Management Structure of Competitive and Non-Competitive Sports Organizations and Their Significant Influence in Youth Sports Participation

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to study competitive and non-competitive sport organizations and their managerial structure. My research is focused on how their policy-making and procedures may affect youth sport participation; does the managerial structure of a sport organization affect youth participation in different sports groups or activities?

Foundations of this research are based on three different sport organizations in Long Island, New York. The first one is a non-competitive Indoor Soccer Organization (NCISO), the second is a private, non-competitive, Gymnastic Facility (NCGF), and finally a competitive Soccer Club and non-profit educational organization (CSC).

Since child participation in any activity depends on the parent’s decision, it is necessary to discuss the organizations’ managerial structure and how they diverge from one another. According to Howard and Madrigal (1990), parents do screen sport organizations based on a set of criteria, before enrolling their children in sport programs. Two primary objectives of my study are to determine what motivates parents and children in enrolling in different sports programs, and whether management structures of sports organizations influence parental and child participation. This research will attempt to examine if management of these sport organizations is prepared to provide a high-quality and dependable service.

The results indicate that there is a significant effect in the management structure and the enrollment or withdrawals of participants at the sports organizations. Specifically, this is since in-house coaches play a key role in decisions of whether or not to keep a participating child active in the sports organization. The questionnaires analyzed in this
study reflect that coaches and trainers are the number one reason as to why parents are still involved at their present sport organization. In opposition, many researchers have stated that coaches and parents are the number one reason why children stop playing sports. Consequently, management usually is responsible for the selection and training of coaches and staff hired to work in these facilities.

Three organizational categories were selected for this study and they will represent the attributes in which youth sport organizations compete and differentiate from one another; these are: (a) the organization’s management, (b) the organization’s goals and philosophy, and (c) the organization’s coaches and trainers.

**Purpose of Study**

During the past three years I have been involved in coaching soccer for children in age range from 7 years old up to 15 years old. As an independent soccer trainer, I have worked for different soccer clubs on Long Island, where it was very noticeable that parents have very little or no knowledge of important concepts such as: pre-season, regular season, game strategy, camp, practices, and psychological coaching procedures and techniques. In fact, the majority of the Soccer Clubs in Long Island hire volunteers with very little sport related experience as soccer trainers and coaches. According to Martens (1984), approximately 2.5 million adults annually volunteer their time as coaches of youth sports teams. The vast majority of youth sports coaches, estimated to be as high as 90 percent, have no formal education in coaching techniques, first aid, injury prevention, or emergency care (Kimiecki, 1988; Milne, 1990; Partlow, 1995; Seefeldt, 1992; Siegel & Newhof, 1992). This is a disturbing percentage, considering the essential importance of these types of skill and abilities in working with children.
There is nothing wrong with attempting different skills as a parent, such as being a soccer coach, because, as Eric Margenau (1990) wrote:

“In athletics, there is nothing the child can possibly do that a parent can’t convert into a positive event. The idea is to reinforce participation and not to demean the child’s efforts for any reason. Athletics provides even the most inept and uncoordinated child with the opportunity to receive parental approval. So, if you can only give your child one special feeling, make it the feeling of thinking that s/he is the best thing that has ever happened in this planet.” (p. 17)

However, it is also noticeable that parents with no official sports education may not know how to react in stressful situations; during youth sports contests many volunteer parents display anger and overreact with young players and official decisions. Many sport organizations have attempted to implement and promote a code of conduct in their facilities and through their organization’s informational website. Unfortunately, this initiative has had very little success; cases of code of conduct violations have continued to increase. As a result of these violations, the respective adults involved are penalized in different ways, depending on the organization’s policy: termination of club membership can be an example of penalization.

On the other hand, I have done some work for a soccer organization in Long Island, New York, where they only hire educated and trained coaches, with significant sports experience. These chosen individuals are: certified, possess working knowledge, and have some college or professional sports experience. At this specific soccer organization they provide motor coordination and soccer skills training; therefore a competitive environment is not present. The program lasts up to 12 weeks long, focusing only on soccer skills training, and providing playing time at the end of each session. In
these sessions, the young athletes play amongst each other, with the primary idea of applying all the skills learned from the coaches and trainers.

**Justification of the Study**

Much research has been conducted and articles have been written on children’s participation in physical activities and sports; their attitudes, behavior, loss of interest, and motivation towards sports activities are greatly influenced by their parents and the sports organization they belong to. As I mentioned before, other psychosocial factors have been studied, but not much research has been accomplished to determine if a sports organization’s management structure has a positive or negative impact on children’s participation sport activities. This is an important area of research for the Sports industry, since the decline and drop-out rate in youth sport participation has been a persistent challenge for youth sport businesses throughout the U.S.A. A national research study completed by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), has showed that participation in most team sports in the United States, for the past 10 years, has been declining. This study explores the motives for youth participation in sports activities, and the role of the sport organization that provides these programs and activities; my study will consider what motivational factors are present when enrolling in these sport organizations and how management structure have a direct relationship with the participants’ enrollment and withdrawal.

**Children and Sports**

The primary goals of playing sports or engaging in a physical activity/fitness program are to: have fun, learn new skills, learn social interaction with exposure to leadership opportunities, improve cardiovascular fitness and weight control, etc. (North
America Youth Sport Institute). While this may be true, it is strongly believed that the management structure of competitive and non-competitive sports organizations have a significant influence in youth participation in these organizations. This is an important detail because many children obtain their physical activities by participating in organized sports programs outside of school, most commonly in sports teams, parks and recreation department youth programs, private organizations, and religious organizations (Pate, Long, & Heath, 1994; Sallis, 1994). It is important to understand and to determine if the management structures of competitive and non-competitive organizations influence parental decisions in registering or removing their children from these specific sports organizations. In the same way, it is important to know how the results might influence or could be applied to maximize the sports organizations’ overall service and performance and the participating children’s understanding and application of sportsmanship.

What motivates children to become participative in sports groups? This question has been studied in many ways, but with more emphasis on the psychological aspects. Such reasons for playing have been grouped into these categories: skill development or skill/mastery, affiliation, team factors, ego/competitiveness, excitement/challenge, success/status or recognition, fitness, and release of energy (McCullagh, Matzkanin, Shaw, & Maldonado, 1993). These categories have been cited by children and adolescents as reasons for their own participation, and by parents as reasons they believed their children participated in sports or exercise activities (McCullagh et al., 1993). However, past research has not investigated the difference in motivators between parents of competitive and non-competitive groups in the same setting. The comparison of the
two groups may provide further insight into parents’ rationale for enrolling their child in an activity program (Jannie Wald, 1999). McCullagh et al. (1993) stated that there is a need for more research to understand participation in youth sports.

In addition, more detailed research has been needed regarding competitive and non-competitive organizations’ management structure, specifically, how they motivate, affect, and improve overall youth participation in sport and exercise activities. Playing sports is considered extremely valuable to the physical and mental development of the child. Sport activities help the child to: improve coordination and concentration, increase the knowledge of his or her body, learn and respect rules and adults involved, be responsible, build self-confidence and socialization skills (Andrews, 1999). My observations show that parents of nine year old children dream about their child getting a full scholarship in college or of their becoming a professional soccer player. Therefore, children's physical activities are influenced by parental beliefs and values of exercise for their children (Dempsey et al., 1993). Dempsey and colleagues (1993) stated that it is still unknown what factors are most important to parents in their decisions to have their children involved in physical activities programs.

