

Characteristics that Contribute to Life After Sports:

The Valuable Skills that Individuals Learn to Use From Participating in Sports

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Author's Note

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Abstract

There are millions of people that are participants of organized youth sports across the country that eventually stop participating in athletics at a certain point of their life. Throughout their playing experiences, the youth athletes learn valuable life skills, either directly or indirectly, that affect their personal development. Depending on their experiences, positive and/or negative aspects can occur that can expose reasons to play sports or not to play sports. The purpose of this study was to make known of any long-term benefits or detriments from the effects of playing sports that carried with them after their years of involvement into everyday society. The study had 10 participants involved with the process of the research study. The participants were given surveys that pertained questions about their playing experiences that occurred then and now have carried with them, now that they are done playing organized youth sports. The questions were in various forms from listing, yes or no, and short explaining. The results discovered numerous valuable life skills, positive and negative experiences that occurred, and informed people of reasons to play sports and not to play sports.

Introduction

The life of being an athlete can range from glamorous for numerous of years or end rather early in childhood. The journey is one that is unique from each person and their surrounding environment. Sports are a popular activity that keep kids busy and engage them in physical activity on a daily basis. Regardless of how long or how far those participants go while playing a sport, there is always an end along the path. Once they enter the world of reality after any level of playing, they must learn how to deal with the adjustments that many people endure on an everyday schedule. The underlying question that is asked in this thesis is about whether or not athletes learn valuable life skills during their participating years, with further reasoning for either side.

Now, that problem might be as easy as a yes or no answer from someone's personal experience or knowledge from seeing it occur through a friend or colleague. If so, what are those specific attributes that are acquired through playing sports and that carried with them into the real world. If not, what are the reasons that sports did not affect them after their time of playing. Whichever is the case, there are answers that will come from this study to further inform people about the benefits or disadvantages of being apart of athletics from a young age.

Understanding that something positive or negative must come from this research, the information that is gathered might sway people towards or away from this type of activity for themselves or children. Saying the answer is yes, that people do learn important concepts while playing sports and identifying them will be crucial. Afterwards, narrowing down those pieces in categories from a team or individual aspect can contribute towards their personal characteristics.

Saying the answer is no, then the underlying scenarios of information as to the reason why will be important to share to the public.

The specific research problem will essentially be a group of individuals that evaluate themselves through a survey that pertains to their skills or lack of that have been related to playing sports. For most of these answers, there will be space available to go into further detail about their information. The categories that will be considered will be gender, race, age, type of sports, and other descriptions that can narrow down these findings into designed charts and graphs. The outcome will provide answers to the questions that are unattainable statistically because they occur on an individual and personal basis.

Formatting this problem can be done in numerous ways that can be seen from various standpoints. Although there are different types of sports and can be either team or individual based depending on the sports, general information can still be gathered together and separately. Three areas that can be discovered from this type of study are working with different types of people, independent work ethic, and devotion levels. These areas do not specifically pertain to a type of sport, gender, or situation. The available details that these sections will unfold are knowledgeable from the eyes of people that may not quite understand what sports truly does to an individual after all.

Working with different types of people is something that sports has the opportunity to enable. The best part about a sports program is that no one participant is alike by any standards. The skill levels are different, financial backgrounds are different, ages may differ, ethnic backgrounds are unique, etc. No matter what type of people that are involved, the goal is the same, to come together and work towards becoming better. Every team has their own style and

organizational makeup, but those details are never a concern because the task at hand must be focused on first.

Although the team sports require everyone's full effort to compete, independent work ethic can be evaluated when looking at each person on the team. Becoming the best version of yourself can benefit the overall team by means of results. Training harder and during your own time can only elevate your playing level that can lead teams to victory due to that effort. That is where the majority of improvement mentality and commitment level become revealed.

Lastly, are the devotion levels that people have while they are playing sports. As everyone does, they must balance various other commitments that are occurring in their lives. Showing up to work hard and strive to be better than the day before is something that varies from each person due to their devotion. The willingness to improve on days off, during practice, etc. are attributes that tell if someone truly cares about what they are doing in that particular moment.

Any of these areas are likely to appear within any job and activity that is not sports too. For this study, we will be strictly looking at how people who participated in sports used these concepts after their playing days were over. Categories within these areas will be brought to the surface as well and can understand if an impact was made during those times to prepare for reality.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to inform people on the impactful effects of playing sports that potentially reveal long-term benefits or detriments after their participating time period in our everyday society.

The reason to focus on this problem will enlighten others on the important factors when it comes to deciding to enroll their children into sports through their youth ages or encourage their kids to participate in sports as far as they can achieve. Without knowing the positive or negative effects of playing sports throughout childhood, parents may choose to or not to personally on their experiences alone. Presenting the overall findings will guide decisions to participate or choose to put time towards other activities.

The method that is being used in this study is a survey that will contain various questions that regard to them and younger generations. This will be given to adults who are done playing for an organized team and may or may not have children of their own. The questions will focus on their experiences and if any characteristics were learned while playing sports carried over into their career field or daily life. Through a combination of communicating the survey through email addresses and in-person to various people in a range of careers will be given. No one will be present when they take this survey so they can fully evaluate these questions with no distractions.

The expected outcome of this research is to get an understanding for previous generations of athletes and what they cherished or truly gruded over the years. Either way, the information will be valuable to the public to see how this could affect future athletes on playing sports. This study is geared towards any type of sport and people in any type of career field to truly get a sense of the entire society. The research, when all said and done, will present the valuable life skills that were learned or the poor experiences that led to a negative persona after these individuals' playing years.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following questions:

- What valuable life skills were learned and carried on after participating in sports?
- How does playing sports positively or negatively affect the individual after their playing years?
- Are there any major reasons as to why or why not to participate in sports?

