

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CHILDHOOD  
SOCIALIZATION INTO SPORT

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1903, the Public Schools Athletic League in New York City inaugurated the first adult-organized youth sports program in the United States. Within seven years, the program grew from 300 boys to 150,000 boys. In 1939, Carl Stotz originated Little League Baseball in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and by 1977, 2.26 million boys and girls were playing in Little League programs. Pop Warner Football, officially incorporated in 1959, is now the largest nationally organized tackle football program with 240,000 participating youngsters. A 1976 youth sports survey in Michigan estimated that over 30 million children between the ages of six and sixteen were involved in over 50 different types of organized sport programs across the nation (Martens, 1978). According to the figures, children are not only entering sports in greater numbers, but also at earlier ages. More girls are participating in sport than ever before. The mass media, particularly television, has increasingly publicized children's sport programs.

Why have children and their families become increasingly involved in sport programs every year? The study of children in sport has been a recent innovation in the social sciences. Because of the author's interest in children and their families, sport appeared to provide an ideal situation in which to examine rather specific kinds of family relationships under rather unique conditions.

The present research study originated as the result of casual observations made on children and their families in a community sport program. Players who were observed as neither skilled in sport nor socially adept became the focus of the research problem. The author wondered why children who lacked athletic skills and social skills would be involved in sports. One explanation proposed was that children in low status positions on sport teams found that "belonging" to the team was more important than the low status position. Besides team membership, other factors such as family support, peer and coach influence, or individual perceptions, were speculated upon as possible alternative factors for understanding child sport participation.

In Chapter II, Review of Selected Literature, plausible explanations for child sport involvement were explored. A social learning paradigm provided the conceptual framework for understanding the socialization process into sport roles. The paradigm posited three categories of social variables which were associated to sport role acquisition: personal attributes of the role learner, socializing agents who influence the development of sport values, attitudes, interest, and skills, and socializing situations which enhance sport involvement. In order to test the utility of the social learning paradigm in explaining child sport involvement and to identify significant variables associated with differential levels of sport involvement, 53 variables were developed to measure the three socialization categories. Data were then collected from 193 players, 260 parents, and 18 coaches involved in a three-month winter basketball program connected with a community park and recreation department.



In Chapter III, the following methodological concerns were dealt with: (1) the research objectives, (2) the subjects and procedure, (3) the operationalization and measurement of variables, and (4) the methods of analyses. In order to provide greater depth to the description of the subjects and sport situation, two research methods, simple observations and questionnaire data, were employed to measure child sport involvement.

The research findings were reported in Chapter IV. Specific attention was focused on variables which distinguished players who were neither skilled nor popular from other players in each of the three socializing categories: personal attributes, socializing agents, and social situations. Distinguishing characteristics of the non-skilled, non-popular players were provided in a summary description.

In Chapter V, further descriptive summaries of other types of players were presented: skilled players, popular players, and both skilled and popular players. The interpretation centered upon non-skilled, non-popular players and reasons underlying their sport involvement, together with comparative levels of involvement of other players.

In summary, the major purpose of this research study was to explore and identify factors that were associated with differential levels of sport involvement for children in organized sport programs. In particular, non-skilled, non-popular players were chosen as the main focus of interest in the socialization process of sport players.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the review of literature examines the process of socialization by which children learn to become athletes. Two sport researchers, Snyder and Spreitzer (1978:69), have described childhood sport socialization in this way:

Learning to be an athlete must be approached in the same manner as learning skills in music, art, automobile mechanics, dramatics, academic subjects, or any other area of special expertise. The development of such skills and knowledge also includes the internalization of the appropriate values, norms, attitudes, dispositions and self-image. Agents and agencies that are significant in both positive and negative learning of the athletic role include four social systems that are vital to the general socialization process for most children and adolescents--family, peers, school, and community.

The socialization process into sport involves perspectives from many disciplines, all basically concerned with child development and child role enactment. A Social Learning Paradigm has provided a framework for understanding the acquisition of a sport role based primarily on three sources: personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations.

