

**Parental Expectations of High School Interscholastic Athletic  
Activities**

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(ABSTRACT)

High school coaching is recognized by many to be a very difficult occupation. Many of the pressures in coaching center around the interactions which occur between coaches and the parents of the athletes they coach. Very little is known about what parents expect from high school athletic programs. In order to determine what parental expectations are of high school sports, parents from three schools within the same school division who had children who participated in a team sport during the 1997-1998 school year were surveyed by mail.

The survey attempted to determine parental positions on various issues which included the relationship between athletic participation and self-esteem, responsible decision making, educational aspirations, participation in games, parental support for their children, and expectations of coaches. A response rate of over 40 percent was observed. In addition responses were disaggregated to determine if differences existed between schools and gender.

Responses to the survey indicate that parents are very supportive of athletic activities and believe that athletics have a positive influence on the lives of their children. Substantial differences between gender and schools were not observed. Results from this survey can provide coaches with an abundance of information that can be used in establishing athletic programs and maintaining positive relationships with parents of their athletes.

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## Chapter 1 Statement of the Problem

### Introduction

High school athletic events hold excitement, competition, and challenge for those who participate. They have become as much a part of most schools as math or English and are a source of pride for schools, communities, and parents of those who participate. Yet high school sports are not without problems; many of the problematic situations bear directly and in a negative way on the coaches of these teams. Situations that are less than positive can compromise the integrity of high school sports, can occur without warning, and have serious ramifications for those involved. I believe the following true story illustrates clearly how athletic situations can quickly digress from positive, character building experiences to stressful, questionable, educational practices.

The gym was at capacity as two rival high school boys basketball teams competed in early January. Both teams were playing well and it seemed certain that the winner would not be decided until late in the game. To add to this excitement was the fact that the home team had led from the beginning over a team that was ranked first in the state in their division. From everyone's perspective the game had been very good. Both teams were playing with great energy. Offenses were being executed with exactness and defenses were tenacious. As the game entered the final minutes the home team began to falter, missing a key shot and making a turnover, allowing the visitors to close the gap. With 13.8 seconds left in the game a driving lay-up produced the first lead change the game had seen. As the coach of the home team I knew that there was ample time to still win the game. After calling timeout and planning our course of action we in bounded the ball, down by a single point. The play that we had planned worked to perfection, producing the exact shot that I had predicted for the most reliable shooter on the team. With the ball in the hands of my best player, eight feet from the basket I felt confident. I would do the exact same thing again under the same set of conditions. As the shot was taken I thought we would win. Only when the shot struck the back of the rim and fell into the hands of an opponent did I feel the disappointment of losing a

hard fought contest. I remember thinking what a great experience this had been, one that we could be proud and learn from to become a better team.

Moments after the conclusion of the game I felt a hand on my shoulder and turned to see who it was. It was the parent of the player who had missed the last shot. Before I could say anything he grabbed the front of my shirt and proceeded to tell me what a poor job I had done coaching. He had his fist drawn back and refused to let go of me. All of this occurred in the presence of perhaps one thousand people. Luckily for me there was an off duty policeman sitting in the row behind my bench. He identified himself to the man as a policeman as he grabbed him from behind, pulling him away from me. I left the bench area and proceeded to the locker room. The team was fine except for the son of the man with whom I had the altercation. He was very upset that his father would do such a thing and was very concerned as to how his father's actions would affect his standing on the team.

In the following weeks several things resulted from this that had an effect on me as coach and on our team. The boy's father was banned from attending any more games that year. The player who had missed the final shot failed two classes for the semester and was declared ineligible. The team did not play up to their potential for the remainder of the year and I still have feelings of anger over the lack of respect shown to me that night.

Athletic activities have been a part of the high school educational experience in the United States since the early beginnings of school. These popular activities were a student generated phenomenon. As students saw independent, community-based athletic clubs produce teams that competed against one another, they too formed athletic associations. Because the local schools were the common bond among these participants, teams naturally became affiliated with schools, if only by name. This held true despite the fact that during the 1920's and 1930's many of the participants did not even attend the school for which they played (Forsythe and Keller, 1972).

Schools at first resisted these affiliations and in some cases attempted to ban athletic activities by students. Such efforts were futile because of the popularity of sports. With little other choice schools tolerated athletics and slowly began to control them to eliminate some of



the abuses that were occurring. A reported problem was that of hiring coaches who were skilled athletes who would not only coach but play. As if this was not bad enough, schools often competed for these individuals. Administrators also began to recognize that educational goals could actually be met through athletic programs and began to formulate specific educational goals for these athletic programs (Forsythe and Keller, 1972).

From these rudimentary beginnings high school athletic programs have grown to the point that almost all schools sponsor extracurricular athletic programs. For the eighth consecutive year, participation in high school athletic programs increased during the 1996-97 school year to 6,195,247 students. This was the second highest total since participation counts began in 1971 and reflected growth for both boys and girls sports (National Federation of High Schools, 1997).

The main responsibility for administering these programs usually falls directly on coaches. In most high schools, coaches are given a great deal of authority. Coaches are given the responsibility of choosing team members, organizing practices, determining team rules, punishing rule violations, scheduling games, dictating program philosophy and deciding who plays to name a few. Often these responsibilities come without any guidelines from administrators, school or community. As a result, coaches are responsible for much of what happens within a team and are therefore closely scrutinized by fans, booster clubs, the media, and the parents of the players whom they coach. This can and often does lead to stress. Stress can be felt as the pressure to win, requests made by players or parents for more playing time, or as a threat to one's job. Once thought of as relatively stable positions, coaches are the most likely members of a school to be fired. In studies reported by Lackey (1977, 1986, and 1994) involving Nebraska schools, 35.9% of the principals reported that a coach had been dismissed at their school within the past three years. In both the 1986 study and the 1994 replication, an attempt was made to determine the sources of coaches stress. In 1986, principals identified parents of athletes as a major source of stress (31%), second only to boosters, patrons, and fans. In 1984, principals identified parents of players as the second greatest source of stress for coaches. In the most recent study, principals identified parents as the greatest source of pressure (41%) as

compared to school boards (5%), athletes themselves (4%), and administrators (2%).

Because coaches seem to be experiencing increasing stress from parental sources it seems useful to determine the causes of this pressure.

### Statement of the Problem

Coaching is a difficult profession. A major source of the stress associated with coaching is perceived to be generated by the parents of the participants. No empirical evidence exists concerning why parents exert pressure on coaches or what they expect their children to gain from participation. No research has been published concerning parental attitudes and athletics or extracurricular activities. The reason for this lack of research is unclear although it may be related to the demands placed on high school coaches. Most high school coaches are employed as teachers and it is their teaching responsibilities that are responsible for their employment. In most instances coaches receive a supplemental contract for their coaching which is a fixed amount or a percentage of their pay as a teacher. In essence a person is working two jobs when coaching, leaving little time for thoughtful investigation of his or her profession.

In order for extracurricular athletic activities to exist, coaches must be hired to instruct and supervise. This hiring process focuses on an individual's qualifications to perform the duties associated with being a teacher. This responsibility for hiring teachers is usually delegated to the principal of an individual school. Once hired, yearly evaluations of a teacher are based on classroom teaching performance. Performance as a coach does not play a part in formal teacher evaluation. It seems odd that teachers are very rarely seen teaching (for which they are evaluated) but they are never evaluated formally for their coaching (which is often viewed by thousands of people). In actuality, coaches are evaluated by various means, none of which are conducted by the school for whom they work. Although parents usually are not experts on athletic management or coaching, their input has an effect on the complex interactions of players and coaches. Adolescents place a very high value on the opinions of their parents (Berndt, 1979, 1982: and Brown, 1990), and so it is likely that parental attitudes may influence the attitudes that children have toward practice and competition. If the efforts of a coach are diminished and

questioned by parents because expectations for their children are not being met, it would seem useful to determine what parents expect athletic programs to provide for their children. In this particular component of school the parents as well as the students are the consumers because it is they who allow participation and often bear the associated costs and effects of their child's participation. By not knowing and by not attempting to understand the attitudes of parents the effectiveness of coaches and athletic programs, an important part of the educational process for many students may be compromised.

### Research Hypothesis and Related Questions

The primary research question for this inquiry is:

What are parental beliefs about extracurricular athletic activities and what are their expectations of these programs?

The answer to this question should provide a better understanding of the expectations of parents which in turn will provide a basis for designing and promoting athletic programs that better meet the needs of students and their parents.

The questions used to determine parental views will reflect three strands of inquiry. First, what are parental expectations of high school athletic programs for their children? Second, what do parents desire in terms of being involved with their child in a particular program? Last, what do parents believe that participation in athletic programs has done for their child?

### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, extracurricular athletic activities refers to the sports of football, volleyball, baseball, softball, and basketball. These sports were chosen because of their team nature and because they were common to each of the high schools participating in this study. In this study all schools football and baseball programs involved male participants and volleyball and softball programs involved female participants. Basketball was offered as a single sex sport for both boys and girls but in separate seasons.

In addition to fathers and mothers the term parents is also used to designate step-mothers, step-fathers, or guardians who are primary care givers for a particular child.

### Limitations

The sample for this study was taken from a population of one geographic area. Literature indicates that views on high schools sports may be affected by the population density and the socioeconomic status of a community or region (Eitzen, 1975). Accordingly findings will be specific to this particular population.

Findings were based on those who responded to a mail survey. No attempts were made to determine if the responses of non-respondents would have been any different from those that were returned.

It must also be acknowledged that the researcher was employed as a teacher and a coach at one of the schools involved in this study.

## Chapter 2 Review of Literature

### Introduction

This is a study about the relationships that exist between the parents of those who participate in high school sports, the programs in which they participate, and their coaches. The reason for the investigation is the observation that these relationships often become strained and make the experience of participation less enjoyable for all involved. It is the purpose of this research to explore some of the beliefs that parents hold for extracurricular athletic participation and how these beliefs are related to their expectations for the programs in which their children participate.

In our high schools, sports are perhaps the most visible of all the activities offered for our students. This is not to say that the public is unaware of student performance in our schools. They are made aware by the media of alleged shortcomings in the form of tests scores and acts of school violence. These, however, are not firsthand observations for the majority of people. Not only do parents and the general public have the opportunity to witness athletic contests in almost all sports, but they are also afforded the opportunity to read about the accomplishments, or lack thereof, of high school teams and the individuals who make up these teams. Many local, regional, and national papers have a daily section devoted to high school sports coverage. For many students and their parents, this is the first time that their activities have a public nature. These reports often attempt to describe how games were won or lost, as well as who performed exceptionally well or poorly. The situation of having to deal with many of the same pressures experienced by older collegiate and professional athletes creates situations where the possible educational benefits from participation may be overshadowed.

But what are the benefits of sports in an educational environment? As discussed previously, high school sports were started not by school administrators with a vision of how classroom educational experiences might be enhanced, but by students who were simply interested in sports. These students formed athletic associations patterned after what adults were doing at the time and because the school was the common bond between participants and community, these teams became identified as

'school' teams. School administrators reluctantly accepted these teams only after finding it impossible to ban them and seeing a need to stop some of the abuses that were occurring (Forsythe and Keller, 1972). An example of these abuses provided by Forsythe and Keller (1972) was a situation where a teacher was hired at a school to coach and play for the baseball team as a condition of his teaching employment.

The existing research on what is accomplished from an educational perspective through high school sports is somewhat limited and focuses mainly on the relationships between curricular issues and extracurricular participation. Research can be grouped into the areas of academic achievement as related to participation, academic aspirations and attainment of those participating in extracurricular activities, and the socialization and interpersonal skills developed through participation in extracurricular activities. The following sections will review research that has been conducted in each of the aforementioned areas.

### Academic Achievement and Athletic Participation

The relationship between academic achievement and athletic participation is not clear. According to Holland and Andre (1987), the available research indicates that male high school athletes have somewhat higher grade point averages than those who do not participate in athletics. A study conducted by the Women's Sports Foundation (1989) found that for Hispanic and white females, as well as white males, school sports participation did correlate positively with higher grades. No differences were found for Hispanic and black males and black females. Conflicting results such as these suggest there may be variables which are not yet understood or identified which mediate higher grades. Parental attitudes toward grades as well as differing socioeconomic levels may factor into this situation. Two studies conducted by Rehberg and Schafer (1968) and Spreitzer and Pugh (1973), however, failed to find a positive relationship between grade point average and athletic participation. In a more recent study using a national data set from the National Center for Educational Statistics which focused on minority students in poor, urban schools (Lisella and Serwatka, 1996), male students who participated in extracurricular activities had lower achievement levels in over 50 percent of the cases while their female counterparts demonstrated higher

achievement levels as a group. This finding illustrates the variability that may be attributed to cultural differences of specific populations. General inferences and between group comparisons may be questionable based on this finding.

The sample population for my research comes from the same geographic area which is very similar in terms of ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic variables. It is unlikely that differences which occur in this study are the result of these factors.

To achieve academically one must be present at school. McNeal (1995) investigated the relationship between participating in high school athletic activities and dropping out of school. Using regression equation models, participation in athletics alone decreased a student's likelihood of dropping out by 1.7 times. When transformed into a percentage, a student would be 40 percent less likely to drop out as a result of their athletic participation. The only other extracurricular activity that had a reducing effect in drop out rates was fine arts at approximately 15 percent.

### Educational Aspirations and Attainment

Educational aspirations and the likelihood of obtaining educational goals as a function of participation in an extracurricular activity have been examined at length by researchers. Rehberg and Schafer (1968) and Spreitzer and Pugh (1973) both found a positive relationship between male athletic participation and plans to attend college. The strongest relationship occurred for boys of low socioeconomic status (SES), low academic standing, and little parental support. This suggests that participation may provide some motivational needs that are otherwise not being met. Coaches may perform surrogate parenting roles such as encouraging education as a means of creating a better life for those whom they coach. Athletic participation and the subsequent rewards from participation may serve as an alternative for some of the experiences students may miss because of low socioeconomic status. The degree to which a school values academic and athletic achievement also has a moderating effect on this variable. In schools that highly value athletic achievement, the relationship between participation in athletics and planning to attend college was strong. Conversely, in schools where

academic performance was held in high regard, athletic achievement had no effect on plans to attend college (Spreitzer and Pugh, 1973).

In terms of whether these aspirations lead to higher attainment, Otto (1975) reported that 9 percent of the explainable variance in educational attainment was directly related to participation in extracurricular athletic activities. This was independent of SES, academic ability, and academic performance. Hanks and Eckland (1976) divided activities into athletic and social (service and leadership types of activity) and found that athletic participation did not directly contribute to higher levels of educational attainment whereas social participation was strongly associated with higher levels of attainment.

Studies involving women generally indicate that there is little relationship between athletic participation, educational aspiration, and educational attainment. One exception occurred among girls who participated in both athletics and music (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978). This population of participants were found to have higher educational expectations than nonparticipants or participants who took part in only one activity.

Although not directly related to educational attainment in the same context as the previous research, the American College Testing Service (Joekel, 1984) attempted to determine the value of four separate factors that were thought to be predicative of success. College graduates were surveyed two years after college. Success was defined as self-satisfaction of individuals along with their participation in a variety of community based activities. The four factors that were compared were major achievements in an extracurricular activity, high grades in high school, high grades in college, and high scores on the ACT. The only factor that could be used to predict success in later life was achievement in an extracurricular activity. Many would argue that the true purpose of education is providing students with the necessary experiences that will allow them to live a successful life and that ultimate educational attainment would be such success.

### Socialization Through Participation

Schools have a responsibility to society to teach their students cooperation and teamwork with other individuals. Jeziorski (1994) makes an interesting observation regarding the social interaction of athletic



participation compared to other school related activities in which students participate. Except for athletic activities and a limited number of non-athletic extracurricular activities, schools emphasize individual success without regard to the success of the group. A person who receives an outstanding grade in a particular class is totally unaffected should the remainder of the class fail. Cooperation is not practiced as an essential element of secondary schooling, therefore, many of the social skills that we prize as a democratic society go unsupported (Jeziorski, 1994). Athletic activities on the other hand support the concept of people working together and the idea that people can produce more working together than independently. The social skills that are required for this interaction are reinforced in a manner rarely found in classroom environments. On athletic teams individuals find themselves asked to do a specific job for the good of the team. Although all positions on a team are not equal in terms of status or responsibility, each player labors at their assigned task, with the understanding (although unstated) that everyone is not rewarded the same. This is not unlike the workplace where many different jobs must be done within an organization for that organization to be successful. These jobs require different skills, different levels of training and pay different amounts. Although each job within an organization differs, it is important that each one be done well for the organization to prosper.

### Other Reasons For Extracurricular Athletic Programs

From these findings and observations it is apparent that extracurricular activities have a place in schools based on what can be gained from an educational perspective.

In addition to the educational purposes served by athletic activities in schools, these activities also provide an opportunity for students to learn about various jobs which are related to sports and recreation. Most people who are currently working as coaches, athletic trainers, and athletic directors began their understanding of these jobs by watching someone do these jobs at the high school level. Although it is very unlikely that a high school athlete will become a professional athlete, a small percentage do and should not be discouraged from pursuing such a dream. Many will be associated with sports in some other fashion, perhaps as coaches themselves or as game officials.

High school sports also provide enjoyment and physical activity for those participating and entertainment for those who watch. For those who participated, many of their most valued memories about high school consists of athletic practices and contests. From a health perspective, the training techniques and self-discipline required for athletic participation may provide a foundation for maintaining lifetime fitness. For spectators, high school sports are a combination of social interaction, a means of supporting and showing pride in the community, and value packed entertainment. With the cost of attending college, and professional sporting events increasing with each passing season, high school sports remain one of the most affordable opportunities to see sports events in person.

### Curricular and Extracurricular Differences

With all the positive attributes of the high school athletic experience, there still remains the fact that many conflicts arise between the parents of participants and the coaches. Lackey (1994) states that of all coaches dismissed over a three year period in Nebraska high schools, 10% were dismissed because of “inadequate social relationships with parents and patrons”, and that principals considered pressure from parents the single greatest source of pressure faced by coaches. From this researcher’s experience, parents are by far the most pressure generating component associated with the coaching experience.

By determining why these conflicts exist and working to eliminate them, both coaches and participants may enjoy these valuable learning experiences more fully. To understand why conflict between parents and coaches may occur it is valuable to look at the relationship that is encouraged and currently maintained between parents and schools and how athletic activities may violate some of these principles.

Schools encourage participation. Attendance is mandated by law and rarely are students denied an opportunity to pursue learning. It would be unthinkable for a school to tell a student that they can not participate in a curricular offering because they do not meet the qualification of the teacher. Schools commonly find themselves offering several courses in the same subject that vary in difficulty to meet the needs and abilities of their students.

From kindergarten through twelfth grade, interaction between parents and school is strongly encouraged. Parent-Teacher Associations provide opportunities during the elementary school years for parents and teachers to interact and discuss issues that face education, specific schools, and individual children. Schools host open school nights as well as parent-teacher conferences which parents attend to discuss their child's progress with teachers, counselors, and administrators. Many schools also involve parents directly in the life of the school. Elementary schools have used the concept of room mothers to bring those wishing to be involved with the school into the classroom to assist with various programs. Many schools have volunteer programs which use parents and community members in ways that benefit students and teachers alike.

For those who choose not to participate in such interactive ways, it is this researcher's observation that schools provide an endless stream of correspondence to parents about the progress of their child in curricular and disciplinary areas. Once the report card was the only way schools related the progress of students to parents. Now schools often send failure notices to parents of students who are failing a class, phone calls and letters explaining disciplinary action, as well as newsletters and internet home pages explaining to parents anything they might want to know about their child's school.

When we look at how this model of participation, communication, and parental involvement compares with what often occurs in extracurricular athletic activities we find a markedly different situation.

Being a member of an athletic team can be exclusive in nature. For parents and students this is the first experience associated with school where the opportunity to participate may be denied. Because more students would like to participate than opportunity allows in many schools, students must be evaluated on their skills and either allowed the opportunity to become a team member or have that opportunity denied. The authority to exclude students from participation is made almost exclusively by the coaching staff. Research by Weber and McBee (1988) found that 85% of the coaches (based on a national sample) had the authority to exclude students from participation due to lack of skill and performance. Although some remediation may be offered through junior

varsity competition, the fact remains that a limited number of students will have the opportunity to be a participant in extracurricular athletic activities.