The contribution to the field will present evidence as to why or why not sports benefitted people on a long-term and/or short-term case. Processing this information will possibly give an answer to reasons other than physical activity to sign the youth up for sports. The benefits for the participants will be to reflect over their playing years and truly think about the positive or negative attributes that were further carried with them over the years. Also, it can hopefully allow them to address to the younger generations of the greatness or poorness of playing sports so they can play or turn towards an activity that will be more beneficial.

Limitations

Due to the short number of months that we are given to do this research thesis, the amount of people that will be able to fill out this survey may not fully get a true grasp of the entire population of people who previously playing sports. Also, not being present when they fill out the survey could mean that the participants will be with others when taking time to take it. Another issue is that these participants will have to use memory rather than in the moment activities. It is always easier to do something that is current rather than referring to it years later, but this could also bring back essential details that have stuck with them for a long time.

Ethical Considerations

The procedures that were followed to assure this research was conducted in an ethical manner were to have people from a variety of backgrounds to complete the survey, different genders, and full identity hidden. The names of the participants or any other information that could detect these individuals will not be present within the results. Although their races and genders will be calculated to assure an even number of varieties, the individuals will not be able to be identified. Also, different career fields will be looked at to get a well-rounded type of people. All other information will remain confidential to allow the privacy for these participants.

Literature Review

People who have participated in sports at some point in their life between early youth stages and high school are “an estimated 45 million child and adolescent participants in the US” (Merkel, 2013), which does not include international youth as well. For most, there must be something that is acquired throughout those years of practicing and playing each day throughout the week and possibly weekends too. Constantly having to stay after school, work on their skills on the playing field or court, still continue to get their school work completed, etc. The relatable skills to be able to juggle everything are increased daily to improve every aspect of their lives to better suit their tasks.

This literature review will discuss three areas that are viewed for life skills that are learned through athletic participation. The first section will be the overall valuable life skills that are brought aware during the participation of sports. The second area will discuss the positivity or negativity that comes from the participation of sports after the years of playing. The third section will focus on whether there are major reasons to or not to participate in sports.

Valuable Life Skills

Athletics are typically seen as an activity to get the youth outdoors and enjoy getting physical activity during their time of involvement. On the other hand, sports go much deeper than those surface reasons behind the use of sports for personal gain as people. There are many tasks that these younger children learn such as through participation and winning or losing too.

In the book “Positive Youth Development Through Sport” that was edited by Nicholas L. Holt, there is a chapter called, “Enhancing life skills through sport for children and youth” that takes a look at these life lessons that are learned through sports activities for the younger

generations. The article discusses the ways that information is best received that will transfer over to life skills over time. The youth may not grasp the indirect lessons that are taught during the course of the sport season, therefore, being direct can avoid the confusion that the children do not understand. The three main ways that are put into this category of transferring the skills, “whether directed toward enhancing athletic performance or success in life, are taught in the same way – through demonstration, modeling, and practice” (Holt et al., 2008).

The study that occurred for this paper was two pre-test and post-test comparison group design evaluations between 40 female volleyball players on two different teams and another study of 32 male soccer players on two different teams. For each sport, one team received an intervention and the other team did not. The intervention included assessments of physical skills, knowledge of the SUPER program, which is an 18 list of reaching your goals, and self-beliefs of their ability to set goals, problem solve, and think positively. Overall, the teams that received the intervention responded with higher self-beliefs, improvement of physical skills, and increase of program knowledge than the control teams. The main purpose of the study was to see the transfer of information that was given towards their abilities of physical and mental skills. The only limitation of this study was the low number of participants and only using two types of sports. Although the results were great, they may bring other information using different types of sports. Also, not listing the background of people, besides male or female, to see if that has a factor could be useful to know too.

The overall purpose of this study was to define what life skills were and how they are relevant. There are multiple contributions towards this academic paper that pertain to athletics. The variables of life skills that were discussed are behavioral, cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal that were viewed to develop children’s abilities across these domains. The sub-

descriptions of each category are as followed; behavioral relates to taking turns, cognitive relates to making good decisions, interpersonal relates to communicating effectively, and intrapersonal relates to setting goals. All of these are particular sections that are used by sport coaches to increase their playing ability and being apart of a team or individual sport.

A fascinating topic that was brought up in this article was that these life skills are not merely absorbed through only participation. Playing a sport does not automatically mean that the youth will gain these skills and become a great member of society after their years of participating are over. The most important step is for the ability to bring those skills that are learned through sports and transfer them to other areas throughout life. That way, they can achieve the most from what they have been taught by coaches and parents. For example, working hard during practice and games hopefully will transfer over to the classroom as well.

Next, the article “An interpretive analysis of life skills associated with sport participation” by Nicholas L. Holt, Katherine A. Tamminen, Lisa N. Tink, and Danielle E. Black, interviews were conducted to explore the way that people acquired life skills by being involved with sports programs. Again, the topic that sport itself did not teach life skills, but rather the participants’ experiences as a whole taught these skills that transferred over to life as a whole. The purpose of the study was to interact with people that played sports and discuss what they learned through their experiences and how they specifically developed those skills through sport.

The study was conducted by interviews of 40 young adults; 20 males and 20 females, that were participants in competitive youth sports programs during their adolescence years. Data was given word for word and subjected to an interpretation of the person being interviewed. There

were three main interpretations of that social interactions were central to how people learned life skills that were given to the participants. First, that the participants learned social life skills through interactions with peers in sports contexts; that the skills retained meaning in the participants' adult lives. Second, participants' parents used sport as a reinforcement for values regarding sportspersonship and work ethic. Lastly, coaches emphasized hard work and teamwork but also had some negative influences on participants' experiences. (Holt, Tamminen, Tink & Black, 2009).

The findings were that the idea of sport can provide an educational context for acquiring life skills but highlight that interactions with social agents such as peers, parents, and coaches are crucial for how people learn life skills through their involvement in sport. The interactions with people that are all involved with the sports program or the athlete's life can guide them towards bringing those skills that they learned to reality and the classroom as well. Out of the social agents of peers, parents, and coaches, peer interactions appeared to be the most meaningful aspect of youth sport participation in the study.

