPSAC was established in 1942 as an organization of athletic directors from accredited New England independent schools. While the association does not function as a regulatory or oversight body (like the NCAA or state public high school associations), NEPSAC does sanction New England championship events in many sports and provides guidance in a variety of issues involving interscholastic athletics (New England Preparatory School Athletic Council, n.d.). The NEPSAC member schools represent all six New England states plus eastern New York State, and include three residence types: day schools, boarding schools and combined day and boarding schools. In addition, all NEPSAC schools are one of two education types: co-educational or single-sex education. Schools in the NEPSAC serve middle school grade levels, high school grade levels, or a combination of both middle and high school grade levels.

A total of 172 independent school athletic directors were sent the online survey measuring role conflict and job satisfaction. The email addresses of athletic directors from all member schools were provided by NEPSAC for the purpose of data collection. One follow-up email was sent 10 days after the initial distribution to promote survey participation. The first wave of collection resulted in 34 responses, and the second, follow-up wave elicited an additional 22 responses to the survey. According to Jordan, Walker, Kent, and Inoue (2011), it is important for researchers to consider the threat of nonresponse error. One method of defining groups is to classify respondents based on successive waves of responses to a questionnaire (Dooley & Lindner, 2003). This would mean that all participants who responded after a follow-up notice has been sent would be grouped in the last wave and thus be deemed "late respondents" (Jordan et al., 2011). Dooley and Lindner (2003) reported that late respondents have been shown to be an appropriate proxy for nonrespondents. In Paul's (1975) study of high school teachers, the researcher conducted telephone interviews with non-

respondents to be sure that non-response error would be avoided.

In the current study, the researcher identified two waves of collections, wave one and wave two. Results of an independent samples *t*-test did not reveal significant differences between wave one respondents and wave two respondents for role conflict (t (52) = .008, p = .528). The reported levels of role conflict for athletic directors in wave one (M = 2.91, SD = .877) were nearly identical to the reported levels of role conflict for athletic directors in wave two (M= 2.91, SD = .804). Similarly, results of an independent samples *t*-test did not reveal significant differences in reported job satisfaction levels between wave one respondents and wave two respondents (t (52) = -.159, p = .057) as athletic directors in wave one (M = 4.07, SD = .773) were comparable to athletic directors in wave two (M = 4.10, SD = .515).

There were a total of 56 completed questionnaires for a 32.5% survey response rate. Among all respondents, 52 completed the instrument in its entirety. The respondents included 44 males (78.6%) and 12 females (21.4%). The ages of the athletic directors ranged from 29 to 76 (M = 48.9, SD= 9.1). There was a wide range in the length of an athletic director's tenure at his or her current school (M=9.8 years, SD= 8.7) with six athletic directors in the first year at his or her current institution and one athletic director serving in the thirty-eighth year as the athletic director at the current school. The average amount of total experience as an athletic director at any independent school was slightly higher (M= 12.6 years, SD= 10.5).

In terms of institutional characteristics, the majority of participants (48.2%) reported that they were employed as athletic directors at day schools, 30.4% were at combined boarding and day schools, and 21.4% worked at boarding schools. The vast majority (78.6%) of those surveyed were co-educational school athletic directors, while 21.4% were athletic directors at single-sex institutions. The majority of athletic directors were in charge of competitive programs that served both middle and high school students (44.6%) and high school-only (39.3%), while 16.1% oversaw middle school-only athletic programs.

The NEPSAC athletic directors reported a wide variety of additional responsibilities, including coaching, dorm duty, and teaching. When the athletic directors were asked how many seasons they were currently coaching a team, 44.6% coached one season, 26.8% coached two seasons, and 8.9% coached all three seasons; meanwhile, 19.6% reported that they were not currently coaching a team. For athletic directors employed at boarding schools or combined boarding and day schools, some amount of dorm duty was a frequent requirement. Twenty-eight respondents indicated that they have dorm duty responsibilities, the majority of which (25%) had dorm duty one night a week. At many NEPSAC schools, the athletic directors were expected to teach classes. While

twenty-one (37.5%) of the athletic directors surveyed stated that they had "zero" teaching responsibilities, the majority (62.5%) reported that they were responsible for teaching at least one class each semester.

When given the opportunity to provide details regarding any other roles that were included in their job responsibilities, thirty-one (55%) of the NEPSAC athletic directors provided examples. Additional on-campus roles that were filled by those athletic directors included: faculty advisor to students (15%), Director of Physical Education (13%), Administrator on Duty (13%), and Admissions Committee (9%). Additionally, three athletic directors reported being in charge of transportation at their school, two individuals worked in their schools' College Counseling office, one did technology work for their school, and one athletic director also served as the dean of the middle school.

Survey Instrument

The research was conducted using a survey format and contained demographic questions as well as Likert scale type questions (see Appendix A). Role conflict was examined using items taken from the Role Questionnaire developed by Rizzo et al. (1970), which was one of the first measures of role conflict (Field, 2002). The eight role conflict items were reliable (α = .88, *M*= 20.37, *SD*= 3.21). The responses to the Role Questionnaire (Rizzo et al., 1970) were obtained using a seven-point Likert-type scale where 1 = very false and 7 = very true. Examples of role conflict items on the questionnaire included "I have to do things that should be done differently" and "I receive assignments without adequate resources and material to execute them (Rizzo et al., 1970, p. 56).

Job satisfaction was measured using the Job Satisfaction Relative to Expectations survey, developed by Bacharach et al. (1991). This measure assessed the degree of agreement between the perceived quality of broad aspects of a job and employee expectations (Fields, 2002). According to Fields, this measure is particularly useful to assess the extent to which job stresses, roles conflicts, or role ambiguity prevent job expectations from being met.

The choice of this particular scale for the present study, with the emphasis on job satisfaction relative to expectations, made sense as athletic directors are responsible for multiple roles, and at times, fulfilling the expectations of one of those roles may conflict with fulfilling the expectations of another role. Bacharach et al. (1991) determined that the scale correlated negatively with role conflict, role overload, and work-home conflict. The reported negative correlation aligned with the current researcher's hypothesis that NEPSAC athletic directors with high levels of role conflict will display significantly lower levels of job satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha for the five items on this survey was reliable (α = .83, *M*= 23.35, *SD*= 6.55). The responses to the Job Satisfaction Relative to Expectations survey (Bacharach et al., 1991) were

obtained using a four point Likert-type scale where 1= very dissatisfied and 4 = very satisfied. Examples of items on the measure included "Your present job when you compare it to others in the organization" and "Your present job in light of your career expectations" (Bacharach et al., 1991, p. 45).

Results

Simple linear regression analysis was used to test hypothesis 1: NEPSAC athletic directors with high levels of role conflict will display significantly lower levels of job satisfaction. Role conflict significantly predicted the NEPSAC athletic directors' ratings of job satisfaction. Specifically, results of a simple linear regression revealed that job satisfaction ($F(1, 51) = 29.418$, $R^2 = .38$, $p = .000$) was significantly predicted by role conflict ($\beta = -.616$, $t = -5.424$, $p = .000$).

The results of an independent samples *t*-test did not reveal significant differences when testing hypothesis 2a, whether NEPSAC athletic directors at boarding schools will experience more role conflict than athletic director's at NEPSAC day schools ($t(52) = -.434$, $p = .460$). A closer examination of the means suggested that athletic directors at boarding schools ($M = 2.964$, $SD = .789$) did not report experiencing more role conflict than athletic directors at day schools ($M = 2.864$, $SD = .867$). When testing hypothesis 2b, whether NEPSAC athletic directors at boarding schools will report less job satisfaction than athletic directors at NEPSAC day schools, the results of an independent samples *t*-test did not reveal significant differences between residence type for job satisfaction ($t(52) = .074$, $p = .135$). For athletic directors at boarding schools ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .141$), levels of job satisfaction were nearly identical to athletic directors at day schools ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .535$).

Results of an independent samples *t*-test did not reveal significant differences between education type for role conflict ($t(52) = -1.535$, $p = .817$), when testing Hypothesis 3a, whether NEPSAC athletic directors at co-educational schools will experience more role conflict than athletic directors at single-sex schools. Athletic directors at co-educational schools ($M = 3.012$, $SD = .785$) reported slightly more role conflict than athletic directors at single-sex schools ($M = 2.604$, $SD = .887$), but the results did not achieve significance. The results of an independent samples *t*-test did not indicate significant differences between education types for job satisfaction ($t(52) = 1.629$, $p = .524$) when testing hypothesis 3b, if NEPSAC athletic directors at co-educational schools will report less job satisfaction than athletic directors at single-sex schools. An examination of the means suggested that athletic directors at co-educational institutions ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .620$) had slightly lower levels of job satisfaction than athletic directors at single-sex schools ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .667$), but not significantly.

Results of a one-way ANOVA were used to test hypothesis 4a, if NEPSAC athletic directors in charge of high school athletic programs, or combined high school and middle school programs, will experience more role conflict than athletic directors at middle schools. The results revealed significant differences between programs served for role conflict (F (2, 50) = 4.722, p = .013). A post hoc Bonferroni test found that athletic directors at middle schools (M = 2.22, SD = .941) scored lower on the role conflict items than athletic directors who were in charge of both middle and high school athletic programs (M = 2.988, SD = .809), and athletic directors in charge of high school athletic programs (M = 3.14, SD = .626).

However, when testing hypothesis 4b, whether NEPSAC athletic directors in charge of high school athletic programs, or combined high school and middle school programs, will report less job satisfaction than athletic directors at middle schools, the results of a one-way ANOVA did not reveal significant differences between programs served for job satisfaction (F (2, 50) = 1.58, p = .217). Athletic directors at middle schools (M = 4.33, SD = .458) reported similar levels of job satisfaction to those athletic directors who were in charge of both middle and high school programs (M = 4.13, SD = .577), and athletic directors at high schools (M = 3.904, SD = .742).

Discussion

The job satisfaction of athletic directors is becoming increasingly important as their jobs and the corresponding roles that they are expected to perform continue to change and expand. Role theory posits that when the behaviors expected of an individual by others in the organization are inconsistent, he or she will be in a state of role conflict and will experience stress, become dissatisfied, and perform less effectively than if the expectations did not conflict (Hamner & Tosi, 1974). For the purposes of this study, the researcher examined the potential impact of role conflict on job satisfaction. Given the possible outcomes of lower job satisfaction ratings, including intention to leave a job, Foor and Cano (2011) urged supervisors to be concerned with the job satisfaction of their employees. Researchers have studied job satisfaction as it relates to athletic trainers (McChesney & Peterson, 2005, Terranova & Henning, 2011) as well as intercollegiate athletic directors (Robinson et al., 2003).

However, no study to date has specifically examined the impact of role conflict on job satisfaction of independent school athletic directors. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate job satisfaction levels of current NEPSAC athletic directors. Specifically, the researcher used the role conflict items from the Role Questionnaire (Rizzo et al., 1970) and the Job Satisfaction Relative to Expectations survey (Bacharach et al., 1991) in an attempt to predict whether NEPSAC athletic

directors who reported more role conflict would have less job satisfaction. Additional research questions sought out differences in these areas between the groupings of residence type, education type, and level of programs served.

In terms of the overall levels of role conflict, NEPSAC athletic directors appear to be dealing with some amount of role conflict in their jobs. The majority of the athletic director's reported coaching at least one season, more than half of the sample had dorm duty responsibilities, and nearly two-thirds of the respondents taught at least one class. Thus, most of the NEPSAC athletic directors were managing at least four different roles on campus. But it is not simply the number of roles that causes an individual to experience role conflict. Kahn et al.. (1964) explained that role conflict is the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would impact compliance with the other. If an athletic director was involved in their administrative role (meeting with coaches on their staff, calling opponents to schedule games), it is reasonable to suggest that they could not simultaneously fulfill their coaching, teaching or dorm duty roles.

Regarding the items on the job satisfaction survey, NEPSAC athletic directors reported high levels of job satisfaction overall. This is similar to Robinson et al.'s (2003) research on NCAA Division III athletic directors, who expressed a high level of satisfaction with their positions. In the Robinson et al. study, when respondents were asked to qualitatively respond to the question "What do you like most about your current position?" the most common response was working with and having an impact on student-athletes. In addition, respondents indicated that they enjoyed a high level of control and autonomy, and a high level of decision-making latitude. It is possible that the high job satisfaction ratings of the NEPSAC athletic directors in the present study are a reflection that they also enjoy working with and having an impact on the student-athletes, and they enjoy similar aspects of control, autonomy and decision-making power. But further research is needed to help identify the basis for the high levels of job satisfaction reported by the NEPSAC athletic directors.

However, when the results for the entire survey were tested by simple linear regression analysis, job satisfaction was negatively predicted by role conflict. This confirmed the researcher's hypothesis that NEPSAC athletic directors with high levels of role conflict will display significantly lower levels of job satisfaction. As noted by Kahn et al. (1964), when a person is confronted with two or more conflicting or opposing role expectations and the corresponding role demands of others, role conflict can occur. This leads to a psychological conflict in which the employee will not be capable of fulfilling every expected role at the same time. For an athletic director, their additional roles (e.g.,

coaching, teaching, dorm duty) might conflict with the role of athletic director, but in addition, these conflicts have an impact on other people. For example, if an athletic director is in an administrative meeting, they cannot meet with player on their team, or a student needing extra help, or a resident with a dorm issue. Therefore, it is possible that for some NEPSAC athletic directors, they feel as though they are short-changing someone who needs them or expects something from them. As they struggle with managing role expectations and balancing conflicting responsibilities, their job satisfaction may suffer.

Results of the one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences between programs served for role conflict. Athletic directors at middle schools scored lower on the role conflict items than athletic directors who were in charge of both middle and high school athletic programs and athletic directors in charge of high school-only athletic programs. This confirmed the researcher's hypothesis that NEPSAC athletic directors in charge of high school athletic programs, or combined high school and middle school programs, will experience more role conflict than athletic directors at middle schools.

While the researcher is not suggesting that middle school athletic directors have "less on their plate" than an athletic director in charge of a high school athletic program, it is possible that middle school athletic directors have fewer conflicts within and between their different roles. According to Chubb (2016), NAIS-member schools send the vast majority of students (nearly 100 percent) to college, with disproportionate numbers of them attending the most selective colleges and universities. College athletic recruiting is beginning earlier, often in ninth or tenth grade (Healy, 2015) and in elite cases, athletes are verbally committing by the end of their freshmen year. Athletes miss varsity practices and games for college visits in their junior and senior year. Students must take required exams, including SAT's, ACT's and Advanced Placement courses, and the scheduling of team practices and games must be planned accordingly. Since middle school athletes are not involved in the college process, managing issues pertaining to college recruiting is not one of a middle school athletic directors expected roles, which is one possible explanation for their lower reported levels of role conflict.

However, results of a one-way ANOVA did not reveal significant differences between programs served for job satisfaction. Athletic directors at middle schools reported similar levels of job satisfaction to those athletic directors who were in charge of both middle and high school programs and athletic directors at high schools. Considering that the average number of years that NEPSAC athletic directors had worked in their current role was 9.8 years, this potentially indicates that they are satisfied enough to remain in their position for an extended period of time, regardless of the program level served.

The results of the independent samples *t*-test did not indicate significant differences between the groups, when testing whether differences in role conflict or job satisfaction existed between NEPSAC athletic directors at boarding schools and athletic directors at NEPSAC day schools. The researcher hypothesized that athletic directors at boarding schools would have more role conflict than athletic directors at day schools. Boarding schools require additional roles such as dorm duty, sit-down dinner, and chaperoning weekend activities, so additional role conflict was expected. In addition, faculty and staff at boarding schools are acting *in loco parentis* 24 hours a day, which is a huge responsibility. However, no significant differences emerged between residence types. The possible explanation for this is that although these are additional roles, they were not necessarily conflicting roles. Everyone has to eat, for example, so sit-down dinner responsibilities at a boarding school would not conflict with coaching or teaching. In addition, while the researcher was anticipating that athletic directors at boarding schools might less satisfied by living and working in the same environment, perhaps this arrangement has positive aspects, too; no commute, no rent/mortgage payments, ability to save money, and a sense of increased connection and community.

No significant differences emerged from the results of the independent samples *t*-test between co-educational and single-sex schools, either for role conflict or job satisfaction. Co-educational schools provide athletic opportunities for both genders as opposed to just one, so the researcher hypothesized that a co-ed athletic department would offer twice as many teams, have twice as many athletes, and have twice as many coaches to supervise as opposed to a single-sex institution. This would initially appear to be quite daunting, but in many cases, an athletic director has a support staff, such as associate and assistant athletic directors. Although the researcher did not control for the number of support staff positions in the present survey, it is feasible that athletic departments at larger schools with larger athletic programs would have a correspondingly larger staff. Although the volume of work might be greater in a co-educational athletic program, the number of conflicting roles for an athletic director at a co-educational school might not be very different from an athletic director at a single-sex school.

Limitations

In retrospect, it would have been helpful to broaden the scope of the survey and include more questions pertaining to different aspects of an athletic directors experience working at an independent school. The omission of control variables could impact the validity and generalizability of the findings. For instance, the researcher did not control for the number of full-time or part-time support staff in the athletic department. Did they have a full-time

administrative assistant? Did their department also have assistant athletic director(s) and/or associate athletic director(s)? Having more staff would allow the athletic director to delegate certain roles or responsibilities, such as equipment inventory or attendance, to an assistant. Being able to delegate could then free the athletic director to focus on more important, and perhaps more satisfying, roles or responsibilities. In contrast, at some schools, an athletic director may have been the only full-time time staff member, which meant they were essentially doing everything on their own without support. This could contribute to increased role conflict, and in turn, possibly decreased job satisfaction.

Although the researcher in the present study did include questions on the survey regarding additional roles, such as whether an athletic director was also expected to coach a team and if they taught classes, asking for more details about those roles would have been useful. For example, there are different responsibilities and roles involved in being a head coach of a varsity team, as opposed to the head coach of a junior varsity team, thirds team or middle school team. Similarly, being a head coach at any level is different from being an assistant coach. In addition, there is a broad range in the responsibilities and roles involved in teaching a class. Is the class an advanced placement course, or a physical education skills class? Does the class meet five days a week or twice a week? How many courses are they teaching each semester, and how many course preps do they have?

The timing of when the survey was emailed to the NEPSAC athletic directors turned out to be a limitation. The initial email requesting participation in the survey, as well as the follow-up reminder email, coincided with the NEPSAC schools' two or three-week long spring break. Many athletic directors were away from their office, traveling with teams or on vacation. Therefore, it is possible that the timing limited the overall response rate, and it may have also limited the type of athletic directors who might have replied.

A final limitation is the concern of nonresponse bias. As Jordan et al. (2011) cautioned their readers, the issue of nonresponse bias can limit the external validity of a research study. The current study did separate the respondents into wave one and wave two, and no significant differences emerged. However, as Jordan et al. noted, the likelihood of nonresponse error in a study decreases as the response rate increases (presuming that adequate sampling procedures are employed), but it cannot be completely eliminated as a potential bias until some mechanism of control is instituted.

Future Research

There are many different directions for possible future research. It would be interesting to broaden the current survey, both in terms of the survey design as well as the sample population. Future survey design

could include questions on numbers of support staff in the athletic department, the level of competition of the team(s) they were coaching, and the number and level of courses they were teaching. The researcher could broaden the survey population to a nationwide sample by sending the survey to all athletic directors at NAIS member institutions. Does role conflict impact the job satisfaction of athletic directors at independent schools outside of the NEPSAC? Is there a difference in the job satisfaction of independent school athletic directors in different regions of the country? Considering that the NAIS has over 1000 member schools nationwide, there is the potential to have a much larger sample to draw from.

Future research could also seek out more detailed information about the schools where the athletic directors work. Beyond the variables of residence type, education type and programs served, which were included in the present study, it would be interesting to examine the cost of school tuition for day and boarding students, total school enrollment, number of athletic participants, athletic requirements, how many sports and teams offered, and the number of coaches that the athletic director supervises. It would be useful to include qualitative, open-ended questions on a future survey to get more in-depth responses from the athletic directors in order to research possible reasons why certain athletic directors experience more role conflict and less job satisfaction. Having such information would provide more context and means of comparison among the respondents and would allow for more in-depth analysis among the different variables.