Coaches also have unprecedented authority in matters once a person is chosen to be a team member. In matters involving discipline issues, coaches have considerably more authority to dismiss a student from a team (in 47% of the schools surveyed) than a teacher has to exclude a student from an academic activity (in 4% of the schools surveyed) (Weber and McBee, 1988). The rationale for actions taken by coaches are rarely communicated to parents. In most cases if a student is 'cut' from a team it is left to the student to inform their parents that they did not make a team and why they think this occurred. In many cases the coach making the decision does not even tell the student, placing only a list of those making the team in a public location. Once a student is a member of a team it becomes the responsibility of the coach to decide who plays during games and to what extent. Again, much of what goes on in practice is not communicated to parents in a manner to which they are accustomed, based on what schools have taught parents to expect. Because parents usually do not attend practices (in many cases coaches do not allow or discourage parents from attending practices) what parents see in the context of team sports is who plays in actual games, who does not play, how well each person does while playing, and the outcome of the combined efforts of the team relative to whom they are playing. Since coaches formally do not provide parents with feedback as to how their child is performing, in cases where players do not play in games or see limited playing time, parents may be getting the unintentional message that their child is not being successful. Students may improve tremendously over the course of the season yet may not earn more playing time because of their skills relative to other team members. Without some communication from the coach to the parents it is easy to see how misunderstandings can occur. Since many coaches neglect to make communication between parents and themselves a concern, parents may develop frustrations due to a lack of understanding and no provision to gain understanding.

Even when communication is established between the coach and parents, parents may find it difficult to understand what coaches have to say. Many times decisions in coaching are not based on conclusive evidence or statistics that can be easily related to the parents. Many

decisions are complex judgments that are made as a result of seeing players interact with one another over weeks, months, and in some cases years. Parents may have difficulty understanding the very nature of team sports where individuals must sacrifice personal accomplishment for the good of the team.

High school sports are also different from school in terms of how involved parents may become with their child's experience. As mentioned previously, schools have traditionally created opportunities for parental involvement. From encouraging parents to help with homework to providing times where parents can meet with teachers to discuss their child, schools expressly want parents to be involved. High school athletic activities provide few occasions where parents can be directly involved with their child in the context of the sport which they are playing. With the exception of booster organizations which are designed primarily for financial assistance for the teams they serve, parents have little chance for involvement. Most parents view their child's participation in extracurricular athletics from the stands after paying an admission fee.

From the coaching perspective this distancing from parents is often a practiced behavior. Many coaches think that to invite parents into the organization of their team is to invite trouble. Should a coach allow the inner workings of the team to be exposed, questions may arise which may be hard to answer to everyone's satisfaction. Another possible problem exists when select parents involve themselves and other parents view this as being politically motivated. Coaches tend to steer clear of these problems by constructing "walls" around themselves, their team, and their program.

All of these differences are magnified because parents are taught the 'school' model first and the 'extracurricular athletic' model later after several years working within the 'school' parameters. If in fact extracurricular athletic activities are valuable educational experiences, which the research implies they can be, it would seem important to plot a course that would make athletic experiences more similar to classroom experiences in terms of communication, feedback, and parental involvement. The one thing that the 'school' model has done which the 'extracurricular athletic' model has not is seeking out parental input and involvement.

Coaches must be aware of these differences and the potential problems that they have caused. Also, coaches must be willing to explore what parents want extracurricular athletic programs to provide for their children. Without this understanding coaches are destined to find themselves involved in job threatening conflicts with parents while continuing to be at odds with current educational practice.

### Summary

Athletic activities are a part of most high schools. These popular activities provide for students experiences that supplement what is learned in the classroom. Research suggests that those who participated in certain extracurricular activities may be more productive academically and develop skills that are fundamental to working with other people.

Although much good is thought to be derived from participation, extracurricular athletic activities are not without their problems. Coaches who are responsible for administering these programs are the most likely teachers within a school system to be fired (Lackey, 1994). Much of the stress faced by coaches of athletic activities is generated by the parents of those whom they coach. One possible cause of this conflict is the difference between the organization of extracurricular athletic programs and curricular programs. These differences include the degree to which we allow parents to be involved, communication between the coach and the parents, and the lack of an adequate method of evaluating the progress of students and relating that progress to their parents. Coaches must be aware of the differences between extracurricular programs and curricular programs and make attempts to make these differences less pronounced. It is also the responsibility of coaches to determine the beliefs and expectations of parents and develop programs that incorporate these ideas into the philosophy of their program.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify parental beliefs about extracurricular athletic activities and their expectations of those programs.

To do this the researcher decided that a mail survey would be an appropriate method for reaching parents and determining their position on various issues concerning their child's participation.

### Population

The population for the study consisted of parents of high school students who had participated in high school team sports during the 1997-1998 school year. Research indicates that sports differ in their structure so sports that are as similar as possible were selected for comparative purposes (Cratty and Hanin, 1980). The team sports of football, baseball (for boys only), boys and girls basketball (two separate teams), volleyball and softball (for girls only) were chosen both because of their popularity and because they are team sports. Team sports are considered those sports where people must work together physically to produce an outcome or achieve their objective. Sports such as golf and wrestling have a team component, but scoring is simply the summation of individual efforts taken together to produce a total. Another unique component of team sports is that more than one person plays at a given time. This creates starters and non-starters, typically called reserves, and involves judgments about a person's worth to a team, something that is usually based on performance in practice and game situations.

The survey population came from three schools in the same county. Because different schools were included in the survey population, the study focuses on only team sports common to each of the schools. Soccer for example was excluded from the study because only two of the three schools offered soccer.

Schools included in the study were located within the same school division. Although the differing locations of the three schools within the county was assumed to create some diversity, conditions under which high school sports were conducted within the same school division were similar.

This included facilities, coaching supplements, school division disciplinary guidelines, and rules concerning athletic participation. The one difference worth noting was with regard to school size. Two of the schools were 'A' classification schools indicating a population of less than 500 students in grades nine through twelve while the other was a 'AA' classification school which serves a population of between 500 and 1000 students. The socioeconomic standing of students as measured by free or reduced lunch eligibility revealed some variability between the three schools. Participating schools reported 20.6 percent, 28.1 percent, and 42.1 percent of their students qualifying for free or reduced lunches. Determining to what extent those who participated in extracurricular activities qualified for free or reduced lunches was not possible.

### Survey Instrument Development

Data were collected using a survey instrument developed by the researcher (Appendix D). In addition to items gathering demographic data, the survey consisted of 52 questions which were asked to explore parental beliefs about extracurricular athletic activities as well as expectations that they held for their child's participation. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with a series of statements using a Likert-like scale including strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. These questions reflected strands of inquiry which were suggested by the existing literature and were deemed to be of importance by the researcher. These strands of inquiry included:

1. Parental beliefs and expectations about the relationship between athletic participation and components of their child's behavior that reflect self-esteem.
2. Parental beliefs about the how participation in athletics affect their child's ability to make responsible personal decisions.
3. Parental expectations about their child's academic performance and educational aspirations connected with participation in athletics.
4. Parental beliefs and subsequent expectations about their child's participation in athletic contests.
5. Parental beliefs about their own role in the support of their child's athletic endeavors.



6. Parental beliefs and expectations for the coaches who are responsible for the extracurricular athletic programs in which their children participate.

Because the survey was sent to parents representing a wide range of educational levels, care was taken to use language which was clear, concise, and free of ambiguities. The survey was piloted with parents who had children playing sports at a junior varsity level. Suggestions made by those who took part in these pilot tests were incorporated into the survey instrument when applicable.

In addition to the survey instrument, several other items were designed and printed to deliver the survey to the prospective respondent. A cover letter was written which provided specific directions for completing the survey and returning it to the researcher. A 12" x 9" envelope was prepared for each mailing as well as a 4 1/8" x 9 1/2" postage paid envelope in which to return the completed survey(s). Respondents were given the option of entering their name to be included in a drawing for three \$25.00 gift certificates. This was done to provide incentive to those who might not otherwise complete and return the survey.

### Administration of the Survey

The survey was administered during the summer of 1998 according to protocol suggested by Dillman (1978). In this method, the researcher identifies all aspects of the survey process that affect the quality of the outcome. All efforts are organized so that design intentions are carried out specifically and purposefully using guidelines suggested by this method. This process is used in the survey design, delivery, and follow-up attempts. These guidelines suggest appropriate length for surveys, preparation of a cover letter, the size of envelopes to be used, mailing date (this determines the day of the week that it should arrive to a potential respondent which, is thought to make some difference), and the time between the initial mailing and follow-up requests.

The first step involved securing master eligibility lists from the schools that had agreed to participate in the study. Master eligibility lists are required for each sport that identifies students who meet criteria for participation. This list is prepared by the coach of each sport and is certified by the principal. The athletic director is responsible for filing this

list with the state governing body of high school sports as well as with each opposing school in each respective sport. Athletic directors were asked to remove any person from the list who quit or otherwise did not complete the season. This process identified 198 families with a child who had participated in one of the selected sports. This information was then transferred to a database that could be accessed from a laptop computer. Master eligibility lists include information about participants only. Accordingly, information about parents such as names and mailing addresses were obtained from the administrative office of each school. Appointments were made with each school to obtain this information which was then added to the database on site. Originally the researcher had planned to use the database not only for record keeping purposes but to generate mailing labels for the initial mailing of the survey instrument and subsequent follow-ups. It was suggested by the literature (Dillman, 1978) and decided by the researcher that addressing envelopes by hand would maximize response rates.

The survey packet contained two survey forms, one for each parent in a two parent family. Single parents were instructed to disregard the second survey. Parents were asked to complete surveys independently without conferring with the other parent or with their children. A stamped, pre-addressed envelope was provided for the return of the completed surveys.

Survey packets were mailed in one mailing to insure that they would arrive on the same day to each household. Seven survey packets were returned because of insufficient addresses. Each school was revisited to determine the cause of the return and all seven addresses were corrected and mailed again. Of 198 surveys mailed, none were subsequently returned for lack of sufficient mailing information.

After a two week period, a postcard was sent to each mailing address expressing thanks for responding to the survey or encouraging a response if none had occurred (Appendix F). In keeping with guidelines from the Institutional Review Board and the researchers promise of anonymity, surveys were not marked with any type of identification number making it impossible to determine who had and had not returned their surveys.

As surveys were returned to the researcher they were dated, numbered, and placed in a secure location. Forty-five families returned surveys prior to the reminder and an additional 39 arrived after the reminder for a total of 84 returns (42.4%). The 84 returns contained 132 usable surveys. All surveys were returned over a six week period.

### Tabulation of Survey Results

Results were analyzed using Minitab Statistical Software, Release 10Xtra. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to determine means and percentages for all demographic variables and survey response items.

In addition to objective responses asked for by the survey instrument, respondents were given the opportunity to add comments concerning their child's extracurricular athletic participation. The comments were recorded and categorized to help increase the researchers understanding about parental expectations and beliefs in regard to extracurricular athletic activities (Appendix J).

## Chapter 4 Results

### Introduction

High school extracurricular athletic activities directly involve coaches and players, but may or may not involve parents. Coaches and players work closely together while parents often have little direct interaction with the activity. Because parents often find themselves distanced from their children and what they do in athletics, conflicts may arise. These conflicts diminish the value of extracurricular athletic programs and may erode the positive educational and social outcomes that would otherwise result from participation.

This research was undertaken to better understand parent beliefs about extracurricular athletic programs and to learn what their expectations are for children who participate in these programs. To investigate parental beliefs and expectations of extracurricular activities, parents of students who participated in extracurricular athletic activities sponsored by three different high schools during the 1997-98 school year were surveyed by mail. In addition to demographic data, parents were asked to respond to statements indicating their position on various issues. Assertions were gathered into strands which explored common topics. The strands addressed the following issues:

1. The relationship that exists between athletic participation and components of their child's behavior that reflect self-esteem.
2. How participation in athletics affect their child's ability to make responsible personal decisions.
3. Academic performance and parental beliefs about the relationship of their child's educational aspirations to participation in athletics.
4. Parental beliefs about their child's participation in athletic contests.
5. Parental role in the support of their child's athletic endeavors.
6. Expectations for the coaches who are responsible for the extracurricular athletic programs in which their children participate.

The survey responses were downloaded to a statistical program (MiniTab 10Xtra) and a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted for each question.

## Demographic Analysis

One hundred and ninety eight households received survey packets. Each packet contained two copies of the survey. Families were instructed to have each parent complete a form. Parents were asked to complete the surveys independently, that is without discussing their answers. Of the 198 households surveyed, 84 families responded by returning at least one survey (42.4%). A total of 132 usable surveys were returned. Parents were instructed to identify the sport in which their child had participated. Parents who had more than one child or a child who had played more than one sport were asked to respond based on a single experience. The following is a breakdown by sport of the surveys returned and the sport that was identified. All teams were single sex.

Survey Response Based On:	N	Percent of Total
Son who played football	41	31.2%
Daughter who played basketball	25	19.0%
Son who played basketball	23	17.5%
Son who played baseball	19	14.5%
Daughter who played softball	16	12.2%
Daughter who played volleyball	7	5.3%

Mothers (57.5%) of participants were more likely to respond to the survey than fathers (40.9%). Less than two percent of the respondents were step-parents and none of the respondents called themselves guardians. Most respondents reported that they were married (88.5%) with smaller percentages reporting being divorced (5.3%), single (3.0%), or widowed (3.0%).

Representation from the three schools involved in the study was similar with a return rate of 31.1, 43.2, and 25.8 percent of the responses coming from the respective schools.

Respondents were asked to indicate their income level. Survey results were as follows:

Income Level	Number - Corresponding Percentage	
Less than \$20,000	8	6.3%
\$20,001- \$40,000	25	19.7%
\$40,001- \$60,000	32	25.2%
\$60,001- \$80,000	27	21.3%
More than \$80,001	35	27.6%

Parents were asked to rate the amount of time that their son or daughter participated in games during the course of their season. Thirty five parents (26.5%) reported that their children played less than half the time while 97 parents (73.5%) reported that their child played more than 50 percent of the time. A question was asked to determine if parents considered their child a “starter” or a “reserve” on their respective team. Most parents who responded to the survey considered their child a starter (73.5%).

### General Findings

Items on the survey were grouped into six strands that were thought by the researcher to represent characteristics of extracurricular athletic activities. These characteristics were determined from literature reviews, in particular Holland and Andre (1988), and areas of interest to the researcher. Parents responded to statements using a four item Likert-like response set that included strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree as options. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics.

The following section presents the aggregated responses of parents for each item in the survey. A complete listing of the survey results can be found in Appendix G.

### General Beliefs About Athletic Participation

The first five items on the survey were statements of a general nature. It was thought that statements of a simple nature at the onset would encourage respondents to complete the entire survey. Parents were asked if participation in athletics was good for their child. This was followed by a question asking whether or not the benefits of the athletic experience could be gained elsewhere in their child's education. The majority of parents (68.1%) strongly agreed that athletic participation was

good for their child. Only three percent felt that the experience was not good. Most parents also agreed (81.8%) that the experience gained from athletic participation could not have been gained elsewhere in other programs offered by the school. Parents agreed that athletic programs were as important as classroom activities in developing their child as a total person (84.6%) with 34.6 percent of parents strongly agreeing. Even though there is strong agreement on the part of parents that athletics are an important part of their child's educational experience, 86 percent of those responding thought that the primary responsibility of schools was to foster academic progress. Parents also report that they want their child to be successful in athletic as well as academic pursuits.

Participation in athletics was good for my child.

Agree	Disagree
<b>96.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

The experience my child gained from participation could NOT have been gained in any other programs offered by the school.

Agree	Disagree
<b>81.8%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>

Athletic programs are as important as classroom activities in developing my child as a total person.

Agree	Disagree
<b>84.6%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>

Academic progress of each student should be the primary responsibility of schools and athletics are of secondary importance.

Agree	Disagree
<b>86.0%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

It is important to me that my child be successful in athletic as well as academic areas.

Agree	Disagree
<b>83.3%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>

From these results it is clear that the parents of those who participate in extracurricular athletic activities strongly support the participation of their children and believe that their participation is important, albeit not as important as academic success.

## Components of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has been linked with participation in athletic activities (Holland and Andre, 1988). It is often thought that self-esteem is a positive attribute and has an influence on many important personal and social components. Parents were presented with five statements related to indicators of self-esteem and asked to what extent these attributes were associated with athletic participation.

Confidence was considered by the researcher to be one indicator of self-esteem. When asked if they had seen their child's confidence improve due to athletic participation, most parents (82.6%) responded that this was the case. Slightly over 43 percent of parents strongly agreed that they had seen their child's confidence improve. About 91 percent of parents also indicated the positive recognition received from athletic participation was beneficial for their child. It was also reported by parents that they believed participation in athletics motivates their child to try new activities (82.4%), and that their children were more satisfied with school while participating in an athletic activity (86.4%). Respondents also indicated (98.5%) that participation was a good way to learn to work with children of different backgrounds with 41.6 percent strongly agreeing. Only two respondents indicated that they did not think that athletics promoted working with children of diverse backgrounds.

I feel that my child's confidence was improved by athletic participation.

Agree	Disagree
<b>82.6%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>

I think that the positive recognition that my child received from participating in athletics was beneficial for my child.

Agree	Disagree
<b>90.8%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>

Participation in athletics motivates my child to try new activities.

Agree	Disagree
<b>82.4%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>

My child seems to be more satisfied with school while participating in an athletic activity.

Agree	Disagree
<b>86.4%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>



Participation in athletics is a good way for children to learn to work with others from different backgrounds.

Agree	Disagree
<b>98.5%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

Parents seem to believe that their children's self esteem was influenced positively by athletic participation. This is a very important and valuable finding for those working with children in athletic programs. Parents in their comments alluded to situations where the behavior of a coach had a negative impact on their child. These comments will be examined later in this chapter and the implications for coaches discussed in chapter five.

### Athletic Participation and Responsible Behavior

A second strand of the survey addressed the perceived relationship between athletic participation and responsible behavior on the part of the student athlete. Parents were asked to report on their child's behavior and the effect athletic participation had on that behavior.

Parents indicated that their children got into less trouble (at home and at school) during the sport seasons with 76.4 percent of the parents agreeing with this statement. Three statements were presented regarding the connection between athletic participation and the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. Responses were very similar for all three statements with about 70 percent of all respondents agreeing that athletic participation decreased the likelihood of their child using these illegal substances. The strongest response of the entire survey came when parents were asked their position on the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs and if it was important to them that their children stayed substance free. All but one respondent agreed with this statement (131 of 132) with 84.1 percent of the parents strongly agreeing.

The last statement in this strand dealt with peer relationships. Parents were asked if their children were less likely to hang around with 'the wrong crowd' if involved in an athletic activity. A majority of those responding (83.2%) felt this to be the case with 37.4 percent strongly agreeing that this was true.

My child gets into less trouble (at home and at school) during their sports season.

Agree	Disagree
<b>76.4%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>

My child is less likely to use tobacco because of involvement in an athletic activity.

Agree	Disagree
<b>68.7%</b>	<b>31.3%</b>

My child is less likely to use alcohol because of involvement in an athletic activity.

Agree	Disagree
<b>71.5%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>

My child is less likely to be involved with illegal drug use as a result of involvement in an athletic activity.

Agree	Disagree
<b>72.9%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>

It is important to me that my child stay tobacco, alcohol, and drug free.

Agree	Disagree
<b>99.2%</b>	<b>.8%</b>

My child is less likely to 'hang around with the wrong crowd' if involved in an athletic activity.

Agree	Disagree
<b>83.2%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>

Parents believe that their children get into less trouble at home and at school during their sports seasons. It is very important to parents that their children not use tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs. They indicate that they think participation in athletic activities has the positive effect of keeping their children from using these illegal substances. Respondents also reported that their children were less likely to associate with 'the wrong crowd' because of involvement in an athletic activity.

### Athletic Participation as Related to Academic Success

Athletic participation in high school is almost always predicated on some level of academic achievement. Unless students maintain academic progress they are not allowed to participate in athletic activities. Because most citizens believe one of the main purposes of school is to promote academic achievement, parental beliefs regarding this relationship were investigated. Items in this strand addressed aspects of academic success

including grades, attitudes about making the honor roll, college aspirations and high school eligibility requirements.

Coaches often hear parents say the reason for not letting their children participate in athletics is the detrimental effects of athletic participation on academic achievement. To explore this topic parents were asked if their child's grades were better during their athletic season than during other times in the school year. Parents were nearly split on this issue. Slightly more parents (56.3) believed that athletic participation did help their child to perform better academically than those who thought athletic participation was detrimental to good grades (43.7%). Parents reported that it was important to them that their child make the honor roll and according to their perceptions, it was important to their child. A great many parents (78.5%) believed that participation in athletic activities had a positive influence on their child's attitude about making good grades. Respondents were split on whether their child's desire to attend college had been influenced by participation (50.4% to 49.6%). Parents responded that it was important to them their child attend college with 93.1 percent agreeing (54.4% strongly agreeing). Only 6.9 percent of parents thought that college was unimportant.