The limitation of this study is that there was only 40 people that were interviewed. Also, the name of the sports that these people participated in were not listed. Again, the backgrounds of these people were not described either, besides listing them as male or female. Overall, the purpose of the study had a meaningful representation and did in fact deliver results that were useful when discovering the benefits of participation of sports as youth that transferred over to life after playing sports too.

In the article "Coaching and Transferring Life Skills: Philosophies and Strategies Used by Model High School Coaches" by Martin Camiré, Pierre Trudel, and Tanya Forneris, discusses

the environments that coaches create and how that transfers to the development of the youth. The idea was that the coaches knew their players enough that specific philosophies were made throughout the team's overall environment. A major contribution to these findings through research was the Gould and Carson's (2008) model of coaching life skills, which is a five-component model that describes and explains this process.

The study was conducted through interviews of coaches and student-athletes from high schools from the two provinces of Quebec and Ontario in Canada. There were 25 participants that included 9 coaches and 16 student-athletes that agreed to be interviewed for this research. The 9 coaches were made up of 8 males and 1 female that averaged the age of 32. The 16 student-athletes were made up of 9 males and 7 females that averaged the age of 16. Six overall sections were discussed during the interviews for the coaches, which included demographic information, coach learning, coaching philosophy, coaching practice, influences of coaches on youth, and support. Four overall sections were discussed during the interviews for the student-athletes, which included demographic information, participation in high school sport, coaching practice, and influence of coaches on youth.

The results were that coaches emphasized the understanding of the pre-existing makeup of their players to create a philosophy that satisfied the outcome of these players learning life skills to transfer outside of sports. The coaches used direct methods when describing an example to the players, such as when a mistake would occur, one of the coaches would say something along the lines of if this happened at work, then what do you think would happen? Using this direct approach can open a high school student-athlete's eyes and realize they should pay more attention to every detail. The transferrable task was found to be the most difficult section, but the

coaches and student-athletes did believe that there was a connection between sports and life skills.

The limitations of the study were that the population of participants was a low amount and that the geographic area did stretch out to different provinces, but from a world perspective, that is not a large area covered. The amount of participants varied more towards males than females, especially in the coaching section. Also, the number of participants were greatly from Quebec than from Ontario too. The overall study was done very well and broke down into various sections from the interview data that was gathered.

Positive or Negative Outcomes from Sports Participation

This section will view the positive or negative aspects that come from sports participation on the development of the youth. Also, the sources will take a look at during the playing years and after the playing years too. Figuring out where exactly that these positive or negative reactions occur are important when working with a team to emphasize the development of the person.

In the article “Youth sport programs: an avenue to foster positive youth development” by Jessica L. Fraser-Thomas, Jean Côté, and Janice Deakin, provides information about how the concern of adolescent growth has now led to an emphasis on positive youth development and using sports as an avenue to improve those issues. Two of the increased problems that are seen recently are adolescent problem behaviors, such as delinquency and drugs, and changing social forces, which are both parents working, single parent homes, increased unsupervised times, etc. Also, youth sports programs are becoming expensive, competitive, and elitist.

The study is more of a review of literatures that pertain to the positive as well as negative implications that are presented throughout the paper. The positive youth experiences and outcomes through sport are examined and based off four sections; physical, social, psychological/emotional, and intellectual development. Next, lists the positive outcomes from those four areas. Following that are the same four sections, but the negative aspects that pertain to each category. Lastly, the factors that contribute towards making the experience positive or negative are evaluated through youth sports. These factors include program design; being well-rounded rather than specialization in one sport at a young age, adult influences; parental influences, which is a major interaction that can lean a child towards their development in a positive or negative manner, and coach influence, the relationship between the youth and coach is important to see how interactions occur when teaching new skills, reinforcement, etc.

The findings of the positive and negative outcomes through the four sections were given through numerous facts. The positive experiences of the physical area were the cardiovascular fitness and weight control that are among the greatest benefits, but also include skill development, strength of muscles, endurance of muscles, flexibility, and structure of the bones too. The benefits of the social development are skills of responsibility, empathy, self-control, assertion, cooperation, and interacting socially with others that can lead to further social skills. The positive outcomes of psychological/emotional development are the enjoyment and challenges that are experienced. Also, increase of self-esteem and decrease in stress can be seen as well. Lastly, the intellectual development is seen that physical activity involvement correlates with improvements of academic performance from grades, attendance, and many others. Now, the negative side of the spectrum. The negative experiences of physical development are sport-related injuries and eating disorders, to assure a physique that they are concerned about

maintaining at an early age. Concerns from the social development section are violence, aggression, and poor sportsmanship. The negative outcomes from psychological/emotional aspects are poor abilities, unattached to the team, vulnerable feeling from teammates. Also, low-confidence, low self-esteem, and burnout are shown as well. Every activity has positive and negative experiences, it is always a risk to take to hopefully work with the development and positive experiences to outweigh the negative areas to improve as people.

The limitation of this study is that there is not one overlaying experiment that was discussed, although, in each section there were examples of studies that were done either by these authors or others to correlate with that section. Other than that, this article gave a great outline of how one experiences the positive or negative experiences and the outcomes that pertain to those pieces. Understanding this overview can correspond with programs that can be put in place to teach everyone involved how to present these experiences throughout every individual.

Throughout the article of “Understanding and promoting fun in youth sport: coaches’ perspectives” by Enrique García Bengoechea, William B. Streat, and D.J. Williams, the emphasis was on the coaches’ ideas of bringing fun to youth sports and creating that positive environment throughout the experience. Three themes were revealed, which are the conflict between skill development and fun, the various meanings of fun, and promoting fun as a matter of being and of doing. Sources from research say that fun connects with the positive experience and reflects through achievement/non-achievement and intrinsic/extrinsic aspects within sport participation. Also, the positive interactions from parents, coaches, and teammates contributes to the enjoyment and fun as well.