With competitive organizations emphasizing the social and health importance of playing sports and exercising, questions about whether or not the non-competitive organizations should introduce the competitive mentality to their participants will arise. The management structure of sport organizations influences the parents’ decision in allowing their child to participate in competitive or non-competitive sports environment based on goals, philosophy and the child’s happiness.
Literature Review

During my research I found very little research that determines what makes parents register their children in sports programs. Besides choosing what sports to play, and where they register their child, registration procedures and fees is the most obvious way parents can be involved and have control of their child’s physical activity. Atsalakis and Sleap (1996) stated that when parents register their child for an activity, they easily evaluate the investment of their time, money, and effort. In this way, registration of children in activity programs is a product of parental decisions and behavior (Atsalakis & Sleap, 1996). Atsalakis and Sleap (1996) developed an out of school study for first grade children. In this study, parents of 400 kids were given a cover letter with the information explaining the program and were asked to answer a questionnaire about their interest in that program. Atsalakis and Sleap (1996) then tried to find a relationship of the attitudes displayed and the intention of registration, and this intention with actual enrollment of a child in this activity program. “The theory of planned behavior proposes that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control would all be significant predictors of intention (Atsalakis & Sleap, 1996).” Attitudes, subjective norms, and distinguished behavioral control did substantially support the prediction of intention, showing that intention could be forecasted from the variables of the theory of planned behavior (Atsalakis & Sleap, 1996). The objective to participate made a considerable contribution to the prediction of behavior; the higher the intention, the more apt it was for children to be enrolling into the program (Atsalakis & Sleap, 1996). Although this study does not truly explain why parents register their child in sport activities, it provides information about what type of parents register their child for sports programs. Parents who had more
enthusiasm on having their children registering in the program, who saw this activity as a
door to social acceptance in the community, and who perceived this as a relatively easy
action were more likely to plan to or actually enroll their children in the program
(Atsalakis & Sleap, 1996).

It is likely that parents register their children in activities based on their own
beliefs about the program or their children. Eccles has created a theory based on the
philosophy that parental beliefs are the most influential in the process of socialization in
to sport activities (Brustad, 1996). This theory affirms that the attention and support
parents put for children's participation in activity is basically a hope of their expectations
that their child will gain success in a specific sport and their views about the value of
success in that specific sport (1996). As a result, parents may create opportunities, like
registration for sport programs, in agreement with their beliefs about their children's
nature and potential to develop (Brustad, 1996).

In addition to my findings, very little research has been conducted on sport
organization management and its effect on child participation and drop out rates from
sports programs. Managers, boards of directors and staff provide the necessary resources
that parents’ and participants’ expectations will be met. It is important to mention that
their decisions directly influence everyone involved in the sport program. Zeithaml,
Berry, and Parasuraman’s (1988) study model assumed that the lack of information of
management in getting information and pointing out critical service to meet consumer
needs helps to low service quality, meaning negative customer experiences and
conclusions. The main sources of lack of information identified by Zeithaml et al. (1988)
were: absence of upward communications, lack of marketing research, and too many
levels of management that may stop or distort the flow of information. General management characteristics of youth sports in the United States are: being managed by volunteer directors, having limited time devoted to management training or specific sport management education background, and limited resources. As a result, it is possible that mistakes exist on the subject of management’s identification of consumers’ satisfaction. Consequently, parents who feel that their expectations about management decisions were not satisfactory may be apt to leave that sport organization.

A number of definitions of quality services focus on what should be evaluated (e.g., Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991; Schvaneveldt et al., 1991; Zeithaml et al., 1990). These categories of quality evaluation include the core service and the interpersonal interactions of the performance of the service. Client participation is fundamental in the production of most services in sports. A brief description of the core service and the interpersonal interaction follows: core service is the segment of quality service related to the result of the promised service such as an expert coaching in a sport club. This segment is similar to the one many called reliability (Zeithaml et al., 1990), output quality (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991), performance (Schvaneveldt et al., 1991), and quality in essentials (Church, Javitch, & Burke, 1995). Along with quality services, the interaction between client and employee is a major point in customer retention and satisfaction. This interaction would refer to the supporting orientation and behavior of the employee, the care towards clients, and personal attention ((Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994; Price, Arnold, & Terney, 1995). Chang and Chelladurai (1996) went above the typical “1 vs. 1” interaction service to focus on the interactions among a group of clients when the service is to the entire group such as the coaching in a team sport. The interaction between the
members of the team has an important impact on the success of coaching, and on the individual athletes. As an example, in a soccer club the players can be either encouraging each other in their efforts to perform well, or they can discourage such effort; for example, they can tease each others’ performance.

Mattsson (1994) argued that because the customers have different opinions of the service and service procedures or steps, this difference could lead to poor quality: “It becomes important to control the kind of customers that enter into the service process. In this way, the process can be adapted to conform to the model of a certain group of selected customers” (pp. 47-48). This could be the case of a city and school, and private recreation departments where they follow this principle in organizing different recreational and competitive leagues based on comparing the different competitive orientations of participants. Lengnick-Hall (1996) gives another interesting view of the relationship between the client and employee in some services. She suggested that some parents may register their children in sports activities or sport clubs without the complete approval by the children. As a result, the children may make out the situation, including the service provider, as poor. With that being said, judgments about the quality of the service cannot be answered by individual clients.

Parents Participation

Sport is a phenomenon that gets everyone’s attention and is part of the contemporary society. The American society is composed of family, school, sporting clubs, other institutions which affect the individuals regarding their overall life behavior. The correlation of those facts is related with the events that involve the sporting life of the youth and the participation/action of the adults in the sporting environment.
In that sense it is necessary to differentiate the terms “school sports/physical activities” and “outside the school sports/activities”; Felker (1998): the "school sports/physical activities” refers to the sport to be developed by the Physical Education inside the school curriculum; while "outside the school sports/physical activities”, can be defined as extracurricular activities that can be named "groups of sport training", with the possible purpose of representation in competitions or not. The development of sport activities during children’s scholastic life is very diverse. It goes from physical education orientation classes in school, to the practical experience of performing the sport, until the formalization of the actual school competition. This process includes the participation and interest of parents, teachers, coaches, the school system, and the community.

Good athletes will perform on a high level in order to become outstanding athletes. The physical education class in this sense has an introductory participation, followed by a very competitive sport society and finally the parents that may or may not support their child to reach his /her objectives. Sometimes this process can lead to functional and social problems. Competitive sports help and develop individuals to perform on a high level at their best. At this level society is more driven to develop great athletes than to discuss the real values of sport. Parents at this level are more concerned in developing a great athlete, which causes parents to go outside the school activities to get their child to achieve success.

However, the over-volarization of sport talent can harm society in terms of over-emphasizing the competitive level/side which leaves aside the importance of the team work culture. No matter how involved and how important is the parent participation in their child’s life, the relationship between them must be analyzed very carefully. Family
and the sport activities are well related and affect children’s overall personality. Berryman (1988) states that the large growth in the past two decades in sport programs for children has resulted in significant changes in the structure of the American family. Social activity for the American family has developed and evolved to be centered on the sport involvement of the child. This new system is characterized by a large amount of the family's time, and money focused on the youth sport activities. This type of family system has been recently described as "the athletic family" (Hellstedt, Rooks, & Watson, 1988). In this matter family (parents) becomes managers of their child’s sports life. The sport in which the child is going to play is determined by the parent during the school phase and not through outside clubs. Once this step is completed, in order to get better and more competitive, parents have their child enroll in outside school sports/physical activities. The overall society respects and admires athletes, and that has a direct relationship with parents’ decision to have their children become an outstanding athlete.