Another issue concerning academic achievement is eligibility rules that require certain progress to be made by students in order to participate in extracurricular athletic activities. Two of the most common rules deal with the number of classes that must be passed the previous semester and minimum grade point averages which must be maintained for participation. The state in which this study was conducted requires that students pass five classes in a seven period day (or three in a four period day) the previous semester to participate on an extracurricular athletic team. Parents were asked if they thought it was fair that students be required to pass five classes in order to participate. Parents expressed agreement (84.1%) with 52.2 percent strongly agreeing students should pass five classes to participate. A second statement determined that 86.4 percent of parents also support a 2.0 grade average for participation. Parental responses to these statements support earlier indications that parents believe academic achievement comes before athletic participation.

My child's grades are better during their athletic season.

Agree	Disagree
<b>56.3%</b>	<b>43.7%</b>

It is important to me that my child makes the honor roll.

Agree	Disagree
<b>81.4%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>

It is important to my child that that they make the honor roll.

Agree	Disagree
<b>75.4%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>

Athletic participation has had a positive influence on my child's attitude about making good grades.

Agree	Disagree
<b>78.6%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>

Athletic participation has encouraged my child to attend college.

Agree	Disagree
<b>50.4%</b>	<b>49.6%</b>

It is important to me that my child attends college.

Agree	Disagree
<b>93.2%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>

It is fair that students must pass (with a 'D' or better) five classes to participate in athletic activities.

Agree	Disagree
<b>84.1%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>

Students should be expected to have a 2.0 grade point average (a 'C') to be able to participate.

Agree	Disagree
<b>86.9%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>

It is clear from the responses that parents have not put athletic interests ahead of academic achievement. It is evidently important to parents that their children make good grades and that they must do so to participate. It is less clear whether or not participation in athletic activities has any influence on actual academic outcomes. While a majority of parents (78.6%) indicated that athletic participation had a positive influence on their child's attitudes about making good grades, only 56.3 percent reported that grades were actually better while their child was participating in an athletic activity. A large proportion of parents indicated that it was

important to them (93.2%) that their children attend college. About half of the parents reported that athletic participation had encouraged their child to attend college while the other half reported that it had not.

### Game Participation

Two of the most contentious issues of team sports concerns who gets to play and the amount of playing time. If expectations of players and parents are not met in regard to these issues, this can lead to unhappiness and frustration for students and parents alike. This may compromise some of the positive benefits of the athletic participation experience.

To investigate this issue parents were asked two questions: one asked if it was important to them that their child have a chance to play in games, and a second if it was important that all team members have a chance to play in games. Not surprisingly, 93.9 percent of parents agreed that it was important that their child play in games. Somewhat more surprising was the response indicating parents thought it important that all team members should have a chance to play in game situations with 77.3 percent of parents being in agreement. On a third question, 88.6 percent of parents expressed the belief that there were situations where it was difficult to allow all to participate.

It is important for me that my child be allowed to participate in games.

Agree	Disagree
<b>93.9%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

It is important for all team members to get a chance to play in games.

Agree	Disagree
<b>77.3%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>

I understand that in some situations it is difficult to let all team members participate.

Agree	Disagree
<b>88.6%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

Parents consider it very important for their child to play in games. Not only is it important that their child get to play, but parents believe that it is important that all team members get to play although they do realize this is often a difficult proposition.

## Parental Support of Extracurricular Athletic Activities

The opportunity for an individual to participate in extracurricular activities may depend on the willingness and level of support provided by their parents. This support is evidenced in many ways. The most important way, although passive in nature, in which parents support their children in extracurricular activities is by allowing them to participate. Other ways could include encouragement, financial assistance to attend sports camps, and by attending games. These are the three possibilities that were explored on the survey.

Most parents indicated that they did encourage their child to do more than is required for the sport in which they participated. Parents often provide sports camp opportunities for their children. Eighty percent of those responding indicated that they did provide such opportunities. Parents strongly agreed (98.5%) that it was their responsibility to attend games in which their child's team played.

I often encourage my child to do more than is required for the sport in which they are participating.

Agree	Disagree
<b>91.6%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>

As a family we often provide sports camp opportunities with our own money.

Agree	Disagree
<b>80.2%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>

I consider it my responsibility to attend the games my child's team plays.

Agree	Disagree
<b>98.5%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

Parents indicate that they do provide encouragement to their children to do more than is required for the sport in which they are participating. Parents also believe it is their responsibility to be in attendance at games in which their child may participate. A great many parents also reported supporting their child's athletic efforts by providing money for sport camp attendance.

## Expectations of Coaches

The final part of the survey instrument attempted to focus on beliefs that parents had formed about coaches or coaching staffs who had worked

with their children during their child's sport season. It was reasoned that information of this nature could be useful to coaches.

### Specific Requirements for Coaches

The requirements to be a high school coach vary greatly between individual schools and specific sports. Three statements gathered parental responses regarding their beliefs about the qualifications of coaches.

Parents strongly believe that individuals need some training to work as a coach with 96.2 percent of parents agreeing that specific training is needed. In the school division from which this sample was taken, no policy exists regarding qualifications for a person to coach. On the issue of whether coaches should be teachers, parents were divided. While most schools try to hire from within their teaching ranks, often this is not possible. It is permissible to hire from outside the school if qualified personnel can not be found within the faculty. This is a very contentious issue for all involved with athletic programs and it is not surprising that about 48 percent of the parents agreed that coaches should be teachers and 52 percent disagreed.

Because of the physical nature of athletics, injuries do occur. Parents almost without exception thought that coaches should be trained in basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation with over 99 percent agreeing that coaches should possess these skills. In the school division used for this research neither CPR or first aid training is a requirement for coaching.

Coaches should be required to have specific training to be a coach.

Agree	Disagree
<b>96.2%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

Coaches should be teachers at the school.

Agree	Disagree
<b>48.1%</b>	<b>51.9%</b>

Coaches should be trained in basic first aid and CPR.

Agree	Disagree
<b>99.2%</b>	<b>.8%</b>

Parents believe that coaches should have certain training to coach including basic first aid and CPR. Although most schools prefer to hire

their coaches from the faculty, this seems to make little difference to over half the parents responding.

### Player and Coach Relationships

Three questions focused on the relationship between coaches and players as perceived by the parents. It was thought by the researcher that an inquiry of this nature would provide some indication of the interpersonal relationship between coaches and players.

Almost all respondents agreed with the statement that their children seemed to get along with their coaches (93.1%). Parents also felt that coaches seemed to have a genuine concern for the individuals on their team (80.5%). When a relationship exists where both parties seem to like one another and an attitude of mutual respect exists, one would suspect that the person in the authority role would have a great deal of influence. Parents seemed to validate this assumption with 86.4 percent of the parents agreeing that their child's behavior was greatly influenced by the coaches.

My child seemed to get along well with their coaches.

Agree	Disagree
<b>93.1%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>

My child's coaches seemed to have a genuine concern for the individuals on their team.

Agree	Disagree
<b>80.5%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>

My child's behavior is greatly affected by the expectations of the coaches.

Agree	Disagree
<b>86.4%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>

### Winning

Parental views regarding the importance of winning was another area deemed worthy of investigation. Coaches often feel pressure to win games. The source of this pressure in some cases is perceived to come from parents. Four assertions were posed in an attempt to determine parental beliefs about winning.

My child's coaches emphasized winning.

Agree	Disagree
<b>72.5%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>



Winning athletic contests is very important to me.

Agree	Disagree
<b>56.2%</b>	<b>43.8%</b>

Winning is very important to my child.

Agree	Disagree
<b>86.4%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>

If I had a choice between winning the game and getting to see my child participate in the game, I would choose winning the game.

Agree	Disagree
<b>46.5%</b>	<b>53.5%</b>

While parents (56.2%) believed winning to be important, parents expressed that it was more important to their children (86.4%) than it was to them. Parents thought coaches (72.5%) fell between the two. It is worth pointing out that as a group, parents were almost neutral on the issue of winning. Parents were slightly more likely to want to see their child play (53.6%) than to see their child's team win (46.5%). This finding has implications for coaches as they face many of the decisions they must make regarding who plays and to what extent.

### Parental Involvement

Parents were asked to respond to statements that were intended to indicate their level of involvement with their child's athletic team and the coaches of that team. Parents were asked to base their responses to these statements on their perception of how coaches behaved as a staff rather than on the behavior of the head coach or any of the assistants.

Parents for the most part agreed (66.4%) that coaches were approachable and concerned about what they thought. However, 33.6 percent expressed disagreement. When presented with a statement to determine if coaches provided a means by which parents could communicate with them, 70.8 percent of those surveyed agreed that they did have a means to communicate with their child's coach. This left almost 30 percent indicating that they felt they had no means to communicate with the coaches. When asked to respond to whether their child's coach used newsletters as a means of communication a majority (69.2) indicated that they did not. Only about 30 percent indicated that some form of written

communication was provided to them by their child's coaches. This statement was followed by a statement intended to determine if parents would like to receive such communication. Parents indicated (90.8 percent) that they would like to receive written communication such as newsletters about the team.

Other statements in this strand attempted to determine if parents were satisfied with their level of involvement with their child's team. Parents were presented with statements to determine if they were allowed to be involved at their desired level or if they would have liked to have been more involved with their child's team. The majority of parents responded that they were involved at the level that they desired (70.2%) while almost 30 percent expressed that they were not allowed to be involved at their desired level. Whether these parents wanted increased or decreased involvement was investigated by asking if they would have liked to have been more involved in their child's athletic experience. Parents were split in their responses with 51.9 percent desiring more involvement and 48.1 percent content with their level of involvement.

My child's coaches were approachable and were concerned about what I thought as a parent.

Agree	Disagree
<b>66.4%</b>	<b>33.6%</b>

My child's coaches provided a means by which I could communicate with them if I felt it was necessary. Examples of this would be providing telephone numbers or holding practices where parents were encouraged to attend.

Agree	Disagree
<b>70.8%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>

My child's coaches communicated with me through newsletters about the team.

Agree	Disagree
<b>30.8%</b>	<b>69.2%</b>

I would very much like to receive news about the team by a newsletter.

Agree	Disagree
<b>90.8%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>

My child's coaches allowed me to be involved with the team at the level at which I desired.

Agree	Disagree
<b>70.2%</b>	<b>29.8%</b>

I would have liked to have been more involved in my child's athletic experience.

Agree	Disagree
<b>51.9%</b>	<b>48.1%</b>

From these findings it is clear that a substantial minority of parents do not feel comfortable with their child's coaches (33.6%) nor do they feel they have a means of communicating with their child's coaches (29.2%). A large percentage of parents (90.8%) report that they would be interested in newsletters about their child's team although few (30.8%) actually receive such correspondence. Although about seventy percent of parents report that they were involved with their child's team at their desired level, responding to a subsequent statement, 51.9 percent agreed that they would have liked to have been more involved.

### Coaches Influence and Team Dynamics

Parents were asked to respond to statements about the influence of coaches on their child. The purpose of this strand was to gain perspective about how parents perceive their child's relationship with their coach and to gain insight from parental perspectives into how rules and decisions should be made which affect their child and the team.

Parents were asked if their child's behavior was greatly affected by their coaches. Slightly more than 86 percent of those responding agreed that their child's behavior was affected by the expectations of their coaches. Almost 22 percent strongly agreed that this was the case. Direction of this influence was sought by asking parents to respond to the statement that their child's coaches had been a positive influence for their child. Again, a majority of parents felt that this was the case (73.4%). Not only did parents indicate that they thought coaches had been a positive influence, 98.5 percent of parents thought that this was a coaching responsibility. By understanding this expectation, coaches may better understand the importance of their behavior to parents.

Parents were asked to respond to whether they thought their child's coaches worked hard to provide a positive experience through athletics. Parents agreed with this statement as a group with only about 22 percent disagreeing.

According to the results of this survey treating children on a team fairly by establishing team rules and holding all members of that team to those rules is very important to parents. Nearly all parents thought that this was the case reflected by 97.7 percent agreement with 68.2 percent of parents expressing that they strongly agreed with this concept. Because team sports usually are conducted in a way that optimizes the possibility of team success, it is the position of many coaches that decisions must be guided by what reflects the best interest of the team. When parents were asked to respond to this premise they also agreed that decisions must be made based on what is in the best interest of the team.

My child's behavior is greatly affected by the expectations of the coaches.

Agree	Disagree
<b>86.4%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>

My child's coaches have been a positive influence in the life of my child.

Agree	Disagree
<b>73.4%</b>	<b>26.6%</b>

It is the responsibility of my child's coaches to be a positive role models for my child.

Agree	Disagree
<b>98.5%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

I believe that my child's coaches work hard to provide a positive experience for my child through participation in athletics.

Agree	Disagree
<b>78.0%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>

It is important to me that my child's coaches establish specific rules and expectations and hold all team members accountable.

Agree	Disagree
<b>97.7%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

Coaches must make decisions based on what is best for the welfare of the team.

Agree	Disagree
<b>92.4%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>

Parents have indicated in this strand that they view coaches as having a great deal of influence over their child and for a great many (73.4%) they consider this influenced positive. Parents agreed (98.5%) that coaches had the responsibility to be role models for their children. Parents agreed (with 62.8% strongly agreeing) that rules should be

established and that all team members be held accountable. Parents also agreed (92.4%) that decisions made by coaches should be based on what is best for the welfare of the team.

### Differences Between Parental Expectations for Male and Female Athletes

An area of interest to this researcher was whether or not differences existed between parental expectations for female athletes and male athletes. Differences between male and female athletes have been documented in a number of studies (Andre and Holland, 1987). It is possible that differences between male and female athletes may in some way be the result of differences in parental attitudes toward athletes of different genders. To investigate this possibility, sports participated in by males (football, basketball, and baseball) were separated from those participated in by females (basketball, volleyball, and softball) and responses determined. Responses were then compared and differences noted between parents of male athletes (POMA) and parents of female athletes (POFA). A complete reporting of results can be found in Appendix H.

Demographic data for parents of male athletes and parents of female athletes revealed mostly similarities with few differences. Mothers of both male and female athletes were more likely to return the survey (56.6% and 59.2% respectively) and most of the returns were from individuals who were married (89.0% and 87.8%). Both parents of male and female athletes reported that they more likely than not had played high school sports (60.5% and 65.3%) and that their children were starters on their respective teams (74.1% and 75.5%).

There were two exceptions. Parents of male athletes (63.4%) constituted a higher percentage of returned surveys than parents of female athletes (36.6%). This difference is explained by a greater number of male students who participated in athletic activities. Boys constituted 121 survey participants while girls had 77. When this difference was taken into account, the return rate for was only 3.1 percent higher for parents of male athletes. One other difference was in reported incomes. In the \$20,001 to \$40,000 bracket, there were a greater percentage of parents of female athletes (28.3%) than parents of male athletes (14.8%), and in the \$40,001

to 60,000 bracket more parents of male athletes (34.6%) than parents of female athletes (10.9%).

Of the 52 statements on the survey, only eight showed differences of greater than ten percent for the parents of males versus females while the average difference between all items was 5.0 percent.

Three of the survey items that demonstrated differences of greater than ten percent came from strand six that focused on parental beliefs about coaches. Two of the three items dealt with parental involvement with their child’s team. These findings suggest that there may be some differences between beliefs and expectations of parents of boys and girls and that coaches may interact differently with parents based on whether the participants are male or female. Parents of male athletes were more likely to indicate that they were not allowed to be involved with their son’s athletic experience (34.9%) more than parents of female athletes (20.8%). Parents of female athletes expressed that their daughter’s coaches were less approachable and cared less about what they thought (40.8%) than parents of male athletes (29.3%).

Within this strand the topic of winning was investigated. Three questions were asked about winning. When parents were asked if winning was important to them (as parents) and if winning was important to their children, very small differences between parents of males and the parents of females (1.3% and 1.0% respectively) were noted. However, when parents were asked if their child’s coach emphasized winning, parents of females were 11.3 percent more likely to agree than parents of male athletes.

My child’s coaches allowed me to be involved with the team at the level at which I desired.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>65.1%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>POFA more likely to agree Difference - 14.1%</b>
POFA	<b>79.2%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	

My child’s coaches were approachable and were concerned about what I thought as a parent.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>29.3%</b>	<b>POMA more likely to agree Difference - 11.5%</b>
POFA	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	

My child's coaches emphasized winning.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>68.3%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>POFA more likely to agree</b> <b>Difference - 11.3%</b>
POFA	<b>79.6%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	

Parents of male and female athletes displayed a difference in terms of their perception of how much they are allowed to be involved with their child's team and to the extent to which they find coaches approachable and concerned about their opinions. Differences also exist on how much parents of male and female athletes believe their child's coach emphasizes winning.

Three statements from strand one also produced differences greater than ten percent. Strand one dealt with athletic participation and components of behavior that reflect self esteem. Parents were asked to respond to whether or not participation encouraged their child to try new activities. Parents of female athletes agreed to this statement (89.8%) more frequently than parents of male athletes (78.0%) for a difference of 11.8 percent. Parents of female athletes were also more in agreement with the statement that their child was more satisfied with school during their sports season (10.7% difference). The last statement in this strand to display a notable difference was whether parents believed peer pressure to participate in athletics existed for their child. Parents of male athletes were more likely to agree that this existed for their child than parents of female athletes (10.6% difference).

Participation in athletics motivates my child to try new activities.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>POFA more likely to agree</b> <b>Difference - 11.8%</b>
POFA	<b>89.8%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	

My child seems to be more satisfied with school while participating in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>POFA more likely to agree</b> <b>Difference - 10.7%</b>
POFA	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	

There is social or peer pressure for my child to participate in athletic activities.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>49.4%</b>	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>POMA more likely to agree</b> <b>Difference - 10.6%</b>
POFA	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	

Differences do seem to exist in terms of the way parents of male athletes and parents of female athletes perceive the ability of athletics to motivate their children to participate in new activities and to increase satisfaction with school during athletic seasons. Parents of female athletes report less peer pressure to participate in athletics than parents of male athletes.

Differences of greater than ten percent were also found with two other items from the survey. Parents of female athletes were more likely to disagree that academic progress was the primary responsibility of the school and that athletics were of secondary importance (17.6% difference). Parents of female athletes were also more prone to agree that it was important that all team members get to play in games (10.2% difference).

Academic progress of each student should be the primary responsibility of schools and athletics are of secondary importance.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>92.6%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>POMA more likely to agree Difference - 17.6%</b>
POFA	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	

It is important for all team members to get a chance to play in games.

	Agree	Disagree	
POMA	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>POFA more likely to agree Difference - 10.2%</b>
POFA	<b>83.7%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	

### Differences Between Schools

Three high schools from the same school division participated in the survey. Data were disaggregated by school and comparisons were then made. A complete reporting of results can be found in Appendix I.

Demographic data revealed great similarities between the three schools. In all schools mothers were more likely to return the survey than fathers but the percent difference between mother/father returns varied between the three schools (4.9%, 23.2%, and 20.0%). Respondents were usually married (85.0%, 92.9%, and 85.7%) and had played high school sports (65%, 56.4%, and 68.6%) as high school students respectively. Survey return rates for each of the three schools were similar showing only a 1.1 percent difference.

Comparison of responses to statements between schools showed a greater degree of variability than revealed in the comparison of parents of



male and female athletes. Whereas the mean difference for each statement of the survey was 5.0 percent when comparing parental responses, the mean difference for schools was 11.2 percent. Twenty-eight of the 52 survey statements showed differences of more than ten percent while ten statements showed differences of or greater than 15 percent. Three items showed differences of greater than 20 percent. Accordingly, differences that were 15 percent or more will be described.

To frame the differences which occurred between schools, it is of value to consider that one survey statement produced a 38 percent greater difference than any other item on the survey.

As discussed previously, many athletic programs do little to let parents know about their teams and the individuals who participate on these teams. This may serve to distance parents from their child’s athletic experience. One possible way that coaches can communicate with parents is through newsletters about their team. One survey statement ask parents to indicate if coaches used this method to communicate with them about their child’s team. Over 92 percent of the parents from school 1 agreed that their child’s coaches communicated with them through newsletters while only 26.8 percent from school 2 and 27.3 percent from school 3 agreed. This produced differences of 65.9% and 65.4% respectively.

My child's coaches communicated with me through newsletters about the team.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	
School 2	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>73.2%</b>	
School 3	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>Difference - 65.9%</b>

It is interesting to then note that of the remaining nine items that showed differences of greater than 15 percent between schools, this one school had either the lowest or highest percent of parents who agreed with these statements. This finding will be used as a reference point to relate the subsequent differences found in school comparisons. Also, differences will be grouped in reference to the strand from which they came.

From the same strand as the statement regarding newsletters was a statement that looked closer at parental involvement and produced a difference greater than 15 percent. When parents were asked to respond

to whether or not they were allowed to be involved with their child’s team at their desired level, parents from school 3 were 19 percent more likely to agree than parents from school 1. It is of interest that although a particular school was much more likely to communicate by the use of newsletters, this did not necessarily have a bearing on whether or not the parents of that school felt they were allowed to be involved with the team at their desired level.