The study involved 18 coaches, which 8 were female and 10 were male, with an average age of 28. A wide variety of sports were included from the coaching sample. The factors that the coaches were chosen for this study were a variety of the age that they coached and level of competition that they coached. The data was collected by semi-structured interviews that allowed the participants to explain on their end of their beliefs or perceptions on the topic of fun.

From the three themes that were discovered, the conflict between skill development and fun was shown that it is difficult to put those two pieces together, but alternating between the two might be a good option. Finding that fine balance of working to get better, but having fun while doing so is an interesting task that the coaches have to decide upon. Next, the different meanings of fun were the experience of achievement and non-achievement aspects of fun that could be intrinsic or extrinsic depending on the nature of the individual's experience. Along with that, hedonic perspective is the well-being of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance and eudamonic perspective focused on self-realization and meaning, are two ways that the athletes found fun too. Lastly, promoting fun in youth sport as a matter of being and doing can be implemented from a positive learning environment. Bringing creative and innovative ways to practice would create fun for everyone and cause reflection amongst the team. Some coaches believed that through the sport itself there was fun that naturally appeared for the players too, so learning the team as a whole can truly identify the entire picture of direction that the coach should aim towards when planning their practices.

The limitation of this study was the low number of participants that were interviewed, but the criteria made for quality choices. There is no one specific way that works or does not work too, it is like holding a pencil and writing, if the form works for you and the writing is legible,

then that is great. Finding that right fit is all up to perception and understanding all of the factors that go into decision making for a coach for the players' positive experience.

In the article "Negative Experiences in Physical Education and Sport: How Much Do They Affect Physical Activity Participation Later in Life?" by Bradley J. Cardinal, Zi Yan, and Marita K. Cardinal, takes a look into the negative experiences that occurs during sports and how that contributes to later in life after the years of playing sports. One of the prevailing facts are memories from past years of participating in sports, which can either be positive or negative, but remembering them will happen. Therefore, negative attributes can affect reasons of being physical active after their adolescent years.

The study included 293 undergraduate students, not specified university, that included 168 females and 125 males with an average age of 20.7. First, the students filled out an exercise questionnaire about their weekly time that is put towards exercise to estimate their physical activity involvement in a category of mild, moderate, or strenuous. Then, three main questions that were yes or no questions were: Have you ever tried out for a team and been cut, Have you ever been picked or chosen last for a team, and Have you ever been on a team, but not been given the opportunity to play (i.e., proverbial bench warmer)?. Lastly, the participants were asked to recall any type of moment from their history within sports and to describe that incident in writing.

The findings of the three main questions were that 17.9% of people had tried out for a team and were cut, 31.0% of people had been picked or chosen last for a team, and 40.7% of people had been on a team, but were not given the opportunity to play. Nothing between the genders had differed drastically. Choosing teams, even if it is for gym class, can be tricky and

should be handled with sensitivity when regarding the process. The major finding was that a separate study of 308 physical education teachers in two midwestern states said that 93.4% of them said it was inappropriate for having the youth create their own teams because typically the least athletic youths are chosen last. Although, 71.4% of teachers never did this, therefore, some teachers did this process even though they knew it was not right. This can have lasting impacts on people with their self-confidence, belief in their ability, etc. That was the most impactful finding from this survey of the undergraduate students that transferred directly over to life after sports.

The limitations were the number of participants was low on a national level and they only looked at one piece that stood out from the results. The study itself was intriguing and made people realize that there can be negative outcomes from specific attributes from participating or trying to play sports. Being cut, chosen last, or not be given the opportunity to play can truly affect the youth, hopefully the youth will take those negative results and use those feelings towards something that they are passionate about and become successful. That is the best way to respond to those situations, just like not getting a job you wanted, being the lowest member in the work team, etc.

Reasons to or Not to Participate in Sports

In the article “Leisure activities and adolescent antisocial behavior: the role of structure and social context” by Joseph L. Mahoney and Håkan Stattin, interprets the differences between high structured participation, such as organized sports, and low structured participation, such as a local recreation center, activities and their role for an adolescent’s social tendencies. The paper discusses that there is a correlation between the forms of adolescent leisure activities and the

antisocial behavior that may occur amongst them. Finding the characteristics of those activities that associated with the increase or decrease in adolescent antisocial behavior was the ultimate goal.

The study was conducted of 703 adolescents, 351 boys and 352 girls, in the 8th grade from 6 communities in Örebro Count in central Sweden were given a survey about their leisure activities and social relations. The parents were invited to complete a survey that pertained towards their adolescent's use of free time, peer relations, and their own relationship with their adolescent, only 580 of them participated, which was a factor that the ones who did not complete the survey showed more unstructured activities from their children. Using these two subject groups and responses, the findings were calculated in various categories.

The results were that for the section of leisure activities and antisocial behavior was that 76% of boys and 78% of girls reported participation in 1 of more structured activities while 42% of boys and 40% of girls reported participating in unstructured type of youth recreation center at least once a week. Structured and unstructured activities were further compared with parent behavior, peers, and activity leaders. Parent behaviors was dispersed between 3 categories of monitoring, trust, and activity support. In each section, parents with high levels of monitoring, trust, and activity support showed that their children were involved with structured activities, such as a sports organization. The opposite was exactly that, parents with low levels of monitoring, trust, and activity support showed that their children were involved with unstructured activities, such as a youth recreation center. Overall, this meant that adolescents, similar between boys and girls, that were involved with structured activities were linked to low levels of antisocial behavior while adolescents that were involved with unstructured activities were linked to high levels of antisocial behavior.