According with Svoboda & Patriksson (1996) the socialization through sports activities is a complex phenomenon that never ends. If parents, coaches, or teachers were asked about the socialization of children through sports activities, for sure we would have different answers for reasons that they all are fascinated by the effects that sports have on them.

The majority of educators, coaches, and parents appreciate everything related to the sporting “show”, just like the “professional world of sport”. We can even say that youth sport competition is the same as the “professional” sport leagues, which involve values, knowledge of the game and skills, and they all look for a spotlight on that sport. In general, the sport is driven by scholarships, popularity, money, and fame. The student
athlete is driven by motivation and results. Sport conduct can have good results or not; it depends on the sport values that were introduced to the athlete during his/her developmental phase through their physical education teacher, athletic directors, coaches or parents.

The concept of parent involvement was studied by Hellstedt (1990), who defines three different types of involvement and they are: little involvement, which has a relative emotional, financial or functional absence of compromise by parents. This indicates absence and little participation in games and events. Also, little involvement is characterized by no voluntary activities like driving to games and practices and very few contacts with the coaches. The second type of involvement is moderate involvement, considered by the Hellstedt as being the ideal where parents are consistent in their orientations, giving support and helping children to establish realistic goals, in addition to financial support. Third, the high level of involvement occurs when the parents exceed in their participation in the sporting life of their children, not knowing how to separate their own personal desires, fantasies and needs from those of his/her children.

Hellstedt verified that small levels of pressure are related to a positive experience by the children. On the other hand, high levels of pressure indicate negative reactions. Hellstedt suggested that the ideal amount of pressure to be exercise on children should be studied in order to maximize their positive experience during games and practices.

Brustad, Babkes, and Smith (2001) have shown that parents can influence a child’s motivation, capability of performance, and enjoyment of sports. The overall parents support, feedback, and behavior can determine for how long his/her child will stay involved in that sport activity. Based on the parents’ expectation, a child can or
cannot reach a certain level of ability. Most of the time it is the parent’s opinion and overall behavior that will categorize the child’s success in sports. In terms of competition and practice, parents can develop anxiety in their child. As an example: inappropriate questions before the activity and incoherent questions after the activity. As a result of this procedure, a child’s performance and enjoyment can be affected.

Hedstrom & Gould (2004) found that the motivational environment that a parent develops can have long-term effects on a child. The environment created can be based on superfluous rewards, such as trophies or recognition, or on personal goal focus, where high self-esteem achievement comes in forms of skill mastery and personal improvement.

Parents play a very important role in their children’s skill and emotional development. Naturally, when children play sports the success of this child is reinforced by the parents. This reinforcement builds confidence, and motivates the child to improve his/her skills even more. In this sense, sport organizations must be aware of this supportive role, in order to team-up with the parents and achieve overall success.

Young athletes who play for punitive or critical coaches are exposed to more pressure and non supportive responses from their parents. They feel that their parents and coaches are not satisfied with their particular sport performance and they view themselves as having less skill, express less enjoyment from their participation, like their sport less and have less motivation (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978; Wankel & Kreisel, 1985). This emotional stress probably reduces enjoyment so much that young athletes stop playing. Parents have been recognized as a common subject in research investigating types of stress for youth sport participants (Gould, Eklund, Petlichkoff, Peterson, & Bump, 1991; Gould, Wilson, Tuffey, &
Lochbaum, 1993; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). A work initiated by Orlick (1975) with 8 and 9 year old participants and 7 to 19 year old dropouts illustrated that youth athletes’ self evaluation suggested they avoid playing sports because of possible failure and disapproval from others; moreover, negative factors related to the competitive emphasis of sport such as winning caused most young athletes to stop playing. If a stressful situation is anticipated, some children will avoid sport participation.

Nevertheless, parental behaviors and influences can be recognized as encouraging and constructive and result in positive emotional responses. For example, even though Hellstedt’s (1988) study on parental pressure on young ski racers found negative emotional responses to parental pressure, he also found that those young ski racers who alleged their parent’s participation as supportive and encouraging had more positive reactions to sport involvement. Skiers that showed they were happy with their parents’ attitude and interest felt that their parents would not be disappointed in case they did not perform relatively well and showed passion for sport participation.

Parents play such an important position in their child’s youth sport experience that they can have a deep influence on the child’s decision to participate in sport. The importance that children feel their parents place on participation in sports as well as the intensity that parents put in involvement and pressure identified by a child can have a negative or positive result on a child’s emotional responses, motivation, ability, and the enjoyment of sport participation.

Parents can have a positive or negative influence on the young athlete experience and a study performed by (Gould et. al., 2002) found that problems with parents were one
of the most cited issues by high school coaches. They come up with the five biggest parent/child interaction problems, and they were:

- spoil their child too much.
- criticizing one’s child;
- overemphasizing winning;
- holding unrealistic expectation and;
- coaching one’s own child;

Children are losing motivation from pursuing their normal love of sports activities. In a study conducted by the researchers at Michigan State University in the 1990’s, 70 percent of the 20 million American children who played in organized sports quit before the age of 13. The study concluded that most children dropped out from sports activities because of adult influence, and mainly because their parents had turned sports experience into a job, and not into an enjoyable experience.

**Sport Specialization**

Sports activities can help develop psychological behavior and social skills in children during their development. Also, sports offer great educational opportunities for social growth and value since many of the social and moral requirements for participation in sports are similar to how people are expected to behave in our society (Seefeldt & Ewing, 2004) In addition, the younger the participant, the greater is the concern with safety and benefits. This tells us that are necessary to study and research how youth are being initiated in sport activities, as well the way coaches and parents are approaching and introducing the right activities for the different growth stages. These activities have to be age specific in terms of physical condition, and the need of that activity.
Sport science has tried to find the appropriate age to start sport specialization. In this case, sports can be categorized as late specialization or early specialization (Balyi, 2003). The ages that young athletes start to specialize in specific sports activities on a regular basis vary by country tradition as well as the sport to be played (Boxter-Jones, 1995; De Rose Junior, 1995; Martens, 1998; Paes, 1992; Rowland, 1996; Zakharov, 1992).

Some researchers believe that between the ages of 12-14 is the most appropriate age for youth to start specializing in one single sport as well as competitive events (Bompa, 1999; Greco & Benda, 1998; Tani, Manoel, Kokubun & Proenca, 1988; Weineck, 1999). Roberts (1980) and Roberts & Treasure (1992), states that children should not specialize until they are 12 years old. The reason is that, children under 12 years of age have not yet reached a good maturity level to assimilate and understand the process of competition. Some other authors (Borges, 1990; Leglise, 1996; Malina & Bouchard, 1991; Rodrigues & Barbanti, 1994) did not establish a specific age to get specialized, however they advise that competition and practice for youth should not be based on chronological age but on physical, emotional, and maturation characteristics to avoid youth to see the activities as an obligation; rather, that it is something positive for their growth development. In accord with Sanderson (2003), fun and enjoyment are the most powerful motivators in attracting and retaining participants.

In this context we can refer to many social groups such as managers, parents, coaches, and teachers who sometimes expect immediate results through great performance during practices and competitions. Early sport specialization, depending on how it is conducted, can generate loss of interest by young athletes even though he/she
had accomplished great results during the child’s early specialization (Bompa, 1999; Braton, 1997; Lima, 1991; Marques, 1991; Weinck, 1999).