My child’s coaches allowed me to be involved with the team at the level at which I desired.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>63.4%</b>	<b>36.6%</b>	
School 2	<b>67.9%</b>	<b>32.1%</b>	
School 3	<b>82.4%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>Difference - 19.0%</b>

Of the eight remaining items that displayed 15 percent or more difference, three strands included two survey statements that met this criterion.

Strand one attempted to identify parental beliefs about the relationship between athletic participation and components of student behavior that reflect self-esteem. Two statements from this strand showed greater than a 15 percent difference between schools.

Parents from school 1 were 15.9 percent more likely to agree with the statement that their child’s confidence was improved by athletic participation than parents from school 2. When asked to respond to a statement about whether or not they believed that there was peer pressure for their child to participate in sports, parents from school 1 were 16.1 percent more likely to agree than parents from school 3 and 15 percent more likely to agree than parents from school 2.

I feel that my child’s confidence was improved by athletic participation.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	
School 2	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	
School 3	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>Difference - 15.9%</b>

There is social or peer pressure for my child to participate in athletic activities.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>	
School 2	<b>41.1%</b>	<b>58.9%</b>	
School 3	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>Difference - 16.1%</b>

Responses from school 1 indicate that parents from this particular school believe that their child's confidence was more affected in a positive way than parents from either school 2 or school 3. Also school 1 parents reported greater perceived peer pressure for their children to participate in athletics than school 2 or 3. The effect that newsletters had on these responses is difficult to determine but the communication provided by newsletters may serve to increase parent's trust in their school's athletic program to promote positive changes in confidence. Newsletters may possibly promote athletic programs to the point that parents believe children want to be involved with these programs.

Strand two focused on how parents perceive athletics to affect their child's ability to make responsible personal decisions. Two statements in this strand demonstrated differences of 15 percent or more. Parents from school 1 were more inclined to agree that their child got into less trouble at home and at school during their sports season than parents from school 2 (19.3%). This pattern was repeated when parents were presented with a statement to determine if their child was less likely to use tobacco because of involvement in athletics. Parents from school 1 were more prone to agree that they were less likely to use tobacco than parents representing school 2 (18%) and more likely to agree than parents from school 3 (15.8%). This same pattern was also seen with statements concerning the ability of athletic participation to decrease the likelihood of alcohol and illegal drug use (14.4% difference for each respectively).

My child gets into less trouble (at home and at school) during their sports season.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	
School 2	<b>68.5%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	
School 3	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>Difference - 19.3%</b>

My child is less likely to use tobacco because of involvement in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	
School 2	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	
School 3	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>Difference - 18.0%</b>

Again, parents from school 1 which used newsletters to a greater degree than the other two schools were more likely to agree that participation in athletics had an influence on their child's ability to make responsible personal decisions. Other factors certainly could influence these response differences, however it is worthy of consideration that increased coach to parent correspondence may have played a role in these outcomes.

Several statements were posed to parents about coaches. The statements reflected components of athletic participation that occur in athletics as well as components of relationships between coaches, players, and parents. One area that reflected differences between schools was the importance of winning to the various parties involved. Parents from school 1 were more likely to report that coaches emphasized winning (85.0%) than parents from school 2 (57.1%). Parents from school 3 were similar to school 1 (82.9%). When parents from the three schools were asked if winning was important to them school 1 parents were more likely to agree than parents from school 3 (15.9%) and more likely to agree than parents from school 2 (13.2%). A third question on winning ask parents about how important winning was to their child. Parents from all schools agreed that winning was important (90.2%, 83.9%, and 85.7% respectively) reflecting only a 6.3% difference from the highest to the lowest response.

My child's coaches emphasized winning.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	
School 2	<b>57.1%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	
School 3	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>Difference - 27.9%</b>

Winning athletic contests is very important to me.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>65.9%</b>	<b>34.1%</b>	
School 2	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	
School 3	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>Difference - 15.9%</b>

Winning is very important to my child.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>90.2%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	
School 2	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	
School 3	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>Difference - 6.3%</b>

School 1 parents were more likely to agree than parents from the other two schools that winning was important to both their child’s coaches, themselves, and their children. While differences of over 15 percent were seen with the first two items, the importance of winning to the children was perceived to be very similar.

Two survey items stood by themselves within a strand as reflecting differences between schools. One dealt with the perceived work ethic of coaches and the other with the importance of academic progress of students compared to the importance of athletics. Parents from school 1 were more likely to agree that their coaches worked hard to provide a positive athletic experience than parents from school 2 (16.4%). Concerning academic progress being of primary importance and athletics of secondary importance, school 1 and school 2 parents were more likely to agree than school 3 parents (21.9% and 20.3% respectively).

I believe that my child’s coaches work hard to provide a positive experience for my child through participation in athletics.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	
School 2	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	
School 3	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>Difference - 16.4%</b>

Academic progress of each student should be the primary responsibility of schools and athletics are of secondary importance.

	Agree	Disagree	
School 1	<b>92.5%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	
School 2	<b>90.9%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	
School 3	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>Difference - 21.9%</b>

Parental beliefs about coaching differed between the three schools involved in the survey. It is impossible within the limits of this study to determine why these differences exist. School culture, individual school rules, and the parents, coaches, and athletes who make up these programs all are sure to have some influence. It is also of interest to

speculate as to whether such practices as communication through newsletters changes the way parents perceive the programs in which their children participate.

### Survey Comments

Parents were asked to add anything about their child's athletic experience in a space provide on the survey. Thirty-eight of the 132 respondents made comments. Comments were classified by their substance as to being part of one of the six strands embedded into the survey or by topic outside the existing structure. A complete listing of all survey comments can be found in Appendix J. Excerpts from these comments will be highlighted in this section.

Five comments were made by parents regarding the first strand of statements that focused on the relationship between athletic participation and components of their child's behavior that reflect self-esteem. The first comment reflected the impact that a coach could have on a child's self-esteem. One parent said,

"Sometimes I think teachers and coaches don't realize what a huge influence they have on the lives of the children. I think they need to keep in mind what impact a careless (thoughtless) remark makes."

A parent commented that they had seen a child's self-esteem affected by their coach.

"I have seen many excellent athletes just pass by because the coaches had no interest in them. I have seen the self esteem of individuals lowered simply because a coach could not handle his job. Whether a player is the best or not, if they are part of a team, they still need encouragement as we all do in any phase of our life."

Another parent commented about the belief that positive encouragement and motivation was what worked with children.

"I would have liked to have seen more encouragement and positive motivation. My daughter will go 100(times) as far with words of encouragement than words of anger yelling".

These two comments suggest that coaches do have tremendous influence and that positive encouragement is preferred to statements of a

negative nature when attempting to motivate athletes. Another parent wrote about excessive verbal comments of a negative nature and the effect that this coaching behavior has on children.

“I am strongly against coaches who yell and scream at the players during games as a motivative factor. I fell [sic] this should only be done during practice an in locker room at half time. Intimidating a child by embassment [sic] in front of friends and family is the worst motivating tool a coach can use. This will only destroy a kid confidence and self-esteme[sic].”

Along with echoing the same sentiment about negative criticism, one parent went so far as to assert that it is a coaches responsibility to promote self-esteem.

“As a parent I feel that it is each coaches job to find out what each student’s best assets are and work on that to make each individual better in that area and make them feel good about themselves. It is very hard for even the best athletes to be told that they should be more like another person. You can tear down the best athlete with negative statements. It is very important to my child that she be accepted for the skills that she has to offer the team. If a coach does not show any confidence in her then she seems to lose her own self confidence.”

Parents provided two comments that directly related to strand two of the survey instrument. Strand two investigated the relationship between athletic participation and a child’s ability to make responsible personal decisions. One parent expressed the opinion that athletics have the ability to keep children out of trouble.

“This has nothing to do with your last question, but in my opinion if a child would be required to join a sport from middle school on you may get less troubled kids.”

A second parent offered,

“I do think if a child is kept busy they are more likely to stay out of trouble.”

Strand three of the survey investigated parental beliefs about the relationship between academic performance and educational aspirations

and participation in athletics. Three parents made brief comments that related to this area. One parent said,

“Athletics gives my children motivation for academics. Coaches need to push grades more.”

Another suggested that while not everyone is of equal academic ability, everyone needs motivation.

“As for grade averages not everybodys a genius [sic] but that doesn't mean they don't have ability or to give up on them.”

A third parent thought that participation in sports should be considered a reward for academic achievement.

“I also teach my child that she plays sports as a privilege for making good grades.”

None of the comments reflected on the relationship between athletic participation and educational aspirations.

Strand four attempted to determine parental beliefs about their child's participation in athletic contests. The topic of playing in game situations drew eight comments, most of which reflected the idea that everyone needs an opportunity to play.

“My son's experience through football has been great. He tried out basketball this year and we were disappointed. He tried very hard, but the coach refused to rotate the boys. He left the starters in the game. My child bring in several fans, which means we travel from (from several different locations) and plus it costs to get into the game. Then all we do is sit and wait for my son to get into the game”.

Another followed in the same vein,

“My child was not given a chance to show how much she could help the team.”

One parent went into detail as to why playing time should be given to reserves whenever possible.



“Some coaches are too quick to pre-determine who their team is and alienate players so they quit or get bad attitudes. Keeping an open mind and playing everyone early in the season in non-district games may provide you with some surprises - if you are looking and open-minded. Parents need to be supportive to the situation as a whole, not the one. But the coach needs to be flexible. Even Michael Jordan gets out of a game for a break. If a reserve knows they will get 2 to 4 minutes a half, they will be more ready and able to prepare. If they have to play more due to fouls or injury, they will be better prepared and will show it. A team is only as good as the ‘last player’ on the bench. If you only have 5 or 6 ready to play, you are opening yourself up for problems. A coach needs to have everyone ready, even though they go 7 or 8 deep on a bench.”

This same basic sentiment was also expressed by another parent. One slight difference in this comment occurs when the parent suggests that in certain situations athletes understand not getting an opportunity to play.

“I think the coaches focus on winning but at the expense of just playing the ‘good’ players. Then the ones that are not so good never get playing time. If you want depth in a team you have to let everyone play, so to gain experience to become a good player. This was not happening at (name of school omitted). I am not speaking of just football. It is obvious [sic] in other sports at (name of school omitted). They just play their favorites win or lose. I can sort of understand in a close game, even the kids understand, but in a lop sided game everyone plays.”

The ideal that everyone needs a chance was again echoed in this comment.

“I would like to see the young people that don’t have much talent play instead of the ones that have talent playing all the time. They all need a chance instead of the ones with the money always playing.”

It is apparent from these comments that some parents are concerned about a lack of playing time for the lesser skilled athletes on a team. However there is an opposition to the mind set that everyone deserves an opportunity to play as seen in the following comment.

“I am glad you are asking these types of questions. I believe there are some parents that just do not understand. Athletic competition after 8,9,10 years old is just that, ‘competition’ not a place to just ‘get to play’. If

someone needs to see their child play for the sake of getting to play, send them to the park! or let them compete for a position and earn it!"

One final comment suggested the ability of at least one parent to see the issue of playing time complicated by the need for team success.

"If I had a choice between winning and seeing my son play, I would rather see him play. But from the coaches point of view, I wouldn't blame him for not playing my son if it would have cost the team the game".

Strand five attempted to identify parental beliefs about their role in support of their child's athletic endeavors. Except for one comment (previously presented) that alluded to attending games and not getting to see their child play, none of the comments fell into this strand for classification.

Strand six contained the most statements of the survey (19) and received the most comments from parents (12). Strand six focused on parental beliefs concerning their expectations of coaches who work with their children. The comments were divided between three issues; the issue of fairness and equal accountability for participants, coaches as role models and exhibiting proper behavior, and the necessary qualifications for coaches.

Five parents made comments about the issue of fairness and equal accountability for all participants. A parent stated,

"All team members need to be held equally accountable, even the 'stars' of the team and should be released if they do not follow rules/expectations."

Another parent who put their comments into a list had the first three items related to this category.

"Coaches need to: 1. Not have favorites. 2. Not determine who plays by how much money a parent/parents donate. 3. Not have double standards."

A third parent made this well thought out statement which covered several areas of concern but focused primarily on fairness.

“There was a marked partiality shown by coaches to team members. This caused a significant barrier to team playing. A team needs to be a team for the group good. Not the good of a few select students. Sports are to teach children how to work together not to learn prejudice, negative peer pressure, or inappropriate behaviors by adults who are supposed to be role models.”

Two parents countered the lack of fairness perspective with these two comments.

“The coaches treated all the children equally whether they were starters or bench warmers. They tried to make them all good players and develop what skills they have.”

Also from another parent,

“I am grateful for the football program at (name of school omitted). There were no favorites. Everybody got a chance and was judged on his ability.”

A second issue that appeared in this strand was that of the qualifications of coaches. Of the four comments made about coaching qualifications, all were of the opinion that the coaches were not as qualified as the parents would have liked. The following are the statements offered by parents.

“I don’t agree on coaches being a school teacher. Since entering the (a specific district) we have stumbled around like we are lost. (Specific school) has in the past as in the present time good, solid, talented athletes. We need coaches who know the game and who have played the game to be competitive.”

And,

“My son’s experience with athletics in this particular school has shown me that they are not interested in expanding the department beyond its existing point. I feel that coaches should be hired that can bring in new life, not ones that have learned from the old coaches at the same school.”

Another parent felt that a lack of coaching experience was a problem.

“The (name of sport omitted) coaches at (name of school omitted) did not have as much experience that I think they should have. Not enough

discipline as should have been. Not enough exercise workouts like for example: running, stretching.”

Lastly a male parent offered this pointed comment regarding coaching of his child and the difference (as he saw it) between male and female coaches.

“For the most part the athletic program did not have the most qualified person coaching my child’s program. Coaches as a whole are a group of selfish egotistical men. Most only think of their own sport, often getting on a child’s case if they do not maintain a level of conditioning equal to that sport. It should be realized that many athletes are multi-sport athletes and conditioning for one sport is not right for another sport. A remarkable difference in my opinion is the attitude and compassion of female coaches. They have more patience for the game and the athlete than their male counterparts.”

The third issue in this strand dealt with the idea of whether coaches should be role models for their children. Of the three parents who made comments about this, all were in agreement that coaches should be role models. Parents also expressed concern that in some cases this was not happening.

“The coaches should be an example for our children. We have coaches at (school name omitted) that smoke, drink, and swear at our kids. This is not a good example. We have some that lose as badly as the students. They need to teach sportsmanship. Our kids do not learn from our coaches not to swear, not to drink, and not to smoke. This is sad.”

Another parent felt as if the coaches attitude about the season had a detrimental effect on her child.

“I feel the coach was very frustrated this year. I am not sure why. But my son was affected by his coaching. He too became frustrated. He has always loved baseball. He has never stopped loving baseball but twice he wanted to quit the team. We encouraged him to stick it out, but he did not join the summer league.”

Although this comments does not speak about the coach being a role model specifically, it is apparent that the coach through his actions affected

the attitude of this one player in a negative way. Lastly, a parent described past experiences of her son and the idea that coaches should be leaders.

“My son’s experience this year was generally positive. However, in the past we have had some horrible experiences with coaches who have been less mature than my son. While I expect my child to be part of the team and follow the rules, the coach does not ‘own’ his body and mind. Part of participating in a sport means learning to make decisions. Sometimes that decision may not be the best one. However, in those cases I expect the coach to be a leader - not only a ‘punisher’.”

Parents also made a number of comments that fell outside the strand organization of the survey instrument. These comments were reviewed and placed into categories based on the theme of the comment.

Comments regarding sportsmanship were made by three parents. One parent was correct regarding the content of the survey when they noted,

“Good sportsmanship was not mentioned in your survey - coaches don’t seem to think it is important.”

Another parent addressed specific behaviors which reflect poor sportsmanship.

“Language and the throwing of equipment at games needs to be addressed and dealt with.”

Finally a parent pointed out that the behavior of some coaches did not meet his/her expectation and contributed to a lack of sportsmanship.

“We have some (coaches) that lose as badly as the students. They need to teach sportsmanship.”

Support of those who participate was another theme into which comments fell. The term support took several forms. In one comment a parent made the observation that parents could be of considerable influence to an athlete especially if they were not supportive of the coach.

“Parents are a coaches best friend or worst enemy - If the parents leave the game bad mouthing the coach, then the child will have no respect for

or listen to the coach. Parents need to be supportive to the situation as a whole, not the one.”

Support for female athletic programs was the concern of this parent.

“Also I would like to see GIRLS be taken seriously. We have a great turnout for games the girls play great and they need the CREDIT and pat on the back.”

Support was thought to be lacking in one particular school from the faculty and staff as reflected by this comment.

“I do wish that the coaches and the players would have had more staff and faculty support.”

Another comment addressed the need for coaches to be flexible.

“Coaches and other teachers at school (ie: band directors) need to be more flexible and more together so children can do as much as possible- at a small school this is very important. Children trying to do 2 sports at once need to have practice schedule for both, but coaches can be flexible (if a child plays golf and runs cross country he should be able to run on own after practicing golf).”

Another parent spoke to the need for discipline in athletics.

“I think discipline as well should be stressed more. It seems now days that the athletes tell the coaches what they are going to do. I try to teach my child respect for discipline at home but I think that it is lacking in sports.

Finally one comment reflected a view that parents, coaches, and players could all agree with,

“I feel there should be better trained ‘Ref’s’ at the games.”

These comments reflect some of the varied concerns that parents have for their sons and daughters who participate in athletics. While some are not expressed as articulately as others, all seem sincere and focus on issues that exist in athletics, many of which were addressed in the survey. Coaches would be well served to provide parents with a means of

communicating comments such as these to them and use them in determining direction for and concerns about their programs.

## Chapter 5 Discussion and Implications

### Summary

High school athletic programs exist in most schools today, yet very little is known about what parents expect from such programs. This research was undertaken with the intention of answering some of the questions about what parents of high school athletes want these programs to be for their children. To conduct this research three schools within a single school division were selected to participate. Information from parents was gathered by mail survey. Of the 198 families who were mailed surveys, 84 responded with at least one returned survey for a return rate of 42.4 percent.

These results provide insight into what parents expect from high school athletic programs and the coaches who are responsible for their administration. By attempting to understand data from this research coaches and administrators may be better prepared to understand and effectively deal with the complex nature of high school athletics and interactions between coaches and parents.

### Discussion Regarding Demographics

The survey was more often returned by married parents (88.5%) who reported earning more than \$40,000.00 each year (74.1), and considered their child a starter on their respective team (73.5%). Both the reported marital status (88.5% reported being married) and income level exceeded what is thought to be the average for the county where this research was conducted. Several possible explanations exist for this finding. With a return rate of 42.3% it is possible that those who choose to participate by returning the survey were more affluent. A second possibility is that above average income allows students to participate in athletics in a way not possible for children from lower income families. Not only may this affluence allow certain children an advantage as far as participating, it may also afford them more opportunities to play in game situations. With 73.5 percent of the parents who responded to the survey considering their children starters, the question arises about whether income level and support provided by a two parent family are related to greater participation.



It is interesting to note that 80.2 percent of the parents agreed that they provide sports camp opportunities with their own money. This opportunity to improve skill level could contribute to children starting on their team rather than being considered a reserve.

Coaches and athletic administrators should be aware of the possibility that socioeconomic status can influence students ability to participate and limit their athletic opportunity. Coaches should be sensitive to issues where money or home responsibilities stand in the way of student participation and develop ways of minimizing these issues from preventing participation.

### Discussion Regarding Beliefs About Athletic Participation

Parents overwhelmingly believe that participation is good for their children. Further, they believe that the experience gained through athletic participation could not have been gained through other programs offered by the school. To the parent(s) of a participating child, the athletic programs in which their child participates are as important as the academic program offered by the school in developing their child as a total person. It is also important to parents that their child be successful in both their athletic and academic pursuits. However, parents believe that academic progress of each student is the primary responsibility of schools. Coaches should be aware of this finding and work to promote academic success of their athletes. Parents believe that coaches have a great effect on the behavior of their child. A coach who uses this influence to promote both positive academic behaviors as well as positive athletic behaviors is evidently supporting the wishes of parents and insuring the eligibility of their children. Coaches can accomplish this through a variety of means. From simply talking about the importance of the academic curriculum and achievement during their contact with students to monitoring grades and providing study halls and assistance when help is needed, coaches can help students to be successful in school and win support from parents in the process.

### Discussion Regarding Beliefs About Self-Esteem

Parents agreed that participation in high school athletics positively influenced components of their child's behavior that would increase self-

esteem. Confidence, satisfaction with school, and positive recognition were all thought by parents to improve with athletic participation. Because of the influence that a coach has with their players, it is important that coaches try to promote these positive outcomes by being positive themselves. As one parent commented,

“Sometimes I think teachers and coaches don’t realize what a huge influence they have on the lives of children. I think they need to keep in mind what impact a careless (thoughtless) remark makes.”