This literature review focuses on three areas of discussion. The first area is a brief description of the general aspects of the process of socialization. The second area of discussion relates sport to the socialization process and introduces various models of sport

socialization together with related research. The last section develops a working framework for childhood socialization into sport and outlines variables associated with child sport involvement.

### The Process of Socialization

The process of socialization has been studied systematically for five decades by: physical education, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, albeit with different emphasis. According to Goslin (1969), regardless of the approach, studies in socialization have been ultimately concerned with how individuals learn to participate effectively in social groups. The socialization process refers to the assimilation and development of skills, knowledge, values, dispositions, and self perceptions needed to perform present and anticipated roles in groups and society (Brim, 1966; Clausen, 1968). This process includes teaching the individual to behave in a manner consistent with social expectations in order to facilitate social-cultural continuity and predictability (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978). In the life of every person, there are a number of significant people--"significant other" (Cooley, 1909; Mead, 1934)--who are directly involved in the socialization process and who exert great influence because of their primacy, their frequent contact, and their control over rewards and punishment (Brim, 1966).

Broadly speaking then, socialization is a learning process in which individuals acquire a social identity by learning appropriate role behaviors from a number of significant persons. From this general perspective of socialization, this study will focus on more limited aspects of the socialization process, namely, how children learn specific role

behaviors from a number of important socializing agents in the special setting of sport.

### Games and Sport

Although games and sport have been ancient and widespread forms of socialization and learning (Loy and Engham, 1973), only recently have they received serious attention.

Earlier, Cooley (1909), Mead (1934), and Piaget (1932) discussed the importance of games in childhood socialization; games acted in effect as mediators between the family and the community. Cooley viewed the peer-play group as a source of primary socialization and as an extension of the family. Similarly, Mead related play to the first stage of development and games to the second stage of development in the genesis of self. Piaget demonstrated how the cooperative application of rules in a marble game could illustrate childhood development in autonomy.

Today, there is a growing interest in sport for children largely because it is being superceded by institutionalized game forms (Opies, 1969). Coakley (1978) reports from a 1974 U. S. News and World Report study that an estimated four million children between the ages of five and fourteen participated in community sponsored sport programs. Other estimates ranged as high as twenty million participants. As the child grows up in American society, play and informal games are often gradually replaced by sport-institutionalized competitive activities that are distinctive from play and games. Sport is specifically characterized by (1) fixed rules which are enforced and controlled by parties other than the participants themselves, and (2) formalized rewards

(certificates, medals) that are earned through participation (Coakley, 1978).

In the last decade or so, social scientists have become aware of sport as a phenomenon that reflects important aspects of the socialization process. Sport has been described by Page (1973:15) as a "microcosm where learning, rehearsal and preparation for the real world take place and as an important experience in human development." Early studies were pioneered by Mead, Cooley, and Piaget and more recently, researchers Obertueffer and Ulrich (1951), Paterson and Hallberg (1966), Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962), Opies (1969), and Inbar (1972) have examined physical education programs, sport, and games for the functions they perform toward the socialization of children into society, culture, and institutions.

#### Socialization into Sport

There are two major orientations which relate sport to the socialization process. The first is concerned with socialization "through" sport in which sport becomes a vehicle for social learning and attention is focused on the "outcome" of sport participation. Is sport a character builder? Through sport, are such traits as self-discipline, leadership, and sportmanship acquired? Research by Ogilvie and Tutko (1971), Seymour (1956), Corbin, (1973), and others have researched such questions with regard to the impact of sports on its participants. From this perspective, sport is treated as an independent variable and sport socialization is related to other phenomena.

The second orientation focuses on socialization "into" sport in which sport is considered a dependent variable. This perspective

focuses on agents or agencies which attract individuals into sport participation and contribute to the acquisition of sport roles. This study will be primarily concerned with this orientation, factors which influence and predict sport involvement.

Two additional areas of focus are specified at this time. The socialization process into sport usually begins in childhood and adolescence, but continues to affect sport involvement throughout the life cycle. This investigation will be concerned with children between the ages of nine and fourteen who are involved in organized sport. Primary involvement in sport refers to persons who actually participate in sport (players, athletes, contestants) while secondary involvement refers to consumers (spectators, viewers, readers) and producers (coaches, referees, promoters) of sport. This research investigation will focus on factors which attract, influence, encourage, and predict children's primary sport involvement.