In this sense, youth sport social groups, leaders, and policy makers have a lack of understanding problems related to the scientific knowledge of youth involvement in sports. Policies, practices, leagues, and tournaments are created without any contribution or input from the sports science community. As an example: the NCISO, which is considered to be a non competitive organization, allows, during the winter time outside competitive organization to rent its facility to run winter soccer leagues for children of the ages 8-10. As mentioned before, this age group should not participate in competitive programs, since they are not goal oriented and do not have the ability to understand the meaning of competition and results (winning vs. losing). Coakley (1986) argued that children could not totally benefit from competitive games until they have the maturity to assimilate their responsibility in relation to the roles of others within this environment. The skill to understand the other’s point of view is essential for one to cooperate successfully with others. To support that, Roberts (1980) states that children are not able to formulate reasonable goals until they can make proper contributions for results.

At the CSC, there were also some discrepancies identified regarding the appropriate age for participation in competition. All 10 year old members from CSC studied in this paper, must take part of try-outs in order to make a team. The literature review states that, no children (until maturity level has been achieved), should go through this process of elimination. This process can leave psychological consequences, such as frustration, and low self-esteem.
In contradiction to the previous two organizations, the NCGF, it was concluded that the non-competitive environment is present in every aspect of the organization. Neither parents, managers, nor facility, and staff cultivate or showed any characteristics that would label the NCGF as being a competitive atmosphere for any age group.

Athletic performance at one age in childhood does not accurately predict performance at a later age (Ryan & Daniel, 2004). Therefore, one may not specialize in the sport they have chances to excel in, seeing that 98 percent of athletes who specialize will never get to the highest levels of the sport (Wiersma, 2000). From a sociological standpoint, early specialization is considered to isolate the young athlete from peers and obstruct the normal identity growth. In conclusion, early specialization is thought to be related to an increase in burnout or withdrawal from sport as a result of chronic stress (Wiersma, 2000).

All three sport organizations studied in this project provide sport activities for different age groups. The main point of this section was to clarify for parents and sport organization managers the concept of when to introduce competitive activities programs for their participants. It is important to notice that every child has a different time of maturation and some children can understand the idea of competition at an earlier age than others. One step that managers and parents can take to retain these young specialized athletes are to provide coach education where they will learn and be able to deal with young athletes, not only making the sport fun for them but also making it interesting for coaches and parents. School in the United States usually provides the first competitive athletic experience for children and in this sense it could be an important part in motivating children to play sports, educating parents to support their children’s
development of skills instead of the mentality of winning at all costs, and developing programs based on the wide range on children’s abilities as well.

**Dropouts**

With increasing numbers of children playing sports every year, it is necessary to study the reason for involvement in organized sports. In general, parents, coaches and youth sport leaders are still trying to find or understand why young athletes participate and drop out from sport activities. Researchers have attempted to discover why millions of children are becoming involved in sports and, once involved what makes an estimated 35 percent of them to drop out from these activities each year (Gould, 1987). Gould and Horn (1984) reviewed the descriptive research conducted to establish the main motives that children cite for playing in and discontinuing participation in the sport. Two studies reviewed are ice hockey league “participation motivation” investigation conducted by Fry, McClements, and Sefton (1981) and a swimming league investigation conducted by Gould, Feltz, Horn, and Weiss (1982). In the Fry et.al., (1981) investigation, male ice hockey participants, ages 8 to 16, were asked to express a number of motives for playing in ice hockey. Results discovered that 98 percent of the boys played to have a good time, 87 percent to become good players, 68 percent to socialize, 61 percent to win trophies and medals, and 54 percent to get exercise. The swimming investigation performed by Gould and others (1982) studied the reasons that male and female competitive swimmers, ages 10 to 18, expressed for discontinuing their participation. Results revealed that 42 percent stop participating because they had other things to do, 28 percent said they were not having a good time, 24 percent wanted to participate in a different sport, 24 percent because they were not improving their skills as they wished to improve, 20 percent...
disliked the coach, 16 percent because of pressure involved, 16 percent were not having fun swimming, and the last 16 percent argued that training was too hard. For instance, Seefeldt, Ewing & Walk (1992) performed one of the largest studies (surveying 8000 youth) with the least reasons that children report for playing a sport. The top five reasons were:

- To have fun
- To do something they are good at
- To stay in shape
- To learn new or improve skills
- To play team sports

These top five motives for playing sports are interesting for different reasons. First, the highest reason to play sports was to have fun. Based on the study, multiple reasons for participating were equally rated: skill development, physical development, and social interaction. Surprisingly, “to win” was rated 8th in participation motives for school sports, and was not even listed by outside school sport participants (Seefeldt, Ewing & Walk, 1992). While this may be true, researchers have revealed that there are different reasons for youth sport involvement (Gould & Pelichkoff, 1998). Athletes who are confident of their skill ability have been found to persist in physical activities; on the other hand, athletes that do not have this confidence are more likely to drop out from involvement in physical activity (Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002).

Figure 1 contains a model of sport participation that begins with the most important reasons for involvement cited by young athletes; followed by a cost-benefit analysis, which eventually results in continued involvement.
As essential as knowing why children play sports, it is important to know and understand why they stop their involvement. Around 35 percent of children stop playing sports each year. However, some athletes stop playing one sport and still play in a different sport (Gould & Petlichkoff, 1998). It is a mistake to say that young athletes who stop playing in one sport will never play again. Gould et al. (1982) and Klint and Weiss (1986) discovered different types of drop out behavior experienced by children.
dropout should be viewed on a continuum that ranges from: sport-specific, dropping out of a specific sport program and to domain-general dropping out of all competitive sports permanently (Smoll, Magwall & Ash, 1988).

An interpretation of dropouts from sport is the result of trial and error; this is a procedure that youngsters use in trying to find physical activities or sport area they enjoy the most (e.g., Fry, McClements, & Sefton, 1981; Gould, Feltz, Horn, & Weiss, 1981; McPherson, Martenie, Tihanyi, Clark, 1980, Robison & Carron, 1982; Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1982). These researchers concluded that multiple activity domains certainly lead to conflicts of interest, in which resources such as time become so limited that the children must drop out of one activity or sport in order to have sufficient time to practice another sport or activity that they have more fun doing. Roberts (1984) argues that young athletes drop out of sports primarily because the activity threatens their perception of abilities. In other words, young athletes drop out of sport because the activity fails to meet their achievement needs. An example would be an athlete that quits a specific sport, for his/her lack of skills, arguing that he or she does not have enough time to continue in that sport activity.

In support of the above statement, Figure 2 illustrates an integrated model of sport participation and dropouts in youth sport. The model consists of the same components applied in the same sport participation motivation models presented before.

For instance, another reason for dropping out of sport has been the influence of leadership. Orlick (1973) found that athletes were disturbed with the exaggeration of competition they experienced in the sport. Players were frustrated with not getting enough playing time and not having a chance to develop their skill learned in practice. In
my opinion, parents’ actions display more importance on winning than how well his or her child played the game, even though parents say they do not.

Figure 2. An integrated motivational model of youth sport participation and withdrawal.

![Motivation Model Diagram]

*Children in Sport, P. 171*

Parents’ obsession to win can be a very stressful condition to handle for young athletes. In many situations, the presence of parents during the children’s performance has shown to be so strong that the parents can overreact and behave aggressively, causing their child’s performance to fluctuate and decline; this may lead to early retirement. For young children ages 9-11, it is very important to play and participate in the game. Many researchers explain that approximately 90 percent of children ages 9-11 would rather play for a losing team than be on the bench as a reserve player with a winning team. In
addition, Gould et.al (1982) state that athletes express the dislike of their coach and not enough fun as the main reason for their withdrawal. The constant increase of youth athletes that stop playing sports is caused by the frequent failure to succeed (viewed by parents rather than themselves) that gets to a point where continued participation becomes an undesirable activity and can also cause loss of self esteem.