Self-esteem is not static and may be especially fragile during the teenage years. Coaches must work toward providing a safe environment not only in a physical sense, but safe in the psychological sense as well. This concept was stated well in the following comment made by a parent.

“It is very hard for even the best athletes to be told that they should be more like another person. You can tear down the best athlete with negative statements. It is very important to my child that she be accepted for the skills that she has to offer the team. If a coach does not show any confidence in her then she seems to lose her own self confidence. A lot of positive and less negative would be an improvement.”

Athletes must feel supported by their teammates and their coaches. Athletic events are often full of intensely emotional moments. Although competition is often said to bring out the best in people (usually the ones who are winning) it can also bring out the worst. Failure to establish a supportive environment may decrease the potential benefits of athletic participation. Parents may become frustrated when their children’s self-esteem is negatively affected through their participation when they expect positive outcomes. Coaches can be proactive and prevent these situations by establishing team rules and coaching guidelines within their program that discourage negativism at any level. Athletic Directors can establish school wide guidelines in this same vein.

Coaches can also be careful not to overemphasize the importance of one player over another. Players may get the unintentional message that their role on a team is not as important as the role that is occupied by the leading scorer or player with the most home runs. If this occurs the confidence and self-esteem of some athletes may be affected and the

ability of the team to perform optimally may be compromised. A similar phenomena can happen to all team members when coaches overemphasize winning. If coaches perceive winning as the only goal, failure to win may have a devastating effect on team moral. Many times winning is not possible due to factors out of the realm of control of the players and coach. By setting goals that are less dependent on others, players may experience confidence building events and improvements even in losses.

By being attentive to this parental expectation of fostering self-esteem among their players, coaches can construct positive learning environments that instill self-esteem in their athletes. This may possibly reduce parental criticisms of this nature and the associated stress experienced by coaches of dealing with unhappy parents.

#### Discussion Regarding Athletic Participation and Responsible Behavior

Statements in this strand of the survey ask parents to respond to whether or not they believed that athletic participation affected their child's ability to behave in a responsible manner. Specifically parents were asked to respond to statements about their child getting into trouble both at home and at school, using alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, hanging around with the wrong crowd, and the bearing that athletic participation had on these issues. A sizable majority (mean = 74.5%) of parents indicated by their responses that they believe their child behaved in a more responsible manner on these issues because of athletic involvement.

If parents believe athletic programs have this effect on their children, it is important for coaches to respect this belief and structure programs to encourage abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. Coaches who openly discourage their athletes from using illegal substances are following the wishes of parents. A step beyond this may be the establishment of team and school rules that forbid illegal substance use by athletes.

Not only must coaches set high standards in word but in deed as well. Related to this issue is coaches serving as role models for their athletes. Parents agreed (98.5%) that it was a coaching responsibility to be a positive role model for athletes. If coaches use or condone the use of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs and this is known by the players, the

effectiveness of the coach in having a positive influence on these issues is probably greatly diminished. With coaching comes a certain degree of public notoriety. Coaches should be cautious of their behavior and not give others reasons to question their character and ability to be an effective leader in this realm.

### Discussion Regarding Athletic Participation as Related to Academic Success

As previously noted it is important to parents that their children are successful academically. This strand of inquiry investigated issues related to academic success and the role that athletics play in motivating students while in high school and subsequently whether or not athletic participation encourages them to attend college.

Parents were nearly split on the issue of whether or not grades were better during their child's athletic season. For some, athletic participation may provide structure and discipline that are needed for academic achievement. For others, participating in athletics may take away from time that otherwise may be devoted to academics. Coaches should be aware of these differences in individuals on their own team and convey to athletes that academic pursuits come first. Many coaches would not support the idea of allowing a player to miss practice to study or prepare a project, but if we are to heed the belief by parents that academic success should be the first priority of schools, coaches have little choice. Coaches should also be aware of placing extreme time burdens on their athletes. Colleges already have rules that govern how much time athletes can spend with their sport each week. High school coaches should organize and make known to their athletes practices schedules on a weekly or monthly basis so athletes can foresee conflicts between academic and athletic concerns and plan accordingly.

Parents of athletes believe their children want to excel academically. Parents report that it is important for them and important to their child that they make the honor roll. They also believe that athletic participation influenced their child's attitude in a positive way about making good grades. While parents reported that it is important that their children attend college, they were split about whether or not athletic participation encouraged their children to attend college. Coaches should be aware of

these findings and support their athletes in the idea of college attendance. Since coaches are believed to exert influence over their athletes, encouragement to attend college may help an athlete make a decision to do so. It will also place coaches in a position of supporting what we believe to be the wishes of parents.

Eligibility requirements to participate in athletics often produce differences of opinion between coaches, teachers who are not coaches, and administrators. Some believe that students must be passing their classes to be afforded the opportunity to participate and that failure to do so voids this right. Others think that keeping a student out of an activity that they enjoy may diminish any hope of rectifying academic deficiencies and may even encourage students to take on even more undesirable behaviors. From the experience of this researcher rarely do students make the type of positive changes that are thought to be encouraged by loss of eligibility. Three different things can happen when a student loses his or her eligibility. Some students simply stop coming to school. These students were primarily coming to school to participate in athletics and once this desirable part of their education is removed they simply quit coming. Other students do learn from the experience of becoming ineligible. They learn to avoid challenging academic classes and opt for classes that they are assured of passing, probably with higher grades. I have had two athletes take this route in order to maintain eligibility and although both did remain eligible, they did not graduate with their class. Lastly, students who become ineligible may have a lifestyle change that encourages them into new social groups. No longer is their time spent in practice and game situations under the supervision of an adult. Often these new relationships do further damage in preventing the athlete from regaining good academic standing.

Still, parents agree that students must pass at least five classes and even more agree that they should maintain a 'C' average to participate. It is worth noting that since all parents had children participating on teams, their child had in fact maintained academic progress. A different picture may have emerged if parents of students who did not qualify for participation had been surveyed about academic requirements.

If coaches work to encourage students to maintain academic eligibility in the ways previously mentioned, situations where students lose

their right to participate will happen less frequently. Once a student does lose his or her right to participate, coaches are faced with a dilemma. What are the coaches responsibilities in helping this student regain their eligibility and how is this best done? Some coaches may chose not to help in this situation but based on the results of this study, the coach may be in one of the best positions to influence positive behavior changes. Keeping the ineligible student on the team even though they will not be allowed to participate may be an option for some athletes. Arranging for academic support through tutoring or counseling yet another. Coaches who contemplate situations such as these and develop a philosophy of handling academic issues while understanding parental viewpoints, will be prepared to help prevent these situations from occurring and in the event that they do occur, be better prepared to effectively help their athletes.

### Discussion Regarding Game Participation

Participation in games is perhaps the most difficult issue related to high school team sports. The very nature of team sports requires that a team be made of about twice as many players as can participate at any give time in a regulation game. By having this number of players on any given team, coaches have the ability to scrimmage or duplicate game situations during practice time. Only baseball and softball fall outside this argument since only one offensive player competes at a time against a defensive team. Still because of pitching requirements (pitchers are only allowed to pitch so many innings per week), and the popularity of these two sports, teams routinely consist of more players than can play at any given time. Based on the responses of this survey, parents have a reasonable position on the issue of playing. It comes as no surprise that parents agree that it is important for their child to be allowed to participate in games. Somewhat less expected from a coaching perspective was that parents agreed that it was important for all team members to get a chance to play in games. This position was somewhat buffered by the understanding demonstrated by parents that there are game situations where it is difficult to let all team members play. From this information it seems apparent that what coaches are being directed to do is to play everyone as much as possible. This picture becomes clouded when a response from another strand is considered. In the strand that focuses on

parental beliefs about winning, parents were almost split when presented with the choice between seeing their child play and seeing their child's team win with slightly more parents (7%) want to see their child play.

Coaches must make very difficult decisions during the course of games. One such decision is who plays and to what extent. While weighing what has been learned from this research, coaches must establish guidelines that reflect what will be done in regard to playing time. These policies must then be communicated to parents. By understanding that parents want badly to see their children play coaches may adopt a position that is more closely aligned with parental wishes and help alleviate some of the tensions which are caused by the issue of playing time.

### Discussion Regarding Expectations of Coaches

The next section reviews findings in regard to parental expectations of coaches. Survey items in this section were to be answered by parents from the impressions that they had gained from being associated with the coaches that worked with their child in their child's sport.

### Coaching Requirements

Many schools are fortunate enough to have highly skilled individuals with a wealth of expertise and experience coaching teams at their school. Other schools have great difficulty staffing positions and often must find individuals from outside the school to fill coaching positions. The role of coach may be filled by a variety of people. One school involved in this survey employed as coaches in addition to teachers, four college students, an unemployed alumnus, a government worker, a postal worker, a bus driver, a truck assembly plant supervisor, and a college economics professor. Parents are divided as to whether coaches should be teachers. From an educational perspective this is a troubling finding. If athletic activities and coaching are to be part of the educational process I believe it stands to reason that those responsible for such programs should be trained as educators. It is even more important that our coaches come from the ranks of teachers when we focus on the purpose and desired educational outcomes from athletics. Having coaches who are outside the school culture may diminish the educational benefits possible through

participation, especially when those coaching have little sense of how athletics should integrate into the school's educational philosophy.

In another regard hiring coaches who are not teachers takes away from the profession of coaching. If persons without backgrounds in education are hired to coach the implication given to the general public may be that anyone with some knowledge of the sport is a qualified candidate. This serves to affect the coaching profession in both a financial and status reducing way.

Parents almost unanimously agree that those who coach should have specific training to be a coach. What training is needed should be identified and required of coaches to strengthen and legitimize the profession. One type of training asked about on the survey was first aid and CPR training. Again, parents agreed (99.2%) that coaches should be trained in basic first aid and CPR. If schools care about parental beliefs they need to heed this advice and require all coaches to seek this training. It stands to reason that coaches will be the first adults on the scene of an injury to administer initial assistance. Although relatively few life threatening emergencies ever occur, the trust that parents place in coaches should extend to having the training necessary to do all that is possible should an emergency exist. This training would also make schools more safe because more coaches who are teachers would be available during the school day to assist with injuries and emergencies. Athletic directors and head coaches should be leaders in this area and establish policy that requires first aid and CPR training for coaches at their school.

### Player Coach Relationships

How well players and coaches interact was thought to be important by this researcher for several reasons. If players like their coaches, this will probably contribute to parents having a higher regard for coaches. Athletes will probably be more cooperative and motivated to improve if they like who they are working with. This may contribute to success in terms of winning and winning is generally regarded as a positive outcome.

Parents concluded that their child seemed to get along well with their coach and that their child's coaches had a genuine concern for the individuals on their team. Parents also believed that their child's behavior



is greatly influenced by the expectations of their coach. This is a very important piece of information and has a direct influence on all other components on coaching. If coaches do in fact have a great deal of influence which parents believe they do, this position can be used in a variety of positive ways. From the athletic perspective coaches can do a great deal to successfully encourage individual behaviors such as cooperation and teamwork. From an academic perspective coaches can use this influence to encourage students to excel academically and consider educational options beyond high school. Encouraging responsible behavior and sportsmanship can also be made a priority with athletes by their coaches. Athletes should respond to this encouragement by adopting appropriate and desirable behaviors.

### Winning

Coaches perceive many types of pressure in their jobs. One pressure is believed to be the pressure to win athletic contests. The origin of this pressure is idiosyncratic. It is likely that coaches think that it is the wish of their supporters, which includes parents, that their team win. Survey results indicate that this may in fact not be the case. This study found parents fall third behind athletes and coaches in terms of how important winning is to them. As previously mentioned, the majority of parents also indicated that they would rather see their son or daughter play than win a game. While it is a certainty that winning is important to some parents (9.2% strongly agreed that winning was important to them), most parents have adopted a more moderate position. Athletes are thought by parents to value winning more than themselves and even more than they believed that their coaches emphasized winning. This emphasis on winning by the athlete is no doubt influenced by many factors. One must consider the possibility that coaches are a primary source of this intense desire to win. One may also consider the possibility that this attitude is not always desirable, especially if failure to win decreases self-esteem, motivation, or increases anxiety in the athlete. Coaches would be well advised to consider carefully how winning per se is integrated into team philosophy and goals. A team's work ethic, skill improvement, and teamwork are probably as deserving of emphasis as simply stressing the outcome of a game.

## Parental Involvement

One of the reasons for pursuing this research was based on this researchers observation that sometimes parents can be neglected when it come to being involved with their child's athletic experience. Coaches and players interact on a daily basis for hours at a time. This is considerably more time than a parent has direct contact with their child each day during the high school years. Many coaches also do little to keep parents informed about their child in context of their participation and progress athletically. This is in direct contrast to what schools typically do concerning keeping parents informed about the progress of their child. The possibility exists that separation from athletics may handicap coaches when it comes to gaining parental support for themselves and their athletic programs.

Parents were asked to respond to a number of statements regarding their involvement with their child's team to determine their level of involvement. About 30 percent of those surveyed indicated that they did not believe their child's coaches were approachable, concerned about what they thought as parents, or had a means of communicating with their child's coaches. Why parents think this was not investigated but two parents made comments that reflected one line of thinking. The following statement captures the essence of both comments.

"I have been reluctant to talk to coaches because she (her daughter) feels if the coach doesn't like what I have to say that she will be punished in some way. I would like to see the coaches have a meeting with all parents before each sport season so that everyone could have a chance to discuss any concerns that they might have."

Also about 70 percent responded that their child's coach did not use newsletters to communicate with parents about the affairs of the team although over 90 percent thought that they would like to receive such correspondence.

Coaches must try to prevent parents from becoming outsiders. Although their interaction with their children is thought to decrease significantly during high school, parents still occupy a position of influence with their children. A parent who feels distanced from their child and

disgruntled because of any of the above reasons can make the job of coaching very difficult. This sentiment was expressed very aptly by this parent.

“Parents are a coaches best friend or worst enemy - If the parents leave the game bad mouthing the coach, then the child will have no respect for or listen to the coach. Parents need to be supportive to the situation as a whole, not the one. But the coach needs to be flexable.”

Coaches can do a number of things to help keep parents in touch with their child’s athletic experience. First and foremost coaches must consider it a part of their job to establish relationships with parents. Some coaches may scoff at this being part of their job but it must be remembered that the inability to get along with parents was the number one reason that coaches were dismissed in the only know study looking at why coaches lose their jobs. (Lackey, 1994).

How one establishes these relationships is dependent on the situation. Findings of this research suggests that a coach find out about parental expectations by meeting with parents to discuss the program which they coach. These meetings can range from informal conversations as parents are picking up their children after a practice to meetings which are scheduled specifically for the purpose of discussing issues of concern. During these meetings coaches should seek to understand issues from a parental perspective without being judgmental or critical of ideas that may at first seem unrealistic. Using parental input where appropriate, a coach should then establish guidelines for their team and review these guidelines with parents prior to the season. Parents agreed (97.7%) that it was very important that rules and expectations be established and that the coaches hold all team members accountable. By giving parents input at various stages of the development of these rules and guidelines, parents should develop as sense of ownership in the formatting of the program. This is very important for coaches because they need parents to help encourage their children to follow the rules and guidelines that have been established. If the rules are not in line with the views held by parents, this is unlikely to occur.

Holding practices that are open to parents is another method for providing insight into what the coach sees each day in practice. Although

having every practice open to parents may not be desirable or practical, designating one day each week when parents may attend could make parents feel more comfortable with their child's coach. Time can be set aside after this designated practice to discuss issues of concern with the coach. Smaller things such as providing a phone number or an e-mail address where the coach can be reached affords parents with a sense of accessibility to the coach and their child's athletic program.

About 50 percent of parents also reported in this strand that they would have liked to have been more involved with their child's athletic experience. The exact type of involvement that parents would like to have is not known but several avenues exist for coaches to involve parents. Many routine coaching responsibilities can be assigned to interested parents who want to help. Coaches must determine how parental assistance may be helpful but duties such as transporting equipment to away games, providing drinks and snacks after the game for players, and planning special occasions can all serve to make parents feel more a part of what their children are doing. Larger projects such as mowing and maintaining fields, painting locker rooms, and raising money for new uniforms may be organized and completed by parents.

### Coaching Influence and Team Dynamics

Making decisions about issues that involve individuals can be very difficult. If coaches establish rules and guidelines and communicate these rules clearly to all parties involved the process can be made much easier. Still, situations may arise where decisions must be made that are not covered by the rules. A good guide to use in this situation is that the decision must be made based on what is best for the welfare of the team. Parents reported that they agreed with this concept (92.4%). Although parents may disagree with an individual decision, coaches may find some assurance that if made in the best interest of the team parents are more likely to accept their position.

### Discussion Regarding Differences Between Parental Expectations for Male and Female Athletes

Differences between parental expectations for male and female athletes were examined to determine if gender played a role. This analysis

found more similarities than differences with only eight of the 52 items having differences of greater than 10 percent. Although differences were generally small and few in number, it is appropriate to examine several of these findings.

1. Parents of female athletes were more likely to agree that they were allowed to be involved at their desired level with their child's team.

2. Parents of female athletes were more likely to disagree that their child's coaches were approachable and concerned about what they thought as a parent.

3. Parents of female athletes were more likely to agree that their child's coaches stressed winning.

4. Parents of female athletes reported their daughters were more likely to be motivated to try new activities because of their participation in athletics.

5. Parents of female athletes were more likely to believe their children were more satisfied with school during their athletic season.

6. Parents of female athletes were less likely to indicate there was peer pressure for their daughters to participate in athletics.

7. Parents of female athletes were more likely to disagree that the primary function of school is academic progress.

8. Parents of female athletes were more likely to agree that it is important for athletes to have a chance to play in games.

While these eight responses showed differences of over 10 percent, only two statements (1 and 7) rose above 11 percent demonstrating that few items showed major differences between the expectations of the parents of male and female athletes. Reasons for these observed differences are unknown but coaches may want to explore these issues in their own situation to determine whether teams under their leadership and their coaching philosophy are affected.

### Discussion Regarding Differences Between Schools

Parents from three high schools in the same school division participated in this study. Survey results were compiled by school and compared. Results showed a greater degree of variability between schools than between parents of male and female athletes with a mean difference for all survey items of 11.2 percent. Twenty-eight survey statements

revealed differences of more than 10 percent and ten items showed differences of greater than 15 percent. Overall, greater similarity than difference was seen in this analysis.

One survey response did produce a very large difference between the three schools. Parents were asked to respond to a statement to determine whether or not their child's coaches used newsletters to communicate with parents. School 1 parents agreed with this statement (92.7%) more than school 2 parents (26.8%) and school 3 parents (27.3%). From this result, it can be assumed that school 1 coaches were using newsletters to communicate with parents at a much higher frequency than school 2 or school 3 coaches. As the nine other items having a difference of 15 percent or more were inspected, it was of interest to note that school 1 parents were either the most likely to agree with statements (eight of the statements) or most likely to disagree (one statement) with statements. One can speculate that the use of newsletters in some way had a bearing on how parents viewed their child's athletic program and how they responded to all statements posed by the survey.

Two statements with differences of more than 15 percent emerged from strand one which investigated parental beliefs regarding self-esteem. Parents from school 1 were more likely to feel that their child's confidence was improved by athletic participation and more likely to agree that peer pressure existed for them to participate in athletics. From a coaching perspective both findings are positive and desirable.

Strand two also produced two statements that displayed more than a 15 percent difference. This strand dealt with personal responsibility as a function of athletic participation. Parents from school 1 were again more likely to agree that their children got into less trouble at home during their sports season and they were less likely to use tobacco products because of their athletic involvement. Other statements about their child's use of alcohol and drugs as well as their choice of friends had the same response pattern, but differences were under 15 percent. Again, these responses are favorable for coaches. Participants who get into less trouble are more likely to continue participation. The fact that parents believe students are less likely to use tobacco, and to a lesser degree alcohol and drugs while involved in sports is an excellent recruitment tool for coaches when trying

to encourage parents to allow participation. This is also an excellent way of demonstrating the value of athletics to the overall purpose of the school.

Another strand on the survey attempted to determine parental views about coaches. One line of inquiry dealt with winning and attempted to determine in addition to parental views on winning, if the views of parents were similar or different from their child or their child's coach. Parents from school 1 were more likely to agree that their child's coaches emphasized winning and that winning was important to them. The use of newsletters by school 1 may have served to help unify all parties on the issue of winning and create consensus among the shareholders.