From a gender perspective, it would be interesting to have a larger sample to determine if women actually hold less than a quarter of all athletic director positions at independent schools nationwide, or if it is a phenomenon exclusive to schools in the northeast. Comparing what differences, if any, exist between male and female athletic directors at independent schools could reveal if gender differences impact role conflict or job satisfaction. Finally, people have many roles in their lives, and not all of them are work-related. Therefore, it would be interesting to include demographic questions about marital status or the number of children living at home, and test for differences among men and women, married and single people, parents or not parents on the variables of role conflict and job satisfaction.

Finally, role theory includes additional variables beyond role conflict, and there are additional outcomes, beyond job satisfaction. As Hamner and Tosi (1974) explained, when the behaviors expected of an individual by others in the organization are inconsistent, he or she will be in a state of role conflict and will experience stress, become dissatisfied, and perform less effectively than if the expectations did not conflict. Future research could incorporate additional role theory variables and focus on

the possible implications for independent school athletic directors, including the coping mechanisms of those who report higher levels of job satisfaction.

Conclusion

For the NEPSAC athletic directors in the present study, an inverse relationship existed between role conflict and job satisfaction. That is, when the athletic directors reported higher levels of role conflict, their job satisfaction decreased. This should be a concern for their heads of school, supervisors and hiring managers, considering the potentially negative outcomes of decreased job satisfaction, such as stress, burnout and intention to leave. However, when reviewing the results of the job satisfaction items on the survey, NEPSAC athletic directors reported high levels of job satisfaction overall. This is encouraging because when examined apart from role conflict, athletic directors still report feeling satisfied or very satisfied with their position. But, athletic directors are expected to perform multiple roles, and at times, those roles conflict. Hopefully, as more research is done on the subject, awareness will increase and efforts will be made to support NEPSAC athletic directors and perhaps limit their conflicting roles.

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Appendix A

Appendix A

The first five questions are from the "Job Satisfaction Relative to Expectations Scale" developed by Bacharach et al. (1991). Responses are obtained using a 4 point Likert-type scale where 1= very dissatisfied, and 4 = very satisfied.

1. Your present job when you compare it to others in the organization.

2. The progress you are making towards the goals you have set for yourself in your present position.

3. The chance your job gives you to do what you are best at.

4. Your present job when you consider the expectations you had when you took the job.

5. Your present job in light of your career expectations.

The next eight questions are from the "Role Questionnaire" scale developed by Rizzo et al. (1970). Responses are obtained on a 7-point Likert-type scale where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

1. I have to do things that should be done differently.

2. I have to go against a rule of a policy in order to carry out an assignment.

3. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.

4. I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.

5. I work on unnecessary things.

6. I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.

7. I receive assignments without the personnel to complete them.

8. I receive assignments without adequate resources and material to execute them.

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A Longitudinal Study of Team-Fan Role Identity on Self-Reported Attendance Behavior and Future Intentions

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Attendance at college sporting events generates billions of dollars annually for athletics departments at the college level in the United States. Based on Identity Theory and prior research, we developed and tested two models that were successful in predicting actual attendance, attendance intentions (conative loyalty), and support for the team across time. Respondents (N = 165; 60% female, 95% Caucasian) filled out three surveys across the year. In Model A (RMSEA = .066, x^2/df = 50.02/29 = 1.73), prior season attendance, number of games intending to attend, and preseason team-fan role identity (Time 1) explained 63% of self-reported attendance behavior (Time 2). Those variables and postseason role identity (Time 2) explained 48.5% of attendance intentions (Time 3; Model A) and 43% of supporting the team in the future (Time 3; Model B, RMSEA = .060, x^2/df = 46.16/29 = 1.59). Sports marketers need to take into account both the impact of role identity as a fan of the team and attendance intentions, not just prior attendance behavior, when predicting future attendance behavior and support for the team.

In the United States, attendance for the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) football teams is fairly high across the Big 5 conferences, but not impressive in other divisions. Across all NCAA divisions, it seems to have plateaued at around 50 million fans per year (Trail & James, 2015). In the 2015 season, The Ohio State University averaged over 107,000 attendees per game (NCAA, 2016) and generated over $30 million (U.S.) from ticket sales for the season, showing how

important attendance and ticket sales are to athletics departments. However, at some schools, attendance numbers are critical not for revenue as much as for the importance of maintaining classification status (i.e., not being relegated to a lower division). If Football Bowl Subdivision schools do not average at least 15,000 on a rolling two-year period they can lose Division I membership (Bowl Subdivision Membership, 2016), which in turn can cost those schools shared revenues from Division I status.

This gives some evidence that one of the most difficult aspects of sport consumption behavior to predict may be attendance. Typically research has either tried to predict attendance intentions (Bodet & Bernache-Assolant, 2011; Gray & Wert-Gray, 2012; Harrolle, Trail, Rodríguez, & Jordan, 2010; Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003; Shapiro, Ridinger, & Trail, 2013; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005; Trail, Fink, & Anderson; 2003; Wang, Zhang, & Tsuji, 2011; Wu, Tsai, & Hung, 2012; Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa, & Biscaia, 2014;) or has inappropriately measured past attendance and attempted to 'predict' it with measures taken afterwards (Bee & Havitz, 2010; Heere et al., 2011; Kwon, Trail, & Anderson, 2005; Laverie & Arnett, 2000). In addition, there have been economic models that attempted to predict attendance with limited success as well (Baade & Tiehen, 1990; Greenstein & Marcum, 1981).

Furthermore, all of the above studies were cross-sectional studies (i.e., the data was collected only at one time). Recently though, Yoshida, Heere, and Gordon (2015) and McDonald, Karg, and Leckie (2014) have done what the previous research did not, and that is to extend these cross-sectional models to longitudinal models, collecting attendance behavior data (Yoshida et al., 2015) or season ticket renewal data (McDonald et al., 2014) several months after collecting attitudinal data. These researchers have advanced sport consumer behavior research with their models by collecting and testing data over time.

Building on their work, and the foundation of those that have come before, we propose and evaluate a model of self-reported attendance behavior. Extending the prior research, we collected attendance behavior for the previous season and collected attendance intentions for the current season (Time 1: Preseason). We then collected self-reported attendance after the current season ended (Time 2: Postseason) and finally attendance intentions at the end of the year (Time 3: End-of- Year). However, as Oliver (1999) has argued, it is not sufficient to assume that past behavior is the only, or best, predictor of future behavior. Cognitive measures need to be included as per Yoshida et al. (2015). Thus, we collected self-reported attendance data and a cognitive measure of role identity (fan of the team) data across the different times to determine the contributions of each as predictors.

Therefore, considering that attendance at college sporting events generates billions

of dollars annually for athletics departments at the college level in the United States alone (Hobson & Rich, 2015), and generates shared revenues for smaller schools that maintain sufficient attendance numbers to keep Division I status, the purpose of this study was to develop and test a model (Model A, Figure 1) that could be successful in predicting actual attendance (behavioral loyalty) and attendance intentions (conative loyalty) across time. However, attendance intentions are not the only potential measure of future loyalty. Thus, we also examined a similar model (Model B, Figure 1) that used a general measure of supporting the team in the future to determine if general support and intention to attend games are substantially different. We used identity theory to create the framework for both Model A and Model B. In Model A, we hypothesized that prior season attendance (a measure of behavioral loyalty) will impact preseason cognitive role identity (fan of the team), the number of games intending to attend (conative loyalty), and actual self-reported attendance (behavioral loyalty again, measured at the end of the season). In addition, we hypothesized that attendance behavior will predict postseason role identity and the likelihood of future attendance. Model B is the same as Model A except that rather than predicting end-of-the-year attendance intentions we have substituted a more general measure of intention to support the team in the future, rather than attending future games.

Theoretical Framework

A primary tenet of identity theory is that people have role identities that are guided by past behavior and predict future behavior (Ervin & Stryker, 2001). People have many role identities (e.g., mother, daughter, employee, and fan of a specific team). The specific identity is a set of beliefs about the importance of that role to the individual, e.g., 'I am an Ohio State fan', or 'Being a Buckeye fan is very important to me'.

Identity theory differs from social identity theory in a significant way in that social identity theory specifies that "a social identity is a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a group" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). As Trail and James (2015) noted, a social identity is an "identification with a collectivity or social category and (is) focused on category-based identities (e.g., Black or white, Christian or Muslim)" (p. 58), whereas an identity within identity theory is a role-based identity, such as teacher, mother, daughter, etc. Trail and James (2015) suggested that the role of sport fan can be either role-based or category-based. Not surprisingly, both identity theory and social identity theory have been used to explain why people are fans and fandom in general.

However, the way that role-based fandom should be measured versus how a category-based fandom should be measured, should be very different. The former should focus on cognitions about how important the role of fan of the team is to the individual, irrespective of any other fan or

anyone else. It is the importance and salience of the role that creates an identity standard (Ervin & Stryker, 2001). On the other hand, a category-based measure of fandom should focus on the social interaction with others in the same category, that is, other fans of the same ilk. Relative to the latter, Mael and Ashforth (1992) suggested, "the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) of which he or she is a member" (p. 104), or referent to fans, in terms of the community of fans of which he or she is a member. Heere et al. (2011) extended this idea and suggested several areas including the sense of interdependence with the group and interconnection with the group. In addition, in Yoshida et al. (2015), they included the idea of fan community or identifying with other people who follow the team. These latter concepts are obviously considerably different from the idea of role identity, which represents how important being a fan of a particular team is to that individual.

Prior research has looked at, and created measurement scales for both role-based fandom and category-based fandom, and has called both "team identification," which is probably not correct. For example, the Team Identification Index (TII; Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Trail & James, 2001) was supposedly created as a category-based measure according to the description and definition that Trail and colleagues have applied to it (e.g., Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000; Trail et al., 2003; Trail & James, 2001). Trail et al. (2000) defined identification as "an orientation of the self in regard to other objects, including a person or group that results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment" (p. 165-166). This definition squarely puts the TII in the social identity theory framework. In addition, they quoted a variety of research from social identity theory in support of team identification and the TII. However, the items in the TII do not represent social identity theory or 'team identification'. There is no mention of being a part of a group of fans or comparison to an outgroup, which is also a key component of social identity theory. The items focus on the "importance of being a fan," considering oneself to be a "real fan of the team," and "experiencing a loss" if the person had to stop being a fan of the team (see Table 1 for full TII item wording). We suggest that the items in the TII are representative of the importance of a role-based identity and not a category-based identify, and represent the ideas in identity theory much more closely than those in social identity theory. In our present research, we focus on identity theory and the importance of a team-fan role-based identity represented by the items in the TII. However, we would suggest that the label TII is also not accurate as it may not represent team identification, and thus possibly should be changed. Although, because the items in the TII represent the idea of a fan role identity, we will use previous research with the TII to support our proposed hypotheses and to measure team-fan role identity.

Role identity and conative loyalty. Conative loyalty is the behavioral intention to repurchase, "a deeply held commitment to buy" the brand (Oliver, 1999, p. 35). However, Oliver noted that this is similar to any other good intention and may not be realized. This is distinct from Dick and Basu's (1994) conception of a conative disposition that includes switching costs, sunk costs, and expectations. Oliver's conative loyalty more closely reflects Dick and Basu's expectation aspect of conation, but Oliver's conative loyalty solely focuses on the intentions with no reference to costs. We focus more on Oliver's definition and the distinction that conative loyalty is intentions only.

As noted above, a primary tenet of identity theory is that people have role identities that predict how they will behave in the future (Ervin & Stryker, 2001). In addition, Oliver (1997) indicated that cognitive loyalty would have an influence on conative loyalty. If we assume that team identification (role identity as a fan) is similar to cognitive loyalty, then the role identity would be related to conative loyalty. Similarly, Azjen and Madden (1986) in their Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggested that attitudes lead to intentions. Although role identities are not attitudes, they are cognitions, because attitudes are comprised of cognitive and affective components, it is an easy supposition to suggest that cognitions such as role identities could easily lead to behavioral intentions. This is supported empirically by prior research.

Within sport consumer behavior literature, the importance of role identity as a fan of a particular team (called team identification when using the TII historically) has been shown to be related to behavioral intentions relative to a team (conative loyalty), explaining anywhere from 10.9% of the variance (Yoshida et al., 2014) to 25% of the variance (Wu et al., 2012; Yoshida et al., 2015). However, not all measures of conative loyalty were the same. For example, Trail et al. (2005) found that role identity (TII) was correlated ($r = .396$) with conative loyalty (measured by four items: likelihood of attending future games, purchasing the team's merchandise, buying the team's clothing and supporting the team), whereas Yoshida et al. (2014) found that role identity (TII; $\beta = .33$) predicted the probability of purchase intention (3 items: attend another sporting event, buying additional products, and spending more than 50% of the fan's spectator sport budget on the team). Wu et al. (2012) explained 25% of repatronage intentions (attending games, watching games on TV, and purchasing merchandise) and Shapiro et al. (2013) found 19.4% shared variance in a single item of attendance intentions and role identity (TII). Based on these results, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: *Preseason role identity will have a positive effect on current attendance intentions.*

In addition, Gray and Wert-Gray (2012) separated conative loyalty into in-person attendance intentions, media-based consumption intentions, team-merchandise consumption intentions, and word-of-mouth communication intentions. Role identity (TII) explained 10%, 11%, 24% and 38% of the variance in each respectively across four separate regression analyses. This shows that attendance intentions could possibly differ from the likelihood of supporting the team in the future, as it differs from other intentions. Further evidence of the potential difference between attendance intentions and supporting the team is reflected in Trail et al.'s (2005) research, which shows that the factor loading of "more likely to attend future games" (β = .507) on the Conative Loyalty factor substantially differs from the factor loading of "more likely to support the team" in the future (β = .723) on the Conative Loyalty factor. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: *Postseason role identity will have a positive effect on likelihood of attending future games and likelihood of supporting the team in the future, but will vary between the two.*

Role identity and behavioral loyalty. In our model, we assumed that some level of behavioral loyalty probably existed considering we were looking at college sport. Identity Theory supports the premise that role identity as a fan of the team is based on prior experience (cf. Ervin & Stryker, 2001), which creates role-based beliefs about the team. In addition, we were interested if preexisting behavioral loyalty (represented by past attendance) would have an impact on current role identity. Past attendance behavior has been shown to be related to role identity (TII). Kwon et al. (2005) found that past attendance behavior was correlated (r = .49) with role identity and Laverie and Arnett (2000) reported a correlation of .45 between past behavior and identity salience (somewhat like role identity based on their measure of it). Based on this research, we propose two more hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: *Past attendance behavior will have a positive influence on preseason role identity.*

Hypothesis 4: *Current attendance behavior will have a positive influence on postseason role identity.*

Although the above-mentioned authors showed that a relationship existed between past attendance behavior and role identity, until Yoshida et al.'s (2015) research no one had determined if current role identity (TII) predicted future attendance behavior in a longitudinal study. Yoshida et al. (2015) determined that role identity (TII) measured at the fifth game of the season (Time 1) was not significantly predictive of actual attendance behavior over the first half of the season (games 1-11; β = .17, Time 2), nor the second half of the season (games 12-21; β = .08; Time 3). These results are rather surprising and do not support Yoshida et al.'s (2015) hypotheses. In attempt to explain why this might be the case, they suggested that the reason that previous research had found significant

relationships between role identity (TII) and attendance behavior (where they hadn't) was probably due to using self-reported attendance data rather than team-tracked attendance data as they did. Although this is one possibility, they did not collect self-reported data in addition to team-reported attendance data, so were unable to compare the two, and thus could not substantiate their premise.

Identity theory indicates that this relationship should exist. Stryker and Burke (2000) suggested that role identity leads to behavior, but indicated that it could be mediated by cognitive comparison. Thus, even though Yoshida et al. (2015) were unable to establish a relationship between role identity and actual attendance behavior measured in the future within their SEM model, based on prior research showing that relationships between the two variables do exist, and that Yoshida et al. (2015) show a correlation between role identity (TII) at Time 1 and Attendance frequency at Time 2 (.38) and at Time 3 (.30), we propose a fifth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: *Preseason role identity will predict self-reported season attendance measured at the end of the season.*

Stability of role identity across time. Using Identity Theory, in a longitudinal study, Serpe (1987) proposed and showed role identities were stable across time for college age individuals. Within sport, the stability of role identity over time has not been examined before. However, category-based team identification measures have been assessed over time and moderate stability has been found. Gau, Wann, and James (2010) found that team identification did have stability across a season as it was correlated at .58 from Time 1 to Time 2. Similarly, Lock, Funk, Doyle, and McDonald (2014), in a more extensive study, tested a five-dimension measure of identification across time and found correlations ranging from .49 to .78. Based on the above information, we propose a sixth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: *Preseason role identity will be positively related to postseason role identity.*

Past behavior to conative loyalty. According to Azjen (1991), in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), past behavior typically predicts future behaviors or behavioral intentions and Smith et al. (2008) in an effort to improve the TPB, suggested that past behavior is often "the strongest predictor of self-reported intentions" (p. 315). Similarly, Oliver (1999) in his loyalty theory, indicated that past experiences would eventually lead to conative loyalty.

Conative loyalty can include both intentions to attend games and intentions to support the team in general (Trail et al., 2005). In a study about college football games (U.S.), Shapiro et al. (2013) determined that the number of past games attended was correlated with attendance intentions (r = .608) and intentions to purchase merchandise (r = .224), but not meaningfully correlated with intentions to support sponsors of the team (r = .167). The attendance measures were self-reported

items asking how many games the respondent went to during the current season and how many they intended to go to during the next season. Bodet and Bernache-Assollant (2011) also found that number of past home games attended was correlated with intentions to attend the next game of the team ($r = .368$). Zhang et al. (2003) found that the number of games attended in the prior season and to that point during the current season was related to the number of games intending to attend the rest of the season and the next season. Although as far as we can tell, no one has directly tested the relationship between past behavior and intentions to support the team, as noted above, intentions to attend games and intentions to support the team may differ (Gray & Wert-Gray, 2012; Trail et al., 2005). Based on this information we formed Hypothesis 7:

Hypothesis 7: *Prior attendance will have a positive influence on conative loyalty (intentions to attend games and support the team), but will impact likelihood of attending future games differently than likelihood of supporting the team in the future.*

Conative loyalty to behavioral loyalty. Oliver (1999) suggested that conative loyalty precedes behavioral loyalty, but is not a perfect predictor as many barriers could constrain intentions from becoming actual behavior. Yoshida et al. (2015) are the only ones we know of that have tested this relationship over time on game attendance behavior. They found that behavioral intentions at Time 1 were significantly correlated ($r = .31$) with team-reported attendance at Time 2, but not at Time 3 ($r = .15$). As noted above though, their behavioral intentions dimension measured three probabilities: "attending another sporting event of my team," "spending more than 50% of my sport consumption budget on my team," and making the "same choice" to attend the game again. The factor loading of the first item was low ($\beta = .54$) indicating that it shared only 25% of the variance with the other two items. Because this item did not contribute much to the behavioral intention factor, it is highly likely that the item would have been differentially correlated with the attendance items than with the scale. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 8: *Conative loyalty will have a positive impact on self-reported season attendance (measured in the future).*

Past behavior to present behavior. Within Loyalty Theory, Oliver (1999) and Dick and Basu (1994) both imply that past behavior predicts future behavior, especially in terms of repatronage. As far as we can tell, the path from prior season attendance to actual current season attendance (measured across time) has not been tested, but Yoshida et al. (2015) did report a correlation between attendance frequency at Time 2 and at Time 3 ($r = .78$) in a single season. Thus, we expect the two to be highly correlated.

Hypothesis 9: *Prior season attendance will be positively correlated with current season attendance.*

Figure 1 depicts all of the paths and hypotheses across the two models. The similarities across the models are obvious, but this allows for comparison of the path coefficients and the explained variance in the dependent variables. This allows us to assess the predictive value of the preceding variables in the models on likelihood of future attendance versus likelihood of future support of the team, a much more general measure, but one that is often included in a conative loyalty measure (as noted above). If the results differ, then that indicates they should not be included together in the same measure of conative loyalty, even if they are relatively highly correlated.