#### Models of Socialization Into Sport

Several investigators (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978; Kenyon and McPherson, 1973) have developed tentative models of sport socialization from which sport involvement can be explained. Both models have utilized a social learning paradigm (Bandura, 1969; Brim and Wheeler, 1966; Clausen, 1968) which essentially identifies three general classes (categories) of variables which mediate the socialization process: personal attributes of the socializee, socializing agents (significant others), and socializing situations (social structure). (See Figure 1.)

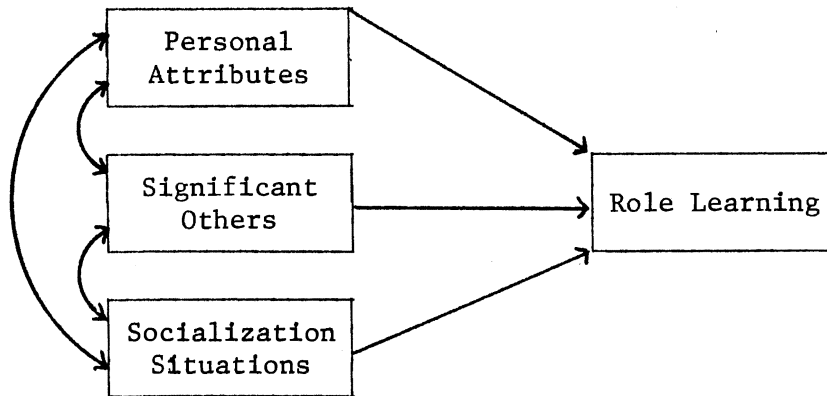


Figure 1. The Three Elements of the Social Learning Paradigm

According to this theoretical approach, role learning is accounted for by the socializee (characterized by a set of physical and psychological traits) who is exposed to a variety of stimuli and reinforcements provided by significant others who act within one or more norm encumbered social systems (Kenyon and McPherson, 1973). Three general types of social learning are distinguished by Kelman (1961) within this paradigm:

1. Compliance--Role learning occurs when the individual accepts influence from another person or group because he hopes to achieve a favorable reaction. Stated another way, the individual learns the appropriate responses to situations defined by others in order to obtain reinforcement or to avoid punishment.
2. Identification--The individual establishes a self-identity by imitating persons who already possess that identity. These persons or role models are usually chosen for imitation because of their primacy and control over sanctions and rewards.

3. Internalization--Role learning includes the development of skills and knowledge as well as the internalization of appropriate social values and norms. The individual not only learns the prevalent definitions or meanings upon which the social reality of the organization is based and identifies with them, he also makes them his definitions and meanings (Berger, 1969).

One inherent weakness in using this general approach to socialization is that of "specification"--specifying a manageable number of variables from a great number of plausible ones (Heise, 1969). This problem is somewhat diminished by two current developments in socialization research. First, studies in socialization are no longer preoccupied with broad behavior and dispositional themes related to early life development. Socialization research now relates to every stage of human development and learning. Second, it has become feasible to concentrate on more specific aspects of socialization and to examine more narrow sets of behavior associated with definite roles (Sewell, 1963; Brim, 1966). For example, only recently has attention been given in socialization studies to the acquisition of roles by children. In sport, one can view sport participation as a sport role and examine the means by which children may acquire the skills and values necessary for role enactment.

Utilizing the basic components of the social learning framework, two tentative sport socialization models have been developed. The first model, by Snyder and Spreitzer (1978:62), indicates that adult sport participation is traced back to childhood reinforcement by parental interest and encouragement to participate in sport, participation in



youth athletic programs, self perceptions of athletic ability, and involvement in sport by one's spouse (see Figure 2).