Two other statements found differences in excess of 15 percent. Parents from school 1 were more likely to agree that their child's coaches worked hard to provide a positive experience through athletics and that the primary responsibility of school is the academic progress of each student. Providing newsletters for parents is something that is not required of coaches. Providing such correspondence may contribute to the idea that coaches are going beyond what is required to provide a positive experience. Despite the apparent emphasis placed on athletics by coaches, athletes, and parents at school 1, it is an interesting finding that school 1 parents also were the most likely to agree that academic progress of each student is the primary responsibility of schools and that athletics is of secondary importance. In many schools a tension may exist between athletics and academics. Some may think that an emphasis on athletics takes away from the academic program and may limit academic achievement. In school 1 this was not the case. How this comes about is very difficult to determine, but at some point coaches should be responsible for reinforcing the importance of academic progress to their athletes. As previously stated, athletes are greatly influenced by their coaches. A coach who emphasizes the academic side of school as well as the athletic side is likely to influence positive attitudes toward academics more than if they do not. If this is what parents believe is important, coaches are putting themselves on the side of the parents which can only strengthen their position. Coaches are well advised to communicate this position to parents.

Parents from school 1 were most likely to disagree that they were allowed to be involved at the level at which they desired. At first inspection

this is a negative finding for coaches. If parents desire greater involvement and that involvement is not allowed, the probability for conflict increases. There is a positive side to this finding and an opportunity of which coaches may take advantage. Since parents indicated they wanted to be more involved, they are probably in a culture where athletics are valued. Coaches have been successful in creating athletic programs that parents see as worthy of their involvement. The challenge for coaches then becomes finding a way to use this parental desire for involvement in a productive way.

### Discussion Regarding Parental Comments

About 29 percent of those parents returning a survey included comments about their child's experience. Many of these comments were presented in Chapter 4 and will not be revisited here. The observation can be made that these comments struck the researcher as being quite insightful and presented rich information about how parents think about various issues related to athletics. As comments are reviewed it becomes easier to understand the uniqueness of each perspective and the honesty with which they were given. Many times parents approach coaches with comments and concerns designed to influence coaches in regard to their son or daughter or issues that affect them. In this study, parents had nothing to gain by making these comments. Often when coaches listen to parents they do so not because they want to, but because they feel an obligation to do so.

Coaches do not often have the opportunity within the course of their season to solicit comments about their athletic program. From the comments obtained through this research it is obvious that parents can provide a great deal of useful information that can be put to good use by coaches in the administration of their athletic programs. It then becomes a question of how to obtain parental input in an atmosphere where self interests or emotions do not dictate the nature of the conversation and issues rather than specific situations become the focus.

A number of suggestions can be made for coaches in search of parental input and involvement. The findings of this research would encourage coaches to hold meetings for parents interested in their sport prior to the start of the season to explain the program and to solicit ideas



about the upcoming season. Coaches can explain needs which exist in the program and determine if there is an interest from parents in helping to meet these needs. At that time coaches can issue invitations to discuss with individuals specific concerns that they may not want to express in public. Each situation is different but these suggestions may help to form a foundation for coach-parent relationships that encourage trust and positive interaction. Failure to listen to parental concerns may establish obstacles for coaches that diminish the return from their efforts. As one parent noted, "Parents are a coaches best friend or worst enemy." Most coaches would be better served to work toward the 'best friend' side of the equation by establishing an environment where parents feel as if they are a part of the athletic experience and are valued accordingly.

### Conclusions

Parents have valuable ideas, a unique position, and need to be understood when it comes to dealing with their children in an extracurricular athletic activity. Coaches have not traditionally involved parents in their coaching philosophy and this in some cases has created situations where parents feel as if they are outsiders to their child's athletic experience. This is especially disturbing inasmuch as athletic activities are a part of the educational experience and most other educational models encourage rather than discourage parental involvement.

The results of this study may or may not be typical of parents in general and their views on athletics. It is understood that a great many factors go into determining what parents want athletic programs to be for their children and it is possible that the population used for this research is not representative of all parent populations in all regards. From all indications there is also a great deal of variability between parents and to a lesser degree between schools and between gender. This makes the job facing coaches all the more difficult when they attempt to determine what parents want from athletic programs.

It is suggested that coaches use what has been done in this research as a model for determining the concerns and positions of parents from their particular school on the various issues that they considered important. Some of the issues addressed in this research are certainly pertinent to all

coaching situations. Other issues not considered here may exist for coaches that could also be investigated in a similar manner.

Understanding these issues may go a long way toward helping determine guidelines for athletic programs that keep coaches and parents working as allies rather than adversaries.

### Suggestions for Future Research

One of the limitations of this study was the size and similarity of the sample. It is suggested that future research in this area use a more diverse sample so inferences can be made about parental expectations for all high school athletic programs at either the state or national level.

Although this research provides a window into what parents believe and expect from high school athletic programs, parents are but one element, albeit an important one, in this equation. Research efforts need to be focused on not only parents but athletic directors, coaches, and the players themselves to learn more about what each of these constituents want athletic programs to be. Findings from each of these groups would provide an increased understanding of expectations and supply valuable data for coaches who are attempting to organize or improve programs.

It is suggested that research be conducted that goes outside those parents who have children participating and into the population of parents who do not have children participating. It would be of exceptional interest to find what parents of non-participating students think about high school athletics. Some of the practices that are commonplace in athletics may prevent participation from some students and thus prevent them from reaping the benefits offered by these programs. Teachers who are not coaches but who are very much a part of the school community could provide a wealth of information that could possibly contribute insight that may make athletics acceptable for all. It is this researchers observation that some faculty members are very supportive of athletics while others are vehemently opposed to athletics and even demonstrate animosity toward athletes. An understanding of what generates this phenomena could be beneficial from the perspective of bridging this chasm in our schools.

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Appendix A  
Synopsis of Protocol for Research Involving Human Subjects

Synopsis of Protocol for Research Involving Human Subjects  
Prepared for the Institutional Review Board

by  
Kevin W. Harris  
and  
Dr. Larry Harris

Justification of Project

This project will attempt to determine parental expectations of varsity extracurricular athletic programs. Determining and attempting to understand these attitudes will be valuable to coaches, athletic directors, and school administrators who are responsible for providing athletic programs for public school students.

Procedures

The researcher will determine through review of school records those students who participated as members of the basketball, football, volleyball, softball, and baseball teams at three separate high schools during the 1997-1998 school year. These sports were chosen because they represent the team sports common to the three high schools in this study. From these records the parent(s) of each participant will be contacted and asked to complete a 52 item survey. This survey will address specific research questions as well as demographic information that will be correlated to responses. After completion of the survey, respondents will return their survey by self-addressed stamped envelope to the researcher.

Risks and Benefits

To the best of the researchers knowledge, those responding will be placed at no risk. The benefits of this research will be that those most closely associated with high school athletic programs will have an additional understanding of the attitudes and expectations concerning these programs.

### Confidentiality/Anonymity

All responses will be confidential. Responses will be reported in aggregate with no student names, parent names, school names, or identifiers being used in the description of the results. Surveys will be numbered for the purpose of tracking returns and follow-ups. The primary researcher will be the sole person with access to identification of surveys. After surveys are returned and tabulated they will be stored in a secure location until they are no longer needed. At this point they will be destroyed.

### Informed Consent

Informed consent for this project has been granted by the following persons:

Jim Sellers - Assistant Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools

Bob Miller - Principal, Auburn High and Middle School

George Porterfield - Principal, Christiansburg High School

Nelson Simpkins - Principal, Shawsville High and Middle School

Included in the appendix is a letter indicating that permission has been granted from Dr. Sellers.

### Biographical Sketches

Kevin W. Harris - Mr. Harris is a Doctoral Candidate in the College of Human Resources and Education within the Division of Teaching and Learning. Mr. Harris graduated from Roanoke College in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Health and Physical Education. In 1987 he earned a Master of Science Degree from Virginia Tech in Exercise Physiology. In 1994 Mr. Harris was accepted as a doctoral student at Virginia Tech in the School Leaders Program. Mr. Harris is employed as a teacher with Montgomery County Public Schools.

Dr. Larry Harris - Dr. Harris is currently a professor in the College of Human Resources and Education in the division of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Harris holds a Bachelor of Science from St. Cloud State College, and his Masters and Doctorate from the University of Minnesota. Previously Dr. Harris has served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs where he served as the College representative to the dean on academic issues



involving programs and faculty. Dr. Harris' areas of expertise includes the pedagogy of reading and the assessment of educational programs.

Appendix B  
Letter to Montgomery County Public Schools Asking  
for Division Approval to Conduct Research

March 28, 1998

Kevin W. Harris  
1290 Spruce Street  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Dr. Jim Sellers  
200 Junkin Street  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Dr. Sellers,

I am writing to you to secure permission to do research within the division, at Auburn, Christiansburg, and Shawsville High Schools. I had asked earlier for permission, but indicated that I would use only one school. Since that request, my committee has suggested that I expand the scope of my inquiry to include all high schools in the county. I have asked the principals of each of the high schools and have been given permission by the three schools previously listed. I was unable secure permission from Mr. Smith at Blacksburg. He informed me that he did not give out parent names and addresses for any reason without their permission. I had very much hoped to make this study representative of Montgomery County Public Schools.

As I had mentioned before, I am working with Dr. Larry Harris to identify parent attitudes regarding extracurricular athletic activities. This will be done with a survey and will involve parents of Montgomery County students who have participated in basketball, football, volleyball, softball, and baseball. Specifically, I will be asking questions about their views on competition, participation, coaching, and the degree to which athletics supports or fails to support the academic process.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Harris

Appendix C  
Letter Granting Division Approval for Conducting Research



# Montgomery County Public Schools

## IASA TITLE I

200 JUNKIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA 24073

TELEPHONE 540-382-5120  
FAX 540-381-6127

April 7, 1998

Mr. Kevin W. Harris  
1290 Spruce Street  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Dear Mr. Harris,

I am in receipt of your letter dated March 28, 1998 requesting permission to conduct research at Auburn, Christiansburg, and Shawsville High Schools. Dr. Sellers has asked that I respond to your letter and advise you of school board policy in reference to conducting research projects:

- (1) No student names, school names or identifiers should be used without prior written permission from the parents, students and the superintendent of schools.
- (2) Any publication, announcement, or use of the results of this survey beyond those in your request will require additional WRITTEN permission from the superintendent prior to use.
- (3) All research must be cleared through the building principal PRIOR to beginning any study in a school. If multiple sessions are needed, each session should be cleared with the principal in advance and the researcher(s) should check in and out of the school through the principal's office for each session.
- (4) All research must be planned and conducted in an effort to minimize lost instructional time for the students involved.
- (5) Any other restrictions applied by the administration of the site school should be strictly adhered to by all members of the research team.

Please do not hesitate to call if you have any other questions or concerns. I wish you the best as you conduct this research project.

Respectfully,

Patricia A. Fenton  
Reading Supervisor

C: Mr. Robert K. Miller, AHS  
Mr. George Porterfield, CHS  
Mr. Nelson Simpkins, SHS

The Montgomery County Public Schools Title I Program does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, age, disability, or national origin in employment or in its programs and activities.

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Appendix D  
Survey Instrument

Interscholastic Athletic Participation Parental Survey

**Circle the description of your child and his/her sport. If you had more than one child participating in sports of a child playing more than one sport, please respond based on one child and one situation.**

son who played football  
son who played basketball  
son who played baseball  
daughter who played basketball  
daughter who played volleyball  
daughter who played softball

**Please answer the following questions. Circle One.**

What is your relationship to the athlete?

Mother / Father / Step-mother / Step-father / Female Guardian / Male Guardian

What is your current marital status:

Single / Married / Divorced / Widowed

What school did your child attend while playing a sport last year?

Auburn / Christiansburg / Shawsville

As a high school student, did you participate in high school athletic programs?

Yes                      No

Please circle the income that most closely represents the total income of your family.

Less than \$20,000    \$20,001 to \$40,000    \$40,001 to \$60,000    \$60,001 to \$80,000    More than \$80,000

Would you classify your son or daughter as a player who:

Played less than 24% of the time in games.

Played less than 50% but more than 25% of the time in games.

Played more than 50% but less than 75% of the time in games.

Played more than 75% of the time.

Would you classify your son or daughter as a:

Starter                      Reserve

**Circle the answer that most accurately describes your position based on your experience with your child being involved with high school athletics during the 1997-98 school year. Questions are found on the front and back of each sheet.**

1. Participation in athletics was good for my child.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. The experience my child gained from participation could NOT have been gained in any other programs offered by the school.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
3. Athletic programs are as important as classroom activities in developing my child as a total person.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
4. Academic progress of each student should be the primary responsibility of schools and athletics are of secondary importance.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
5. It is important to me that my child be successful in athletic as well as academic areas.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
6. I feel that my child's confidence was improved by athletic participation.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
7. I think that the positive recognition that my child received from participating in athletics was beneficial for my child.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
8. There is social or peer pressure for my child to participate in athletic activities.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
9. Participation in athletics motivates my child to try new activities.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
10. My child seems to be more satisfied with school while participating in an athletic activity.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
11. Participation in athletics is a good way for children to learn to work with others from different backgrounds.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
12. My child gets into less trouble (at home and at school) during their sports season.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
13. My child is less likely to use tobacco because of involvement in an athletic activity.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree
14. My child is less likely to use alcohol because of involvement in an athletic activity.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree



15. My child is less likely to be involved with illegal drug use as a result of involvement in an athletic activity.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

16. It is important to me that my child stay tobacco, alcohol, and drug free.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

17. My child is less likely to 'hang around with the wrong crowd' if involved in an athletic activity.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

18. My child's behavior is greatly affected by the expectations of the coaches.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

19. My child's grades are better during their athletic season.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

20. It is important to me that my child makes the honor roll.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

21. It is important to my child that they make the honor roll.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

22. Athletic participation has had a positive influence on my child's attitude about making good grades.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

23. Athletic participation has encouraged my child to attend college.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

24. It is important to me that my child attends college.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

25. It is fair that students must pass (with a 'D' or better) five classes to participate in athletic activities.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

26. Students should be expected to have a 2.0 grade point average (a 'C') to be able to participate.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

27. It is important for me that my child be allowed to participate in games.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

28. It is important for all team members to get a chance to play in games.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

29. I understand that in some situations it is difficult to let all team members participate.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

30. I often encourage my child to do more than is required for the sport in which they are participating.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

31. As a family we often provide sports camp opportunities with our own money.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

32. I consider it my responsibility to attend the games my child's team plays.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

**For this section some questions will require an answer based on the average impression that you have of a coaching staff for a specific sport rather than a specific individual. For example, football has several coaches. If your son played football, try to construct your answers based on how that staff presented themselves.**

33. Coaches should be required to have specific training to be a coach.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

34. Coaches should be teachers at the school.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

35. Coaches should be trained in basic first aid and CPR.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

36. My child seemed to get along well with their coaches.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

37. My child's coaches seemed to have a genuine concern for the individuals on their team.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

38. My child's coaches emphasized winning.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

39. Winning athletic contests is very important to me.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

40. Winning is very important to my child.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

41. If I had a choice between winning the game and getting to see my child participate in the game, I would choose winning the game.  
Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

42. My child's coaches were approachable and were concerned about what I thought as a parent.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

43. My child's coaches provided a means by which I could communicate with them if I felt it was necessary. Examples of this would be providing telephone numbers or holding practices where parents were encouraged to attend.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

44. My child's coaches communicated with me through newsletters about the team.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

45. I would very much like to receive news about the team by a newsletter.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

46. My child's coaches allowed me to be involved with the team at the level at which I desired.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

47. I would have liked to have been more involved in my child's athletic experience.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

48. My child's coaches have been a positive influence in the life of my child.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

49. It is the responsibility of my child's coaches to be a positive role models for my child.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

50. It is important to me that my child's coaches establish specific rules and expectations and hold all team members accountable.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

51. Coaches must make decisions based on what is best for the welfare of the team.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

52. I believe that my child's coaches work hard to provide a positive experience for my child through participation in athletics.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

Please add anything about your child's experience that you would like on the back of this sheet. Thank you for your help with this important project.

Appendix E  
Survey Cover Letter

June 1, 1998

Dear Parents,

Sports play an important part in the American way of life. Many people, including myself believe that sports have a place in public education. There is very little research on what parents desire from athletic programs for their children. As a result coaches, teachers, and administrators are left to guess for themselves about what parents want from these programs. Because your child participated in a varsity sport in a Montgomery County School last year you have been selected to participate in the following survey. This survey will attempt to determine your views and expectations regarding high school sports.

This survey will take about ten minutes of your time. You are encouraged to fill in the survey now while it is fresh on your mind. Two surveys have been enclosed, one for each parent in the household. Each parent is asked to complete a survey independently. After completing the survey you are free to discuss it but it is important to this study that independent responses be collected. If this is a one parent household simply throw away the second survey.

Your responses will be completely anonymous. The findings will be reported as averages. The results will be used to inform coaches in Montgomery County and elsewhere about parental expectations. It is my hope that coaches would use this information to better meet the needs of those they serve. Results of the study will be mailed to those requesting. Results will also be posted on the internet at:

<http://www.bev.net/education/schools/auburn> - go to Kevin Harris then to current research

After completing the survey(s), please return using the self-addressed, stamped envelope that has been provided. All surveys are needed by June 22.

As an incentive to participate, a drawing will be held from the returned surveys for three gift certificates, each valued at \$25.00, from Food Lion. To participate in this drawing please write your name on the enclosed blue index card and return it along with your survey.

Thank you in advance for taking time to complete this important survey. Your responses will be used to help better the educational process for the children of Montgomery County.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Harris, Doctoral Candidate, Virginia Tech School Leaders Program

Appendix F  
Follow Up Postcard

June 14, 1998

Dear Parents,

A questionnaire was recently sent to you regarding your views about your child's participation on a school athletic team. If you have already completed and returned it to me please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. It is very important that your response be included in this study so the results can accurately represent the attitudes and expectations of parents in Montgomery County.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire or have misplaced it, please call me at 382-5362 and I will send you another copy.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Harris

Appendix G  
Results of Interscholastic Athletic Participation Parental Survey



## Results of Interscholastic Athletic Participation Parental Survey

The following data are given as number of responses and as the corresponding percentage.

son who played football	<b>41-31.2%</b>
son who played basketball	<b>23-17.5%</b>
son who played baseball	<b>19-14.5%</b>
daughter who played basketball	<b>25-19.0%</b>
daughter who played volleyball	<b>7- 5.3%</b>
daughter who played softball	<b>16-12.2%</b>

What is your relationship to the athlete?

Mother	/	Father	/	Step-mother	/	Step-father
<b>76-57.5%</b>		<b>54-40.9%</b>		<b>1-1.7%</b>		<b>1-1.7%</b>

What is your current marital status:

Single	/	Married	/	Divorced	/	Widowed
<b>4-3.0%</b>		<b>116-88.5%</b>		<b>7-5.3%</b>		<b>4-3.0%</b>

What school did your child attend while playing a sport last year?

Auburn	/	Christiansburg	/	Shawsville
<b>41-31.1%</b>		<b>57-43.2%</b>		<b>34-25.8%</b>

As a high school student, did you participate in high school athletic programs?

Yes	No
<b>82-62.6%</b>	<b>49-37.4%</b>

Please circle the income that most closely represents the total income of your family.

less than \$20,000	\$20,001 to \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$80,000	More than \$80,001
<b>8-6.3%</b>	<b>25-19.7%</b>	<b>32-25.2%</b>	<b>27-21.3%</b>	<b>35-27.6%</b>

Would you classify your son or daughter as a player who:

Played less than 25% of the time in games.	<b>21-15.9%</b>
Played less than 50% but more than 25% of the time in games.	<b>14-10.6%</b>
Played more than 50% but less than 75% of the time in games.	<b>22-16.7%</b>
Played more than 75% of the time.	<b>75-56.8%</b>

Would you classify your son or daughter as a:

Starter	Reserve
<b>97-73.5</b>	<b>35-26.5</b>

The following data are presented as the total responses for each question (n) and the statistical mean of all answers to that question. 'Strongly agree' would represent a score of one, 'agree' would be represent two, disagree would be represent three, and 'strongly disagree' would represent a score of four. Listed with each of the four possible responses are the number of responses and the corresponding percentage.