The limitations of this study were the low number of participants and that the survey was only given in one country. Another factor was that this study was geared towards any type of structured activity, but sports were listed as one of the choices. Although, the study was organized and resulted in findings that supported their initial questions. If possible, reaching out to a larger population would truly get a world basis of this understanding from a standpoint on a larger scale. Also, adding the parents of the adolescents was an interesting twist to correspond with each of the surveys that were completed.

The article “Personal Reasons for Withdrawal from Team Sports and the Influence of Significant others among Youth Athletes” by Christoph Rottensteiner, Lauri Laakso, Tuomo Pihlaja, and Niilo Konttinen takes a deeper insight of the reasons what factors tend to draw people towards stepping away from sports at a youth age. Not only were the youth looked at for their reasons for withdrawing, but also the impact of others around them, such as coaches, parents, peers, and siblings. Areas that were viewed were gender, level of competition, and the involvement in the youth sports over the years.

The study had 535 participants that broke down into 3 sports, which were soccer with 397, ice hockey with 88, and basketball with 50 that had stopped their activity in sports. The main source used to collect the data was a principal component analysis, which reduced the number of reasons for ceasing their participation in sports and to focus on the main sections. Using this data, they were able to pinpoint exact purposes behind the decisions of stopping involvement all together.

The results found that other activities became more of a priority than sports and the excitement levels decreased were the two main reasons for withdrawing from participation.

Alongside those factors, the two groups of significant others that had an influence in their decision of withdrawing were coaches and teammates. As the youth continue to grow older, they find other passions that intrigue them or the need to branch out to various tasks that they deem important at the time, such as getting a job, fitting in with others, escaping conflicts, etc. with the entire changes of puberty that go along with everything else. Statistics showed that there were differences for stepping away that related to social issues and ability between years of involvement and gender. The study was able to seek particular reasons behind withdrawal from the youth themselves and significant others that were involved with their lives too.

The limitations of this study were that a large portion of the participants were involved in one sport rather than the other two sports presented and the overall number of participants are relatively low compared to a world basis. Also, separating the participants by number of each gender was not listed. The entire study focused on the aspects that they wanted to find out and the results did not disappoint by any means. Having the significant others attached to the study was important because the youth are constantly around older people guiding them in certain directions.

In the article “Youth Sport Participation and Withdrawal: Is It Simply a Matter of FUN?” by Linda M. Petlichkoff, discusses the highlighted reasons behind participation in youth sports. The topics of age, fun, winning, and motivational levels of the youth participants are evaluated in this research. Also, there were numerous factors put in place to assure an accurate representation of youth sport participants that were involved.

The study was presented in the form of a questionnaire to over 10,000 young people. The specific age range of these people were 10-18 years old and were from 11 different cities within

the United States. The research was presented by Athletic Footwear Association when it was reported to them. The three main issues that this questionnaire presented about sports were why teenagers participate, why they quit, and how they felt about winning. Assuring that the questionnaire was to the point made it simple to narrow down specific areas that became in view.

The results had four main sections that became in focus from the data that was collected through the questionnaires. First, was the participation in organized sports decreases drastically as younger people become older. Second, fun was the key reason for staying involved in sports and the lack of fun was one of the primary reasons for discontinuing. Third, the factor of winning plays a less of a role than most adults think. Lastly, not all athletes have the same motivations for their involvement in sports. These four areas became relevant through the results of this study and provided detailed information about the youth and their reasons behind playing, stopping, winning, and motivational levels.

The limitations of this study were that the questionnaires were only given to 11 cities, but they could have been spread out across the country and that differences between gender, race, specific ages, etc. were not presented. The research gave well-rounded answers concerning the overall youth between the ages of 10 and 18, but did not narrow down specific groups within the participants. Altogether, the information was given from an abundance of participants and gave appropriate results for this type of study.

Summary

From the literature that is presented, the importance of parents, coaches, and peers have an important impact when it comes to the youth and their participation in sports, as well as their development as people. Young athletes need to find the enjoyment from playing to continue to

have a positive experience from the sport. Coaches should implement ways to have fun during practices, but also know when it is time to practice diligently to become better at their sport. Also, including direct ways of teaching life skills are valuable to the overall development of these young athletes as they become older. With appropriate guidance, influence, peers, etc. sports can be an impactful experience for children as they continue their life after playing too. Although, sports can result in positive experiences, negative experiences can be just as relevant, which needs to be taken into account when deciding on joining an organized sports program or not. The limitations with the literature mainly represent low participant numbers and either specific sports or areas that the research was conducted, which limits the overall knowing across the globe. Overall, the literature presented various information from each source that brought together a complete understanding of the three main themes that were given rather than one or two main points to directly deeper evaluate.

Methods

Throughout the experience of being a youth athlete, enduring countless development skills through various activities each season or year as they become older. Seeing those particular aspects of sports that transfer later in life in a career is valuable to observe to understand if sports have a bigger impact than only physical activity, for example, as a youth. Contemplating if participation in organized youth sports pose a factor after playing throughout a career and/or life in general from numerous lessons can be detected.

This study addressed the following questions:

- What valuable life skills were learned and carried on after participating in sports?
- How does playing sports positively or negatively affect the individual after their playing years?
- Are there any major reasons as to why or why not to participate in sports?

The study was conducted through surveys, which the individuals evaluated themselves, that engage in questions about their playing experiences and what they use from those playing days in their career and/or life now. Everyone had the same type of questions that included general information about them, listing, yes or no, and short explaining. All of the answers were recorded and put together for the results of the research study.

Setting

The main areas that I conducted my research were people who worked on two separate campuses. One was a college and the other was a preparatory high school, except for two of the participants, which were not affiliated with either.

The specific setting was either through email or in-person for the individuals to fill out the surveys. On the campuses, the interactions took place in their offices. Any further questions were answered by the participants if needed prior to them filling it out. When the participants filled out the surveys, they were completely by themselves. Through email, communication was the same process, only not face-to-face.