Method

Sampling Procedure

Data were collected at the beginning of fall semester in late August just before the team's season began (Preseason), but after school started, from a convenience sample of 502 college students taking classes in the Department of Health and Human Performance at a large Mid-western university. The students filled out the paper and pencil survey during class time. The same group of students was emailed the second survey at the end of the fall semester in December after the team's season had ended (Postseason). The students emailed back their responses, which were matched by an identification number to the first survey. Of the original 502, 357 responded to the Postseason questionnaire, but due to missing items only 325 were useable. At the end of the second semester in late May (End-of-Year), we emailed the third survey to those who had completed both the first and second surveys and again matched responses using the identification number. Of the 325 that completed the second survey, 187 completed the third survey. However, we only had complete data on 165 matched responses across all three surveys on the variables included in this analysis. We checked for non-response bias by evaluating the differences on preseason Role Identity between the first 100 people to fill out the survey and the last 100 people to fill out the survey (out of the 502). The ANOVA indicated no significant differences ($F(1, 200) = 0.37$, $p = .848$; M (Early) = 4.73, M (Late) = 4.77). We also tested those who filled out the survey at only at Time 1 (preseason) versus those who filled out survey at both Time 1 and Time 3 (End-of-Year). The ANOVA on Role Identity showed no significant differences ($F(1, 502) = 1.46$, $p = .227$; M (Time 1) = 4.58, M (Time 3) = 4.74.

Incentives were offered to respondents who completed the survey. Respondents had the option to enter a drawing to win one of several prizes. The information collected for the drawings was kept separate from survey responses to maximize anonymity and confidentiality. The Human Subjects Board at the university approved the research.

Description of Sample

The final sample of 165 was approximately 60% female, and almost 95% Caucasian. The average age of the students was 20.5 years (*SD* = 2.6) when the study started and there was a distribution across the number of years in college (1st year = 18.6%, 2nd year = 21.4%, 3rd year 24.9%, 4th year = 22.3%, 5th year (or more) = 12.8%). The average number of years being a fan of the university's football team was 7.7 (*SD* = 6.07). This was not surprising as most of the students were from the general vicinity in the state and it was a state university.

Materials

The Preseason questionnaire included the demographic items and three items from the Team Identification Index (TII; Trail et al. 2003; Trail & James, 2001), which we used for a measure of role identity as a team fan, because the items within the TII focus on the importance of the role of being a fan of that particular team. The reliability of the TII has been shown across multiple data collections (Fink et al., 2002; James & Trail, 2008; Kim & Trail, 2010; Kim, Trail, & Magnusen, 2013; Robinson et al., 2005; Shapiro et al., 2013). The items from the TII were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree, with 4 = Neutral. We also included one item measuring the number of home football games attended during the previous year, and one item measuring the number of home football games intending to attend during the upcoming season.

The Postseason questionnaire had the same items as the preseason questionnaire (TII). We also recorded the number of self-reported home football games attended during the season that just ended. The End-of-Year questionnaire had one item measuring likelihood of attending in the future and one item measuring the likelihood of supporting the team in the future.

Results

We used the RAMONA Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique, available in the SYSTAT 7.0 (1997) statistical package to test a CFA, with the three role-identity items measured at Time 1 and Time 2. In addition, we included the single items measuring prior season attendance and number of games intending to attend at Time 1, self-reported game attendance at Time 2, and likelihood of attending future games and likelihood of supporting the team in the future at Time 3. Error terms of the role identity items were not correlated across time in the model even though others have done so because it typically artificially increases the fit of the model.

Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested that RMSEA values less than .060 indicated a close fitting model, .061 – .080 indicated reasonable fit, .081 – .100 indicated mediocre fit, and values > .100 were unacceptable. For the CFA, the RMSEA

value was .065, with a CI from .031 to.096, and the $\chi^2/df = 47.578/28 = 1.70$, indicating reasonable fit. The AVE values for the role identity items were .712 (Time 1) and .706 (Time 2) and the CR values were .88 (at both Time 1 and Time 2), indicating good construct reliability (Table 1). The correlations among the variables ranged from .380 to .817 (Table 2). The highest correlation was between the pre- and post-Role Identity as they were the same items measured across the two different times. These high correlations indicated good test-retest reliability. There was discriminant validity as all AVE values exceeded the squared correlations between any two variables (Table 2).

Both models fit the data well. For Model A, the RMSEA value was .066 and the $\chi^2/df = 50.02/29 = 1.73$, with no residuals greater than .1, indicating reasonable to good fit. For Model B, the RMSEA value was .060 and the $\chi^2/df = 46.16/29 = 1.59$, with no residuals greater than .1, indicating good fit. The path coefficients, and whether each individual hypothesis was supported or not, are reported in Table 3.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test two competing models primarily derived from identity theory, but to some extent influenced by the Theory of Planned Behavior and Loyalty Theory, that predicted attendance intentions (conative loyalty) and self-reported attendance behavior (behavioral loyalty) over time. Models A and B differed from each other only by the ultimate dependent variable in the model. In Model A, we were trying to predict the likelihood of attending games during the following season, whereas in Model B we substituted a general conative loyalty measure: likelihood of supporting the team in the future. Our rationale for these different models was to determine whether likelihood of supporting the team was sufficiently distinct enough from likelihood of future attendance that both should not be included in the same conative loyalty measure as both frequently are (Harrolle et al., 2010; Trail et al., 2003; Trail et al., 2005). We will first discuss the models in general (with a few allusions to the specific hypotheses) and then discuss each hypothesis specifically.

Model Fit. Both models fit the data well. In Model A, prior season attendance, number of games intending to attend, and preseason Role Identity (importance of the role of being a fan of the team; all measured at Time 1) combined to explain slightly more than 63% of the variance in self-reported attendance behavior (Time 2). In addition, those variables and postseason Role Identity (Time 2) combined to explain 48.5% of likelihood of attending games during the following season (Time 3; Model A) and almost 43% of the variance in likelihood of supporting the team in the future (Time 3; Model B).

Attending Future Games vs. Supporting the Team. The differences in variance explained between likelihood of attending future games and likelihood of supporting the team was small. In Model A, the amount of variance in likelihood of attending future games (Time 3) explained by the whole model was 48.5% and the primary predictor was postseason Role Identity (β = .438; 19.1%) rather than self-reported attendance (β = .370; 13.7%). Similarly, in Model B, the amount of variance in supporting the team in the future (Time 3) explained by the whole model was 42.9% and once again postseason Role Identity (β = .502) explained more variance (25%) than self-reported attendance (β = .243; 6%). This indicates that these two variables were distinct enough that they should be measured separately, even though they were highly correlated (r = .783; Table 2). This is similar to what Gray and Wert-Gray (2012) found when running separate regressions on attendance intentions, merchandise consumption intentions, media consumption intentions, and word-of-mouth intentions.

Support of Hypotheses. Now let us look at the specific hypotheses to determine whether they were supported or not. Although the path from preseason Role Identity (Time 1) to number of games intending to attend (Time 1) was significant (supporting H1), it explained only slightly more than 4% of the total variance in game attendance intentions, when all of the other variables were in the model. Interestingly though, postseason Role Identity (Time 2) explained 19% of the likelihood of attending future games (Time 3), supporting H2, when all of the other variables were in the model. Although some of the difference in variance explained could be due to how attendance intentions were measured in Time 1 (number of games) versus Time 3 (rating likelihood), the shared variances (squared bivariate correlations; Table 2) do not show such dramatic differences. The shared variance between preseason Role Identity and preseason intentions to attend was 22%, whereas it was 27% between postseason Role Identity and future likelihood, indicating the impact of other factors in the model influenced the path coefficients. These results supported previous research (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Gray & Wert-Gray, 2012; Matsuoka et al., 2003; Shapiro et al., 2013) and identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Not surprisingly, attendance had differential effects on Role Identity, depending on where the relationship existed in the model. In support of Hypothesis 3, prior season attendance explained 19% of the variance in preseason Role Identity, but current season attendance only explained 4% of the variance in postseason Role Identity. The latter supported Hypothesis 4, but the variance was negligible. The differences were probably due to the path between preseason Role Identity and postseason Role Identity. Preseason Role Identity explained 55% of the variance in

postseason Role Identity (supporting Hypothesis 6 and the research of Lock et al., 2014). This relationship could have subsumed some of the shared variance between preseason Role Identity and current season attendance, reducing the influence of the latter on postseason Role Identity.

Above, we noted that Hypothesis 5 was not supported because there was no significant relationship between preseason Role Identity and current attendance due to other variables in the model. This was primarily due to the substantial amount of variance explained in number of games intending to attend (Time 1) by prior season attendance (29%) supporting Hypothesis 7 (and supporting Shapiro et al., 2013). It was also due to the amount of variance explained by number of games intending to attend (Time 1) in current season attendance (50%; Time 2), supporting Hypothesis 8 and Yoshida et al.'s (2015) research. Furthermore, these path coefficients show that the relationship between prior season attendance (Time 1) and current season attendance (Time 2) was fully mediated mainly by number of games intending to attend (Time 1), but also to some small extent by preseason Role Identity. Due to these mediated relationships, Hypothesis 9 was not supported even though the correlation between prior attendance and current attendance was .581 (Table 2) similar to what Yoshida et al. (2015) found.

In sum, our results supported much of the prior research, but also provided considerably more information about the relationships between role identity and both conative and behavioral loyalty across time. However, the results from the models also created many questions as well. There are obviously many mediated relationships that have not been previously investigated and were not anticipated. For example, why would intentions almost fully mediate the relationship between prior attendance and current attendance? As Oliver (1999) noted, intentions are frequently not fulfilled, thus we expected that past behavior would predict current behavior at least to some extent. In addition, most athletics departments assume a season ticket renewal rate of around 70% or more, showing past behavior predicting future behavior. Therefore, to have less than 3% of the variance of current behavior explained by past behavior was surprising. Obviously, it could be due to the sample, but considering that Yoshida et al. (2015) found similar results, it seems that intentions may fully mediate this relationship. A similar mediated model should be tested on a new sample to see if this can be replicated.

Implications for organizations. The implications for organizations are straightforward. Sports marketers and administrators need to take into account both the impact of role identity as a fan of the team and attendance intentions, not solely prior attendance behavior. Obviously, if the mediated relationships are accurate,

sports marketers need to be aware of the mediating effects primarily of intentions, but also to some extent need to also be aware of team-fan role identity. Including only some of these variables in market research and not others may give dramatically different results. Second, marketers need to be aware of the differences between attending the game and just supporting the team in general. On the face of it, this is a readily apparent assumption. Fans can certainly support the team and not attend; and spectators can attend, but not support the team in other ways (e.g., attending for business purposes or because other family members do). In sum, sports marketers need to be aware of the interplay among these variables and take into account each of them when trying to determine future attendance behavior and support for the team.

Specifically though, collegiate administrators, especially at small colleges, need to understand that students that go to games during the prior year, will increase their fandom, will intend to go to more games in the future, and will follow through by going to more games. Thus, administrators need to identify those students and encourage them to be ambassadors for the team, advocate for the team on social media, and talk up the team to their friends and family, because these students are the most loyal cognitively, conatively, and behaviorally. These are the advocates for the team and thus the most likely to be able to convince other students to attend.

Study limitations. We have noted some of the limitations already, but as with most studies, replication is critical, especially across fans of a variety of different teams, leagues, and levels. Second, as with most longitudinal research, we had substantial dropout. We lost about 60% of the original sample, so future research should start with a considerably larger sample. Third, team success was not measured and certainly could have an impact on all of the variables. Or perhaps even better, expectancy (dis)confirmation could be included. Future research should include that variable, if possible. Fourth, the specific path coefficients are only representative of this particular sample and because we tracked only one team at one university, the coefficients are not generalizable to other data sets.

Suggestions for future research. We have already made some suggestions for future research, but we think the most important is to test the potential mediated relationships and determine if they replicate. We expect that they will since they were apparent in Yoshida et al.'s (2015) research as well. In addition, tracking people across multiple seasons would be extremely interesting as well.

In sum, we have extended the literature considerably through this research, mainly by doing a longitudinal study that incorporated team-fan role identity (TII), conative loyalty, and behavioral loyalty. We

have shown relationships that have not been tested before and explained more variance in some variables than any previous research. However, as noted above, we may have created as many questions as we answered.

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Tables

Table 1

Factor Loadings (β), Confidence Intervals (CI), Standard Errors (SE), Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Explained (AVE) Values

Factor and Item	β	CI	SE	*CR*	AVE
Preseason Team Identification				.88	.712
I consider myself to be a "real" fan of the team	.856	.810-.901	.027		
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the team	.781	.722-.839	.036		
Being a fan of the team is very important to me	.891	.851-.930	.024		
Postseason Team Identification				.88	.706
I consider myself to be a "real" fan of the team	.848	.803-.893	.028		
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the team	.762	.700-.823	.037		
Being a fan of the team is very important to me	.905	.869-.941	.022		
How many (team name) home football games did you go to last year?					
How many of the seven (team name) home football games do you plan on attending this year?					
How many home (team name) football games did you attend this season?					
I am likely to attend future games.					
I am likely to support the (team name) football team in the future.					

Table 2

Correlations from the CFA, Average Variance Explained (AVE) Values, Squared Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Pre Role Identity	**.712**	.667	.191	.206	.144	.268	.277
2. Post Role Identity	.817	**.706**	.177	.235	.233	.375	.377
3. PastAttendance	.438	.421	----	.404	.338	.183	.148
4. #gamesIntending	.454	.485	.636	----	.624	.325	.219
5. PresentAttendance	.380	.483	.581	.790	----	.339	.236
6. LikelihoodAttending	.518	.612	.428	.570	.582	----	.613
7. LikelihoodSupport	.526	.614	.385	.468	.486	.783	----
Mean	4.73	4.01	3.59	5.07	4.32	5.79	5.95
Standard Deviation	1.44	1.23	2.67	2.39	2.59	1.43	1.20

Note: Correlations below the diagonal. AVE values in bold on the diagonal. Squared correlations above the diagonal.

Table 3

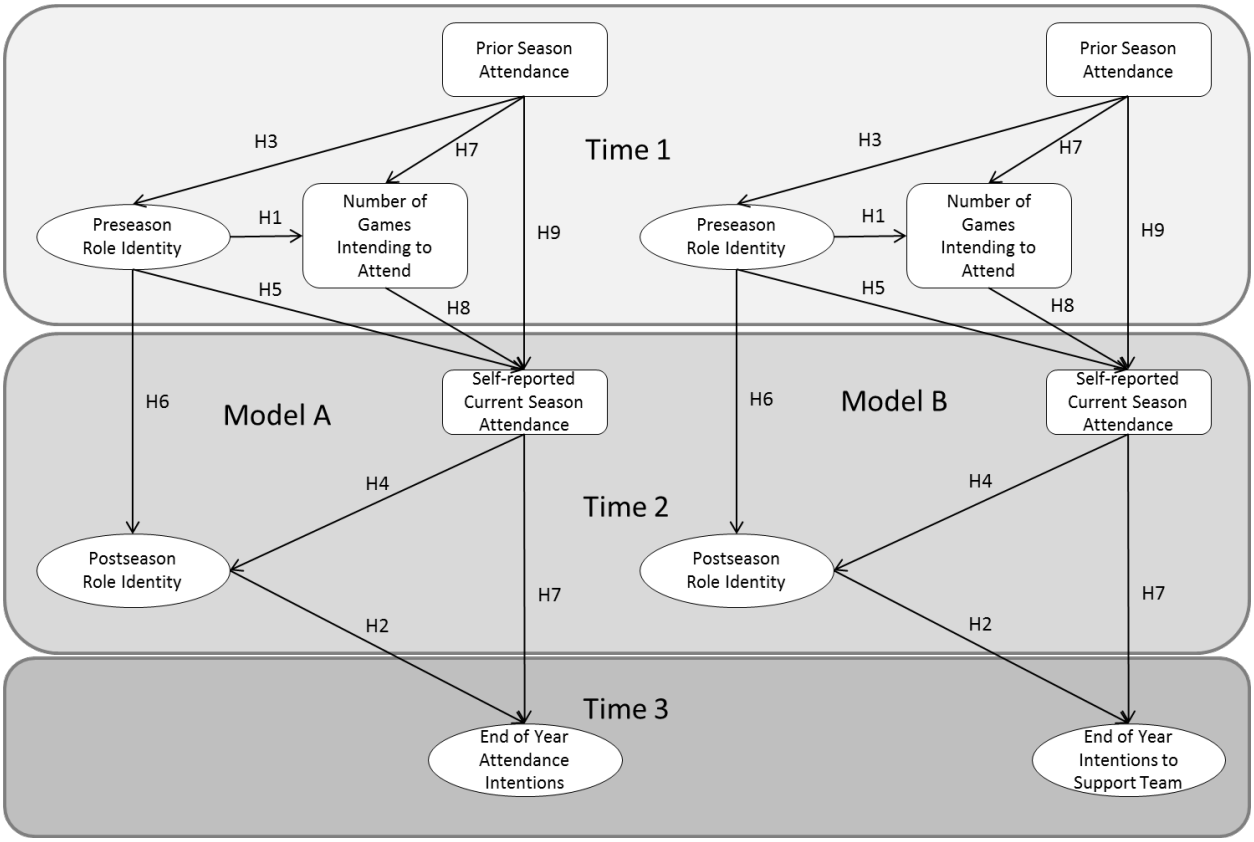
Path Coefficients and Fit Indices across Both Models

Path		Model A β	Model B β
H3 (Supported): Prior Season Attendance (Time 1) → Preseason Role Identity (Time 1)		.434	.434
H7 (Supported): Prior Season Attendance (T1) → # of Games Intending to Attend (T1)		.541	.541
H9 (Not supported): Prior Season Attendance (T1) → Self-reported Season Attendance (T2)		.131	.131
H1 (Supported): Preseason Role Identity (T1) → # of Games Intending to Attend (T1)		.219	.218
H5 (Not supported): Preseason Role Identity (T1) → Self-reported Season Attendance (T2)		.004	.005
H9 (Supported): Preseason Role Identity (T1) → Postseason Role Identity (T2)		.743	.743
H8 (Supported): # of Games Intending to Attend (T1) → Self-reported Season Attendance (T2)		.705	.705
H4 (Supported): Self-reported Season Attendance (T2) → Postseason Role Identity (T2)		.202	.202
H7 (Supported) Self-reported Season Att. (T2) → End-of-Year Attend Intentions (T3)		.370	
H7 (Supported) Self-rep. Seas. Att. (T2) → End-of-Year Intent to Support Team (T3)			.243
H2 (Supported) Postseason Role ID (T2) → End-of-Year Attendance Intentions (T3)		.438	
H2 (Supported) Postseason Role ID (T2) → End-of-Year Intent to Support Team (T3)			.502
R^2	Preseason Role Identity	18.9%	18.8%
	# of Games Intending to Attend	44.3%	44.2%
	Self-reported Season Attendance	63.5%	63.5%
	Postseason Role Identity	70.7%	70.7%
	End-of-Year Likelihood to Attend Future Games	48.5%	
	End-of-Year Likelihood to Support Team in Future		42.9%
Model Fit	RMSEA	.066	.060
	X^2/df	1.73	1.59

Note: H1-H9 = Hypothesis 1-9; T1 = Time 1, T2 = Time 2, T3 = Time 3

Figure 1

Competing Models of Attendance and Intentions to Support the Team



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Parent Coaches' Experiences and Insights Into a Youth Soccer Program

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Municipal governments continue to struggle with decreased funding. In order to offset depleting funds, agencies rely on volunteers to provide resources to the public. In youth sport programs, parents provide much of the support, and it is estimated that 90% of youth sport coaches are parents. Given that parents have been instrumental in youth sport programs, the purpose of this study was to understand parents' experiences and insights associated with volunteering by using a youth soccer program located in a mid-sized town in Illinois as a case-study. Specifically, the study was designed to examine (a) parents' motivations in volunteering, (b) challenges parent coaches faced while volunteering, and (c) parent coaches' recommendations to agency personnel. Using a qualitative approach, 11 parents were interviewed. Findings indicated that parents were motivated to volunteer in order to help their children, and several expressed a desire to give back to their community. The primary motivation and benefit for volunteer coaches was their relationships with the children. Relationships with other adults in the program were also significant, but they tended to be secondary. Challenges in volunteering included working with the children, parents, and agency staff. Recommendations included providing incentives to coaches, conducting player assessments, ensuring that recruited volunteers share the agency's philosophy, and addressing volunteer concerns.