1. Participation in athletics was good for my child. **n=132 - mean=1.36**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>90-68.1%</b>	<b>38-28.8%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>
  
2. The experience my child gained from participation could NOT have been gained in any other programs offered by the school. **n=132 - mean=1.93**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>37-28.0%</b>	<b>71-53.8%</b>	<b>19-14.4%</b>	<b>5-3.8%</b>
  
3. Athletic programs are as important as classroom activities in developing my child as a total person. **n=130 - mean =1.82**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>45-34.6%</b>	<b>65-50.0%</b>	<b>18-13.8%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>
  
4. Academic progress of each student should be the primary responsibility of schools and athletics are of secondary importance. **n=129 - mean=1.79**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>48-37.2%</b>	<b>63-48.8%</b>	<b>14-10.9%</b>	<b>4-3.1%</b>
  
5. It is important to me that my child be successful in athletic as well as academic areas. **n=132 - mean=1.9**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>36-27.3%</b>	<b>74-56.0%</b>	<b>20-15.2%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>
  
6. I feel that my child's confidence was improved by athletic participation. **n=132 mean=1.77**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>58-43.9%</b>	<b>51-38.9%</b>	<b>18-13.6%</b>	<b>5-3.8%</b>
  
7. I think that the positive recognition that my child received form participating in athletics was beneficial for my child. **n=130 - mean=1.71**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>52-40%</b>	<b>66-50.8%</b>	<b>9-6.9%</b>	<b>3-2.3%</b>
  
8. There is social or peer pressure for my child to participate in athletic activities. **n=132 - mean=2.56**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>7-5.3%</b>	<b>53-40.1%</b>	<b>62-46.9%</b>	<b>10-7.5%</b>

9. Participation in athletics motivates my child to try new activities. **n=131 mean=2.0**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**24-18.3%**                      **84-64.1%**                      **22-16.8%**                      **1-.8%**

10. My child seems to be more satisfied with school while participating in an athletic activity. **n=132 - mean=1.78**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**49-37.1**                      **65-49.2%**                      **16-12.1%**                      **2-1.5%**

11. Participation in athletics is a good way for children to learn to work with others from different backgrounds. **n=132 - mean=1.60**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**55-41.7%**                      **75-56.8%**                      **1-.8%**                      **1-.8%**

12. My child gets into less trouble (at home and at school) during their sports season. **n=129 - mean=2.07**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**30-23.3%**                      **69-53.5%**                      **29-22.5%**                      **1-.8%**

13. My child is less likely to use tobacco because of involvement in an athletic activity. **n=131 - mean=2.09**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**31-23.7%**                      **59-45.0%**                      **38-29.0%**                      **3-2.3%**

14. My child is less likely to use alcohol because of involvement in an athletic activity. **n=130 - mean=2.08**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**29-22.3%**                      **64-49.2%**                      **34-26.2%**                      **3-2.3%**

15. My child is less likely to be involved with illegal drug use as a result of involvement in an athletic activity. **n=129 - mean=1.99**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**39-30.2%**                      **55-42.6%**                      **32-24.8%**                      **3-2.3%**

16. It is important to me that my child stay tobacco, alcohol, and drug free. **n=132 mean=1.16**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**111-84.1%**                      **20-15.1%**                      **1-.8%**                      **0-0%**

17. My child is less likely to 'hang around with the wrong crowd' if involved in an athletic activity. **n=131 - mean=1.81**  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree  
**49-37.4%**                      **60-45.8%**                      **19-14.5%**                      **3-2.3%**

18. My child's behavior is greatly affected by the expectations of the coaches. **n=132 mean=1.93**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>29-22.0%</b>	<b>85-64.4%</b>	<b>16-12.1%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>

19. My child's grades are better during their athletic season. **n=128 - mean=2.34**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>16-12.5%</b>	<b>56-43.8%</b>	<b>52-40.6%</b>	<b>4-3.1%</b>

20. It is important to me that my child makes the honor roll. **n=129 - mean=1.82**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>46-35.6%</b>	<b>59-45.7%</b>	<b>24-18.6%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

21. It is important to my child that that they make the honor roll. **n=130 - mean=2.01**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>31-23.8%</b>	<b>67-51.5%</b>	<b>31-23.8%</b>	<b>1-.7%</b>

22. Athletic participation has had a positive influence on my child's attitude about making good grades. **n=131 - mean=2.05**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>22-16.8%</b>	<b>81-61.8%</b>	<b>27-20.6%</b>	<b>1-.8%</b>

23. Athletic participation has encouraged my child to attend college. **n=131**

**mean=2.32**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>23-17.6%</b>	<b>43-32.8%</b>	<b>64-48.9%</b>	<b>1-.8%</b>

24. It is important to me that my child attends college. **n=132 - mean=1.52**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>72-54.6%</b>	<b>51-38.6%</b>	<b>9-6.8%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

25. It is fair that students must pass (with a 'D' or better) five classes to participate in athletic activities. **n=132 - mean=1.66**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>69-52.3%</b>	<b>42-31.8%</b>	<b>17-12.9%</b>	<b>4-3.0%</b>

26. Students should be expected to have a 2.0 grade point average (a 'C') to be able to participate. **n=130 - mean 1.73**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>54-41.5%</b>	<b>59-45.4%</b>	<b>15-11.5%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>

27. It is important for me that my child be allowed to participate in games. **n=131**

**mean=1.71**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>45-34.3%</b>	<b>78-59.5%</b>	<b>8-6.1%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

28. It is important for all team members to get a chance to play in games. **n=132**  
**mean=1.93**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>41-31.1%</b>	<b>61-46.2%</b>	<b>27-20.4%</b>	<b>3-2.3%</b>

29. I understand that in some situations it is difficult to let all team members participate. **n=132 - mean=1.87**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>35-26.5</b>	<b>82-62.1%</b>	<b>11-8.3%</b>	<b>4-3.0%</b>

30. I often encourage my child to do more than is required for the sport in which they are participating. **n=131 - mean=1.74**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>45-34.3%</b>	<b>75-57.2%</b>	<b>10-7.6%</b>	<b>1-.8%</b>

31. As a family we often provide sports camp opportunities with our own money. **n=131 - mean=1.87**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>44-33.6%</b>	<b>61-46.6%</b>	<b>25-19.1%</b>	<b>1-.8%</b>

32. I consider it my responsibility to attend the games my child's team plays. **n=132**  
**mean=1.36**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>86-65.2%</b>	<b>44-33.3%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

33. Coaches should be required to have specific training to be a coach. **n=132**  
**mean=1.5**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>71-53.8%</b>	<b>56-42.4%</b>	<b>5-3.8%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

34. Coaches should be teachers at the school. **n=131 - mean=2.35**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>24-18.3%</b>	<b>39-29.8%</b>	<b>65-49.6%</b>	<b>3-2.3%</b>

35. Coaches should be trained in basic first aid and CPR. **n=131 - mean=1.42**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>76-58.0%</b>	<b>54-41.2%</b>	<b>1-.8%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

36. My child seemed to get along well with their coaches. **n=131 - mean=1.77**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>41-31.3%</b>	<b>81-61.8%</b>	<b>7-5.3%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>

37. My child's coaches seemed to have a genuine concern for the individuals on their team. **n=128 - mean=2.05**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>23-18.0%</b>	<b>80-62.5%</b>	<b>20-15.6%</b>	<b>5-3.9%</b>

38. My child's coaches emphasized winning. **n=131 - mean=2.13**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>20-15.3%</b>	<b>75-57.3%</b>	<b>34-26.0%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>

39. Winning athletic contests is very important to me. **n=130 - mean=2.36**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>12-9.2%</b>	<b>61-46.9%</b>	<b>54-41.5%</b>	<b>3-2.3%</b>

40. Winning is very important to my child. **n=132 - mean=1.96**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>24-18.2%</b>	<b>90-68.2%</b>	<b>16-12.1%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>

41. If I had a choice between winning the game and getting to see my child participate in the game, I would choose winning the game. **n=129 - mean=2.56**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>11-8.5%</b>	<b>49-38.0%</b>	<b>54-41.9%</b>	<b>15-11.6%</b>

42. My child's coaches were approachable and were concerned about what I thought as a parent. **n=131 - mean=2.25**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>19-14.5%</b>	<b>68-51.9%</b>	<b>35-26.7%</b>	<b>9-6.9%</b>

43. My child's coaches provided a means by which I could communicate with them if I felt it was necessary. Examples of this would be providing telephone numbers or holding practices where parents were encouraged to attend. **n=130 - mean=2.23**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>16-12.3%</b>	<b>76-58.5%</b>	<b>30-23.1%</b>	<b>8-6.2%</b>

44. My child's coaches communicated with me through newsletters about the team. **n=130 - mean=2.78**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>2-1.5</b>	<b>38-29.2%</b>	<b>76-58.4%</b>	<b>14-10.8%</b>

45. I would very much like to receive news about the team by a newsletter. **n=131 mean=1.90**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>24-18.3%</b>	<b>95-72.5%</b>	<b>12-9.2%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

46. My child's coaches allowed me to be involved with the team at the level at which I desired. **n=131 - mean 2.26**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>13-9.9%</b>	<b>79-60.3%</b>	<b>30-22.9%</b>	<b>9-6.9%</b>

47. I would have liked to have been more involved in my child's athletic experience.

**n=129 - mean=2.40**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>10-7.8%</b>	<b>57-44.2%</b>	<b>62-48.1%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

48. My child's coaches have been a positive influence in the life of my child. **n=128**

**mean=2.14**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>26-20.3%</b>	<b>68-53.1%</b>	<b>24-18.8%</b>	<b>10-7.8%</b>

49. It is the responsibility of my child's coaches to be a positive role models for my child. **n=131 - mean=1.45**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>73-55.7%</b>	<b>56-42.7%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

50. It is important to me that my child's coaches establish specific rules and expectations and hold all team members accountable. **n=132 - mean=1.39**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>83-62.9%</b>	<b>46-34.8%</b>	<b>3-2.3%</b>	<b>0-0%</b>

51. Coaches must make decisions based on what is best for the welfare of the team.

**n=131 - mean=1.74**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>46-35.1%</b>	<b>75-57.3%</b>	<b>8-6.1%</b>	<b>2-1.5%</b>

52. I believe that my child's coaches work hard to provide a positive experience for my child through participation in athletics. **n=132 - mean=2.03**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>34-25.8%</b>	<b>69-52.3%</b>	<b>20-15.1%</b>	<b>9-6.8%</b>

Appendix H  
Survey Response Differences Between Parents of Male  
and Parents of Female Athletes



## Survey Response Differences Between Parents of Male and Female Athletes

The following data are presented for parents responding to survey statements based on whether their child was male or female. Responses for football, boy's basketball, and baseball were combined for male participants while girl's basketball volleyball, and softball were combined for female participants. Demographic data was determined for these categories as well.

A four item Likert-like scale was used for responses to the survey statements. Strongly agree and agree responses were combined and strongly disagree and disagree responses were combined to form agree and disagree categories respectively. Percentages were then determined for parents of male athletes (POMA) and parents of female athletes (POFA) responding to the survey statements.

Parents of male athletes	<b>83</b>	<b>63.4%</b>
Parents of female athletes	<b>48</b>	<b>36.6%</b>

	What is your relationship to the athlete?						
	Mother	/	Father	/	Step-mother	/	Step-father
POMA	<b>56.6%</b>		<b>41.0%</b>		<b>1.2%</b>		<b>1.2%</b>
POFA	<b>59.2%</b>		<b>40.8%</b>		<b>0.0%</b>		<b>0.0%</b>

	What is your current marital status:						
	Single	/	Married	/	Divorced	/	Widowed
POMA	<b>4.9%</b>		<b>89.0%</b>		<b>3.6%</b>		<b>2.4%</b>
POFA	<b>0.0%</b>		<b>78.8%</b>		<b>8.2%</b>		<b>4.0%</b>

	What school did your child attend while playing a sport last year?				
	School 1	/	School 2	/	School 3
POMA	<b>68.3%</b>		<b>62.5%</b>		<b>57.1%</b>
POFA	<b>31.7%</b>		<b>37.5%</b>		<b>42.9%</b>

	As a high school student, did you participate in high school athletic programs?	
	Yes	No
POMA	<b>60.5%</b>	<b>39.5%</b>
POFA	<b>65.3%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>

	Please circle the income that most closely represents the total income of your family.				
	< \$20,000	\$20,001 to \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$80,000	\$80,001 >
POMA	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>
POFA	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>28.3%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>28.3%</b>

Would you classify your son or daughter as a player who:	POMA	POFA
Played less than 25% of the time in games.	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
Played more than 25% but less than 50% of the time in games.	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
Played more than 50% but less than 75% of the time in games.	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>
Played more than 75% of the time.	<b>54.9%</b>	<b>59.2%</b>

	Would you classify you son or daughter as a:	
	Starter	Reserve
POMA	<b>74.1%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>
POFA	<b>75.5%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>

1. Participation in athletics was good for my child.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
POFA	<b>95.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

2. The experience my child gained from participation could NOT have been gained in any other programs offered by the school.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
POFA	<b>79.6%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>

3. Athletic programs are as important as classroom activities in developing my child as a total person.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
POFA	<b>79.2%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>

4. Academic progress of each student should be the primary responsibility of schools and athletics are of secondary importance.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>92.6%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>
POFA	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>

5. It is important to me that my child be successful in athletic as well as academic areas.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>81.9%</b>	<b>18.1%</b>
POFA	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

6. I feel that my child's confidence was improved by athletic participation.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
POFA	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>

7. I think that the positive recognition that my child received from participating in athletics was beneficial for my child.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
POFA	<b>91.5%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>

8. There is social or peer pressure for my child to participate in athletic activities.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>49.4%</b>	<b>50.6%</b>
POFA	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>

9. Participation in athletics motivates my child to try new activities.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>
POFA	<b>89.8%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>

10. My child seems to be more satisfied with school while participating in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
POFA	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>

11. Participation in athletics is a good way for children to learn to work with others from different backgrounds.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
POFA	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

12. My child gets into less trouble (at home and at school) during their sports season.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>79.0%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>
POFA	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>

13. My child is less likely to use tobacco because of involvement in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>71.1%</b>	<b>28.9%</b>
POFA	<b>64.6%</b>	<b>35.4%</b>

14. My child is less likely to use alcohol because of involvement in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>
POFA	<b>68.1%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>

15. My child is less likely to be involved with illegal drug use as a result of involvement in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>
POFA	<b>71.7%</b>	<b>28.3%</b>

16. It is important to me that my child stay tobacco, alcohol, and drug free.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
POFA	<b>98.0%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

17. My child is less likely to 'hang around with the wrong crowd' if involved in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>86.6%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>
POFA	<b>77.6%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>

18. My child's behavior is greatly affected by the expectations of the coaches.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>85.5%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
POFA	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>

19. My child's grades are better during their athletic season.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>55.0%</b>	<b>45.0%</b>
POFA	<b>58.3%</b>	<b>41.7%</b>

20. It is important to me that my child makes the honor roll.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
POFA	<b>78.3%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>

21. It is important to my child that that they make the honor roll.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>
POFA	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>

22. Athletic participation has had a positive influence on my child's attitude about making good grades.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>
POFA	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>

23. Athletic participation has encouraged my child to attend college.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>
POFA	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>51.0%</b>

24. It is important to me that my child attends college.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
POFA	<b>89.8%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>

25. It is fair that students must pass (with a 'D' or better) five classes to participate in athletic activities.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>84.3%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>
POFA	<b>83.7%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>

26. Students should be expected to have a 2.0 grade point average (a 'C') to be able to participate.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>85.5%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
POFA	<b>89.4%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>

27. It is important for me that my child be allowed to participate in games.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
POFA	<b>95.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

28. It is important for all team members to get a chance to play in games.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>
POFA	<b>83.7%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>

29. I understand that in some situations it is difficult to let all team members participate.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>88.0%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
POFA	<b>91.7%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

30. I often encourage my child to do more than is required for the sport in which they are participating.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
POFA	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>

31. As a family we often provide sports camp opportunities with our own money.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>81.7%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>
POFA	<b>77.6%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>

32. I consider it my responsibility to attend the games my child's team plays.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
POFA	<b>98.0%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

33. Coaches should be required to have specific training to be a coach.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
POFA	<b>93.9%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

34. Coaches should be teachers at the school.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>49.4%</b>
POFA	<b>43.8%</b>	<b>56.2%</b>

35. Coaches should be trained in basic first aid and CPR.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
POFA	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

36. My child seemed to get along well with their coaches.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>95.1%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
POFA	<b>89.8%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>

37. My child's coaches seemed to have a genuine concern for the individuals on their team.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>84.0%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
POFA	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>

38. My child's coaches emphasized winning.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>68.3%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>
POFA	<b>79.6%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>

39. Winning athletic contests is very important to me.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>56.6%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>
POFA	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>44.7%</b>

40. Winning is very important to my child.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>86.7%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
POFA	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

41. If I had a choice between winning the game and getting to see my child participate in the game, I would choose winning the game.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>47.0%</b>	<b>53.0%</b>
POFA	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>54.3%</b>

42. My child's coaches were approachable and were concerned about what I thought as a parent.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>29.3%</b>
POFA	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>40.8%</b>

43. My child's coaches provided a means by which I could communicate with them if I felt it was necessary. Examples of this would be providing telephone numbers or holding practices where parents were encouraged to attend.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>73.2%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>
POFA	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>

44. My child's coaches communicated with me through newsletters about the team.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>
POFA	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>

45. I would very much like to receive news about the team by a newsletter.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
POFA	<b>91.7%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

46. My child's coaches allowed me to be involved with the team at the level at which I desired.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>65.1%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>
POFA	<b>79.2%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>

47. I would have liked to have been more involved in my child's athletic experience.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>47.6%</b>
POFA	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>48.9%</b>

48. My child's coaches have been a positive influence in the life of my child.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>75.3%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>
POFA	<b>70.2%</b>	<b>29.8%</b>

49. It is the responsibility of my child's coaches to be a positive role models for my child.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
POFA	<b>97.9%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

50. It is important to me that my child's coaches establish specific rules and expectations and hold all team members accountable.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
POFA	<b>95.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

51. Coaches must make decisions based on what is best for the welfare of the team.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>94.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
POFA	<b>89.6%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>

52. I believe that my child's coaches work hard to provide a positive experience for my child through participation in athletics.

	Agree	Disagree
POMA	<b>80.7%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
POFA	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>



Appendix I  
Survey Response Differences Between Schools

## Survey Response Differences Between Schools

The following data are presented for each of the three individual schools involved in this study. A four item Likert-like scale was used for responses to the survey statements. Strongly agree and agree responses were combined and strongly disagree and disagree responses were combined to form agree and disagree categories respectively. Percentages were then determined for each school.

	School 1	School 2	School 3
son who played football	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>32.1%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
son who played basketball	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
son who played baseball	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>
daughter who played basketball	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
daughter who played volleyball	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
daughter who played softball	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>

What is your relationship to the athlete?

	Mother	Father	Step-mother	Step-father
School 1	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 2	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>
School 3	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

What is your current marital status:

	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
School 1	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
School 2	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>92.9%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>
School 3	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

What school did your child attend while playing a sport last year?

School 1	<b>34.1%</b>
School 2	<b>42.4%</b>
School 3	<b>26.5%</b>

As a high school student, did you participate in high school athletic programs?

	Yes	No
School 1	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>35.0%</b>
School 2	<b>56.4%</b>	<b>43.6%</b>
School 3	<b>68.6%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>

Please circle the income that most closely represents the total income of your family.