Rules and regulations to reduce the youth sport dropout rate can be effective as long as leaders (coaches, parents, managers, and community) promote the “supposed ability” of all participants, by helping them to develop a good feeling about themselves. Nicholas (1984) believes there is still hope for the low-ability athlete; he argues that athletes, who learn to evaluate their ability based on personal performance, rather than on winning, can be successful in any situation. In the case of performance oriented athletes, great effort and consistent sport participation allow favorable self-evaluation that enables them to achieve high ability (Burton, 1983). As a result, performance oriented youth athletes stay longer in the sport, than athletes that focus or have been trained towards outcomes rather than individual progress.

In order to improve abilities and reduce youth drop out rates, youth sport leaders and parents can focus on two types of strategies:

- modification of rules and ideas to minimize success and cultivate development of low perception of ability among low skill youth athletes and/or;
- change in how an athlete understands/analyzes competition and evaluates success.

In other words, these strategies above can reduce sport dropouts if we concentrate first on ways administrators organize and develop a competitive environment that is targeted to the needs of young athletes, and then to train and teach coaches to help their athletes to
understand the whole concept of sport experience in a more positive and supportive environment.

The management structure of sports organization is so important that in this sense administrators can play a central role in reducing sport dropouts and make the sport activity more fun. The primary role of an administrator is to develop a competitive philosophy and the rules of the sport; a successful youth sport organization is one that can create a competitive environment and rules that deliver a positive experience for all the participants (Burton, 1983).

Programs that emphasize the physical, psychological, social, emotional, and moral needs of young athletes usually provide fun, exciting, and growth-producing experiences, whereas programs that foster a win-at-all-costs attitude inevitably doom a significant number of participants to develop low perceptions of ability and in turn prompt inevitable departure from the sport (Burton, p. 253).

Managers can emphasize or introduce the philosophy of athlete-centered competitive philosophy, that places the productive personal growth of athletes ahead of winning (Burton, 1983), and develops a competitive environment that allows all participants to be successful and develop positive opinions and self-esteem in themselves.

Coaches sometimes influence dropout rates by cultivating an environment that influences a player’s motivational formations; they are also one of the main causes of dropouts according to players who drop out of sport activity (Robinson & Caron, 1982). Since children in organized sports are exposed to goals developed by adults, managers have to be responsible for the recruitment, selection, and training coaches and staff; this involves guiding and introducing them to an environment that is more concentrated on positive competition and skill learning. Managers of sport organizations must take the
responsibility to educate coaches about coaching techniques and the organization’s philosophy; this will help to reinforce the athlete centered competitive philosophy.

Similarly, parents definitely influence youth sport overall participation (Ames, 1992; Duda 1993) and control their children’s goal to be result or ego oriented (Babkes & Weiss, 1999), which affects their sport experiences. Very often, parents can be labeled as the direct or indirect cause of youth sport dropout. It is vital for administrators to help parents understand the organization’s philosophy to help establish a positive competitive philosophy. Parents are by far the most involved and influential factors on youth sports. They put so much time, effort, and money in it that sometimes they can misinterpret the overall philosophy of playing sports. Therefore, it is important for administrators and managers to provide some type of parent orientation program that will explain and teach the organization’s values and sports guidelines in order to grow and have their support in promoting the athlete centered competitive philosophy.

Methodology

Sample and Setting I

The NCISO was one of the non competitive sport organizations studied in this research. The NCISO is located in Lindenhurst, New York and provides soccer training among other activities. The NCISO is a modern indoor soccer complex dedicated to the growth and support of youth and adult soccer on Long Island. The NCISO provides programs all year around like individual skills training clinics, team training, camps, youth Futsal (type of soccer) teams and training, and adult evening field rentals. At the NCISO, I studied a group of 10 years old girls who attend this facility specifically to acquire soccer skills training. Before choosing this group, I asked the manager to provide
me with same population since I am trying to keep the same age group to have some sort of consistency in my work. This specific age group was chosen based on their transitional phase and versatility to play in competitive and non competitive sports activities. For this reason a group of 10 year olds from the NCSO was studied.

**Data Collection I**

At the NCISO, I was able to study a group of 10 years old girls. In order to have the questionnaire (Appendix A) completed by parents, as soon as permission was granted by the manager of the NCISO I was able to visit the facility and distribute questionnaires, which were completed by parents. This group goes to the NCISO specifically to get soccer skill training. All parents and guardians who entered the NCISO to drop off and/or stay to watch their child practice were asked to participate and complete the survey. A cover letter (Appendix B) of introduction and consent were attached to the survey. This letter explained my status as a student and the purpose of the study. In order to keep confidentiality, the cover letters with the parents’ signature were signed, and then detached and placed in a different envelope separate from the surveys. A total of 18 surveys were completed, and 6 surveys out of these 18 were eliminated from the study since they were not completed in their entirety. At the NCISO a total of 12 surveys were interpreted and analyzed.

A total of 12 parents were very satisfied with the coaching staff, and only one parent was somewhat satisfied with the manager. Taking this into consideration, the NCISO manager is one of the two managers responsible for the hiring and training of the coaches and staff. A relationship between the overall satisfaction with the manager and the coaching staff could be established. Ninety percent of the surveys answered, by
parents, ranked skill improvement as the number one reason for enrolling their child at the NCISO. This percentage is in accordance with the manager’s and sport organization’s goals and philosophy to provide soccer skill training. None of the surveys collected from parents at the NCISO ranked fun as one of the top three reasons to have their child register in that sport organization. McCullagh et al. (1993) evaluated youth participation motives and parents’ opinions of 81 children aged 7-14, who were playing in a recreational soccer league; they established that when parents were asked about their children’s participation, they chose reasons similar to those picked by their children (McCullagh et al., 1993). The reasons in this study were divided into seven categories: skill/mastery, ego/competitiveness, fitness, team factors, fun/excitement, recognition, and affiliation (McCullagh et al., 1993).

Sample and Setting II

A study done by De Knop, Laporte, Van Meerbeek, & Vanreusel (1991) in Belgium evaluated sports clubs and concluded that sports clubs are in competition with other organizations and have to manage the interests of members in other leisure activities. The sport clubs must know that they are dealing with a young population that likes to switch around and participate in different activities (De Knop et al., 1991). At the end of their study, they concluded that between 73 percent and 80 percent of sport clubs in Belgium were able to keep their membership at a consistent level. This study also states that achievement is easier for team sports than for individual sports. On the other hand, sports clubs have a serious problem with dropout rates of 61 percent for individual sports and 46 percent for team sports. Sixty one percent is considered to be a high percentage of dropouts and could be associated to discontent or a lack of customer
service felt by member’s satisfaction (De Knop, Laporte, Van Meerbeek, & Vanreusel, 1991). Agreeing with other researchers, Baar (1996) identified poor coaching techniques as the influential cause of membership dropout.