Participants

The sampling plan was a purposive sample that was done by prior knowledge that the individuals had participated in sports during their high school and/or college years. Trying to get a diverse group, choosing various people was a main focus to see if there were any noticeable differences in answers. Overall, there were 10 participants that were available to fill out the surveys.

The participants were from various backgrounds. There were 5 males and 5 females that completed the surveys. The average age for the males was 29.2 years old. Among the females, the average age was 25.4 years old. For the males, there were 3 Caucasian and 2 Black individuals. For the females, there were 4 Caucasian and 1 Hispanic participants. With regards to location of the participants, 5 were from the college campus, 3 were from the preparatory high school, and 2 were not affiliated with either. From the 5 participants that were from the college campus, 2 were Caucasian females, 1 was a Caucasian male, and 2 were Black males. From the 3 participants from the preparatory high school, 1 was a Caucasian female, 1 was a Hispanic female, and 1 was a Caucasian male. From the 2 participants that were not affiliated with either, 1 was a Caucasian male and 1 was a Caucasian female. Through means of communication with the participants, 6 were in-person and 4 were through email. From the 6 participants that were in-

person, 3 were Caucasian females, 1 was a Hispanic female, and 2 were Caucasian males. From the 4 participants that were through email, 1 was a Caucasian female, 2 were Black males, and 1 was a Caucasian male. All of the participants were done playing organized sports either in high school, college, or both.

Intervention

The independent variable measured in this research study outlined the life skills that were learned through participating in organized youth sports. The intervention was given either through email or in-person. The same instructions were given to each group. They were to evaluate themselves through the survey and ask any questions for clarification about any of the questions. Once given the survey, they were left alone to complete the survey. All participants had the choice to whether accept or decline to fill out the survey.

The dependent variable were the answers that the participants gave on the surveys. Each person had different experiences from one another that were written down to importance of the individual. Although the questions were the same, there was no right or wrong answer, rather people wrote down what they had learned and continue to use now. The participants were never on the same teams with the same coaches, factors, experiences, etc.

Materials

The intervention was completed by using a Word document to type the questions with numeric numbers next to them. The participants either filled out the printed version on paper by using a pen or pencil or used the attachment in their email to fill out the survey.

Measurement Instruments

The tool that was used to collect the data was through the survey that was given to the participants. There were 10 total questions or responses within the survey. The unique answers from the individuals were put into an Excel sheet to organize the data.

The validity of the study was established through the same exact questions or responses that were asked to each participant. Each participant was given the opportunity to fill in their own answers about themselves or the research topic. The reliability was made through giving the participants the ability to express their own personal remarks. Using those answers, the data was put into specific results.

Procedure

The data was collected through surveys that were given to the participants either in-person or through email. The participants were allowed to ask questions prior to beginning the survey if they needed any clarifications on the questions. The data took a span of 3 days to gather from the various participants. Each interaction was the same process, whether it was through email or in-person. The participants had the freedom to choose various answers, reasons, etc. from their own playing experiences.

The type of study was mainly qualitative study that had a few yes or no questions included as well. The participants were given the survey with expectations to fill it out from the instructions from each question. Most of the answers were what they believed to have the most impact on themselves now as they reflect on their experiences. The last question was more of a short response for each section of that question. After all the data was collected from each individual, the data was then organized into an Excel sheet that labeled each question along the

top with the participants answers in each row. The various responses were placed in understanding the corresponding section for further representation of the data from the whole view.

Data Analysis

The data was collected and categorized by means of the survey that represented the research questions. Once the data was collected in the Excel sheet, configuring the entire type of population was easily available. Understanding the average ages, the number of females, males, types of race, and what answers occurred the most from the participants was readily viewable. Seeing the answers that the participants gave, being able to interpret them for the research questions was from a descriptive standpoint.

Results

After the research was conducted, there were multiple valuable life skills that were learned and have been carried on by the participants into their career and/or life now. By using those answers and the responses to the other questions, figuring out whether the experience was positive or negative was able to be seen as well as reasons to or not to play organized youth sports too. No clear differences were found through age, sex, or race.

On the following page is the Excel sheet that the data was collected and organized into the specific categories:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Sport(s)</u>	<u>Life Skills</u>	<u>Top Influencer(s)</u>	<u>Recommend Sports for Younger Generations?</u>	<u>Friends Who Did Not Play Sports?</u>	<u>Ever Quit During Season?</u>	<u>Miss + Do Not Miss</u>
21	M	White	Baseball, Golf	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Others Aware of Surroundings with Others Balance Good and Bad 	Self	Yes	Yes	No	<p>Miss: Being around like-minded people with passion / attitude</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Everyone Wins Aspect</p>
32	M	Black	Basketball	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Others Improve by Working Hard Tough Challenges can be Conquered 	Peers	Yes	Yes	No	<p>Miss: Nothing, now works within sports, gets excitement from that</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Limited Time / Places to Play</p>
21	F	White	Volleyball	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Working with Others Perseverance 	Peers	Yes	Yes	No	<p>Miss: Work with a team towards goals / organized physical activity</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Stress from being extremely busy / overwhelmed</p>
28	M	White	Ice Hockey, Baseball, Soccer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Dedication Leadership 	Parent(Dad)	Yes	Yes	No	<p>Miss: Team Aspects / Competition</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Early Practices / Extra Work after Bad Game</p>
24	F	Hispanic	Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Swimming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Perseverance Time Management Good Work Ethic 	Coaches	Yes	No	No	<p>Miss: Competing / Pushing Self</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Heartache/emotions when not performing at best</p>
35	M	Black	Football, Basketball, Track	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discipline Feeling of Achievement/Failure Self-Practice/Structured Work Ethic 	Coaches	Yes	Yes	Yes, Conflicts with Coaches	<p>Miss: Work, Routine, Excitement for Games</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Disappointment through emotions from a loss</p>
30	M	White	Basketball, Baseball, Football	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability Trust Respect 	Coaches	Yes	Yes	No	<p>Miss: Teammates/Games</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Nothing</p>
27	F	White	Field Hockey, Basketball, Softball	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Time Management Perseverance 	Peers(Captains)	Yes	No	No	<p>Miss: Fun, Playing to Win, Exercise, Learning Skills</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Nothing</p>
26	F	White	Basketball, Softball, Volleyball	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Working with Others Taking Direction 	Coaches	Yes	Yes	Yes, Work Requirements Conflicted with Practices	<p>Miss: Conradery</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Extensive Time when involved</p>
29	F	White	Ice Hockey, Soccer, Tennis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teamwork/Working with Others Leadership Selflessness 	Coaches	Yes	No	No	<p>Miss: Competition, Conradery, Friendships</p> <p>Do Not Miss: Conditioning</p>