	< \$20,000	\$20,001 to \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$80,000	\$80,001 >
School 1	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>
School 2	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>
School 3	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>

Would you classify your son or daughter as a player who:	S1	S2	S3
Played less than 25% of the time in games.	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
Played more than 25% but less than 50% of the time in games.	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
Played more than 50% but less than 75% of the time in games.	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
Played more than 75% of the time.	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>46.4%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>

Would you classify you son or daughter as a:

	Starter	Reserve
School 1	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>
School 2	<b>74.1%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>
School 3	<b>74.3%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>

1. Participation in athletics was good for my child.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 2	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
School 3	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

2. The experience my child gained from participation could NOT have been gained in any other programs offered by the school.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>
School 2	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>
School 3	<b>74.3%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>

3. Athletic programs are as important as classroom activities in developing my child as a total person.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>
School 2	<b>87.0%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
School 3	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>

4. Academic progress of each student should be the primary responsibility of schools and athletics are of secondary importance.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>92.5%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
School 2	<b>90.9%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
School 3	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>

5. It is important to me that my child be successful in athletic as well as academic areas.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>
School 2	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>
School 3	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

6. I feel that my child's confidence was improved by athletic participation.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
School 2	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>
School 3	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>

7. I think that the positive recognition that my child received from participating in athletics was beneficial for my child.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>95.1%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
School 2	<b>89.1%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
School 3	<b>88.2%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>

8. There is social or peer pressure for my child to participate in athletic activities.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>
School 2	<b>41.1%</b>	<b>58.9%</b>
School 3	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>

9. Participation in athletics motivates my child to try new activities.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
School 2	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>
School 3	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

10. My child seems to be more satisfied with school while participating in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>90.2%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>
School 2	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
School 3	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

11. Participation in athletics is a good way for children to learn to work with others from different backgrounds.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
School 2	<b>98.2%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>
School 3	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

12. My child gets into less trouble (at home and at school) during their sports season.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
School 2	<b>68.5%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>
School 3	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>

13. My child is less likely to use tobacco because of involvement in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
School 2	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>
School 3	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>

14. My child is less likely to use alcohol because of involvement in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
School 2	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>33.9%</b>
School 3	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>

15. My child is less likely to be involved with illegal drug use as a result of involvement in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
School 2	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>33.9%</b>
School 3	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>

16. It is important to me that my child stay tobacco, alcohol, and drug free.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 2	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 3	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

17. My child is less likely to 'hang around with the wrong crowd' if involved in an athletic activity.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>
School 2	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
School 3	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>

18. My child's behavior is greatly affected by the expectations of the coaches.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
School 2	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
School 3	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

19. My child's grades are better during their athletic season.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>46.3%</b>	<b>53.7%</b>
School 2	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>
School 3	<b>57.1%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>

20. It is important to me that my child makes the honor roll.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
School 2	<b>85.5%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
School 3	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>

21. It is important to my child that that they make the honor roll.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
School 2	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>29.6%</b>
School 3	<b>74.3%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>

22. Athletic participation has had a positive influence on my child's attitude about making good grades.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>
School 2	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>
School 3	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

23. Athletic participation has encouraged my child to attend college.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>53.7%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>
School 2	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>50.9%</b>
School 3	<b>48.6%</b>	<b>51.4%</b>

24. It is important to me that my child attends college.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
School 2	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
School 3	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

25. It is fair that students must pass (with a 'D' or better) five classes to participate in athletic activities.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
School 2	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
School 3	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>

26. Students should be expected to have a 2.0 grade point average (a 'C') to be able to participate.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>
School 2	<b>87.0%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
School 3	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

27. It is important for me that my child be allowed to participate in games.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
School 2	<b>94.5%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
School 3	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

28. It is important for all team members to get a chance to play in games.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>73.2%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>
School 2	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>
School 3	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>

29. I understand that in some situations it is difficult to let all team members participate.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>90.2%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>
School 2	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
School 3	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>

30. I often encourage my child to do more than is required for the sport in which they are participating.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
School 2	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
School 3	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

31. As a family we often provide sports camp opportunities with our own money.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>
School 2	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>
School 3	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>

32. I consider it my responsibility to attend the games my child's team plays.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
School 2	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 3	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

33. Coaches should be required to have specific training to be a coach.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
School 2	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
School 3	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

34. Coaches should be teachers at the school.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>51.2%</b>
School 2	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
School 3	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>55.9%</b>

35. Coaches should be trained in basic first aid and CPR.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
School 2	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 3	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

36. My child seemed to get along well with their coaches.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
School 2	<b>92.9%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
School 3	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

37. My child's coaches seemed to have a genuine concern for the individuals on their team.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
School 2	<b>77.4%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>
School 3	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>

38. My child's coaches emphasized winning.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>
School 2	<b>57.1%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>
School 3	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>

39. Winning athletic contests is very important to me.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>65.9%</b>	<b>34.1%</b>
School 2	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>47.3%</b>
School 3	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>

40. Winning is very important to my child.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>90.2%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>
School 2	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>
School 3	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>



41. If I had a choice between winning the game and getting to see my child participate in the game, I would choose winning the game.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>
School 2	<b>48.2%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>
School 3	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>

42. My child's coaches were approachable and were concerned about what I thought as a parent.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>
School 2	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>33.9%</b>
School 3	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>

43. My child's coaches provided a means by which I could communicate with them if I felt it was necessary. Examples of this would be providing telephone numbers or holding practices where parents were encouraged to attend.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>
School 2	<b>70.9%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>
School 3	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>

44. My child's coaches communicated with me through newsletters about the team.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
School 2	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>73.2%</b>
School 3	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>72.7%</b>

45. I would very much like to receive news about the team by a newsletter.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
School 2	<b>91.1%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
School 3	<b>88.2%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>

46. My child's coaches allowed me to be involved with the team at the level at which I desired.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>63.4%</b>	<b>36.6%</b>
School 2	<b>67.9%</b>	<b>32.1%</b>
School 3	<b>82.4%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>

47. I would have liked to have been more involved in my child's athletic experience.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>
School 2	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>49.1%</b>
School 3	<b>58.8%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>

48. My child's coaches have been a positive influence in the life of my child.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
School 2	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>29.6%</b>
School 3	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>

49. It is the responsibility of my child's coaches to be a positive role models for my child.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 2	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
School 3	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

50. It is important to me that my child's coaches establish specific rules and expectations and hold all team members accountable.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 2	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
School 3	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

51. Coaches must make decisions based on what is best for the welfare of the team.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
School 2	<b>91.1%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
School 3	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>

52. I believe that my child's coaches work hard to provide a positive experience for my child through participation in athletics.

	Agree	Disagree
School 1	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
School 2	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>
School 3	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>

Appendix J  
Parent Comments

## Survey Comments from Parents

Of the 84 families that returned survey packets, 38 individuals made comments in reference to their child's experience with an extracurricular athletic activity. The following are the comments in complete quotes from those who responded.

1. "I've had two children finish high school and play sports from the 8th grade on. Winning is important to everyone - but these coaches have taken it to the extreme - it was more important than skill teaching, self-esteem and in some cases even the welfare of the players. Coaches want to take all the glory but none of the blame. They have 'favorites' and not always (are they) the most skilled. Good sportsmanship was not mentioned in your survey - coaches don't seem to think it is important."
2. "Considering the problem of hiring (a coach) last fall at (school). I had no problem with his ability to coach even though in his past he made a mistake and corrected it. No coach is above a mistake in his past."
3. "Athletics gives my children motivation for academics". "Coaches need to push grades more."
4. "Sometimes I think teachers and coaches don't realize what a huge influence they have on the lives of the children. I think they need to keep in mind what impact a careless (thoughtless) remark makes. Overall I am happy with the coaching staff. I know it must be frustrating to provide the opportunity to participate and then not have enough show up to play. (a drawback of a small school??)."
5. "My son's experience through football has been great. He tried out basketball this year and we were disappointed. He tried very hard, but the coach refused to rotate the boys. He left the starters in the game. My child bring in several fans, which means we travel from (from several different locations) and plus it costs to get into the game. Then all we do is sit and wait for my son to get into the game. To my understanding this coach isn't going to get to coach again next year. I hope not anyway."

6. "My child is the type of youngster who is good at anything he decides to do-whether it's athletic or academic. I think athletic participation has been good for him because it keeps him active in this society of ours which often touts exercise but opts for the couch. I believe in the old axiom 'a healthy mind and a healthy body' and that high school sports are one way of meeting that goal. My child has expressed interest in being a coach. I was at first opposed to the idea but I have seen the way he seems to be able to assess players and situations and have changed my mind. (I still encourage him to have a dual major, however)."

7. "I would have liked to have seen more encouragement and positive motivation. My daughter will go 100(times) as far with words of encouragement than words of anger yelling. I have always felt that the girls on her team were all super but it did not shine. You should see them now with their parks and rec coach he can get them to work as a team. I'm impressed. Also I would like to see GIRLS be taken seriously. We have a great turn out for games the girl play great and the need the CREDIT and pat on the back."

8. "I feel there should be better trained 'Ref's' at the games."

9. "My child was not given a chance to show how much she could help the team. Teach more offense and defense!!! (man to man and zone). Coaches should be teachers of the team sport, not of the school necessarily. Both would be nice."

10. "Language and the throwing of equipment at games needs to be addressed and dealt with."

11. "Some coaches are too quick to pre-determine who their team is and alienate players so they quit or get bad attitudes. Keeping an open mind and playing everyone early in the season in non-district games may provide you with some surprises - if you are looking and open-minded. Parents are a coaches best friend or worst enemy - If the parents leave the game bad mouthing the coach, then the child will have no respect for or

listen to the coach. Parents need to be supportive to the situation as a whole, not the one. But the coach needs to be flexible. Even Michael Jordan gets out of a game for a break. If a reserve knows they will get 2 to 4 minutes a half, they will be more ready and able to prepare. If they have to play more due to fouls or injury, they will be better prepared and will show it. A team is only as good as the 'last player' on the bench. If you only have 5 or 6 ready to play, you are opening yourself up for problems. A coach needs to have everyone ready, even though they go 7 or 8 deep on a bench."

12. "Coaches and other teachers at school (ie: band directors) need to be more flexible and more together so children can do as much as possible- at a small school this is very important. Children trying to do 2 sports at once need to have practice schedule for both, but coaches can be flexible (if a child plays golf and runs cross country he should be able to run on own after practicing golf)."

13 "As a parent I feel that it is each coaches job to find out what each student's best assets are and work on that to make each individual better in that area and make them feel good about themselves. It is very hard for even the best athletes to be told that they should be more like another person. You can tear down the best athlete with negative statements. It is very important to my child that she be accepted for the skills that she has to offer the team. If a coach does not show any confidence in her then she seems to lose her own self confidence. A lot of positive and less negative would be an improvement. It is too easy in this day and time for an athlete to give up. There is too much other fun things for kids to do, that is why coaches need to change with the times. Make sports fun and constructive. I think discipline as well should be stressed more. It seems now days that the athletes tell the coaches what they are going to do. I try to teach my child respect for discipline at home but I think that it is lacking in sports. I also teach my child that she plays sports as a privilege for making good grades. I have been reluctant to talk to coaches because she feels if the coach doesn't like what I have to say that she will be punished in some way. I would like to see the coaches have a meeting with all parents before each sport season so that everyone could have a chance to discuss

any concerns that they might have. I appreciate this survey. I have never received one before and I feel like it is a good opportunity to express my thoughts.

14. Comments of a personal nature, not specifically concerned with the survey.

15. "All team members need to be held equally accountable, even the 'stars' of the team and should be released if they do not follow rules/expectations. Everyone the comes to all practices should get to play. A coach should keep his/her team together and work with them all year to see significant improvement. Not just during the season and preseason practice."

16. "I don't agree on coachs being a school teacher. Since entering the (a specific district) we have stumbled around like we are lost. (Specific school) has in the past as in the present time good, solid, talented athletes. We need coaches who know the game and who have played the game to be competitive. I know that some people have volunteered their time for free to coach and were good at the sport with knowledge and ability to work with students but were told if a teacher wants the job they have 1st choice. If you had a baseball team that in rec ball that went to the semi-finals in the state, don't you expect a good season? If you have the athletes but a poor coach, what do you have? Unhappy players, unhappy parents, no support for the team."

17. "I am strongly against coaches who yell and scream at the players during games as a motivative factor. I fell [sic] this should only be done during practice an in locker room at half time. Intimidating a child by embassment [sic] in front of friends and family is the worst motivating tool a coach can use. This will only destroy a kid confidence and self-esteme[sic]".

18. "I think the coaches should have the best interest of the student at heart. They should teach the students to win and lose. To lose and learn from it. The coaches should be an example for our children. We have

coaches at (school name omitted) that smoke, drink, and swear at our kids. This is not a good example. We have some that lose as badly as the students. They need to teach sportsmanship. Our kids do not learn from our coaches not to swear, not to drink, and not to smoke. This is sad. AS a parent at (name of school omitted), if we speak out our children suffer for it. The are eithr [sic] put on the bench or their lives are mad [sic] much harder than they should be. It is also very important that a school have an athletic director that is concerned for the students. Ours is only concerned about the money he can make.”

19. “I think the coaches focus on winning but at the expense of just playing the ‘good’ players. Then the ones that are not so good never get playing time. If you want depth in a team you have to let everyone play, so to gain experience to become a good player. This was not happening at (name of school omitted). I am not speaking of just football. It is obious [sic] in other sports at (name of school omitted). They just play their favorites win or lose. I can sort of understand in a close game, even the kids understand, but in a lop sided game everyone plays. This is not happening. You also have coaches who smoke and swear at practices which is not right. He or she is to be a role model. I realize the kids are a problem too. Some kids who are in trouble off the field should not be allowed to play. Regardless of there ability. There have been students who have had charges against them and still participated in sports. I think that kids need to show respect to the coaches also. If they cannot then he or she should set the bench till they become a team player. We have had kids and parents throw temper tantrums to get there way. We even had kids and parents attack the coach physically and get by with it so there child gets to play. The school dropped the charges against the parent. The child was suspended from one non district tournament do you call this right? The athletic director has nothing but money on (their) mind. I think that (the athletic director) should not be a coach. (The athletic director) shows favoritism towards basketball with his money. They are the only ones making money according to his budget. There are a lot of things going on at the school and I commend you on your survey. I hope that you can effect some changes at the high school. It should be watched for a



year with a impartial person just to see how things are doing at the school. Just remember the kids, and the coach is not always the problem.”

20. “I think that (name of school omitted) sports (ALL) lack guidance, training and positive influences necessary for helping to create a well rounded athlete and person!”

21. “The (name of sport omitted) coaches at (name of school omitted) did not have as much experience that I think they should have. Not enough discipline as should have been. Not enough exercise workouts like for example: running, stretching. If a child does not give all and do everything possible to participate both in practice and games, ‘ride the pine!’ sit on bench.”

22. “I think (name omitted) is a very good coach. (Name omitted) had a lot of influence on my daughter. My child enjoyed playing for her and learned a lot about the game. The only thing that I felt was not fair was during the tournament when the J.V. player was brought up to Varsity to play. This J.V. player played more of the games than a few of the Varsity players. This was very discouraging to the Varsity players that attended every practice, participated in every game, and ‘hung in there’ when some of the older girls decided that they didn’t want to play. This was not only discouraging to the players but many of the parents. My question was if this person could contribute such a great amount to this Varsity team and the coaching staff felt that she was a better player, then why wasn’t she moved up much earlier in the season. I think it’s great to as J.V. players to step up and help in Varsity tournaments, but only when Varsity players need a break, are to tired to play anymore, etc. I find it discouraging to see so many talented kids in a school and very few are participating in basketball. I feel that the coaching staff needs to concentrate on encouraging and trying to help older kids instead of making them aware of their faults. I know that we can not tolerate the smoking and drinking from our athletes: I also think that we as adults need to encourage and try to help these kids. These kids need to learn to respect the coaches and the coaches need to treat the kids with the same respect. It’s been said that if

a kid loves the game they'll play for anyone. I hope we find this to be the fact next school year."

23. "My son's coaches seemed more interested in approval from local residents whose son's were players. Some of the best players sat on the bench while others played and teams were being routed. Even during the routs coaches kept younger or inexperienced players on the bench. The coaches placed all the blame for poor performance on the players. This same group of players on the rec. league (under another coach) are undefeated and playing extremely well and all seem pleased with attitude and playing time. My son will not play next year."

24. "Coaches need to:

1. Not have favorites.
2. Not determine who plays by how much money a parent/parents donate.
3. Not have double standards.
4. At any time tear down a players confidence - especially during a game.
5. Have the respect of it's own players.
6. Communicate with players and have players respect the game they play. It is a team sport, not an individual sport.
7. Charge \$4.00 per person for a game. Too much to charge for a H.S. baseball game."

25. "For the most part the athletic program did not have the most qualified person coaching my child's program. Coaches as a whole are a group of selfish egotistical men. Most only think of their own sport, often getting on a child's case if they do not maintain a level of conditioning equal to that sport. It should be realized that many athletes are multi-sport athletes and conditioning for one sport is not right for another sport. A remarkable difference in my opinion is the attitude and compassion of female coaches. They have more patience for the game and the athlete than their male counterparts."

26. "Getting a new coach and coaching staff last year had a positive effect on my child. Coach (name omitted) and his staff are doing an excellent job."

27. "Coaches should always be positive in games. Never tell the children their faults during a game. For those who struggle they should never stop encouraging them. My son had the most fun this, his last year. He had fun the other years but this was his best. This has nothing to do with your last question, but in my opinion if a child would be required to join a sport from middle school on you may get less troubled kids. I have seen many of our kids that had talent but would not play a sport. If they tried it they may find one they like. They don't get encouragement from home. Sometimes a child that has never played until Middle S. or High S. will not even try. They are embarrassed to try. Any kid that is given a choice[sic] or no parent backing will not play. By doing this we may find some wonderful kids out there."

28. "My son's experience this year was generally positive. However, in the past we have had some horrible experiences with coaches who have been less mature than my son. While I expect my child to be part of the team and follow the rules, the coach does not 'own' his body and mind. Part of participating in a sport means learning to make decisions. Sometimes that decision may not be the best one. However, in those cases I expect the coach to be a leader - not only a 'punisher'. I have no problem with running laps for being tardy. I do draw the line at abusive behavior of coaches - either physical or mental."

29. "I am glad you are asking these types of questions. I believe there are some parents that just do not understand. Athletic competition after 8,9,10 years old is just that, 'competition' not a place to just 'get to play'. If someone needs to see their child play for the sake of getting to play, send them to the park! or let them compete for a position and earn it! Don't competition what happens after the school years? Don't you have to compete in life and be on teams that win?"

30. "The coaches treated all the children equally whether they were starters or bench warmers. They tried to make them all good players and develop what skills they have."

31. “ My son’s experience with athletics in this particular school has shown me that they are not interested in expanding the department beyond its existing point I feel that coaches should be hired that can bring in new life, not ones that have learned from the old coaches at the same school. This system allows too much influence from the parents and old classmates. I have seen many excellent athletes just pass by because the coaches had no interest in them. I have seen the self esteem of individuals lowered simply because a coach could not handle his job. Whether a player is the best or not, if they are part of a team, they still need encouragement as we all do in any phase of our life. If a coach is not going to provide this for every player then don’t put them on a team and use them as only an opponent for the others during practice.”

32. “My child, a superb athlete and outstanding soccer and softball player, played soccer 3 years and softball her senior year. Even though she is recognized in the community as an outstanding softball player, she was not allowed to play because she had played soccer the previous 3 years.”

33. “I would like to see more new coaches for the school. And that they are a teacher at the school. I would like to see the young people that don’t have much talent play instead of the ones that have talent playing all the time. They all need a chance instead of the ones with the money always playing.”

34. “ I do think if a child is kept busy they are more likely to stay out of trouble. My daughter and another girl played (the same position in a sport). the coach would not put my daughter in the game unless they were way ahead in points. The starter (at this position) got an injury so my daughter got to play. The coach wouldn’t hardly let her bat. He had a designated hitter for her. Her confidence level went way down. At the end of the season she had a stats sheet, and my daughters stats were better than the starting (position). My daughter also plays parks and rec ball. The coach let her bat and she is on base everytime . I think that the coach has to show some confidence in the players and give them all a chance. If the coach doesn’t think the player is good enough to be on the team, then he or she shouldn’t make it.”

35. "I am grateful for the football program at (name of school omitted). There were no favorites. Everybody got a chance and was judged on his ability. They have a great coaching staff that goes above and beyond to help teach boy with school and football and life and most of all God. If every sports program at (name of school omitted) were run half as well as football, we'd have an excellent sports program. As for grade averages not everybody's a genius [sic] but that doesn't mean they don't have ability or to give up on them. They just impress doing their best and anybody's best should be good enough. That's what is so special about the football coaching is their coaches were qualified enough to know their best abilities and not their social status. I could go on and on about the football programs abilities but I think the triple in numbers and the sport that raised the most money and the one the community says it likes the most says it all. I do wish that the coaches and the players would have had more staff and faculty support."

36. "If I had a choice between winning and seeing my son play, I would rather see him play. But from the coaches point of view, I wouldn't blame him for not playing my son if it would have cost the team the game".

37. "I feel the coach was very frustrated this year. I am not sure why. But my son was affected by his coaching. He too became frustrated. He has always loved baseball. He has never stopped loving baseball but twice he wanted to quit the team. We encouraged him to stick it out, but he did not join the summer league. He is going to baseball camps this summer and I hope he will continue to love the game. When we've ask him in the past what he wants to do when he grows up he's always said a professional baseball player. We've always encouraged the dreams of our children (no matter what the odds). I hope that no coach would ever (discourage) the dreams of any player".

38. "There was a marked partiality shown by coaches to team members. This caused a significant barrier to team playing. A team needs to be a team for the group good. Not the good of a few select students. Sports are to teach children how to work together not to learn prejudice, negative

peer pressure, or inappropriate behaviors by adults who are supposed to be role models”.

## Vita

Kevin Wayne Harris was born August 2, 1959, the first and only child of Marvin and Evelyn Harris. Kevin attended Auburn High School, located in Riner, Virginia and graduated in 1977. In 1977 he entered Roanoke College where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Education. While at Roanoke, Kevin was a member of the varsity basketball, cross country, and tennis teams. After graduating from Roanoke College in 1981, Kevin was admitted to graduate school at Virginia Tech where he received a Master of Science degree in Exercise Physiology. While working on this degree Kevin gained employment with Montgomery County Public Schools as a health and physical education teacher. In addition to his teaching responsibilities Kevin has coached various sports, served as athletic director, and special projects coordinator.

In 1994 Kevin began work on his doctorate with the School Leaders Program at Virginia Tech.

Kevin is married to the former Susan Lynn Duncan of Christiansburg, Virginia. Kevin and his wife Susan along with their daughter Emily Nicole currently reside in Christiansburg.