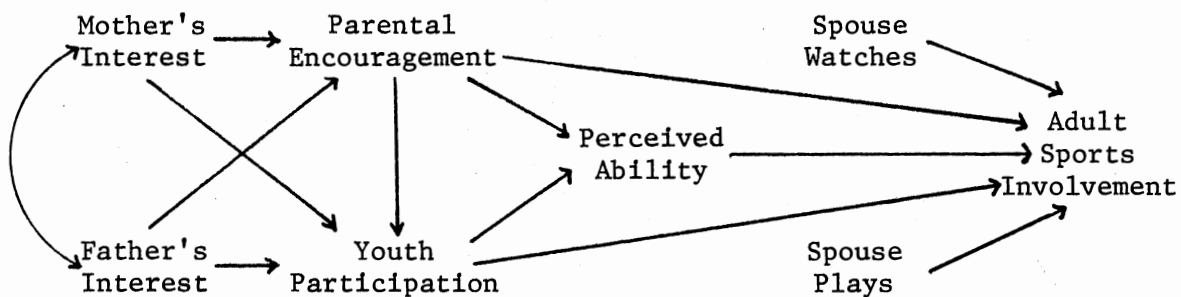


Figure 2. A Theoretical Model of Socialization Into Sport

A second model, proposed by Kenyon and McPherson (1973:309), summarizes the overall socialization process into sport (see Figure 3). Their model accounts not only for family, school, peer group, and community influence in sport involvement, but also focuses upon the importance of physical aptitudes. Childhood and adolescent socialization periods are treated separately. Empirical research supportive of these two general models of sport socialization will now be discussed under the following topic headings: personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations.

#### Personal Attributes

The term "personal attributes" as related to sport socialization is

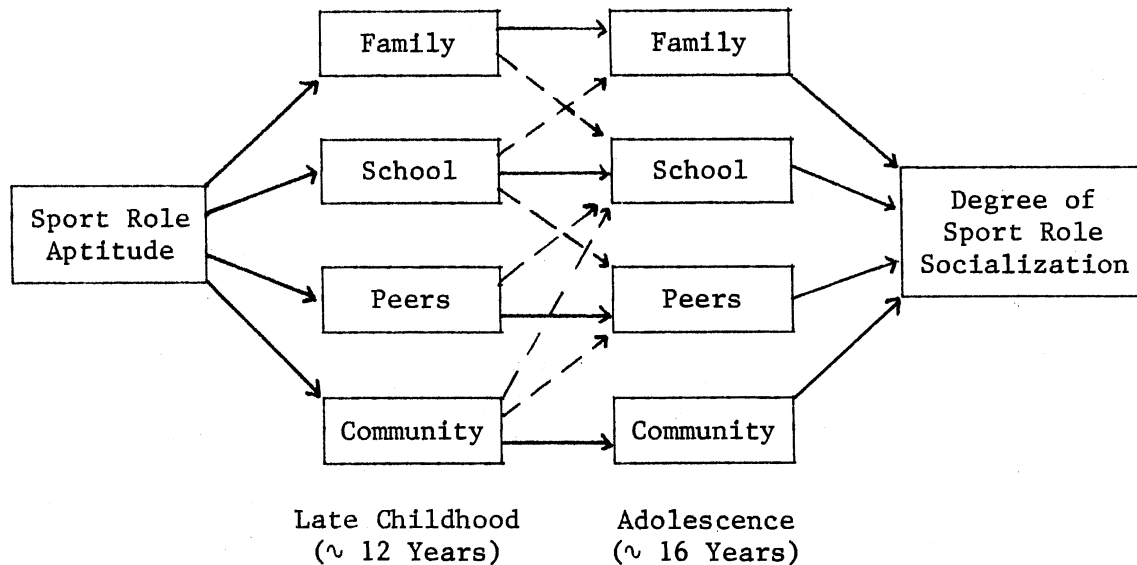


Figure 3. Kenyon and McPherson's Model of Socialization Into Sport

vague and not well defined; however, two general categories can be identified in the literature.