Municipal governments and park districts offer various youth sport programs to the public. Yet, these public organizations have been forced to operate on increasingly tight budgets. Prior to the 1970s, many public agencies enjoyed adequate funding to meet the growing needs of their citizens, but tax reforms forced a new age of austerity. During the 1970s and early 1980s, municipal governments across the United States faced reduced public funding due to significant decreases in tax revenue (Backman, Wicks, & Silverberg, 1997). This also forced competition for tax revenue among the various social services, where park and recreation services were deemed unessential in comparison to other services including police protection, health services, and fire protection (Crompton, 2009).

Currently, many municipal governments continue to struggle with decreased funding. For instance, in the state of Illinois, the governor halted "$180 million in parkland grants in March [of 2015]" ("Raunder suspends," 2015, para. 4), and $146 million parkland-related grants were also suspended for the development of park facilities and open space for parks. Despite such decreases in public funding, many municipal governments across the state are still expected to meet the significant, and often growing, demand for services by their constituents. Thus, municipal agencies, such as those found in Illinois, have had to develop different approaches for designing and delivering services demanded by the general public.

One approach that has been utilized to offset costs is the reliance on volunteers in program and service delivery. Researchers have stressed the importance of volunteers in everyday service provisions (Silverberg, Marshall, & Ellis, 2001), community-level voluntary associations (Putnam, 2000), and state- or regional-level parks and recreation associations (e.g., zoos, museums; see Caldwell & Andereck, 1994). In youth sports, volunteers may take the form of various community members, including local high school or college students, teachers, or parents. In the case of parents, they have been noted as providing much of the transportation, "league fees, equipment, and spectatorship" for youth sports, and are "thus integral to the existence of youth sport programs" (Wiersma & Fifer, 2008, p. 505). Some parents also provide the crucial service of coaching youth teams that facilitates the overall operation of a program while also being personally involved with their child (Dorsch, Smith, & McDonough, 2009; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). As many public parks and recreation agencies would not be able to operate without volunteers, volunteerism has been a much discussed facet among leisure practitioners and researchers.

Consequently, it is critical to understand individuals' experiences and insights with volunteering in order to improve recruitment and retention efforts. Given that parents have been instrumental in

youth sport programs, the purpose of this study was to understand parents' experiences and insights associated with volunteering by using a youth soccer program located in a mid-sized town in Illinois as a case-study. Specifically, the study was designed to examine (a) parents' motivations in volunteering, (b) challenges parent coaches faced while volunteering, and (c) parent coaches' recommendations to agency personnel.

Defining Volunteerism

Volunteerism has been conceptualized in several different ways, and researchers have discussed the various dimensions involved. For the purpose of this study, Stebbins's (2004) definition will be utilized in that "volunteering is uncoerced help offered either formally or informally with no or, at most, token pay done for the benefit of both other people and the volunteer" (p. 5). His definition reflected the four volunteer dimensions conceptualized by Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth in 1996.

Cnaan and colleagues (1996) summarized various volunteering definitions and developed four main dimensions: free choice, remuneration, structure, and intended beneficiaries. Free choice indicated that engagement in the activity was not coerced or obligated but rather a conscious decision by the individual. Free choice appears to be an integral component of volunteerism as studies in which the research participants were forced to volunteer demonstrated less than optimal outcomes. For instance, Stukas, Snyder, and Clary (1999) discovered that students who were forced to volunteer were less likely to want to volunteer in the future.

Remuneration referred to no pay to low pay or a stipend (Caldwell & Andereck, 1994; Knoke & Prensky, 1984). Scholars have disagreed on whether financial payments disqualify the experience from being categorized as volunteering (e.g., Wilson, 2000). Some scholars argued that individuals who choose to perform work with a meager wages should be considered quasi-volunteers.

The structural dimension of volunteering described whether the activity is formal or informal. Formal volunteerism is "proactive, involving planned time and effort with established or formal organizations" (Tang, 2012, p. 186). This type of volunteering may include being involved in a city-sponsored special event. Informal volunteer opportunities are "sporadic and reactive, and usually involves friends and neighbors" (Tang, 2012, p. 186). This type of volunteering may include helping to pick up trash in one's neighborhood.

The last dimension, intended beneficiaries, entailed who will benefit as a result of the volunteering. The beneficiaries of volunteering could be strangers, close friends or relatives, or oneself. Indeed, with respect to personal benefits, researchers have cited numerous reasons why individuals volunteer, including improving

job-readiness skills (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010; Musick & Wilson, 2008) and enhancing knowledge sets (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010; Kay & Bradbury, 2009). Some individuals volunteer in an attempt to improve or develop social interactions and interpersonal relationships with others (Mccorkle, Dunn, Wan, & Gagne, 2009). Some research also highlights the impacts to community residents, friends, or relatives that volunteering may have (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010; Wilson & Musick, 1997). Additionally, intended beneficiaries may be helpful in understanding the experiences of parent volunteers as they may initially get involved as a way to help their children, but ultimately may also receive significant personal benefits.

The Role of Parent Volunteers in Youth Sport

Although participation in youth sport has decreased in recent years, it is estimated that 21.5 million children aged 6 to 17 participate in U.S. youth sports (Kelley & Carchia, 2013). It is also estimated that approximately 7.5 million youth and interscholastic coaches are needed to instruct these youth (National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education, 2014). Of this figure, roughly 4 million are volunteers. Although coaching positions are fulfilled by teachers and high school/college students (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010), some of the latest figures indicate that approximately 90% of youth sport coaches are parents (Busser & Carruthers, 2010). Due to parents' instrumental role in youth sport programs, municipal park districts may benefit from understanding this population's volunteer patterns as well as their motivations and challenges to improve recruitment and retention efforts.

Demographic patterns in volunteer parent coaches. Several factors can impact parents' choice to volunteer. Notable is how the children in the household can influence parents' volunteerism. Households with children living at home are comparatively more likely to volunteer (Wuthnow, 1998). In this group, parents who have older children are likely to volunteer more hours than parents with young children (Damico et al. 1998; Schlozman et al., 1994). Further, households with school-age children are more likely to volunteer if parents are married versus if a parent identifies as single (Sundeen 1990).

Further, Cuskelly (2008) reported that the 35-54 year-old age cohort is the group most likely to be involved in youth sport volunteering. This is not surprising, Cuskelly explained, because this age group is the one most likely to have children who are of the age to play youth sports. In addition, the 35-54 year-old age cohort is also the group most likely looking to extend their own involvement in a sport (beyond participation) to a level that includes volunteering. Nichols and Shepherd (2006) discussed the importance of identity to former sport participants, noting that those players no longer able to physically participate often look for ways to maintain

their involvement in some fashion (i.e., volunteering). Such efforts to extend sport participation may be true for many parents who participated in a particular sport as a youth and young adult and now wish to see their child(ren) participate in the same sport or activity.

Examining drivers and motivations in parent coach volunteerism regarding youth sport. In the context of parent volunteers, the interest in volunteering is frequently tied to having a child on the team. Although this is not always the case, most people who volunteer do so because their son or daughter is involved on the team or has been in the past (Dorsch, Smith, & McDonough 2009, 2015; Messner, 2009). In Weiss and Fretwell's (2005) study on parent coaches' interactions and relationship with their children in a youth soccer league, coaches reported being motivated to volunteer in order to interact with their child and having the child present was of importance. Parents also reported that they would not be volunteering if their child were not playing. The motivation to volunteer when one's child is involved in an activity seems fairly obvious. However, researchers have also noted the increased frequency with which parents cite their enjoyment with helping not only their own child, but also other children on the team (Dorsch et al., 2009).

Many parents may not begin volunteering as a way to have fun and develop social networks, although research has shown that these social networks are important benefits that become valuable ties in their own right. In Weiss and Fretwell's (2005) study on parent coaches in a youth soccer league, coaches reported that they were able to meet "other parents and kids on the team" as well as be better acquainted with their child's friends. One study discussed the importance of parent peers and the resulting opportunities to socialize as a key ingredient for improving the quality of parent's experiences in youth sport (Dorsch et al., 2009). In other words, many parents initially get involved to directly help their child, but through their involvement have a fulfilling experience by helping and socializing with other children on the team.

Parents may also find themselves volunteering for other reasons, such as gaining leadership skills. The opportunity to take a leadership role in a voluntary capacity serves as a way of developing new knowledge, skills, and abilities. Researchers have noted the importance of such leadership roles, including developing skills transferrable from leisure to civic settings (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Glover & Hemingway, 2005). Furthermore, such skills can potentially transfer into the professional arena to better equip people to do their job or perhaps even provide them with the skills needed to acquire a new job. Nevertheless, Glover and Hemingway (2005) pointed out that the types of skills and knowledge gained as a result of volunteering highly depends on the tasks completed and the specific setting in which the volunteering takes place.

Challenges to serving as a volunteer parent coach. Similar to other sport volunteers, parents face different challenges when serving as volunteer coaches. Major obstacles pertain to lack of time, inability to make a long-term commitment, and the financial cost of volunteering (Hall et al., 2006, as seen in Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). Parents with young children, especially those with multiple young children, may be balancing several activities with their children in addition to their own professional and social lives. The inability to make a long-term commitment is related to the first challenge in that parents may already be stretched thin in terms of time, energy, and resources. In Weiss and Fretwell's (2005) study, parent coaches reported having difficulty coaching three full seasons because of lack of energy and time.

Related to lack of energy are the additional responsibilities and expectations that stem from volunteering (Cuskelly, 2004, 2008), which may become a social and psychological burden. In the youth sport context, this could include things such as the added stress of preparing practice routines as well as managing potentially difficult interactions with players, parents, other coaches, referees, and league administrators. These difficult interactions may extend beyond the playing field, and, thus, an additional cost of volunteering includes the added stress of responsibilities. Financial cost of volunteering can also serve as a constraint. Barnes and Sharpe (2009) discussed occasions where highly active volunteers were paid small stipends that helped offset the difference of what these people could make if they worked. Respondents noted that although the stipends were small they made them feel appreciated *and* encouraged them to continue to be an active volunteer.

Finally, parent coaches may find themselves constrained with the increased professionalization of youth sport (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Cuskelly, 2008; Cuskelly et al., 2006; Nichols & Shepherd, 2006). The private sector has had a significant influence on volunteer management to the extent that youth and voluntary sports are increasingly operated like businesses that require specific business-like skills (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Cuskelly et al., 2006). This formalization can be helpful in some ways because it likely leads to increased efficiency and a more formal, structured way of operating. However, in their study of rugby club administrators in Australia, Cuskelly and colleagues (2006) discussed the displeasure some people expressed with increased professionalization. Reasons for this displeasure included volunteer efforts that seemed too much like work or, similarly, a highly formalized volunteer commitment that required excessive amounts of time and energy. Further, some individuals were excluded or felt pushed out as volunteers because, despite their long tenure as a volunteer with the organization, they did not possess enough business-like skills in order to successfully navigate the

contemporary volunteer leadership terrain (Cuskelly, 2008; Sharpe, 2006).

Consequently, given the large number of parent volunteers needed to ensure that youth sport leagues continue to be offered, municipal park district officials will benefit from better understanding volunteer experiences and insights for youth parent coaches. Specifically, this study was designed to examine (a) parents' motivations in volunteering, (b) challenges parent coaches faced while volunteering, and (c) parent coaches' recommendations to agency personnel. The project focused on parents who volunteered for a youth soccer program in a Midwestern city. By examining these questions, it will be possible to inform recruitment and retention efforts by practitioners.

Method

Study Context

The study was conducted in a mid-sized Midwest community with a population of approximately 42,000. The community is also home to a large university. The youth sport programs sponsored by the park district relies heavily on volunteers to serve as coaches, coordinators, and team administrators. When insufficient numbers of parents volunteer to coach, the athletic coordinators must find other individuals in the community to assist in these roles (G. Cales, personal communication, 2010). The athletic coordinators often hire college-aged students who have sport-specific experience to fill the void of volunteer coaches. Although many of these students have a good working knowledge about the sport they are coaching, many do not have experience working with younger children. Thus, the athletic coordinators would like to pull more from the pool of potential parent volunteers who have a vested interest in their child's sport participation and who are more familiar with relating to younger children.

The first author's involvement in this process began in January 2010 after attending a meeting with agency officials regarding potential ways to improve the program. These meetings continued for several months. During one of the meetings the athletic coordinators discussed the difficult challenges they were facing, including a limited budget, scarcity of volunteers, and challenging coaches and parents. In an effort to explore these issues, the athletic coordinators helped with the recruitment of parent volunteers for this study to elicit feedback on their experiences and insights.

Recruitment and Data Collection Procedures

The goal for recruitment was to obtain volunteer coaches who represented various ages, genders, and experience levels among parents. The athletic coordinators contacted current and former coaches via email and asked if they would be willing and able to be interviewed to discuss their volunteer involvement. This resulted in coaches making contact with the research

investigator, but most of this population was more experienced, older, and entirely male. Athletic coordinators further suggested others as being "good people to talk to" because they were either new coaches, younger coaches, or female. In all, a total of 20 individuals preliminarily agreed to participate in the study, but ultimately only 14 total people were interviewed. Given the purpose of this study, the three coaches who were not parents were excluded from this analysis. Thus, this paper focused specially on the experiences of the 11 parent coaches.

Despite the desire to recruit volunteers who varied in age, gender, and experience levels, the majority of the study participants were male (n = 9; see Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009). In general the participants were White/Caucasian and married. Study participants were also well-educated: five held a Bachelor's degree, three held a Master's degree, and three held a Doctorate's degree. The 11 participants ranged from ages 28 to 44 (Table 1). Study participants reported volunteering for varying degrees of time, but the majority reported having considerable experience coaching for the agency. At the time the study took place, 10 reported still serving as parent coaches, and one individual had formally coached but had plans to begin coaching again once his younger child was old enough to join the league. Some of the volunteers were people who used to have children in the sport programs, but whose children were now grown and no longer participated. Thus, these volunteers provided useful insights through their long-term involvement as a volunteer and former parent volunteer.

Interview Protocol

The interview questions for this study focused on the overall experience of volunteers, especially parent volunteers, in a youth sport setting. These questions built off of the core research questions that examined: (a) parents' motivations in volunteering, (b) challenges parent coaches faced while volunteering, and (c) parent coaches' recommendations to agency personnel. These questions were developed after a thorough review of the literature as well as through discussions with park district staff. The questions were shared with park district staff before the first interview to allow for feedback.

The study utilized a semi-structured interview guide (Patton, 1990). Parents were probed about their decision to be involved with volunteering, constraints faced prior to and during volunteering, benefits associated with volunteering, and general experiences associated with volunteering. As such, the following questions were developed for interviewing study participants:

1) How and why did you first get involved in coaching/volunteering?
2) Did you feel obligated to volunteer because your son/daughter was on the team?
3) Did you experience any barriers or obstacles when initially trying to

volunteer or perhaps later on in your volunteer experience?
4) Have you met new people as a result of your volunteering with the youth soccer program?
5) How many new people (e.g. parents, coaches, staff, etc.) do you know through volunteering with the youth soccer program?
6) Have you made new friendships as a result of your volunteering?
7) Do you get together with any of these new friends outside of the soccer program?
8) What has it been like working with (other) parents on your team?
9) What are the best parts about volunteering?
10) What are some of the more challenging aspects of volunteering?
11) What has it been like working with the agency staff and others around the league?
12) Have you had any negative interactions during your time volunteering at this agency? If so, has the negativity affected you outside of your time at the agency?
13) How would you describe the character of this league?
14) What have been some of the best lessons you have learned as a coach/volunteer?
15) If there was something that you could improve, what would it be?
16) Describe the officiating – too soft, too strict, knowledgeable, inexperienced, instructive?

These questions represented a general interview guide. As discussed by Patton (1990), the importance of having a general interview guide is not about having a strict set of questions that are asked in the same order to every participant. Rather, the focus is on covering the range of important issues while adapting the order to each individual interview. Indeed, many of the interviews flowed from one topic to the next, sometimes with little prompting. To be clear, the first interview question listed above was the same one initially proposed to all study participants. However, as discussed later in the Findings section, the responses to that opening question frequently spawned several other thoughts or topics that the participants wished to discuss.

The first author conducted all of the interviews for this study, face-to-face, at a time and location mutually agreed upon with the participants. Most of the participants asked to meet at their place of employment or in their homes although some interviews took place at the first author's home and office, coffee shops, and a local park. Interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 3 hours, with an average time of 1 hour and 17 minutes.

Data Analysis

An inductive analysis was used to interpret participants' narratives and identify

emerging themes related to the research questions (Creswell, 2005). Specifically, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim using Express Scribe software shortly after the interview was conducted. Brief member checks were conducted with participants via email, but no significant changes were recommended. Each interviewee was assigned a pseudonym during transcription to help protect their confidentiality.

Further, at the completion of each transcription the first author wrote or tape recorded a short summary of the major points the participant had raised during the interview. For the purposes of this study, two main forms of memos were used: code notes and theoretical notes. Code notes described basic impressions of the data, including any differences or similarities observed from one transcript to the next. In later stages of data collection and early analysis these notes were much broader, suggesting potential connections between categories as well as some that could be combined. Theoretical notes included memos that summarized the researcher's thoughts and ideas about the data.

As an illustration, the first transcript was read and memos were inserted at the end of the transcript. These memos were read before the second interview in order to modify questions in the semi-structured protocol as needed. Participants' responses that stemmed from these changes were highlighted and tracked. After the second interview took place, it was transcribed and read, and a memo was inserted at the end of the transcript. The protocol for the next interview was modified accordingly once again. After repeating this process with the first three transcripts, the transcripts were re-read and emerging themes were highlighted. For future transcriptions, the text aligning with these themes were highlighted. Thus, each new transcription had its notes categorized under the previously identified themes. The transcripts were re-read after every third interview (i.e., 3rd, 6th, and 9th interview). When interviews and subsequent transcriptions were finalized, each transcript was read again. Areas that aligned with the identified themes were highlighted, and the data was double-checked against the themes once again at the end of reviewing all the interviews. A final read was conducted with close attention to the memos and how they aligned with the themes that had emerged. No new themes had been identified by the last few interviews conducted. Finally, themes were analyzed to identify the connections between them, and relevant topics were drawn together.

Repeatedly going through the data allowed for the opportunity to address any lingering problems. In some areas the transcriptions were difficult to hear or understand, so these tapes were evaluated at the end for further clarification. These efforts were almost always successful and provided crucial additional information. By the time the transcriptions were completed, the preliminary analysis of the findings had

already been identified. By then lower order themes had already been identified. Similar themes were grouped next to each other and, where relevant, combined into a higher order theme.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Guba (1981) outlined four main criteria for trustworthiness of data: truth value (credibility), applicability (transferability), consistency (dependability), and neutrality (confirmability). Krefting (1991) and Shenton (2004) built upon Guba's (1981) four criteria for evaluating trustworthiness of qualitative data. To help establish credibility both Krefting and Shenton recommended iterative questioning. This approach was used by repeating questions from multiple angles to ensure a true or valid framing of the data. Furthermore, Shenton noted the importance of debriefing sessions between the researcher and his or her colleagues. To address this strategy, the first author periodically met with his colleague, the third author, who provided feedback on both the methodology and content of analysis that helped guide subsequent interviews.

Krefting (1991) and Shenton (2004) also described strategies for establishing transferability. Based on conversations with the athletic staff and observations, the findings from this study provide a solid 'baseline understanding' from which future studies can compare (Gross, 1998, as seen in Shenton). The strategies for establishing dependability rest largely on the researcher's ability to provide detailed descriptions of the exact methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991; Shenton, 2004). To establish dependability in this study a detailed description of the research processes is provided. Confirmability is the last factor for establishing the trustworthiness of the data. Guba (1981), Krefting (1991), and Shenton (2004) all recommended reflexivity as a strategy for managing confirmability where the researcher examines his personal influences on his work.

