

Adults=Perceptions of the Long-Term Effects
of Participation in High School Sports

Susan S. Bechtol

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David J. Parks, Chairman

William R. Christy

Christina M. Dawson

Vicki M. Swecker

Travis W. Twiford

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(ADULT'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN
HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS)

by
Susan Smith Bechtol

Dr. David J. Parks, Chairman

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

(ABSTRACT)

The long-term effects of participation in high school sports were the focus of this study. Ten top-level managers in Fortune 500 companies were asked about participation in high school sports and the enduring effects of that participation.

Five men (one black) and five women (one Asian) participated in the study. Interviewing, observing offices, and reviewing high school yearbooks were the methods of data collection. The data were analyzed using the constant-comparative method of Maykut and Morehouse (1994).

Based on the literature and the development of a sports participation theory, data were collected on the organizational and personal variables affecting participation in high school sports, and the sports participation variables affecting later life.

Long-term effects of sports participation in high school were identified in 13 areas: (1) being competitive, (2) being goal oriented, (3) being physically active, (4) making friends, (5) developing leadership skills, (6) enhancing self-esteem, (7) displaying sports paraphernalia, (8) practicing sports philosophy, (9) working as a team, (10) acquiring skills not taught in a classroom, (11) managing time, (12) volunteering, and (13) working with diverse groups. These findings may be helpful to school administrators and policy makers as they evaluate the benefits and liabilities of their sports programs.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all the high school athletes who have touched my heart for the past twenty years. There are too many of you to name. It is hoped that you learned something from your experiences as a high school athlete that has endured. Perhaps, you learned at least one thing from high school sports participation that has carried over to your adult life. This project would never have been conceived had it not been for the daily encounters of watching you practice, mature, and compete. A very heartfelt thanks goes out to each of you. Thanks for the motivation to “just do it,” and thanks for the memories.

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