Sport Aptitude. This term refers to speed, strength, and coordination--basic requirements for sport involvement according to Kenyon and McPherson (1973) and Wohl and Pudelskiewicz (1972). Kenyon (1970b) indicated that athletic or motoric ability was the second most influential factor, after significant other influence, in a path analysis of variables which explain primary sport involvement for adults. In an earlier study (1968), Kenyon found that among 113 Olympic aspirants in 1968, 96 percent of them had participated in some sports in elementary school and 65 percent of these players had claimed to be "winners" the first time they had competed in a sport event. It is not clear what the term winner implies, but it does suggest that the Olympic players were

referring to sport aptitudes. Spreitzer and Snyder (1975) reported that "perceived ability" or self perception of one's athletic ability was an important factor affecting sport involvement. Supportive of this idea was a study done by Orlick and Botterill (1975). They interviewed youngsters who had never played in organized sport programs and 75 percent of them stated that they had never tried out for sport because they did not think they were good enough.

Social Psychological Factors. These factors generally refer to personality traits of the players involved in sport. Seymour (1956) studied Little League Baseball programs when they were being organized in the early 1950's and compared 114 ten- to twelve-year olds with a group of non-participants both before and after the baseball season. On the basis of one season of sport experience, he found that the sport participants tended to measure higher before and after the season on these personality traits--cooperation, social consciousness, emotional adjustment, leadership, and responsibility--although not significantly. King and Chi (1974) examining these personality characteristics--dominance, extroversion, emotional stability, ego strength, conscientiousness, and conservation--found that adult athletes did tend to be slightly more extroverted, conscientious, conservative, and have more ego strength than non-athletes, but again not significantly so. Sage (1974) using the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule on 646 athletes could not find any differences in personality profiles within sport teams or between eight different sports: football, baseball, wrestling, gymnastics, swimming, track, and tennis.

It appears that empirical data relating personal attributes to sport remain somewhat indeterminate at this time. The findings

relative to sport aptitude seem to suggest that both possession of and perception of athletic skills are important factors leading to sport involvement. On the other hand, findings relative to personality characteristics and sport involvement are inconclusive. It is suggested that a more systematic analysis of dispositional factors as they relate to sport socialization would be a fruitful area for future research.

### Socializing Agents

The term socializing agent will be employed in this study to distinguish it from "reference groups". Significant others or socializing agents are individuals who, by work or example, exercise a major influence over the attitudes and values of the socializee (Woelfel and Haller, 1971). Reference groups refer to a plurality, total community, or group into which the socializee is eventually socialized. According to Inkeles (1969), socializing agents and agencies have a concept of what the socializee is to become; therefore, they substantially influence the outcome of the socialization process. A more specific aspect of socializing agents or agencies is that they represent role models (Clausen, 1968)--individuals or groups, real or symbolic, who exemplify attitudes, values, and social responses to the socializee and who are important elements in childhood role acquisition. Role models define continuity in the social order and their absence is noted by an increased importance placed on sanctions.

According to the following sport-oriented investigations (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978; McPherson, 1973; Kenyon, 1970, 1973; Roethlisberger, 1978; Pudelkiewicz, 1970; and Greendorfer, 1978) the three socializing

agents most likely to have the greatest impact on the socializee in childhood sport are (1) the family, (2) the peer group, and (3) the coaches.

The Family. The first agent of socialization is the nuclear family. The importance of the family as a primary socializing agent in early childhood development is well documented (Sears, Maccoby and Levin, 1957; Bandura, 1969; Brim, 1966; Parsons and Bales, 1955; Goslin, 1969; McCandless, 1969; Clausen, 1968; and Inkeles, 1968).

A number of studies in sport socialization also confirm the importance of the family as a primary socializing agent in childhood involvement in sport. Pudalkiewicz (1970), Snyder and Spreitzer (1978) both indicate that the initial stimulus to becoming interested in sport is received in the home environment. Roethlisberger (1978) investigating socialization patterns of Olympic female gymnasts found that fathers and coaches were the most influential socializing agents. Family influence was the greatest factor in college women competing in sports (Malumphy, 1968; Greendorfer, 1978). Greendorfer noted that not only did the female athlete have family approval for her participation and competition, but there was also a family history of family participation in sport. For male athletics, the influence of family and other socializing agents appears to be sport specific and differential over time. McPherson's study (1973) on Canadian ice hockey players and tennis players reported that mothers were more influential agents for tennis players but not hockey players. Interest in sport was initially aroused in the family, usually by the father. Family influence appeared to decrease in high school while peer and teacher-coach influence increased. Kenyon (1973) found in his study of track and field Olympic

aspirants and gymnasts that family was more influential in generating interest in traditional spectator sports (baseball, basketball, and football), but teacher-coaches were more influential in stimulating interest in track and field. The peer group was the most important contributor toward arousing interest in most sports. Snyder and Spreitzer (1978) stated that parental interest in sport and parental encouragement to participate were important factors influencing offspring participation in sport. Parental attitudes and their participation in sport were also related to offspring sport involvement, according to Zeller (1974).