Results

The study's purpose informed the interview questions, and the responses to the questions informed the three major themes that aligned with the objectives. The first theme, "The Decision to Coach," encapsulates the reasons individuals in this study chose to volunteer. The second theme "The Most Challenging Aspects," relates the difficulties associated with being a volunteer coach. The third theme was "Program Improvements Needed" which discusses the changes that participants would like to see at the agency (see Table 2).

The Decision to Coach

The initial question posed to each study participant was, "How and why did you first get involved in coaching or volunteering?" Specifically, participants responded to this question and expressed a personal philosophy behind volunteering, an interest in volunteering as a way to help their

children, and sometimes due to a lack of better options. Several participants discussed volunteering as a way to give back to the community. Such feelings were often rooted in an upbringing that emphasized volunteering and other civic-minded behavior. One parent, Ned-a 45-year-old volunteer with 7 years of experience, shared the following for his reasons for volunteering: "[My mom] was always volunteering at the school, at the church" as well as "it's something that I see as my responsibility to pay back. And, 'cause if we don't support the park district programs for the kids, we're not going to have them." Ned's comments reflect a commitment to volunteering that was modeled by his parents and also point to the necessity of volunteers in order to provide recreational opportunities for his children as well as other people's children. Another participant mentioned a similar commitment to volunteering that was instilled by his parents and continues to influence his thinking as an adult:

> Volunteering is, the community's given a lot to me. I've been here a long time. So I need to give back to the community. And if I'm not willing to give back to the community, why should I expect anyone else to do it? So I try to give back and hopefully by my example others will join in and recognize that they should be giving back as well. And through more volunteerism in the community we'll get more done. For the community [and] for the kids. – Neil

Volunteering as a way to help their children. Many parents stated that they volunteered because their children wanted to play soccer, and they were looking for a way to be more involved in their children's lives. Alex, a 43-year-old volunteer with 6 months of experience, explained that he volunteered as a way to spend time with children. Others, like Steve (a 31-year-old with 3.5 years of experience), took that feeling a step further to include their knowledge of soccer: "I got into coaching because my kids wanted to play sports. And I knew enough about the sports they wanted to play that I felt comfortable leading more than just them. I felt comfortable leading other people's kids [too]." Steve made a point to say that if his child was interested in basketball that he would not become a basketball coach because he did not know enough about the sport to be an effective coach. However, a few participants had volunteered to coach despite little if any previous soccer experience. Uta, who coached with her husband and fellow study participant Brad, explained that they volunteered as a way to spend time together as a family. And Bev described her volunteer coaching as mostly a matter of being able to help so that her child could have the experience.

Nearly every participant noted that working with children and seeing them improve was the best part of volunteering. For instance, Steve said, "There's nothing

like seeing someone who's been struggling to get it. And the light goes off." Many participants discussed similar instances in which children learned, improved, or exhibited some kind of growth on the soccer field and beyond. Several coaches also described how rewarding it was to help children build their confidence through playing soccer. Nolan mentioned his own rewarding experience in helping children improve their self-esteem and self-confidence through soccer. He explained that several children on his team were overweight; Nolan worked with these children to play to their strengths on the soccer field. Nolan reported that by the end of the season these children were doing fantastic on his team, contributing to form an intimidating set of defenders.

Many participants discussed the importance of being a positive influence to the children on their team. Some, like Uta, discussed this positive influence in terms of being a good role model. Steve discussed his desire for being a positive influence on the children in terms of helping them build character. Steve described his own difficult upbringing and thus the need for emphasizing character not just to his own children, but to all of the children on the soccer team. Several interviewees mentioned a similar interest in volunteer coaching that centered not just on their own children, but also helping other people's children. Bev said, "I mean I was doing it more just for my kid. But in the end it was nice to be there for all the kids."

In addition to the importance of working with all children on the team, many of the participants also described the significance of coaching soccer such that the lessons taught on the field would transcend beyond just soccer. Neil explained that he wanted the children on his team to learn something beyond just the sport, he also wanted them to develop a love for sport that would carry throughout their lives. For some other coaches it was a matter of teaching life skills. For example, Rex explained that he recognized that it is unlikely any of the children on his team will go on to play professional soccer. However, he added that, "I think there are very valuable things kids can learn about cooperation, teamwork, leadership, following. There's a lot of life lessons that can come out of that." Steve, another volunteer coach, discussed similar off-the-field lessons, saying "Yea I may use soccer to do it but it's all about coaching them how to succeed and be honorable men and women in life."

Necessity due to a lack of better options. Several participants discussed that their initial involvement as coaches was due to the poor quality of a college student coach they had witnessed during their child's first season playing soccer. According to many of the parent participants, the park district gets college students who are ineffective at leading soccer practices and games for teams of children. Neil explained his dissatisfaction with the college student coach of his child's

first team, saying "[The college student coach had] absolutely no idea how to play the game, no format to the field, no nothing. And the kids weren't learning anything other than, kick the ball at the goal. It was horrible. And he clearly had no management of the kids or understanding of the sport." Ivan added that the college student coach of his oldest child's first team was well-meaning but he/she barely emphasized learning the basics of soccer. Ivan went on to explain that his experience on the sidelines that first season was insightful in that he witnessed several parent volunteer coaches of other teams that were extremely effective in teaching the basics of soccer. Ivan concluded that he felt he would have to get involved as a volunteer coach in order for his son to have a positive initial learning experience with soccer. Therefore, many of the parent volunteer coaches grew so frustrated with the quality of the coaching that they decided to step up and coach themselves.

The Most Challenging Aspects

Participants in the study described a number of different challenges associated with volunteering. Many participants described challenges having to do with fitting coaching into their already busy lives. More specifically, parents described difficulties in three main areas: dealing with children, parents, and the agency staff.

Difficulties adjusting to coaching. First, many participants described challenges and difficulties having to do with fitting coaching into their already busy lives. For instance, Alex mentioned several times the difficulty he had with coaching because of his already substantial work and family demands. He had coached as an assistant for one season and then as a head coach for another, but had to step away from coaching because of the demands at his job. Another volunteer coach, Brad, mentioned that he worked 10 hour days before each of their practices and it was often a challenge getting to practice on time. Julie mentioned a similar challenge of fitting coaching into her schedule, but said that now that she has coached regularly it is easier because she can plan her schedule, in part, around coaching. Lastly, Bev mentioned the significant amount of time she invested in preparing for each practice. Bev was one of the few study participants without a soccer background and thus she said her preparations often consisted of at least two to three hours each week outside of practice time.

Challenges with children. Julie mentioned that working with children can be frustrating, especially as you try to seek the balance where "you don't scold them. But you also don't let them get away with everything." Steve discussed the challenge in dealing with children when you do not know much about their background or their family. For instance, he explained that some children might be dealing with a divorce in the family or simply a bad day at school. Regardless, such situations, he said, could have a negative impact on a child and thus

make it difficult to connect with them and get them to focus on the soccer field. Another volunteer coach, Ivan, made an interesting statement, saying that children were both the best and worst parts of volunteering. Ivan pointed out that he liked having a positive impact on children, and he thought "kids are hilarious!" However, he also described the frustration of dealing with children who wanted to argue all the time or did not want to follow his instructions. Ivan further elaborated, saying the challenging times were especially hard because:

> You have to deal with your own kids, that sucks enough. But then you're with a kid, and you think to yourself, You're not even my kid! Why am I doing this?! …You're sucking the energy out of me! … It'll put you in a bad, bad funk. Kids can get you. … But it's because I love kids.

Challenges with other parents. Challenges with other parents was also mentioned by participants. Jim bluntly stated "Honestly parents are the worst. That's the worst part about volunteering," largely because some refused to hear his feedback about their children's poor behavior on the field. In his experience, these parents had attitudes just as bad as their children. Thus, Jim experienced difficulty communicating with several parents that only made his on the field experience that much more difficult. As Jim put it, "And it sucks! Cause you kind of volunteer your time and you have to deal with parents that want to complain all the time." Nolan also expressed frustration in dealing with parents because he felt many did not take the soccer program seriously. For instance, he described several situations in which children would miss a soccer practice or game for a sleepover or some other activity. Nolan explained that this made his life difficult in terms of planning lineups and having enough children on hand to field a team. Nolan also felt it was disrespectful to him because he was a volunteer, giving his time and not getting paid, and thus parents should be more diligent in bringing their children to practices and games.

Challenges with the agency. Another challenge discussed by parent coaches was dealing with agency. Neil's frustration with the agency was echoed by many different participants in the study. Steve, Ivan, Nolan, and Bev all described how the agency seemed lazy and uninterested in doing anything other than the status quo. Ivan explained that dealing with the agency staff was frustrating "Cause it appears they don't give a shit." For Ivan this was especially difficult because he had a lot of parents complain to him about the quality of the soccer program, some of whom assumed he worked for the agency. He explained that he did not work for the park district, but made sure to relay those concerns, as well as his own, on to the agency staff. However, he believed such feedback was never acted upon because he never saw any changes in the program or with the agency staff

themselves. Ivan noted, "Cause they don't want to make it good. They just want to get by and go home." Nolan discussed similar frustrations with the agency staff, saying that it felt as though they simply ran the soccer program to do it and get it over with. This was not the way to run a professional organization, Nolan noted, and he used several examples from the neighboring park district as ways to do things better.

Besides just laziness, study participants expressed frustrations related to the lack of organization in the agency soccer program. Brad noted that the park district in the neighboring community was much more organized than the agency. Ivan lamented the lack of organization at the agency because he had heard several parents express their interest in going over to use the neighboring park districts' programs because they were better organized. Alex, who had never coached before, mentioned that he felt the agency could have done a better job in having all of the paperwork, t-shirts, and other such items organized for each coach ahead of time. None of these things were adequately taken care of before the season and Alex explained that made his life as a volunteer that much more difficult.

Several other study participants complained about the lack of the updates on the park district's weather hotline. The hotline is supposed to be updated each time there is questionable weather to alert parents and coaches about the cancellation of practices or games. However, multiple volunteer coaches noted that the weather hotline was routinely out of date. Julie mentioned that when the weather hotline was not updated that she would then get calls from parents asking her if a practice or game would still continue as scheduled. This lack of organization was particularly frustrating to some, including Ivan and Nolan, because the agency staff was being paid to do this work while the coaches were all volunteers. Nolan correctly pointed out that even the referees on game days were being paid, but he felt like as a volunteer coach, he was one of the individuals doing the most work to help make the program run.

Almost everyone with an inside knowledge of the agency stated that they had already given at least some, if not all, of their feedback to the agency athletics staff. Frustratingly, the agency staff rarely, if ever, utilized the information they were provided in order to improve the program. Steve discussed his frustrations after providing many different ideas and opportunities for improvement that were never implemented. Relatedly, Nolan said he had provided feedback numerous times to the agency staff, and was even told that his ideas were under serious consideration. But then when none of his idea were implemented, he felt like "Why bother?!" Thus, the volunteer coaches who were in a position to help improve the agency were quite frustrated because they felt their feedback was not being taken seriously. As Nolan put it, he wished that the agency would take the initiative to ask him for his feedback. But,

he noted, he stopped expecting anything from the agency athletics staff:

> Just don't count on them for anything. Don't count on them for any kind of… assume that the only thing they will provide will be the field, on the day, the field, the refs, and the balls. The rest, you have to organize everything. You have to sometimes I would have to check the schedule with the weather, but I would email everybody the morning about that.

Several other study participants expressed similar frustration with the lack of accountability on the part of the agency.

Program Improvements Needed

Despite all of the frustrations voiced by these volunteer coaches, many were still interested in finding ways to see the program improve and succeed. Steve and Nolan were adamant about the importance of doing player assessments, where each player was evaluated based on a common set of drills or exercises. Doing assessments allows for a distribution of talent across all teams to ensure competitive balance. Nolan explained that the neighboring park district did assessments every two years and that this was an effective model for redistributing players to maintain balance as well as to have each player interact with a wide array of other players and coaches in the program.

In addition to assessments, a few participants also described the need to improve the volunteer coach recruitment process. At the time the study took place, the agency was constantly seeking volunteers and thus would take almost anyone who expresses interest. However, Steve noted, "they should do more than just accept everyone that says, 'I want to coach.'" He said the problem with this strategy is that no one spends time to figure out if each coach has a philosophy or approach that matches the agency's philosophy, which focused on learning the basics of soccer, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Some felt that the agency never worked to actively enforce their philosophy.

A final aspect that participants wanted to see improved was the effort by staff to retain volunteer coaches. Complaints about this aspect of the program related to the lack of effort by agency staff to maintain contact with coaches, conduct periodic check-ins, and show appreciation to the volunteers for giving their time. For instance, Bev, a first-time coach with no previous soccer experience, was extremely frustrated that the agency staff did not do more to stay in touch with her during the season. She explained, "I'm doing it for my daughter, that's why I finished doing it. But if you really want to keep people I feel like they [need to] do more to keep people. Right now I don't think they're doing anything." The lack of effort or a poor job by the athletic staff may deter some individuals from coming back to coach again.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand parents' experiences and insights associated with volunteering by using a youth soccer program as a case-study. Specifically, the study was designed to examine (a) parents' motivations in volunteering, (b) challenges parent coaches faced while volunteering, and (c) parent coaches' recommendations to agency personnel.

According to Stebbins (2004), "volunteering is uncoerced help offered either formally or informally with no or, at most, token pay done for the benefit of both other people and the volunteer" (p. 5). This was evident when analyzing parents' motivations to serve as volunteer coaches. Primary reasons for coaching involved parents' personal philosophy behind volunteering, a desire to help their children, and a lack of better options for coaches. Some parents mentioned contributing to positive community outcomes, which the literature has noted as a major motivation for volunteering in some individuals (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010; Wilson & Musick, 1997). Parents were also interested in having an impact on their family members. For instance, participants discussed the importance of teaching children to play the sport of soccer and helping them develop their soccer-specific knowledge. Parents also discussed broader benefits they hoped to instill in children through their coaching efforts, including teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, building confidence, and social skills. When their children outgrew the program, some parents continued to volunteer in order to help other children. These findings are not surprising given the literature documenting that individuals may volunteer to help someone they know and wanting to have an impact on children's outcomes (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010; Busser & Carruthers, 2010; Wilson & Musick, 1997). Additionally, as evidenced by this study, most parent volunteers were so focused on the children having a positive experience, that they do not consider the benefits for themselves. Yet, most parents experienced at least some social benefits as a result of their volunteer experiences.

Major challenges that parents experienced dealt with interacting with children, other parents, and agency staff. For instance, Ivan explained that sometimes children can be particularly difficult on the soccer field. He went on to say that this behavior could affect him in his life outside the soccer field, too. Others also shared stories regarding the difficult interpersonal dealings with other parents. In the case of the study participants, they mentioned that parents would sometimes allow their children to miss practice or games, which would have an impact on whether the team had enough players to enter a competition. Other parents disagreed with coach's decisions. The tension between coaches and parents has been acknowledged. Holt, Tamminen, Black, Sehn, and Wall (2008) reported that many parents perceived their knowledge of the specific sport being played

as greater than that of other parent peers. The result of these perceived differences was tension amongst parents and spectators in the stands. Those who believed they knew more about the sport felt some other parents were making uninformed critiques of the referees, strategies, or other parts of the game. Put a different way, parents and fans who were perceived to possess less sport-specific knowledge (such observations were made by parents as well as the researchers through participant observation) contributed to an awkward and uncomfortable bleacher environment for some parents.

Parents in this study also mentioned facing challenges with agency staff. Most participants agreed that the athletic staff, and the soccer program in particular, were not well organized. However, reactions to this disorganization were mixed. Some participants appreciated the hands-off approach, noting that they did not like the highly regimented nature of the soccer leagues in which they had previously played or coached. Other study participants were more critical of this lack of organization, saying they felt the staff could have done more to help prepare and equip new coaches to be successful. The coaches who expressed these frustrations tended to be the ones who were newest to the sport of soccer. Some also mentioned the lack of appreciation they felt from the agency, and some commented that their suggestions were ignored. These concerns prompted recommendations in order to improve the retention of parent volunteers.

Management Implications

As several participants explained, volunteers play a crucial role in the ongoing operation of youth sports leagues at the municipal level. Thus, volunteer recruitment must be seen as a vital component of youth sports. Study participants described three things they thought would better prepare and attract potential volunteer coaches: formal training and certification; fee waivers or stipends; and more agency support.

Formal training and certification. Foremost, several participants called for more formal volunteer training and certification process. Training and certification may be especially important for coaching soccer because, as several participants noted, they did not grow up playing the sport. As a result, these individuals did not have an extensive background in playing the sport which would have helped them coach more effectively. Therefore, the agency should look to adopt a formal training and certification process for youth sport coaches that helps build their coaching confidence in the sport as well as gives each coach a tangible benefit (e.g., certification).

Despite the fact that some parents have previous involvement in a sport or activity, it is often important for parents and coaches to undergo volunteer training. Researchers have routinely recognized the importance of good coaches in creating a positive

environment for children in youth sport (Ferreira & Armstrong, 2002). Furthermore, these same researchers identified the need for good training for coaches to ensure they promoted the values and principles of their specific league. Volunteer training is a crucial aspect of youth sport because it helps outline positive youth development principles (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005), which helps align parent volunteers and coaches under a common set of goals that reinforce the agency's mission. In turn, focusing on an agency's mission is important in municipal parks and recreation settings because these agencies often emphasize effort, cooperation, and inclusivity over competition and winning. Thus, creating an inclusive youth sport environment requires careful and deliberate training that helps set the tone and expectations desired by the agency. Ultimately, these volunteer training efforts highlight the fact that the mindset and approach to working with children in youth sport is just as important as the actual lessons and techniques that are covered on the field.

There are many different agencies and organizations in the United States that deal with volunteer training for youth sport. Three of the most prominent organizations for youth soccer are the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS), and the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA). The AYSO utilizes several core philosophies in their approach to youth soccer, including an emphasis on positive coaching and player development (American Youth Soccer Organization [AYSO], 2011). These principles are stressed at all levels of the volunteer soccer organization, from league administrators to coaches, parents, and players (AYSO, 2011). The NAYS emphasizes a training program for league administrators and coaches as well as parents to ensure they all play a positive role in the child's development (National Alliance for Youth Sports [NAYS], 2011). Interestingly, the NAYS was formerly known as the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) but changed its name in 1993 to reflect the broader importance of training not just for coaches but administrators and parents too (NAYS, 2011). The PCA was founded in 1998 at Stanford University and its focus is on training coaches to become a "Double-Goal Coach"; this approach entails focusing on winning as well as teaching life lessons through sport involvement (Positive Coaching Alliance [PCA], 2011). The PCA (2011) incorporates parents into the mix by having them stress the positive life lessons that their child(ren) can gain from sport activities. All of these organizations recognize the importance of training not just coaches, but also league administrators and parents, in order to set expectations and help ensure the emphasis is on positive youth development principles.

Fee waivers and remuneration. In addition to training, a financial remuneration would help attract more

volunteers. Cnaan and colleagues (1996) discussed remuneration as one of the four dimensions in their definition of volunteering. In this study, participants explained that a small stipend would be a welcome benefit for their volunteer service. The stipend would not have to be much, but it would go a long way towards making the volunteer coaches feel appreciated for their time and effort. If a stipend is not a feasible option, then several participants also brought up the idea of a fee waiver for their child's registration. Fee waivers were utilized in the neighboring park district and would potentially be an effective tool to help attract and retain volunteer coaches.

Agency support. Organizations utilizing parent volunteer coaches will also need to provide support to these volunteers. In the case of this study site, the fact that agency staff had not acted upon any of their suggestions reflects poorly on the athletics staff as well as the agency as a whole. In many cases municipal parks and recreation agencies have end-of-season evaluations as well as general feedback forms, but feedback should not be limited to just one of these few formal formats. Instead, staff at municipal parks and recreation agencies should be open to feedback at any time. Creating a list to track such feedback would not be difficult, and would provide a reference point to demonstrate what changes have been made. Individuals who are unwilling to hear or solicit such feedback are likely not fulfilling the core duties of their position.