My second population of the study was the CSC on Long Island. The CSC has a total of 2000 members, with age groups ranging from 6-19 years old. The 6-9 year old group fits in the Developmental program, which falls into the non competitive category. The 10-19 year age group fits in their Travel Program; this program is considered to be a competitive category. For the sake of identification of non competitive and competitive categories, I will provide a detailed explanation of its operation. The developmental program is run by the Soccer Club where teams are created based on athletic and skill levels. There is no such thing as “A team” or “B team”; the coaches (most volunteers and parents) split the teams evenly in terms of skill and athletic ability. The Developmental groups only play in an in-house league. Smaller group are created that play among each other. The records and scores of this group are not posted or tracked. On the other hand, the competitive program or Travel Program is created by-try outs. Players from the same age groups are invited to participate in the try-outs in which a group of trainers and board members evaluate all participants and choose the top players to create a team. When the number of kids chosen is greater than the allowed squad list, a second team is created, and so on. The Travel team can participate in local, regional, or national tournaments. The majority of the competitive teams at the CSC are members of the Long Island Soccer Junior League Inc (LISJL). The LISJL is a local league, where teams from different towns on Long Island play against each other. The scores from these competitions are recorded and posted on the LISJL web site. In addition, the teams that win in their
respective divisions are rewarded by moving up to a more competitive division. Divisions run from Premier to Division VI, with Div. VI being the least competitive and Premier being the most competitive in terms of skill levels. At the CSC also, I chose a 10 year old girls team to participate in this study to keep uniformity and comparable data for the sport organizations being studied.

Data Collection II

The CSC team studied was a group of 10 year old girls with 15 players on their roster. Before I approached the parents, I contacted the head coach of the team and explained the purpose of my study, as well as the questionnaires for his approval. The head coach allowed me to attend his practices and approach the parents in order to get them to complete the questionnaires (Appendix A). Before the sessions started the head coach would introduce me to the parents and explained the purpose of my study. During two consecutive weeks, I distributed questionnaires in their soccer practices and had the parents complete them. As in the previous research, I used the same method of data collection: a cover letter (Appendix B) of introduction and consent was attached to the survey. In this letter, I explained who I was, and the purpose of the study. In order to keep the confidentiality, the cover letters with the parents’ signature were detached and placed in a different envelope from the one with the surveys. I arrived on their soccer field 15 minutes before their practice started in order to get the parents to complete the survey. During these 2 weeks I was able to approach 11 parents that filled out the survey on site and returned the completed survey back to me as they finished. With 15 players on their roster, I was not able to get in touch with all the parents, since a lot of them have their kids’ car pool to soccer practices or drop off the kids and pick them up at the end of
practices. Some surveys were taken home by kids whose parents could not complete them on-site (I avoided having the surveys to be taken home, since questions about the questionnaires could arise and I would not be able to clarify them). A total of 15 surveys were collected and 6 of them had to be discarded for incompletion.

A total of 9 parents were very satisfied with the coaching staff. Two of the nine parents were somewhat satisfied with the manager. The manager of the CSC was not able to answer some of the manager questionnaire (Appendix C) if the CSC hired and trained its coaching staff, since teams from the CSC have no direct relationship with the club. Individual teams from the CSC can hire any coach and trainer they want; no upper manager will interfere with individual teams decision. He was able to respond only to the question regarding to his “own” team under the umbrella of the CSC. The manager of the CSC is not responsible for the training of the coaching staff under his supervision, but he is responsible for the selection of the coach that will train his team. Taking into consideration that 100% of the parents were very satisfied with the coaching staff, we can conclude that the parents’ approval of the coach’s selections reinforces his good management and leadership skill. As a reminder, there were 2 parents that were not satisfied with his other management skills; these skills were not identifiable in this study.

Four parents out of nine ranked fun as the main reason to have their child involved in this organization; to be on a team was cited by three other parents; one parent chose the possibility to win a scholarship as the number one reason to have his/her child join this team; and finally one parent ranked skill development as his/her most important reason to have his/her child on this team. A combining of different reasons that lead parents to enroll their child in this sport organization are in conformity with the
manager’s philosophy and goals, which is “to provide a high quality athletic experience combining fun and competition. To enjoy the experience while also instilling personal and team oriented values.” The competitive philosophy is more evident in the CSC than it is in the NCISO. Both managers of the NCISO and the CSC possess no previous experience in managing sports teams or a sport facility or organization. This information supports the thinking that the majority of coaches and managers of sports organizations in the U.S. are volunteers and have no official sports management education. However, it is clear that their philosophy and goals agree with parents’ philosophies and goals.

Sample and Setting III

The NCGF also was one of the non-competitive sports organizations studied in this research paper. The NCGF attempts to give every child the best foundation for success. The NCGF developed a non-competitive curriculum, designed to build motor skills while having fun, and at the same time developing better emotional, intellectual and social skills. Their program includes skills development, movement, music, gymnastics, sports, exercise, games, listening and cooperation. The NCGF emphasizes that every child gets individual attention, and can develop at their own pace. Trained instructors create an atmosphere where positive experiences are the main goal, and constant feedback is given to every parent.

Data Collection III

Once the NCGF owner approved the questionnaire, I was able to visit his facility. One of the questions had to be eliminated from the parents’ questionnaire (Appendix A), but fortunately this question was not relevant to my study. The NCGF owner was concerned that this question would raise an unnecessary concern to the parents which I

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1 The name of this facility has been disguised
totally agreed. During my first visit at the NCGF, I arrived 20 minutes early in order to have the owner answer the manager’s questionnaire and to allow him to ask me any questions regarding my study and data collection process.

As the parents arrived at the facility, they would sign in and take their child towards the classroom. Once all the children were placed in the classroom, the owner introduced me and explained my study to the parents. At the NCGF, I was able to collect 15 questionnaires and had to discharge 4 due to incompleteness. During my first visit at the facility, I had very little success in having parents complete the surveys; this was caused by children that had babysitter and grandparents as their drivers. For their lack of information and involvement, they could not answer the questionnaire. During my second visit, the owner again introduced me and explained my study to the parents. At this time I had a great response since all the parents stayed to watch their children’s class. As they watched the class, they would complete the questionnaire.

My findings resulted in: ten parents out of eleven were very satisfied with the coaching/training staff. Two surveys out of eleven were answered somewhat satisfied with the management structure. The owner/manager of the NCGF answered his questionnaire (Appendix C) stating that he is responsible for hiring and training the coaching/training staff. With 90% of the parents responding that they were very satisfied with the trainer’s performance, we can conclude that a positive outcome regarding the manager and his management and leadership skills does exist, since he is the one responsible for the selection and training of his staff.

The reason parents have their child enrolled at the NCGF vary from: having fun (4); socialization aspect (4); free play (1); feel important (1); and learn new skill (1). The
owner/manager’s main philosophy, goals, and objectives were to: build motor skills, basic athletic skills development, and confidence in a fun way. Interpreting his words, we can say that building and learning agrees with the parents’ goal in choosing have fun; the socialization aspect cited by the parents can be associated with skills development; to feel important can be related to the NCGF goal to build confidence; and, the last one, the ability to learn new skills also matches with building motor skills mentioned by the owner. Like the other organizations studied in this research, parent and management goals and philosophy were very consistent with each other.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

Approval to conduct this study was obtained from the Dowling College Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research. Letters from the Sports Organizations managers acknowledging their consent to distribute a voluntary questionnaire in their clubs were also acquired (Appendix D). Participants signed an informed cover letter confirming their willingness to participate in this study (Appendix B). Parents’ names were not included on the questionnaire, and the surveys were numerically coded by the last four digits of their home number. All the participants were assured that the information collected would be kept rigorously confidential. All surveys were under my supervision and were destroyed at the end of my study. Managers from the Sport Organizations studied in the paper also signed an informed cover letter confirming their willingness to participate in this study (Appendix E).

**Instruments**

The mechanisms used in this study were: two questionnaires, being one for the Sport Organization Manager and the other being for the parents, a clip board, and a pen.
The most common form of determining satisfaction rates is the Likert scale, also most know as the five-point bipolar response. These scales always ask people to indicate how much they agree or disagree with a statement. In this study I only used four point scales: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied.