Generally speaking, the findings on family influence on childhood socialization into sport concur. Both female and male sport participants are likely to be influenced by the family in childhood although family influence may decrease later on.

Measurement of family influence in sport has been limited to extremely general concepts (i.e., encouragement, interest). These concepts need further specification if they are to be used meaningfully in understanding the process of socialization into sport. Several extensive review articles on parent-child relations (Becker, 1964; Baumrind, 1971; Martin, 1975; and Rollins and Thomas, 1979) emphasize the importance of studying the combined effects of parental support behaviors with parental control techniques to account for empirical regularities between parent behavior and child behavior. Parental support refers to "encouragement, approval, praise, help, interest, cooperation, expressions of love, nurturance, physical affection" (Straus and Tallman, 1971:393), "diffuse positive social sanctions" (Parsons and Bales, 1955: 371), and "positive reinforcing stimuli" (Ferster and Skinner, 1957).

Parental control attempts refer to power, discipline, authority, dominance, restriction, or coercion (Becker, 1964; Baumrind, 1971; Goode, 1972). Two dimensions of parent control attempts are distinctive: inductive control (firm authority combined with explanations) and coercive control (punitive, power assertions of authority).

In particular, the Rollins and Thomas review (1979) of 235 studies done between 1960 and 1974, provides a systematic account of parental support and control behaviors as they related to eight positive childhood behaviors: cognitive development (persistence, ability to generalize), conformity, creativity, self-control, moral development, self-esteem, achievement, and sex role orientation. A summary of their findings indicate that behavior that is valued by society (socially competent behavior) and has instrumental utility is positively correlated with parental support, inductive control attempts, and the importance of such socially competent behavior in parents. These same behaviors are negatively correlated with coercive control attempts of parents. Patterns of parental support and control will be examined in this investigation to see if they are related to sustained sport involvement of children.

The Peer Group. The earliest peer group emerges (approximately ages three to eight) from the play group where the child is first introduced to peer-child assessment of behavior. Two later peer groups appear between the ages of eight and twelve, from thirteen through eighteen. Bossard and Boll (1966:275) refer to these last two peer groups as the "clique" and the "gang". A clique is defined as "a small, intimate social participation group which consists of persons of the same social status and agreement over the exclusion of others from the

group." A gang, on the other hand, is a more formal group, more permanent, less exclusive, and bound by subculture of dress styles, nicknames, slogans, passwords, etc. (Bossard and Boll, 1966).

Although several kinds of peer groups can be differentiated for purposes of analysis, all forms of peer groups share these characteristics in common (Havighurst and Newgarten, 1957; Bowerman and Winch, 1959; Brim, 1966; McCandless, 1969). The peer group is second only to the family in socializing the child. It is indispensable in role rehearsal, as in codes of conduct, competitive behavior and sex-role orientation. The peer group supplies important confirmation-disconfirmation of self judgements of competence and self esteem although the foundation of these characteristics are probably more influenced early by the family.

Several sport investigations have related the importance of peer influence to the sport socialization process. Helanko (1963:240) examined the developmental pattern of sport participation among Scandinavian children and described the socialization process in terms of three peer group stages: the pre-gang period, the gang period, and the post-gang period. The age levels of each group are similar to those described by Bossard and Boll. According to Helanko, in the pre-gang period, sport participation serves as a source of pleasure; in the gang period, sport involvement acts as a means of status definition. He observed, "Sports and the gang together constitute the social milieu in which for the first time in his life, a boy is called upon to create a social position for himself among his equals." Tutko and Bruns (1976) described a nine-year old boy who had just joined a Little League team. He was clumsy and afraid of the ball--he didn't care that he was the worst player on the team. Instead, he was glad he belonged to something--his uniform



gave him a "sense of identity". During the postgang period, the gang gradually dissolves into aggregate pair groupings and sport participation becomes more individualized.