The first three columns pertained to the participants' information about themselves that they were allowed to input. Following those, a set of bullet points were placed to list the sports that the participants had played during high school and/or college. They were allowed to list more than the three bullet points that were given. The range of sports were baseball, golf, basketball, volleyball, ice hockey, soccer, swimming, football, track, field hockey, softball, and tennis. This wide variety of sports was able to give a good representation of all sports that are in existence.

Next, the participants had to list the 3 most important life skills, for themselves, that they learned from playing sports that they use in their career/life now. There was a wide variety of life skills that were presented in the list. From the total of 30 answers, working with others was listed 5 times, which was the highest out of all the life skills. Following was leadership that was listed 4 times. All of the other life skills that were listed are time management that was listed 2 times, communication listed 2 times, accountability listed 1 time, dedication listed 1 time, discipline listed 1 time, trust listed 1 time, respect listed 1 time, and taking direction listed 1 time. Along with those, categories that revolved around perseverance was listed 4 times, revolved work ethic listed 3 times, revolved balance/feeling of good and bad listed 2 times, and revolved selflessness/aware of surroundings with others listed 2 times.

After the life skills, the participants had to choose from themselves, coaches, parents, or peers as their top influencer(s) during their years of participating in sports. Themselves totaled 1, coaches totaled 5, parents totaled 1, and peers totaled 3. Also labeled next to the responses were side notes that the participants had written.

Following the top influencer(s), three yes or no questions were asked, with the last one having an explanation if yes. The first question was if they would encourage younger generations to participate in sports. All 10 participants had chosen yes on this question. The second question asked if they were friends with people who did not play sports. The participants that answered yes were 7 and the participants that answered no were 3. The third question was if the participants had ever quit during a season and if yes, why did they. The participants that answered no were 8 and the participants that answered yes were 2. One of the reasons was due to conflicts with coaches and the other reason was due to work requirements conflicted with practices.

Lastly, the participants were asked what they miss the most and what they miss the least now that they were done playing organized youth sports. The individuals were given the ability to respond however they felt. Starting with what the participants do miss, 9 of the participants labeled answers that can be summarized as being around others/teammates with the same goals/mindset, the competition, organized activity, pushing themselves, enjoyment, and routine. The 1 participant that had put a different answer wrote nothing because now he works within sports and he continues to get excitement through that.

Transitioning to what the participants do not miss the answers were more different from one another. The participants that wrote along the lines of emotions/extra work due to poor performances totaled 3. The participants that wrote that they did not have much time outside of sports totaled 3. The participants that wrote that they do not miss nothing totaled 2. Lastly, 1 participant wrote that they did not miss the everyone wins aspect within sports and 1 participant wrote that they do not miss the conditioning.

Discussion

As millions of young children continue to participate in youth sports, tracking their progressions outside of sports are important to look at to see if there are any noticeable differences from other youths who do not play sports or are involved in other activities, such as music or art. Understanding the development of the youth can benefit decision-making about participating in certain activities. Also, looking at the transition when the youth grow older and are too old to participate in youth sports, can help reveal information that has carried with them from their playing years or what type of negative experiences that may have occurred due to their playing years.

The purpose of this study was to gather information to be able to present to people of the impactful effects from playing sports that could reveal long-term benefits or detriments after their participating time period in our everyday society. The study was conducted through surveys that were presented to the participants in various ways to get a better understanding of their prior experiences. The data was organized with an Excel sheet to further observe the collection.

The first three columns on the Excel sheet were information about the individuals to gather a strong understanding of the background of the participants with their age, sex, and race. Following those columns, three bullet points, with the ability to list more if needed, were listed to allow the participants to label the sport(s) they played during high school and/or college. The sports represented were baseball, golf, basketball, volleyball, ice hockey, soccer, swimming, football, track, field hockey, softball, and tennis. Having this wide variety of sports allowed for good representation of all the types of sports that are presented in organized youth sports. The

findings overall could be presented as organized youth sports as a whole rather than a narrow view from a few sports.

First, the life skills that the participants listed, 1 through 3 as importance to them, were a wide variety of valuable skills that they had learned and retained through their career/life after playing sports. The data had such various answers that there was no simple way to categorize the results. The most occurring life skills that were listed were working with others and leadership. The results had two separate topics that appeared, which were people-oriented skills and individual/personal skills. The people-oriented skills were working with others, leadership, communication, and answers that revolved around selflessness/aware of surroundings with others added up to 13 out of the 30 answers that were listed. Along with individual/personal skills that were time management, dedication, discipline, accountability, trust, respect, taking direction, answers revolved around perseverance, answers revolved around work ethic, and answers revolved around balance/feeling of good and bad totaled 17 out of the 30 answers that were listed. With the slight advantage to individual/personal skills, the two topics were relatively even from the entire picture. Gaining these valuable life skills that appeared, from both aspects, are positive results and reasons to play sports too.

Next, the top influencer(s) was chosen from themselves, coaches, parents, or peers. With 8 out of 10 of the participants choosing either coaches or peers, this presented that the environment during the procession of practices, games, and the season was a positive experience. They felt the connection between their coaches' aspirations and the comradery of their peers to strive towards their goals. The relationships that occurred while interacting within the team helped them continue. The other two participants, 1 chose self, which meant he was more

internally motivated to achieve, and the 1 other chose parent(dad), which meant his dad's guidance and relationship during his playing years helped him strive to become better.