The managers’ survey was very straightforward and it evaluated their managerial skills. No demographic questions were included because they had no relevance to this study. The risk management, leadership, funding, sponsorships, and event management questionnaire was based on the National Council of Youth Sports Certified Sports Administrators Program.

Parent questionnaires were very specific in order to find out what the parents think about the sport organizations’ managers that run the programs. A list of factors that make the parents stay with their current organization was attached to the survey, in order to limit the variety of responses that were not related to this study.

Also, all the sport organizations involved in this study received a Debriefing Script at the end of the study. It informed all participants that this research study is accessible for future reviews.

**Discussion**

The focus of my study was on the management structure of youth sports organizations on Long Island; it is important to analyze: first, what managers are doing to make young athletes have great experiences for their lifetimes, and second, what is the motivation of parents for having their children participate in organized physical activities, specifically gymnastics and soccer.
Once again, it was proved that the majority of the sports organizations are administered by volunteers with very little sport management experience. My first hypothesis was that parents would care about the management structure, since they are paying for the service. However, my conclusions were that as long as the coaches and trainers were skilled and prepared to introduce new skills, to maintain positive atmospheres, and help their children achieve their goals, parents will be satisfied. Only one parent of the 32 participants in this study indicated that they were somewhat satisfied with the coaches and trainers. These results can be observed below in Figure 3:

The dropout number of American kids withdrawing from sport would considerably decrease if sport organization managers, owners, and coaches start delivering and reinforcing the most frequent reasons why children and parents chose to play sports: these reasons are fitness, skill development, and fun (McCullagh and colleagues 1993).
Conclusion

Many parents fail to acknowledge that youth sports are not adults' recreation, but children's play (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Iso-Ahola & Hatfield, 1986). A recent study by Goldstein and Iso-Ahola found that over 50 percent of youth soccer parents became angry while watching their children's games. The idea that young sport participants should have fun playing and competing, rather than being asked about and criticized for the final score, are far from the minds of parents (Iso-Ahola, S. E., & Hatfield, B., 1986) as today many parents only care about the final scores.

Some people motivated by ego orientation decide to compete, in order to defeat someone; in the course of winning, they look to confirm and show their individual superiority. To people with very strong ego orientations, winning is getting it all and at all costs, even if it means being unethical or taking advantage of others. Some people are motivated by task or ethical orientation. Competitors with high ethical orientation concentrate their forces not on winning, but on skill improvement, apart from results. These people choose to participate in competition to develop and improve their skills; they focus on personal goals. It should be noted that this type of research has demonstrated that both characteristics exist simultaneously in individuals; however, the relative degree of each characteristics will vary (Sleek, 1996).

According to the National Alliance for Youth Sports (2002), about 70 percent of youth sport organizations in North America are administered by volunteers. Volunteers may experience difficulty in dealing with the demands of successfully managing a sports organization. These volunteers, who are striving to achieve strategically complex goals, are being increasingly analyzed by their members, government, funding agencies, and
other stakeholders (Cuskelly & McIntyre, 1999). However, being volunteers is not an excuse for bad service. Observe that the above is a reliable percentage and is extremely difficult to reduce. The volunteer managers may not have the required skills to efficiently operate a youth sport organization; they probably have a different educational background than the one considered necessary to administer: parks and recreation programs, youth skill development programs, sport clinics, sport competitions and so on. However, we must agree that they have very important attributes; one of them is the enthusiasm to do the job. With this appreciation of the youth sport environment, it is necessary to provide tools that would allow these “volunteer administrators” to be more knowledgeable, prepared, and in control of the environment for which they are responsible.

Not every American child is involved in physical sport activities or a sport outside of school. Of the 48 million children (ages 5-17) suitable for youth sport in the United States in 1995, only approximately 22 million, or 45 percent, played in an agency sponsored sport outside of school (Seefeldt & Ewing, 1996). Sports can have a wide and positive impact for children. In this sense, it is clear that schools are critical, if not the most important resource for children in terms of providing access to sports activities. Within physical educational classes in school, society has the opportunity to offer the potential benefits of physical sport activities and sport participation. They also provide the opportunity to build social skills and teamwork philosophy.

It is very important to understand the processes and problems related to competitive and non competitive sports programs for children. The reality is, we truly do not know much about how or why children become involved in competitive and non
competitive sports programs, why they keep participating, or how and why they dropout. Furthermore, researchers, educators, coaches, and parents should know that many of the problems in children’s sports are related to the outside world. Therefore, more study and work should be conducted towards understanding the overall environment of a community sport program.
Appendix A

Research Questions

Parents

Management Structure of Competitive and Non Competitive Sports Organizations and Their Significant Influence in Youth Sports Participation.

If you need more space please use the back of the form

1. Last four digit of home number _______
2. How many of your children are enrolled at this Organization? _____ If more that one, please fill out a questionnaire for each child.

Information for child number  1  2  3  4

3. Please rank the five most important factors that you are trying to accomplish having your child/children in this organization? See the list that follows that you may want to use.
   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.

4. Based on the previous question, can this organization deliver all five factors that you are trying to accomplish? Explain.

5. How important was the Organization Philosophy on your decision to have your child/children enrolled in this organization? Explain.

6. How important was the Organization Goals on your decision to have your child/children enrolled in this organization? Explain.

7. Was the Management Structure important in your final decision to have your child/children enrolled in this organization? Explain.

8. Do you have any sport related background? If yes, please specify such as Collegiate Athletic, Semi-Pro, and Professional.

9. Were you an athlete, trainer or a coach?

10. Do you know if this organization provides a curriculum to its coaching/training staff?

11. Please rank the five most important factors that encourage you to continue your child/children participating in this organization activity.
Appendix A (cont’d)

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

12. How do you rate the satisfaction with the Management Structure in this organization?
   Very Satisfied   Somewhat satisfied   Somewhat dissatisfied   Very dissatisfied

13. How do you rate the Satisfaction with the Coaching Staff in this organization?
   Very Satisfied   Somewhat satisfied   Somewhat dissatisfied   Very dissatisfied

14. Please rank the five most important factors that encouraged you to change from your previous sport organization if applied.
   • Location, accessibility ___
   • Coaches ___
   • Management ___
   • Financial Cost ___
   • Schedule ___

Please rank the five most important factors that encouraged you to stay with your current sport organization.
   • Location, accessibility ___
   • Coaches ___
   • Management ___
   • Financial Cost ___
   • Schedule ___

Parent Information

Are you the: Mother _____  Father ______
Do you consider yourself the most involved in your child’s sport participation? Yes   No
Age ______
Level of Education
   Some High School
   High School graduate
   Some College
   College graduate
   Graduate degree

Did you earn any athletic letter or achievement in high school or college?   Yes   No
Appendix A (cont’d)

Please discuss any questions that you may have with myself or my faculty advisor. I may be contacted at (631) 902-9892 or mvr1@dowling.edu. My advisor, Dr. Stuart Rosenberg, may be reached at (631) 244-3423 or rosenbes@dowling.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Maura Pilotti, at pilottim@dowling.edu or at 631-244-5012. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.
Appendix A (cont’d)

List of factors that you are trying to accomplish having your child/children enrolled in this organization.

To have a good time
To be with friends
The coaches
To compete
Being on a team
To test ability against others
Awards
To have fun
To get exercise
To improve skills
To feel important
To reduce risk of disease
To compete against others
The uniforms
The challenge
To stay in shape
To be physically fit
The action
To get interested in sports
To gain recognition
To help work out anger
To feel good when s/he does well
To learn new skills
To do something s/he is good at
The excitement
Appendix A (cont’d).