Snyder and Spreitzer (1978) indicate that peer influence, particularly within the neighborhood, provide early socialization experience into sport participation. Peer groups stimulate initial interest in sport and provide a framework from which the child learns athletic skills as well as evaluates his own ability (i.e., I'm the best player in the group, I'm an average player, etc.). Snyder's paper (1970) on socialization in sport points out three important factors related to sport involvement: (1) strong personal commitment, (2) voluntary participation, and (3) expressive relationships with teammates and/or coaches. It follows that if the involvement of the youngster in a sport program is not totally voluntary, or accompanied by personal commitment or some expressive relationship with peers or coaches, he would not continue to play. Other studies relating peer influence to sport socialization are in general agreement that peer interest and involvement in sport are precipitating factors in socializing the individual into sports (Kenyon, 1973; Roethlisberger, 1970; McPherson, 1973; Kenyon and Grogg, 1969).

Overall, in sport socialization, the peer group stimulates interest in sports, confirms or disconfirms perceived athletic ability, and provides a means for status definition as a team player.

The Coaches. Tutko and Bruns (1976:184) describe the coach as a role model to the child, ". . . by what he says, his mannerisms, his response to the joys and stresses of competition. The coach shapes the child's own sense of reward or futility from participating in

sports." Role models in sport have been considered only to a slight extent. McPherson (1973), studying Canadian ice hockey and tennis players, found that all his respondents (N=71) reported they had a sport idol. Since the sample was Canadian, it was not surprising that the idols for both groups were outstanding hockey players. McPherson noted that for the hockey players there was a positive relationship, which increased with age, between the position played by the idol and the position played by the respondent. Greendorfer (1978) found that for female sport participants, in childhood, male sport models were dominant; in adolescence, both sex models were important and female role models were significant at the adult stage. Despite the changing pattern of significance, male role models never ceased to be important at each stage.

The behavior of the coach toward less able players is critical for later development in sports (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978; Novak, 1971) particularly, because negative sport experiences for children can have lifelong consequences. Martens (1976:107) argued that, "coaches must remember that expectations can reinforce both positive and negative behavior and these expectations are communicated not only knowingly but often unknowingly."

Coach influence, like peer influence, has been reported as being positively related to sport involvement, but only in studies in which the respondents have already become actively involved in sports as adults (Kenyon, 1973; McPherson, 1973; Kenyon and Grogg, 1973; Roethlisberger, 1978). According to Snyder and Spreitzer (1978), it is just as important to understand negative socialization in sport since the aversive consequences have lifelong consequences for one's

self concept and overall life style. It is equally important to understand why a substantial proportion of the population is "indifferent or even antagonistic" to many forms of sport. In conclusion, the exact nature of coach influence, whether positive or negative, is still being determined in early socialization into sport.

The Reference Group. This research study will focus primarily on socializing agents who influence the socializee in sport. Although reference groups are important to this research, they are not controlled for in this investigation; instead, their influence is acknowledged and subsequently discussed.

Two important and relevant reference groups in sport socialization are the school and the community. The school is where the children spend most of each day and where they must accommodate themselves to adult authority. The school may also be the setting where children are first introduced to organized games and sports. If physical activities are valued by the school, these values are likely to be reinforced through a physical education program with teacher-coach role models. These adults have the same mechanisms of socialization available to them as have the family--means for approving or disapproving appropriate role behavior in children. School influence, as a socializing agency toward sport socialization, will not be examined in this study. The particular sport program under consideration is a community sport program which is outside the school curriculum.