Study Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations of this study. The participants in this study were soccer coaches, and, thus their experiences may not directly translate to other youth sports. A few individuals in the study coached other sports such as baseball or basketball, and indeed a few of them discussed their experiences related to these other sports. Ultimately, however, this study focused on volunteer coaching experiences for the sport of soccer. Lastly, the sample of people interviewed for this study represented a highly educated group. The study site is home to a large, public university so it is not surprising that some people in the sample have multiple degrees. However, the plethora of undergraduate and graduate degrees likely means that the findings from this study do not apply to the general population.

There are numerous areas of opportunity for future research that stem from this study. Studying family dynamics might be fruitful in better understanding people's decision to volunteer. Several participants noted they would have been unable to volunteer if it had not been for the support of their spouse. Additional research will need to be conducted on the gendered nature of volunteer coaches, as Messner and Bozada-Deas (2009) warned about the phenomenon where "most men volunteers become coaches and most women volunteers become 'team moms'" (p. 49). In this study, only two mothers served as coaches, and one did it alongside

her husband. Future studies could examine the unique challenges women may face in choosing to serve as a parent volunteer coach for their children.

Given the lack of volunteers at this public agency as well as in many other communities (Cuskely, 2004), it would be beneficial to further explore the factors that influence coaching decisions. It would also be interesting to investigate the benefits of long-term relationships built through youth sport connections. In this study, the individuals who reported the most social connections tended to be the ones who had been involved with the program the longest. Thus, it seems that longevity with an organization is important for developing and maintaining social connections. However, the exact benefits of these connections or relationships are still unclear. It would be interesting to speak to several long-time volunteers with such relationships to understand the specific benefits they have realized as a result of developing and maintaining these kinds of social relationships.

Volunteer social networks are one potential avenue for future research. Barnes and Sharpe (2006) discussed volunteer social networks in their study of a Canadian community park, noting that the volunteers did their work not just to benefit the agency but because it benefitted themselves. Such volunteer social networks likely exist in other communities, and the exact conditions for such networks are worth further examination. The findings from this study did not demonstrate a social network amongst volunteers, but the concept is worth exploring in future studies. For instance, senior citizens and retired people who volunteer at community centers likely have different experiences than do parents with children in youth sports.

Conclusion

The use of volunteers has become an effective, and oftentimes necessary, method for carrying out public programs and services. Specifically, municipal parks and recreation agencies have increasingly had to rely on volunteers in order to conduct basic programs and services. This reliance on volunteers has significantly increased with the recent economic woes. This study highlighted the benefits and motivations of individuals who chose to volunteer for a public parks and recreation agency. The findings demonstrated that there is the potential for positive, rewarding experiences as a volunteer. Future research should continue to explore the positive, as well as negative, effects of volunteering on the individual, especially as they relate to social impacts.

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Tables

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Name	Age	Sex	Time Spent Volunteering (years)
Steve	31	Male	3.5
Ivan	37	Male	3.5
Alex	43	Male	0.5
Neil	44	Male	15
Nolan*	49	Male	10
Rex	39	Male	1.5
Ned	45	Male	7
Brad	38	Male	4
Uta	37	Female	4
Saul	41	Male	4
Bev	28	Female	0.5

**Note*: Reflects the only former coach.

Table 2

Study Results

Response category	Higher order themes	Description	Lower order themes
Motivations	**Civically-minded**	Participant shows concern for the public good and expresses this through volunteering	"[My mom] was always volunteering at the school, at the church" as well as "it's something that I see as my responsibility to pay back."
			"'cause if we don't support the park district programs for the kids, we're not going to have them"
	Children-centered	Volunteering is driven to help their children or other children in the community	"I got into coaching because my kids wanted to play sports. And I knew enough about the sports they wanted to play that I felt comfortable leading more than just them. I felt comfortable leading other people's kids [too]."
	Necessity	Parent expressed the need to fulfil a gap due to lack of volunteers	"[The college student coach had] absolutely no idea how to play the game, no format to the field, no nothing. And the kids weren't learning anything other than, kick the ball at the goal. It was horrible. And he clearly had no management of the kids or understanding of the sport."

Response category	Higher order themes	Description	Lower order themes
Challenges	**Transition**	Parents expressed difficulty adjusting with the demands of volunteering	Substantial work and family demands
	Children	Parents expressed difficulties interacting and working alongside children	"You have to deal with your own kids, that sucks enough. But then you're with a kid, and you think to yourself, You're not even my kid! Why am I doing this?! …You're sucking the energy out of me!"
	Parents	Parents expressed difficulties interacting and working alongside parents	"Honestly parents are the worst. That's the worst part about volunteering."
	Agency	Parents expressed difficulties interacting and working alongside the agency	"Just don't count on them for anything. Don't count on them for any kind of… assume that the only thing they will provide will be the field, on the day, the field, the refs, and the balls. The rest, you have to organize everything."
Recommendations	**Player assessments**	Parents expressed the need to have players assessed for skills and abilities.	Neighboring park district did assessments every two years.
	Recruitment	Agency should improve their efforts to attract quality volunteers.	"They should do more than just accept everyone that says, 'I want to coach.'"
	Volunteer retention	Agency should improve their efforts to retain volunteers.	"They [need to] do more to keep people."

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Exploring the Relationship Between the Relative Age Effect and Youth Development Among Male Recreational Ice Hockey Players

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The current study examined if relative age influences the youth developmental experiences of male recreational ice hockey players. Participants completed an on-line survey that solicited their date of birth and responses to the Youth Experience Survey for Sport (YES-S). Our analysis revealed no relative age effect among the recreational hockey players. The MANOVA results revealed no significant multivariate differences between quartile of birth and the five YES-S dimensions (p = .493). It is reassuring that the experiences of the recreational ice hockey players in our sample do not differ in their developmental experiences as a consequence of when they were born throughout the selection year.

Participation in organized extracurricular activities has been associated with various positive outcomes including increased academic achievement (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999), interpersonal competence (Mahoney, Cairns, & Famer, 2003), college attendance (Mahoney et al., 2003; Zaff et al., 2003), civic involvement (Zaff et al., 2003), and lower rates of early school dropout (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Organized sport has become a popular activity for youth, particularly in Canada, where approximately 76% of Canadians aged 6-17 years were found to participate in at least one form of organized sport (Guèvremont, Findlay, & Kohen, 2008). Youth sport is recognized as an excellent opportunity for children to improve their physical health skills, as well as their psychosocial development (e.g., cooperation, discipline, leadership) and motor skills (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007).

While sport offers many benefits, it can also lead to negative outcomes including injuries (Merkel, 2013), increased alcohol consumption (Eccles & Barber, 1999) and parental pressure, as well as poor relationships with coaches (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009). Taken together, sport is a domain that furnishes participants with a wide range of both positive and negative experiences, highlighting the importance and need to ensure that sporting environments are organized and structured effectively to foster positive development (MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012).

There are many underlying factors (e.g., coaching, motivational climate, peers) that may influence the experience youth have within sport, one of which is *relative age*. Relative age can be described as the age differences among individuals in the same cohort (Barnsley, Thompson, & Barnsley, 1985). To illustrate this point, an 11-month age disparity among 10-year-old children represents nearly 10% of total life experience (Musch & Grondin, 2001). Further, relative age can interact with various primary (i.e., training, genetic, and psychological factors) and secondary factors (i.e., socio-cultural and contextual factors) that can influence skill acquisition (Baker & Horton, 2004). Unfortunate, yet common, consequences of relative age differences are relative age effects (RAEs). These are (dis)advantages one experiences as a result of his or her birthdate relative to a predetermined cut-off date (Barnsley et al., 1985). When using a January 1st cut-off date, an individual born in January is almost a whole year older than someone born in December. This disparity can help precipitate the various mechanisms (i.e., physiological development, psychological maturity, experience, competition) (Musch & Grondin, 2001) behind the formation of RAEs. A traditional RAE occurs when there are a greater proportion of relatively older individuals participating in an activity whose birthdates fall shortly after a cut-off date compared to their relatively younger peers.

Within educational literature, relative age has been found to influence academic performance (Cobley, Baker, Wattie, & McKenna, 2009a), the diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD; Elder, 2010), leadership roles (Dhuey & Lipscomb, 2008), and attendance at a post-secondary school (Bedard & Dhuey, 2006). Specifically, those who are relatively younger tend to have lower grades, are more likely misdiagnosed with ADHD, less frequently hold a leadership position (e.g., club president), and are less likely to attend a post-secondary institution. Such disadvantages extend beyond education into other domains, including sport. Relative age effects have been found to exist in a number of sports (e.g., soccer, hockey, baseball, and basketball) and at various levels of competition (Cobley, Baker, Wattie, & McKenna, 2009b). Because relatively younger athletes tend to be physically smaller, this can lead to them being overlooked by coaches and less likely to be identified as talented at an early age

(Helsen, Starkes, & Winckel, 1998). Alternatively, those who are relatively older are more commonly considered to be talented and, consequently, are exposed to better coaching (Helsen et al., 1998), as well as achieve greater success (Barnsley et al., 1985), ultimately leading to a more positive and enjoyable sporting experience. Relative age effects within sport can negatively impact the experiences of those who are relatively younger and can lead to these athletes dropping out (Barnsley & Thompson, 1988; Delorme, Boiche, & Raspaud, 2010; Helsen et al., 1998; Lemez, Baker, Horton, Wattie, & Weir, 2014). Helsen et al. (1998) noted that relatively younger male soccer players tended to drop out as early as 12 years of age.

To date, there have been a variety of proposed solutions to eliminate or minimize RAEs. However, many of these seem to be administratively challenging or have failed to garner the attention of sport governing bodies. Some solutions include grouping athletes based on height and weight (e.g., Musch & Grondin, 2001), alternating cut-off dates from year to year (e.g., Barnsley & Thompson, 1988), implementing age quota systems (e.g., Barnsley & Thompson, 1988), or delaying the selection process and representation of athletes (i.e., streaming) (Baker, Schorer, & Cobley, 2010). Given that these proposed solutions have yet to receive traction from sport governing bodies, it is imperative to continue evaluating the experiences youth have during sport. Despite what researchers know about the presence of RAEs within sport, there has been a void in the literature examining the role relative age may have on the personal development of youth within these activities. To this point, the purpose of the current study is to examine if relative age influences youth developmental experiences as measured by the Youth Experience Survey for Sport (YES-S; MacDonald et al., 2012). The YES-S was created from a modified version of the Youth Experience Survey 2.0 (YES; Hansen & Larson, 2005) to measure the positive and negative personal developmental experiences of youth in sport.

Literature Review

RAEs in Hockey

Canadian ice hockey and volleyball were the first sports found to be influenced by RAEs. An unequal birth distribution was found for Canadian ice hockey players as well as male and female volleyball players participating at recreational, competitive, and senior professional levels (Grondin, Deschaies, & Nault, 1984). Shortly thereafter, Barnsley et al. (1985) provided strong evidence of a linear relationship between month of birth and participation rates in the National Hockey League (NHL), Ontario Hockey League, and Western Hockey League. Since these foundational studies, ice hockey has become a primary focus for RAE studies. Specifically, Cobley et al. (2009b) identified through their meta-analysis that 32.8% of RAE studies focused on ice hockey. At the

NHL level, numerous studies have confirmed the presence of RAEs (Addona & Yates, 2010; Barnsley et al., 1985; Boucher & Mutimer, 1994; Côté, MacDonald, Baker, & Abernethy, 2006; Montelpare, Scott, & Pelino, 2000; Nolan & Howell, 2010). Wattie, Baker, Cobley, and Montelpare (2007) examined the history of the NHL and concluded that the RAE emerged within the late 1970s. Similarly, Addona and Yates (2010) found evidence that the RAE began for NHL players born since 1951. The authors concluded this birthdate bias was a result of the Soviet Union's rise as a dominant force in international hockey, which resulted in Canada changing its national development programs.

Relative age effects have been found to exist in other elite levels of hockey, including Canadian intercollegiate athletics (Chittle, Horton, & Dixon, 2015; Montelpare et al., 2000), the Canadian Hockey League (Nolan & Howell, 2010), and within four countries (i.e., Canada, United States, Sweden, and Finland) participating in the International Ice Hockey Federation's World Junior Hockey Championships (Bruner, Macdonald, Pickett, & Côté, 2011). Likewise, Baker and Logan (2007) provided evidence that hockey players born in the first half of the year were more likely to be selected in the 2000-2005 NHL entry drafts; however, relatively younger Canadian hockey players appeared to be selected earlier in the draft. While relatively younger athletes are often seen as disadvantaged within the literature, research has suggested that relatively younger NHL players are more likely selected as All-Stars and to participate on Olympic teams, as well as have longer careers (Gibbs, Jarvis, & Dufur, 2011). Furthermore, Wattie, Cobley, et al. (2007) found relatively older children participating in ice hockey were more often injured than their relatively younger peers.

A likely contributing factor to the RAEs witnessed in elite hockey stem from similar birthdate distributions seen in youth leagues. Within the Edmonton Minor Hockey Association, traditional RAEs were found in the 'Pee Wee,' 'Bantam,' 'Midget,' and 'Juvenile' leagues (Barnsley & Thompson, 1988). Further, the authors demonstrated a significant relationship between birth quartile and youth participation, where those who were relatively older tended to participate on top tier teams. As a result, these players are more likely to be selected to the professional ranks. Similarly, relative age advantages were witnessed in a sample of select players participating in the Calgary Minor Hockey Association, whereby more than 60% of players were born in the first half of the year (Montelpare et al., 2000). Hancock, Ste-Marie, and Young (2013) also found strong evidence of a RAE for males registered in the Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) who were participating competitively (i.e., where coaches selected players). The aforementioned studies highlight the

importance of competition to the development of RAEs within youth hockey.

Typically, when examining youth hockey at the house league level there are no RAE trends. House league hockey can be defined "…as a community oriented Minor hockey program structured to provide development and competition at the recreational level" (Hockey Canada, 2013, p. 57). For example, Montelpare et al., (2000) found nearly an equal birthdate distribution for their sample of house league players, where 53% were born in the first half of the year and 47% in the second half. In contrast, Hancock et al. (2013) found significant RAE trends for the noncompetitive (i.e., where no coach selection was made) divisions of 'Initiation' and 'Novice' for players registered in the OHF. While the older divisions demonstrated birthdate distributions that were significantly different from what would be expected in the general population, they were not consistent with a traditional RAE pattern. Nevertheless, players who were relatively older were consistently underrepresented within these older divisions.

Positive/Negative Youth Development

Research by MacDonald, Côté, Eys, and Deakin (2011) examined the various factors that influence positive and negative personal development for male and female athletes and found affiliation with peers, self-referenced competence, effort expenditure, and task climate were all significant predictors of positive sport experiences. Conversely, ego climate and other-referenced competency were predictors of negative experiences. Creating an environment that is athlete-focused, and encourages goal setting and sharing may help build stronger relationships among peers and increase motivation, (MacDonald et al., 2011). Moreover, Fraser-Thomas et al. (2011) examined sport program characteristics (e.g., sport type, training time, team sex) to determine their role in youths' developmental experiences. Key findings included age as a predictor of initiative and cognitive skills, whereby those who are older had more experiences in initiative and cognitive skills. Additionally, the results suggested that co-ed teams scored higher in the area of personal and social skills, and players coached by the same sex scored higher in the initiative domain. Other research has found coach autonomy support to be associated with personal and social skills, cognitive skills, goal setting, and initiative (Cronin & Allen, 2015). Research conducted on adolescent soccer players found that team success had no correlation with the overall developmental experience; however, coach transformational leadership behavior and the coach-athlete relationship appeared to be the best predictors of athletes' positive developmental experiences such as goal setting, initiative, and personal and social skills (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013).

With obesity rates in children rising (Janssen et al., 2005), it is of the utmost

importance to ensure youth continue to participate in extracurricular activities such as sport. Regular physical activity is an effective method to prevent chronic diseases such as obesity (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). As a result, the aim of this study is to answer the following research question: does relative age influence youth developmental experiences within male house league hockey? Within the 2013-2014 hockey season 138,768 males were participating at the 'Bantam' and 'Midget' level (Hockey Canada, 2014), providing a large number of individuals available to survey. More importantly, this division is often viewed as both competitive, yet popular among youth since skill level is not a criterion for participation. By comparing the sport experiences relatively younger and older athletes have, respectively, we may be in a better position to guide decision-making when creating new sport programs or modifying existing ones. Finally, to the best of our knowledge this is the first study to examine the influence of relative age on the five dimensions of the YES-S.

Methods

Youth Experience Survey for Sport

The YES-S is a 37-item instrument that examines five dimensions of youth development including: *personal and social skills, initiative, goal setting, cognitive skills,* and *negative experiences* (MacDonald et al., 2012). The personal and social skills dimension consists of 14 items (e.g., 'I became better at giving feedback'). The initiative dimension is comprised of four items (e.g., 'I learned to push myself'). The goal setting dimension contains four items (e.g., 'I learned to find ways to reach my goals'). The cognitive skills dimension consists of five items (e.g., 'I improved skills for finding information'). Finally, the negative experiences dimension is made up of ten items (e.g., 'I was treated differently because of my gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation'). The items on the YES-S are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 4 (*Yes definitely*) that represents experiences that occurred during sport participation. The YES-S has been established to have adequate model fit and reliability with 9-19-year-old youth sport participants (MacDonald et al., 2012).

Sample

For this research, 464 male house league ice hockey players completed an online survey hosted by Fluidsurveys. These players were sampled from one of three hockey tournaments that took place within the Canadian province of Ontario in 2014. Participants answered a variety of demographic questions including date of birth and completed the YES-S (MacDonald et al., 2012). Prior to completing the online survey participants were asked to read the online consent form and check a box indicating that they consent to participate in this research project and acknowledge the risks involved.

Procedure & Data Analysis

The sample was delimited (n = 453) to include only to those who answered a minimum of 30 out of the 37 items (i.e., 80%) on the YES-S, provided complete responses to the remaining portions of the survey (e.g., date of birth), and to correct for various forms of response bias. Participants ranged from 15 to 21 years of age, with nearly 92% of athletes 16 through 18 years old. Since most of our sample is between 16-18 years of age, and beyond the age at which maturation variability is at its peak among adolescent males (Musch & Grondin, 2001), we believe our results are less likely to be influenced by the potential physiological and cognitive differences associated with age disparities. Thus, we can more effectively isolate the influence of relative age on these individuals. Case mean substitution was used to deal with the remaining missing data (El-Masri & Fox-Wasylyshyn, 2005), which is appropriate when 20% (or less) of the items are missing (Downey & King, 1998). Once data were collected, mean scores for each YES-S dimension were calculated for each participant. These scores were then used to compare how the positive and negative developmental experiences in sport differed among participants and test for the influence of relative age on these scores.

To determine if there was a RAE present within this sample, athletes were grouped into the appropriate birth quartile using December 31st as the cut-off date (Hockey Canada, 2013). Those born in the months of January, February, and March were placed in quartile one (Q1), quartile two (Q2) consisted of those born in April, May and June, quartile three (Q3) represented those born in July, August, and September, and quartile four (Q4) included those born in October, November, and December. A chi-square goodness of fit test (X^2) was performed to determine if the observed birthdate distribution of these male house league ice hockey players differed significantly from what we would expect to see based on OHF birthdates for midget players ages 15-17 (Hancock et al., 2013). Effect sizes were calculated using Cramér's phi (φ). Based on previous research involving recreational hockey players, we did not expect to find a RAE (e.g., Barnsley & Thompson, 1988; Montelpare et al., 2000). Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare the scores of the various sub-scales of the YES-S across birth quartiles. Through these analyses we attempted to discern how relative age may be influencing the positive and negative sporting experiences of youth ice hockey players. This research project has received ethical review and clearance, consistent with the guidelines set out in the Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement for Research Involving Humans (2010).

Results

Within our sample, 102 athletes were born in Q1 (22.5%), 128 (28.3%) in Q2, 118 (26.0%) in Q3, and 105 (23.2%) in Q4. The

results of the chi-square goodness of fit test revealed no significant differences between the birthdate distribution of our sample of house league hockey players and what we would expect among players in the OHF ($X^2 = 3.762$, $df = 3$, $p = .288$, $\varphi = 0.091$, see Figure 1). As a result, we conclude there is no RAE within this sample.