To meet new friends
To help control weight
To win against others
Motor development
To help learn discipline
Medical advice
To earn college scholarship

Please discuss any questions that you may have with myself or my faculty advisor. I may be contacted at (631) 902-9892 or mvr1@dowling.edu. My advisor, Dr. Stuart Rosenberg, may be reached at (631) 244-3423 or rosenbes@dowling.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Maura Pilotti, at pilottim@dowling.edu or at 631-244-5012. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.
Appendix B

Dear Parent:

I am a Graduate student at Dowling College. One of my requirements to complete my degree is a thesis research project. I am conducting a study designed to investigate if the Business Management Structure has an influence on the participant and parents’ motivation in enrolling in sport clubs and gymnastics programs. Participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without intimidation or prejudice. Please discuss any questions that you may have with me or my faculty advisor. I may be contacted at (631) 902-9892 or mvr1@dowling.edu. My advisor, Dr. Stuart Rosenberg, may be reached at (631) 244-3423 or rosenbes@dowling.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Maura Pilotti, at pilottim@dowling.edu or at 631-244-5012. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Participation in this study involves the completion of a written questionnaire. All data from this study will be treated confidentially. Your name will not be identified in any way with this research. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information, and that you understand, and you have been given the opportunity to ask any questions. Information about the results of this study will be provided to you at your request.

THANK YOU.

Marcus Reis
Graduate Student
Dowling College

Signature __________________________

THIS STUDY HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY DOWLING COLLEGE
Appendix C

Research Questions
Managers

Management Structure of Competitive and Non Competitive Sports Organizations and Their Significant Influence in Youth Sports Participation.

If you need additional space please use the back of the form.

1. What is your organization trying to accomplish?

2. What is your organization philosophy?

3. What are your organization goals?

4. Is your background related to Gymnastics or other Sports Related? If yes, explain.

5. Do you have any previous experience managing a sport organization? If yes, for how long?

6. Is it necessary to possess coaching, training, or sport related background / experience to be part of yours organization coaching/training staff? Please, explain your answer.

7. What is your level of education?

8. Did you earn any athletic letter or achievement in high school or college?

9. Do you have any sport related background? If yes, please specify such as Collegiate Athletic, Semi-Pro, or Professional?

10. How does your organization select its trainer/coaching staff?

11. Does this organization provide a curriculum to its trainer staff to follow up?

12. Choose below the leadership behavior that most applies to you.

   ➢ Directive
   ➢ Supportive
   ➢ Achievement-oriented
Appendix C (cont’d)

- Participative

13. What leadership behavior must your trainer staff use/have?

- Directive
- Supportive
- Achievement-oriented
- Participative

Please discuss any questions that you may have with myself or my faculty advisor. I may be contacted at (631) 902-9892 or mvr1@dowling.edu. My advisor, Dr. Stuart Rosenberg, may be reached at (631) 244-3423 or rosenbes@dowling.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Maura Pilotti, at pilottim@dowling.edu or at 631-244-5012. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.
Appendix C (cont’d)

Risk Management

Do you recruit coaches/trainers? Yes No
Do you perform security checks? Yes No
Do you train the event staff and security? Yes No
Do you do contract law? Yes No
Do you training the participants? Yes No
Do you do scheduling? Yes No

Management and Leadership

Do you establish a direction through goals, policies, and procedures (strategic plan)? Yes No
Do you create an organization structure that works? Yes No
Do you have the ability to negotiate with key products, and service venders? Yes No
Do you communicate with members and customers services strategies including measurement techniques? Yes No
Do you work with other sport organizations with similar goals? Yes No

Funding Sports Organizations

Do you have experience in sponsorship? Yes No
Do you have experience dealing with grants? Yes No
Do you have experience with membership? Yes No
Do you have experience with events? Yes No
Do you have experience with merchandising/licensing? Yes No
Do you have experience with fund raising? Yes No

Sponsorship & Negotiations

Do you identify and research potential corporate partners? Yes No
Do you write sponsorship proposals? Yes No
Do you present sponsorship opportunities? Yes No
Do you negotiate and contract with sponsors? Yes No
Do you evaluate the Return of Investment (ROI)? Yes No

Event Management

Do you create or enhance events? Yes No
Do you manage and implement events? Yes No
Do you evaluate events? Yes No
Appendix C (cont’d)

Please discuss any questions that you may have with myself or my faculty advisor. I may be contacted at (631) 902-9892 or mvr1@dowling.edu. My advisor, Dr. Stuart Rosenberg, may be reached at (631) 244-3423 or rosenbes@dowling.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Maura Pilotti, at pilottim@dowling.edu or at 631-244-5012. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.
Appendix D

Debriefing Script for “Management Structure of Competitive and Non Competitive Sports Organizations and Their Significant Influence in Youth Sports Participation.”

Thank you for participating in this research. The purpose of this study was to evaluate if the management structure of a sport organization has any influence on participants (parents/children) in enrolling in that specific organization. Questions were related to the management structure of the organization and the purpose of registering your child to participate in that sports activity. In brief, management is responsible for policy making and staff selection. It is believed that the management structure of an organization affects the participants’ enrollment in specific programs.

For this purpose, questionnaires were distributed to parents on-site of the sport facility for data collection. Simultaneously, the manager of the sport organization completed the questionnaire, in which he/she explained the organization’s philosophy and goals. As the participants walked in the facility they were approached and explained the purpose of the study.

Here are the summary results of the study:

Please discuss any questions that you may have with me, Marcus V. Reis, or my faculty advisor. I may be contacted at (631) 902-9892 or mvr1@dowling.edu. My advisor, Dr. Stuart Rosenberg, may be reached at (631) 244-3423 or rosenbes@dowling.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Maura Pilotti, at pilottim@dowling.edu or at 631-244-5012.

THANK YOU.

Marcus Reis
Graduate Student
Dowling College
Appendix E

Dear Manager:

I am a Graduate student at Dowling College. One of my requirements to complete my degree is a thesis research project. I am conducting a study designed to investigate if the Business Management Structure has an influence on the participant and parents’ motivation in enrolling in sport clubs and gymnastics programs. Please discuss any questions that you may have with me or my faculty advisor. I may be contacted at (631) 902-9892 or mvr1@dowling.edu. My advisor, Dr. Stuart Rosenberg, may be reached at (631) 244-3423 or rosenbes@dowling.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Maura Pilotti, at pilottim@dowling.edu or at 631-244-5012. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Participation in this study involves the completion of a written questionnaire. All data from this study will be treated confidentially. Your name will not be identified in any way with this research. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information, and that you understand, and you have been given the opportunity to ask any questions. Information about the results of this study will be provided to you at your request. I would like to meet you at your convenience. However, I will be happy to forward to you the questionnaire by email.

THANK YOU.

Marcus Reis
Graduate Student
Dowling College

Signature __________________________

THIS STUDY HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY DOWLING COLLEGE
Appendix F

To The Institutional Review Board at Dowling College:

I am writing in behalf of Marcus Reis to inform you that he has been authorize by me, Peter Galantino, to use the United States Academy of Soccer facility for his research project.

We will be more than glad to help you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

Peter Galantino
Appendix G

To The Institutional Review Board at Dowling College:

I am writing in behalf of Marcus Reis to inform that he has been authorized by me, Dana Danielo, to use the HBC Soccer Club as an instrument on his research project.

We will be more than glad to help you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

Dana Danielo
Appendix H

To The Institutional Review Board at Dowling College:

I am writing in behalf of Marcus Reis to inform that he has been authorize by me, Richard Cole, to use the __________ facility on his research project.

We will be more than glad to help you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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References