After the top influencer(s), the three yes or no questions were placed. The first question was whether or not the participants would encourage younger generation to play sports and all 10 of the participants chose yes. Clearly, even if some aspects throughout their playing years were not enjoyable or the best scenario, the participants must either had a complete beneficial experience or learned multiple lessons that carried with them. It may not mean that their experience was positive, but it does mean that they took some piece of those experiences that they want younger generations to be apart of to develop as people too.

The second question was whether or not they had friends who did not play sports. Out of the 10 participants, 7 of them chose yes and 3 of them chose no. This shows that the majority of people branched out from the people that only participated in the same activities. Although they were consumed with being apart of a team, they had positive relationship with other people who did not play sports or were into other types of activities. Getting along with a variety of people can only benefit the experience of seeing other people's views on particular topics and learn more information about other aspects than only sports too. The 3 participants that chose no were possibly comfortable with the friends within their own team, which is completely great, but did not take the opportunity to get a broader understanding of other individuals that were into various other activities.

The third question was whether or not the participants had ever quit during a season and if so, then explain why. From the 10 participants, 8 chose no and 2 chose yes. The majority of people stuck out the entire seasons that they played whether it was enjoyable, positive, negative,

time consuming, etc. In life, multiple situations will always be in effect and learning how to cope with those can be a valuable skill. One of the participants that chose no had the reason of conflicts with coaches. The other participant that chose no had work requirements that conflicted with practices. These are two valid reasons, especially if the relationships are not stable in the environment or the balancing act becomes overwhelming to handle. These pertained the reasons to and not to play sports in that assuring the environment is positive to learn and understand if the individual will be able to balance everything in their life at the same time.

Following those yes or no questions, two short response questions about what the participants missed the most and the least from their personal experiences playing organized youth sports. The majority of participants wrote about topics regarding being around others with the same goals, the competition, the organized activity, and the fact of pushing themselves for what they miss the most from playing sports. These experiences show that sports created a place where everyone was different from personality, techniques, style, etc., but came together for similar reasons to pursue to become better and enjoy the hard work to put in for the outcome.

For what the participants missed the least, the answers were filled with more variety. A portion of the participants wrote about the emotions or more work that occurred due to poor performances. Others wrote that sports consumed much of their time, the feeling that everyone wins, and conditioning as their factors that they do not miss. Along with those, a couple of people had written nothing. Although these answers are widespread, they taught many lessons. How to deal with adversity when it happens is very important and being busy keeps many people away from technology, getting in trouble, etc. Furthermore, now that the participants are done playing organized youth sports, they took habits from what they miss the most and miss the least

to apply them in life situations, such as working at a company with co-workers, dealing with arguments or hard times that arise, and being organized with their time.

Limitations

The limitations that occurred during the course of the study could be viewed from two separate categories. First, the restrictions that were placed, not from the study alone, but from outside attributes that arose from natural life experiences. Having less than five months to carry out this research study seems like quite a bit of time, but in reality, balancing every other aspect from other classes, a job, an internship, natural occurrences in life, and creating an avenue upon graduation were a lot to handle for that period of time. Second, the outline of the research questions and the survey were not in complete correspondence for the results. Creating a survey to allow the participants to express their reasoning is difficult to categorize the data. Possibly, if this course was in the summer, the potential of less distraction could benefit the direct focus and attention to all the necessary details needed to complete this study. Overall, the surveys did express findings that were noteworthy, but configuring a better format of the research questions, questions on the survey, and data collection would have increased a more precise outcome.

Recommendations for Future Research

If this research study were to be done again, making the research questions thought-pondering, but with the ability to bring forth straightforward results, will be best to organize into a data collection format. Assuring that the research questions and the questions on the survey correlate with each other to receive the most direct answers will be more efficient to collect the data. Some of the topics that could be covered would be what professions that the participants are in, if other activities play a bigger, smaller, or similar role as sports in terms of development,

asking if injuries occurred and how that affected them, and narrowing down to a specific age range. Also, adding more participants will help when it comes to comparing the results to the entire population. Although those topics are suggestions, attention to detail with the set-up is laid out for the best outcome possible is the most important step.

Conclusion

The three main lessons learned through this study were limiting the ability to answer for the participants to accurately collect the data, having the participants elaborate on certain questions can have benefits, and formatting the data collection in another manner. Rather than having to read between the lines for the answers of the research questions, direct questions that will produce straightforward answers will be most beneficial when it comes to data collection. Also, allowing for only one answer, especially in the life skills section, can be easier to categorize the entire data at the end of the collection. Next, allowing the participants to respond with personal experiences in the form of short responses can lead to better details for the research questions and data. Lastly, formatting the data collection in another manner can be in the form of graphs, charts, etc. Visually seeing the data could better represent what precisely occurred from the answers. Overall, although with the implications, this research study did bring forth accurate and noteworthy results. Changing a few aspects to allow for direct research questions, questions on the surveys, and the data collect format could bring forth clear results.

Appendix: Survey

Project Survey

By: Darren Belliveau

No Personal Information will be released about you.

Please be accurate and precise.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask.

Thank You!

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: _____
3. Race: _____
4. List the Organized Youth Sport(s) that you participated in during high school and / or college?
 -
 -
 -
5. List the main Life Skills, of importance to you 1-3, that you have learned from playing the sport(s) that you use in your career / life today?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
6. Who most influenced throughout your time playing in terms of participating in sport(s): yourself, coaches, parents, or peers?
 - 1.
7. Would you encourage younger generations to play sports?
8. Were you friends with people who did not play sports?
9. Did you ever quit during a season? If so, why?
10. Now that you are done playing organized youth sports, what do you miss the most and miss the least?

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