Cronbach's (1951) alpha (α) scores were computed to measure the internal consistency of the dimensional subscales, and all were deemed acceptable (i.e., scores greater than .70; George & Mallery, 2003). The MANOVA revealed no significant multivariate differences between quartile of birth and the five YES-S dimensions (Pillai's Trace = .032, F(15, 1,341) = .963, p = .493). Therefore, it appears that the experiences of the house league ice hockey players in our sample do not differ in their developmental experiences as a consequence of when they were born throughout the selection year. As per the recommendation of an anonymous reviewer, we reanalyzed our data using years of hockey experience as a covariate and found similar results.

Based on the relative ages of the participants, scores on the YES-S range from 3.31-3.37 for personal and social skills, 2.49-2.70 for cognitive skills, 3.20-3.25 for goal setting, 3.55-3.61 for initiative, and 1.56-1.71 for negative experiences. See Table 1 for details regarding the mean and standard deviation of the YES-S sub-scales based on quartile of birth.

Discussion

To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine the relationship between relative age and youth experiences in sport. The results of this study support similar findings that male house league ice hockey players are not disadvantaged as a result of their date of birth (e.g., Hancock et al., 2013; Montelpare et al., 2000). Thus, the potential benefits (or detriments) relative age has on these players is essentially nonexistent. Since house league hockey players often compete at this level for enjoyment reasons, rather than in pursuit of a professional career, it is reassuring that they are not having disparate experiences as a result of their relative ages. Despite the null findings in this study, we believe relative age ought to be considered in other studies exploring positive youth development within sport to provide a more comprehensive analysis of other potential influences on youth sporting experiences. This may be particularly true when examining the development of youth competing at higher levels of competition, where the RAE is more prominent.

There is growing emphasis on the importance of publishing null findings (Ioannidis, 2005, 2006), as they save fellow researchers both time and resources examining phenomena that may fail to exist. Furthermore, Ioannidis (2006) goes so far as to suggest that journals should always publish null results, providing they recognize their limitations, and only publish significant findings after replica studies have been conducted. With this in mind, it is

important to highlight the limitations associated with the current study. Firstly, the participants within this study were recruited at hockey tournaments throughout Ontario and thus, likely reside in the province of Ontario. As a result, caution should be used when generalizing these results to other regions across Canada. Also, as with any self-reported survey instrument, it is difficult to ensure participants answered questions about their youth experiences in sport thoughtfully and honestly. Furthermore, we recommend replicating this study with samples drawn from other competitive levels (e.g., AAA) to determine if experiences in sport would differ across quartiles at more elite levels of competition. Future research of this nature conducted on female athletes, in different geographic regions, as well as in different sports would be beneficial and insightful.

The scores of the participants in this study on personal and social skills, goal setting, and initiative resemble those of Cronin and Allen's (2015) study where participants rated themselves above 3.00 for personal and social skills, goal setting, and initiative, but only 2.11 for cognitive skills. These authors stress the role that coaches have in youth development and well-being. Specifically, Cronin and Allen suggest that coaches should develop an autonomy-supportive climate (e.g., listening to athletes) and provide opportunities for youth to develop positively through various actions (e.g., teaching goal setting, controlling emotions). The hockey players' self-rated scores for negative experiences (1.56-1.71) in this study are nearly identical to the average ratings (1.71) presented by MacDonald et al. (2011). Scores reported for the cognitive (2.26), goal setting (3.06), and initiative (3.47) subscale ratings are also similar to our sample (cognitive skills: 2.49-2.70; goal setting: 3.20-3.25; initiative: 3.55-3.61). As a result, the house league hockey players in our sample seem to be enjoying the psychosocial benefits that youth sport has to offer.

It is a positive sign that youth within our sample are both experiencing the positive and (to a lesser degree) negative outcomes of sport, regardless of their relative ages. However, it is important to acknowledge that those who may have had negative sporting experiences have potentially already dropped out. This is noteworthy given that other investigations have noted relatively younger athletes dropping out of sport due to their negative experiences (e.g., Barnsley & Thompson, 1988; Helsen et al., 1998; Lemez et al., 2014). Outside of sport, relatively older high school students have been found to hold leadership roles more often and obtain more leadership experience prior to graduation (Dhuey & Lipscomb, 2008). In light of the current findings and the similar results of Chittle, Horton, Weir, and Dixon (2015) it appears that relatively younger and older hockey players demonstrate similar leadership behaviors, possibly due to their participation in house league sport. If sport provides opportunities that are transferrable

to other life contexts, the impact of relative age may diminish.

Given that sport participation is an excellent means to maintain health, and develop psychosocial and motor skills (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007), it is of the utmost importance that sport developers continue exploring all factors that can influence these experiences. Furthermore, participation in extracurricular activities has been shown to improve academic achievement (Cooper et al., 1999) and extend to other areas such as college attendance (Mahoney et al., 2003), and civic involvement (Zaff et al., 2003). In the future, parents, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders should consider promoting sport to children, particularly at the house league level, as a method to facilitate positive development (i.e., goal setting, personal and social skills, cognitive skills, and initiative) and leadership skills, given that relative age plays no discriminating role in these outcomes. Using sport as an avenue to foster personal growth has the potential to shape and influence other areas of development, including education and career opportunities.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1

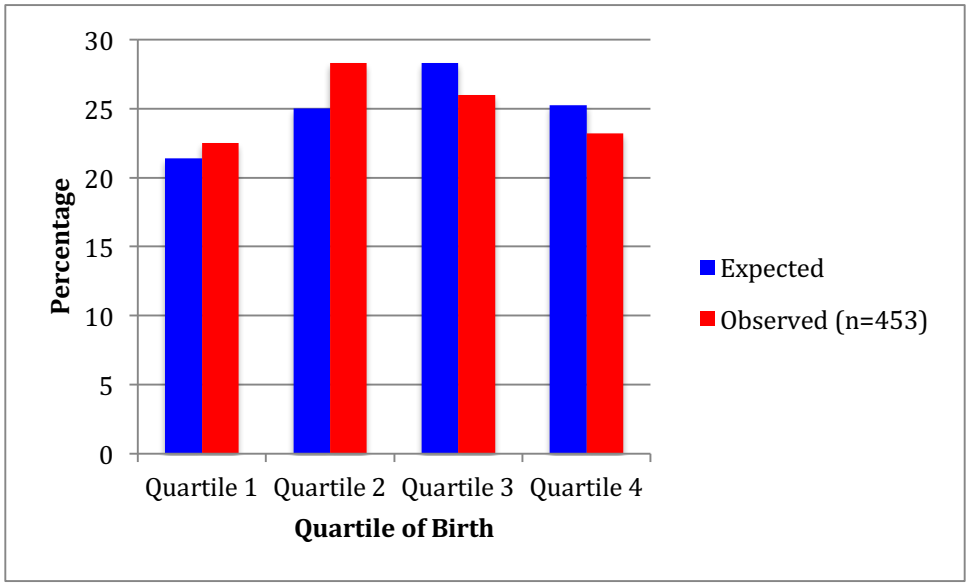
Means and standard deviations for the Youth Experience Survey for Sport (YES-S) based on quartile of birth

YES-S subscales	Q1 *Mean(SD)*	Q2 *Mean(SD)*	Q3 *Mean(SD)*	Q4 *Mean(SD)*
Personal and social skills	3.31(.49)	3.37(.47)	3.32(.45)	3.31(.45)
Cognitive skills	2.64(.82)	2.70(.78)	2.51(.78)	2.49(.75)
Goal Setting	3.22(.69)	3.25(.65)	3.24(.61)	3.20(.60)
Initiative	3.59(.54)	3.61(.52)	3.61(.43)	3.55(.47)
Negative experiences	1.56(.56)	1.71(.68)	1.60(.61)	1.67(.62)

Note: Q1 = Quartile one; Q2 = Quartile two; Q3 = Quartile three; Q4 = Quartile four. Scores are based on a 4-point Likert scale ancored from 1 (*Not at all*) to 4 (*Yes definitely*).

Figure 1

Overall birth distribution by quartile. Expected average population birth rates for males were derived from those who were registered in the Ontario Hockey Federation in 2007 (Hancock et al., 2013).



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Sport Spectator Behavior as a Moral Issue in College Sport

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Spectator aggression continues to be a serious problem in American college athletics. However, despite the magnitude of this problem, fan abuse has not received the same level of concern (i.e., promotion of sportsmanship and fair play) as "winning-at-all-costs" perpetrated by athletic participants. In response, the author argues that perhaps many in the sport milieu do not consider fan behavior as a moral issue (i.e., actions that are harmful to others) and therefore unworthy of more serious consideration. As a result, the purpose of this study was to explore the types of spectator abuse inflicted upon college athletes as well as assessing the emotional impact. The results of this study showed that college athletes do indeed experience a variety of insults and harassment. However, findings also indicated that athletes are generally emotionally unaffected by the abuse. The contradictory nature of this finding is discussed.

Sport spectator aggression is a serious problem across a variety of sports, levels, and countries (Gubar, 2015; Wakefield & Wann, 2006; Wann, Haynes, McLean, & Pullen, 2003; Wann, Melnick, Russell, Pease, 2001). Of particular and growing concern in the United States is spectator aggression in college athletics. This is evidenced by former NCAA president, Myles Brand (2008), who stated, "Campuses increasingly have student sections in football and basketball that have taken on the role of ensuring a home court advantage with zealous enthusiasm that sometimes moves from rowdy support to over-the-top vulgarity and violent action" (Brand, 2008, n.p.). Brand (2008) stated further, "These behaviors represent a threat to the integrity of intercollegiate athletics….It's time to address the rising problem" (n.p.).

In addition to Brand's strong assertions, there is a variety of anecdotal and empirical research to support the existence of spectator aggression in college athletics. Anecdotally, Ngo (2012), for example, reported a variety of spectator aggression at college football games such as trash talking, booing, throwing beer cans, and harassing cheerleaders. As well, college basketball fans insult and harass players to the point that players such as Oklahoma State's Marcus Smart attacked a Texas Tech fan in the stands. The fan, Jeff Orr, acknowledged that he "enjoyed his moment of getting into Smart's head" (Monteiro, 2014, n.p.) (see also, Wahl, 2008). Empirically, Rudd and Gordon (2010) found that 52 out of 137 college student basketball fans self-reported the use of various forms of heckling and harassment towards the opponent. Additionally, a study by Rudd (2016) revealed that among a sample of 221 college students, the majority "agreed" or "tended to agree" that it is fair to heckle opposing players, yell at the referee or umpire, or ridicule the rival teams.

Spectator aggression, however, has not been addressed equally to that of the winning-at-all-costs behaviors committed by athletic participants. For example, major interscholastic sport organizations such the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) all list and encourage sportsmanship as an important value within competition (Champions of Character; NCAA Core Values; The Case for High School Activities) but give little or no attention to spectator behavior. In addition, numerous scholars and educators have written on the importance of sportsmanship and fair play among athletes (Arnold, 1992; Clifford & Feezell, 1997; Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 2003; Simon, Torres, & Hager, 2015) whereas few, if any, have done so in the context of sport spectatorship.

This lack of attention suggests that many in the sport milieu may not consider spectator aggression to fall within the same realm of winning-at-all costs, or believe that fans have a responsibility to practice sportsmanship in a manner equal to athletic competitors. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to establish spectator aggression as a moral issue in sport that should be viewed equally to winning-at-all-costs in athletic competition. It is hoped that doing so will stimulate sport administrators to consider fan behavior more seriously. As well, perhaps establishing spectator aggression as a moral issue will evoke more educational and philosophical writings on the spectator aggression problem, which in turn, will create more awareness and problem solving to address this important issue.

To support the case that spectator aggression violates morality and is therefore a moral issue, a study was conducted with a convenience sample of NCAA Division II athletes. The key research questions to be answered were: 1) What is the nature of the

spectator aggression that is directed towards college athletes? 2) To what extent do various forms of spectator aggression emotionally hurt college athletes? 3) To what extent do various forms of spectator aggression have a positive or negative impact on college athletes' athletic performance? The answer to these questions will ultimately help determine if spectator aggression is a moral issue. However, before answering these questions, a number of key constructs are explained including spectator aggression, ethics, sportsmanship, and the notion of sport as a valued human practice. Subsequent to this section will be the study's methodology, results, and discussion.

Key Supporting Concepts

Spectator Aggression

Aggression has generally been defined as involving the intention to harm or injure another person (Baron & Richardson, 1994; Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Coakley (2009 has added that aggression may involve physical or verbal actions that are intended to "dominate, control, or do harm to another" (p. 197). More specific to sport, Wann, Carlson, and Schrader (1999) posit that sport spectator aggression can be divided into two types: hostile and instrumental. The former involves acts of violence or harm motivated by feelings of anger. For example, a spectator may cast obscenities or throw objects at a referee for making what is perceived to be a bad call. In contrast, instrumental aggression pertains to harmful actions that are intended to yield a particular result. For instance, a spectator may shout derisive comments to an opposing player with the goal of diminishing their concentration and performance.

Therefore, in the sport context, spectator aggression essentially involves harmful verbal or physical actions towards others in the sport milieu including opposing players, coaches, and game officials. Further, spectators may act aggressively for either hostile or instrumental reasons. However, for clarification, the purpose of this study is not to assess intentionality. Rather, the overarching purpose of this study is to determine if college athletes are emotionally affected by spectator aggression regardless of the type of aggression (i.e., hostile or instrumental).

The Nature of Ethics

According to Frankena (1973), ethics involves thinking about morality or moral problems. Morality is essentially concerned with how our actions, motives, and intentions affect other people (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 1994). Ethics, therefore, involves reasoning about the rightness or wrongness of one's actions or how one "ought" to act in order to avoid hurting others (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996; Morgan, Meier, & Schneider, 2001). Lumpkin et al. (1994) have referred to this reasoning process as moral reasoning, which importantly, will be affected by what one

values: the moral or the nonmoral. Moral values are those values involving actions, motives, and intentions towards other people (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 2003). Moral values are therefore critical to human relationships and when violated may likely cause harm (Lumpkin et al., 1994). Thus, ethical situations arise when harm may come to another individual as a result of violating a moral value. Prime examples of moral values include honesty, justice, beneficence, and responsibility (Lumpkin et al., 1994).

In contrast, nonmoral values are based on things that have an extrinsic quality such as money, power, fame, and winning (Frankena, 1973; Lumpkin et al., 1994). Nonmoral values by themselves do not have a moral quality because they are merely things. However, what one does to obtain a particular nonmoral value may induce an ethical problem and the use of moral reasoning. For example, the extent that an athlete values winning may impact whether or not he or she will play fairly or respect their opponent. That is, the individual may value winning to the point that he or she will cheat to win or perhaps bring harm to their opponent. Similarly, in the case of college sport spectators, what is valued likely impacts their moral reasoning in relationship to the opposing team. Spectators who cast abusive insults towards opposing players likely value winning over moral values such as respect or beneficence (not doing harm).

Expanding the Concept of Sportsmanship to Sport Spectators

Perhaps synonymous with ethics in sport is the concept of sportsmanship as a result of its moral underpinnings. Although there are a variety of definitions, most point to the upholding of moral values. Rudd and Stoll (1998) posited that sportsmanship includes the moral values of responsibility, fairness, and respect for one's opponent. Clifford and Feezell (1997) maintain that sportsmanship is "excellence of character" (p. 15) with the moral value of respect at its core. Arnold (1984) proposed a multidimensional view of sportsmanship which includes amicability (social union view), generosity and magnanimity (pleasure view), and compassion (altruistic view).

In sum, these definitions suggest that sportsmanship is the concrete display of acting ethically in sport. Or, as Clifford and Feezell (1997) suggested, sportsmanship is the display of virtuous behavior. Furthermore, the notion of sportsmanship gives support to the idea that there is indeed a morality in sport. For without sportsmanship, the ethos of sport becomes purely about winning and doing whatever it takes to do so. This latter type of model often results in the use of cheating, as well as harming and disrespecting one's opponent (i.e., winning at all costs).

Sportsmanship can also be thought of in terms of the "good sports contest" (Fraleigh, 1982, p. 186) which is not only germane to athletic competitors but also sport spectators. According to Fraleigh, the

good sports contest can only occur when all athletic participants are able to fairly contest one another. That is, when all competitors abide by the rules of the given sport. Contrariwise, when participants intentionally break rules to gain an advantage, a fair contest no longer exists and thus makes it impossible to determine a legitimate winner. n a similar vein, Pearson (1973) posited that the purpose of an athletic contest is to test one's skills against their competitors in order to determine who is the more skilled individual or team. Athletic competitors compete unethically (or unsportsmanlike) when they intentionally defy the purpose of the athletic contest (i.e., to test one's skill against their competitor's skill in order to determine who is more skillful) (Pearson, 1973).

Fraleigh's (1982) and Pearson's (1973) ideas about skill testing and the good sports contest can easily be applied to sport spectator aggression. For, sport spectators who act physically or verbally aggressive towards opposing players are not upholding the notion of a good sports contest where athletic competitors are able to test their skills. Rather, aggressive sport spectators inflict various forms of physical or verbal harm that can be intended to prevent participants from competing at their highest level (i.e., instrumental aggression). As Pearson (1973) proposed, sport competitors act unethically when they intentionally violate the intended purpose of the particular sport: to determine who is the more skilled team or player. Sport spectators, then, behave unethically or unsportsmanlike when acting aggressively towards opposing players, which can in turn, prevent equal skill testing.

In addition to Fraleigh (1982) and Pearson (1973), Clifford and Feezell's (1997) notion of sportsmanship as respect for one's opponent is also applicable to sport spectators. Clifford and Feezell maintain that if athletic competitors value competition and the opportunity to excel, then it is only logical that participants should want good opponents. As such, one's opponent should be respected and valued rather than viewed as an enemy to be humiliated and destroyed. Applied to sport spectatorship, spectators should want to watch their team challenged by a worthy opponent, which in turn results in a good sports contest. This, however, is unlikely to occur if spectators act with hostile and instrumental aggression towards opposing players.

Sport as a Valued Human Practice versus Winning at All Costs

The previous two sections established that there is an ethical basis to sport that can be displayed through sportsmanship. However, as mentioned earlier, many in the sport milieu may compete under an alternative competitive model known as winning-at-all-costs. Arnold (1992) suggested that this latter model of competition is the byproduct of what he calls the "sociological view of sport" (p. 240) in which the purpose of competition is

to achieve a variety of extrinsic goals such as winning, money, fame, and prestige. Arnold maintains that when extrinsic goals become the focal point of competition, competitors may do whatever it takes to win, including cheating, violence, and other forms of gamesmanship, which amounts to a winning-at–all-cost mentality.

However, contravening the winning at all costs ethos in sport, Arnold (1992) has offered an alternative view. Arnold posits that sport may be considered as a culturally valued human practice much like other valued human practices such as medicine, engineering, farming, or architecture (Arnold, 1992). When sport is viewed as a valued human practice, it means that each competitor considers him or herself as a member of that particular sport. As a member, one willingly agrees to be measured and evaluated in accordance to the particular rules and standards of excellence within a given sport (Arnold, 1992). Sport, then, is pursued for the sake of participating and attempting to achieve the internal goals of sports (e.g., giving a scoring pass in soccer, making a great angle shot in tennis, or a spectacular run in American football) rather than for extrinsic rewards such as winning and money (Arnold, 1992). Arnold also adds:

> Furthermore, every practice, if it is to remain true to itself and not be corrupted by influences or pressures external to it, requires a certain kind of relationship between those who participate in it, whether they like one another or not, or whether, as in many instances of sport, they find themselves opposed to one another in competition. Unless the participants in a practice see one another with respect and as being common guardians of the values inherent in the practice they are pursuing, the practice itself is likely to suffer and perhaps fall victim to the unprincipled and the unscrupulous (p. 239).

Arnold, therefore suggests that in order to avoid the desire for extrinsic rewards and the winning-at-all cost mentality that may follow, the moral values of justice, honesty, and courage be fostered and integrated into the ethos of sport. Specifically, justice will establish fair treatment and play among competitors. Honesty will create a sense of trust between opponents and courage will engender the ability to risk harm to oneself when it is necessary to uphold and protect the internal goals and values that make-up the practice of sport.

In conclusion, Arnold's (1992) view of sport a valued human practice provides the necessary framework for legitimizing the practice of ethics and sportsmanship by both athletes and spectators. For, as Arnold asserted in the above quotation, when athletes view their participation in sport as a member of a valued human practice, they will then do all they can to preserve the integrity of that practice regardless if they are in opposition to one another. On the other hand, when competition becomes imbued with a desire towards the extrinsic

(e.g., winning, money, power, etc.), a winning at all costs ethos may emerge, which may also involve hatefulness towards one's opponent. It is this latter model that has perhaps fueled much of the spectator aggression in college athletics.

Method

Design

This study utilized a descriptive nonexperimental design. Such a design is appropriate when the researcher is interested in describing a given phenomenon that is related to a particular attitude, belief, or behavior (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In the case of this particular study, the researcher sought to describe the emotional impact of spectator aggression on college athletes and to describe the nature of the aggression. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected for the description (see below).

Data Collection

A short questionnaire (six questions) was developed to assess the emotional impact of spectator aggression (harassment and insults) on college athletes and to obtain information about the nature of the aggression (see Appendix A). The questionnaire included five closed-ended questions and one open-ended question to collect qualitative data (see Table 1 for responses to questions 1-5).

The closed-ended questions had either two or three response options depending on the nature of the particular question. For example, question #3 states, "To what extent did the insults or harassment hurt you emotionally?" The following response options are then: Not Hurtful, Hurtful, and Very Hurtful. For clarification, although some research has suggested the use of anywhere from 4-11 response options (Johnson & Christensen, 2012), Frary has pointed out that too many response options can confuse the responder and therefore the number of response options should depend more on the nature of the question. Thus, it is believed that it was sufficient to have two to three response options for the particular questions. Furthermore, the need to have a wider range of response options is more of a consideration for summative scales in order to create enough variability in responder scores (Thorndike, 1997). However, as mentioned, the questionnaire used for this study is not summative.

Regarding reliability and validity, because the questionnaire was not designed as a summative scale, internal consistency and factor analysis were not conducted. These are common methods for providing reliability and validity evidence for attitude scales (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Thorndike, 1997). Instead, each question was unique to the others and was therefore analyzed individually. The validity of the questions is based on their development from supporting literature concerning spectator aggression (Gubar, 2015; Ngo, 2012; Rudd & Gordon, 2010; Wann et al., 1999).

Participants/Procedure

After being provided a list of student-athlete email addresses by the athletic director of the respective college, the questionnaire was electronically administered (using a survey software program) to a convenience sample of 287 male and female college athletes competing for a NCAA Division II college in the Southeast. Specific sports were men's baseball (n=92), men's basketball (n=15), women's basketball (n=19), men's soccer (n=55), women's soccer (n=42), women's softball (n=32), men's volleyball (n=14), and women's volleyball (n=18). These specific sports were targeted on the basis that they involve settings where spectators can be close enough to the athletes to have a psychological impact as a result of loud abusive chanting and harassing. A total of 108 athletes (males= 58; females = 50) responded anonymously to the questionnaire (37.6% response rate) which included men's baseball (n=27), men's basketball (n=9), women's basketball (n=8), men's soccer (n=17), women's soccer (n=18), women's softball (n=16), men's volleyball (n=5), and women's volleyball (n=8).

Data Analysis

IBM SPSS version 22.0 was employed to run descriptive analyses in the form of a frequency distribution on the closed-ended questions (1-5). These analyses were used to determine the percentage of athletes that were choosing the various response options (see Table 1). In addition, a content analysis (identification of emerging patterns or themes) (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1987) was conducted for question #6 which was an open-ended question used to stimulate qualitative responses concerning the types of harassment or insults college athletes experienced while competing.

Results

Quantitative Data

Question #1 asked how many of the athletes had experienced being harassed or insulted while competing as a college athlete. Of the 108 that responded, (52.8%) said "no "compared to (47.2%) that said "yes." The latter group (n=53) then responded to the five remaining questions (four of which were quantitative) related to experiences with spectator aggression. As seen in Table 1, the majority (72.5%) reported being harassed or insulted "not often" whereas a combined 27.5% indicated "often" or "very often" (question #2). Additionally, 82.4% did not find fans' insults or harassment "hurtful" compared to 17.6% that found the abuse to have a hurtful impact (question #3).

Regarding the impact of fan abuse on performance, the majority (66.7%) indicated that insults and harassment did not decrease their athletic performance, while an additional 33.3% reported that insults and harassment did decrease performance "somewhat" (question #4). Alternatively, a sizeable number of athletes reported that harassment or insults caused them to

improve their performance "a lot" (15.7%) or "somewhat" (56.9%) whereas 27.5% indicated "not at all" (question #5).

Qualitative Data

Of the 51 athletes that said "yes" to question #1, there were 34 athletes that provided qualitative responses to question #6, which asked the athletes to provide examples of fan harassment or insults. After reading and carefully examining all of the responses, six themes emerged related to the types of harassment or insults experienced. These themes include: 1) physical characteristics, 2) playing ability, 3) parents yelling, 4) prove the fans wrong/play harder, 5) use of player's name or number, and 6) miscellaneous forms of harassment/insults.

In the identification of these themes, it is important to note that there are no hard scientific principles, laws, or assumptions that must be met in qualitative data analysis (Patton, 1987). Rather, according to Patton (1987) qualitative researchers "must rely on their own intelligence, experience, and judgment" (p. 154) when analyzing qualitative data. Similarly, Creswell (1998) stated, "Undoubtedly, no consensus exists for the analysis of the forms of qualitative data" (p. 140). Therefore, the identified themes were based on the interpretation of the author. To provide trustworthiness and verification of the proposed themes, verbatim quotes have been provided for the reader so that the identified themes are verifiable and trustworthy. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), the use of low inference descriptors (verbatim) is one method for strengthening interpretive validity.

What follows next are the listing of each theme along with the number of statements that were associated with it. For clarification, each statement is from a different athlete. Therefore, a theme with seven statements equates to seven different athletes. In order to illustrate the nature of each theme, two verbatim statements are provided. Note that some responses were rich to the extent that they could be placed within more than one theme.

Physical characteristics. The first theme represents a total of seven different statements that mention fans making insulting remarks about some aspect of a player's physical appearance. For example, one athlete said, "One time during a volleyball game this guy in the stands was making fun of my forehead haha." Another said, "In my first collegiate game at [name of place omitted] last season, I was getting insulted about being foreign and having red hair. I ended up messing up the corner kick right in front of their fans haha."

Playing ability. The second theme represents a total of 12 different responses that involved fans deriding players for making a mistake or their playing ability. This theme captured the most prevalent number of responses related to harassment or insults by fans. For instance, a player said "People I don't know on the other team yelling my name or number, telling me you

suck, nice ass, and don't mess up." Another simply replied with "Calling names, yelling air ball if I miss a shot. I've had parents yell at me, etc."

Parents yelling. The fourth theme represents five different responses involving parents yelling out forms of insults and harassment to opposing players. For example, one player said,

> I have been given dirty looks by parents on the opposing team who are watching the game. I have also heard parents yell at the other team to "hit her hard" or "make sure she's scared when you run at her."

Additionally, another athlete stated, "I've had parents complain about me when I pitch and it puts a fire inside me and makes me throw better."

Prove the fans wrong/play harder. The fifth theme represents eight different statements that related to playing harder and proving fans wrong when receiving insults or harassment. For instance, an athlete said, "You will hear them laugh and jeer, but you have to use it as a way to make you perform better. Prove them wrong almost." Another player said,

> [team name omitted] softball team were making comments at me during the middle of a game at conference tournament. They kept saying stuff like 'You aren't really freshman of the year,' so I got really hyped and played with some cocky confidence and it made me want to play better.

Use of player's name or number. The sixth theme represents seven statements that pointed to the use of players' names or numbers as a form of harassment or insult. One player said, "…if I make a bad pass a spectator would say something like "nice one" or "great job number 7." A different player said, "They find our name and call you out personally."

Miscellaneous forms of harassment/insults. Lastly, there were ten different unique statements that were difficult to capture thematically. For example, one athlete stated, "Some spectators get very personal and look stuff up about you and your family." Another player said, "Racial slurs are the only insults I get at games."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to substantiate the proposition that spectator aggression is a moral issue in college athletics as well as inconsistent with sportsmanship and the practice view of sport. The impetus for making such an argument is to bring more serious attention to sport administrators who as Brand (2008) stated: "look the other way" in the interest of maintaining strong fan support (n.p.).

As explained earlier, ethical problems involve the violation of moral values and harm to others (Lumpkin et al., 1994). However, most athletes did not report being emotionally hurt by spectators' insults or harassment. Also, the majority did not find insults and harassment to decrease playing

ability. In contrast, many of the athletes felt that spectators' insults or harassment could, to some degree, improve performance.

Responses, then, suggest that most athletes from this study's sample are not emotionally or negatively affected by spectator abuse and therefore it would seem difficult to identify spectator behavior in college sport as an ethical problem. However, a conflict in this appraisal arises when considering the nature of the various insults and harassment experienced by college athletes. As shown in the results section, athletes experienced a variety of insults specifically related to one's playing ability and physical appearance. Therefore, is it not unethical when fans make derogatory or mean spirited comments such as telling a player that they "suck" or when they are ridiculing players for the color of their hair, shape of their forehead, or making racial slurs? As such, although many athletes indicated that fan insults and harassment are not hurtful, it does not necessarily mean that the nature of the fan abuse is morally acceptable. As Shields and Bredemeier (1995) noted, evaluating morality requires an understanding of the intentions behind the action. Actions with harmful intent violate morality (Lumpkin et al., 1994). For example, Person A intentionally and without provocation shoots Person B, who is wearing a bulletproof vest. Because the bullet hits the vest and does not cause harm to Person B does not mean that Person A is cleared of immorality. Thus, it may be argued that although many athletes claim they are not affected by fan abuse, there is still an ethical issue at hand when fans intentionally desire to cause emotional harm to competing athletes (see Wann et al, 1999).

It is also important to consider the mechanisms that may allow many college athletes to be emotionally unaffected by fan abuse (at least judging by this sample's responses). For, if an individual was ridiculed or harassed while simply walking to their car, would they not feel insulted and upset? More than likely, the answer is, "Yes." What is it then about the sport context that causes many athletes to become impervious to verbal abuse? The answer to this question may largely rest on our North American sport society's extreme emphasis on winning.

Sage and Eitzen (2016) posit that North Americans place an enormous premium on winning (see also, Eitzen 1999; May, 2001). They maintain that there is typically no other conception of success in sport but to win (Sage & Eizten, 2016). As such, college and professional coaches are frequently fired for not winning which in turn creates great pressure to win and avoid being deemed a failure (Sage & Eitzen, 2016; USTA Hires LSU's Wilson, 2015). Athletes across all levels of sport are then scorned and belittled for failure to win (Eizten, 1999; Sage & Eitzen, 2016). This type of sport culture ultimately leads to the fostering of certain types of values that are believed to be instrumental in winning. Sage and Eitzen (2016) point to the values of work ethic and

sacrifice as two critically important values espoused by coaches. It is believed that the high possession of these two values is the difference between winning and losing (Sage & Eitzen, 2016).

In a similar vein, Coakley (2009) posits that elite level athletes are socialized into accepting four key norms that make-up the "sport ethic" (p. 163) which includes: 1) dedication to the sport above all else, 2) striving for distinction, 3) accepting risks and playing through pain, and 4) no acceptance of obstacles to prevent winning. According to this theory, athletes wishing to reach elite levels of sport (e.g., college and professional), must adhere to the norms of the sport ethic (Coakley, 2009). Coakley (2009) suggests that conforming to the sport ethic becomes dangerous when athletes mistakenly overconform. This occurs when an athlete goes beyond the accepted norm of being a competitive athlete. For example, an athlete may "strive for distinction" by using performance enhancing drugs or overtraining.

In sum, there is reason to believe that athletes may be socialized or taught by coaches, parents, and teammates that there is a certain type of mentality and value system that must be maintained in order to be competitive and remain a participant of elite level sport. Part of this norm system is that one must be mentally tough in competition, which likely includes blocking out harassment and verbal abuse from fans. This would then explain why many of the athletes in this study reported being unaffected by fan abuse despite being treated unethically. However, further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms that allow many athletes to become inured to fan abuse.

In contrast, while many athletes may be able to deflect fan abuse and even use it as motivation to play harder, it is important to note that some athletes (17.6%) did report being emotionally hurt by malicious fan behavior. A portion of the sample (33.3%) also indicated that insults and harassment by fans decreased playing ability "somewhat." These responses suggest that perhaps depending on the athlete and the nature of the abuse, that some athletes could be emotionally hurt to a serious degree, which would warrant more attention to the issue of fan behavior in college athletics. Additional quantitative studies are needed with larger stratified samples of women's and men's sports to obtain a clearer understanding of how many athletes are emotionally impacted by fan abuse. In particular, this study was delimited to Division II NCAA athletics, which does not involve the amount of money, commercialization, and expectation to win as Division I athletics (Coakley, 2009; Lumpkin et al., 2003). This in turn, could create a greater prevalence of highly identified fans that exude an even higher level of fan abuse towards athletes at the latter level (see Wann et al., 1999; Wann, Peterson, Cothran, and Dykes, 1999 for studies concerning the relationship between

team identification and spectator aggression).

Limitations and Future Research

This study contained a few limitations that should be noted as well as future directions for research. First, the study's sample was limited to NCAA Division II athletes. Considering that reports of spectator aggression have largely come from Division I athletic programs (Gubar, 2015; Monteiro, 2014; Ngo, 2012) which have significantly larger fan bases and revenue production (Lumpkin et al., 2003; Simon et al., 2015), it is possible that Division I athletes would report higher instances of spectator aggression as well as being more emotionally impacted. Additional research with Division I athletes is needed to obtain a clearer understanding of spectator aggression and its impact on athletes.

Second, although the emotional impact of the spectator aggression was assessed on a variety of men's and women's sports, the sample size did not allow for meaningful comparisons across sports. Future research is needed with larger stratified samples of various men's and women's sports to investigate any differences in spectator aggression. Certain sports may have more of a spectator aggression problem than others, which may suggest something about sport culture.

Third, it was noted that Wann et al.(1999) posited that spectators may act aggressively for either hostile or instrumental reasons. However, this study did not assess aggression at the level of intentionality. Therefore, it is not known if the types of spectator aggression reported by athletes were done hostilely or instrumentally or for any other particular reason. Additional studies are needed to determine the reasons for sport spectator aggression.

Fourth, this study did not ask the athlete participants to provide reasons for why they were or were not emotionally hurt by spectator aggressions. It was speculated in the discussion that perhaps athletes are socialized by the sport milieu to shut out the aggressive nature of spectators. Additional studies, particularly qualitative, are needed to obtain a deeper understanding of how athletes cope with spectator aggression.

Conclusion

Although the majority of athletes in this study's sample did not report being emotionally hurt by various forms of spectator aggression, it does not necessarily nullify spectator aggression as a moral issue. As mentioned in the discussion, it is possible that many college or elite level athletes have been socialized into deflecting the effects of spectator aggression. However, the development of a protective shield from harm does not make it morally acceptable to attempt to cause such harm (e.g., make comments about players' physical appearance or playing ability). Furthermore, there was a portion of athletes (17.6%) that did report being emotionally hurt by spectator aggression. Thus, not all

athletes are impervious to spectator aggression.

Some readers may feel that sport spectators who yell statements such as "great job 7," "nice one," "air ball," or just generally laughing and jeering at mistakes is not worthy of moral concern. To the contrary, it is suggested that whether it is yelling "air ball" or telling a player "you suck," that both forms are discordant with morality and ethical thinking. This argument can be supported by Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative, which is comprised of the tenets of universality and respect (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996; Frankena 1973).

Applied to sport spectators, Kant's principle of universality requires aggressive sport spectators to consider if they are willing to universalize their aggressive actions. In other words, are they willing to recommend that their aggressive actions would be good for everyone to do as well if done to their own self? For example, would a spectator who tells an opposing player that they "suck" because they are angry (hostile aggression) or because they want to help their team win (instrumental aggression) be willing to suggest that such actions are good for anyone who is angry or needs to achieve something they desire. More than this, would the spectator be willing to approve of aggressive actions done to their own self? That is, would they want to be told that they "suck" or be criticized for their physical appearance simply because someone feels like telling them so. The answer to this question is likely, "No."

Kant's second component of his categorical imperative, respect, may also be applied to spectator aggression. Kant posited that all human beings should be treated as ends rather than a means to an end (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996). In the latter form, one is not respecting individuals as rationally thinking and autonomous persons who have the freedom to choose their thoughts and course of action. Rather one is being thought of as a means to achieve a particular end result, regardless of their freedom of choice. In the case of aggressive sport spectators, opposing players are treated as a means to an end when sport spectators inflict aggressive forms of behavior in order to diminish the player's competitive level (and help their team win) or be used as a vehicle for the spectator to vent anger and frustration.

In addition to ethics, it is important to consider how this study's findings are inconsistent with sportsmanship. As mentioned earlier, sportsmanship involves moral values such as fairness, respect, and amicability (Arnold, 1994; Clifford & Feezell, 1997; Rudd & Stoll, 1998). Clearly, sport spectators who criticize opposing players for their ability or physical appearance, or who make sarcastic comments such as "Nice job, 7," are not in harmony with the ideals of sportsmanship. Therefore, again, although many of the athletes did not report being emotionally hurt by spectator aggression, the kinds of

aggressive actions that were reported are arguably a violation of sportsmanship.

Ultimately, the data from this study allows for the argument to be made that many sport spectators are acting in an aggressive manner that is both unethical and unsportsmanlike. Further, although, many of the athletes indicated that the aggressive behavior is not hurtful, it does mean that concern is unwarranted. And, in fact, concern has indeed been shown by the NCAA in establishing the Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct to help develop positive sportsmanship environments for all involved at collegiate athletic events (Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct, n.d.).

Notably, some schools have begun responding to the committee's charge. For example, the Indiana University Athletic Department now places "Courtside Seating Guidelines" in the floor level seating of Assembly Hall gymnasium (basketball). The guidelines provide a list of proscriptive behaviors and consequences for engaging in them (Machir, 2014). The Michigan State Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has a fan behavior policy that states, "Any individual who engages in unruly or illegal conduct at an athletic event may be ejected from the event and prohibited from re-entering the athletic event." ("Season Ticket Holder Policy," n.d., n.p.)

Thus, there is evidence that in some quarters there is recognition of the spectator aggression problem. However, spectator behavior policies involving the revoking of tickets or removal of spectators from seats may only be one piece of the intervention picture. Lickona (1991) postulated that the possession of character involves the qualities of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Applied to sportsmanship, this means that sport spectators must have a knowing and valuing of sportsmanship in order to practice it. By arguing that spectator aggression is a moral issue that belies the concept of sportsmanship, it is hoped there will more increased efforts within college athletic departments and organizations to not only develop spectator policies but to also foster the moral knowing and valuing of sportsmanship.

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Tables

Table 1

Division II Athletes Responses to Quantitative Questions 1-5

Question	Response	Response	Response	Total
Q1. Harassed by spectators while playing	No (57) (52.8%)	Yes (51) (47.2%)		108
Q2. How often insulted or harassed by spectators	Not often (37) (72.5%)	Often (13) (25.5%)	Very Often (1) (2.0%)	51
Q3. Extent insults or harassment hurt emotionally	Not Hurtful (42) (82.4%)	Hurtful (9) (17.6%)	Very Hurtful (0) (0%)	51
Q4**.** Extent insults or harassment decrease playing ability	Not at all (34) (66.7%)	Somewhat (17) (33.3%)	A lot (0) (0%)	51
Q5. Extent insults or harassment improve performance	A lot (8) (15.7%)	Somewhat (29) (56.9%)	Not at all (14) (27.5)	51

Note: The total number of responses dropped from 108 (all respondents) to 51 because the latter are only those that said "yes" to question #1.