Shibutani (1961) stated that because children are placed in a community, they learn to form an appreciation for the manner in which various categories of people are evaluated and consequently incorporate customary patterns into their approach to the world. In other words,

children are responsive to institutions of community life, recurrences in social customs, and value orientations which define the meaning of life. To Loy and Ingham (1973), socialization attempts to fit children to the community. The community, as a socializing agency in sport socialization, will not be studied directly in this investigation, although the researcher is aware that this particular community setting provides an important and potent reference group. It is the site of a major state university which has a long athletic tradition in Big Eight sport competitions. Therefore, the sport participants, their families, and the sport program used in this study will most likely reflect community values and interest in sport.

#### Socializing Situations

The importance of the socializing situation for sport generally refers to situational facilities (opportunity sets or socializing settings) provided by significant others and reference groups. Since the child is socialized not only by his family orientation, but also by agents or agencies which extend beyond the family, exposure to different values, beliefs, opportunities, and people depend somewhat on the family's location in social, geographical, and temporal terms. This means that differences in social class, geographical locations, and birth order can result in differential socialization outcomes (Inkeles, 1968; Goslin, 1969, Clausen, 1968).

Social Class and Location. There is fairly extensive literature relating social class variables to sport participation. McPherson (1976), Loy (1969), Luschen (1969), Webb (1969a), and other studies differentiated participation in types of sport according to social class and found

that educational level, amount of income, and family and peer influence were explanatory variables. Hodges (1964), in an early review of literature on the subject, concluded that in America the higher the social class position, the more likely the individual would be involved in sport as a "participant" than as a "consumer". Kelly (1978) and findings in the Statistical Abstracts (1976) supported the notion that male involvement in sport is a function of social class, family size, and sport agency affiliations. Also, lower class males participated more in team sport than upper class males.

McPherson (1976) and Phillips (1976) examined involvement in sports as a function of ethnic group background. McPherson proposed that sport involvement by Blacks was attributed to differential socialization experiences in early childhood. McPherson reported that Black players in track and field were initially encouraged by their mothers, later influenced by peers and coaches, came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and became involved in sport at an earlier age compared to White players. Phillips maintained that unequal access to organized athletic programs, facilities, and coaching was the main cause of racial variations in sport participation. Blacks were overrepresented in sports (boxing, basketball, football) where facilities and programs were available in the public schools and underrepresented in "club" sports such as golf, tennis, and swimming.

Carlson (1979) also indicated that selection of recreation activities as leisure pursuit was directly related to accessibility and proximity of facilities in the immediate environment. Groups with low incomes restricted their choice of sport to activities involving little or no cost while high income groups were related to a wider range of

activities. According to Loy ((1969), low income groups tended to engage more in community, church, or business sponsored sport programs than high income groups who were more associated with the country club milieu.

Sex of Sibling and Ordinal Position. Kenyon and McPherson (1973) suggested that because siblings can serve as strong role models, the propensity for sport involvement increases as the number of male siblings increase in the family. This proposition was tested by Landers (1970) and Portz (1973) with female sport participants. They found that female participants were just as likely to have older sisters as older brothers.

In a study by Kenyon (1973), 50 percent of his 113 Olympic gymnasts and track and field respondents reported that they were first born. Nesbitt (1974) found in his study of 110 college athletes that first-borns were less likely than later-borns to participate in these "dangerous" sports--football, soccer, and rugby--because they were more frightened by the prospect of physical injury than later-borns.

While socioeconomic class and location appear to be related to sport participation, more data on sex of sibling and birth order are needed to relate these variables to socialization in sport.

#### Developing a Theoretical Framework

Conceptual frameworks like the Social Learning Paradigm provide broad and relatively abstract guidelines to describe general features and components of a phenomenon which can be studied. One cannot study a phenomenon without defining its specific components, but once the

components are defined, developing a theory or set of propositions that can be used to explain and predict the phenomena is essential.

Most noticeable in the research literature on childhood sport socialization was the "absence" of data using children as respondents for explaining child sport involvement. Studies relying on retrospective views of successful athletes omitted a whole spectrum of outcomes associated with the sport socialization process by ignoring those participants who did not become athletes. There was also a noticeable lack of empirical research directed toward the overall framework of early socialization into sport for children.

In light of these two issues, it was proposed that the variables most closely associated with successful adult participation in sport were likely to be the same variables associated with child involvement in sport. It was further proposed that these variables or combination of variables might differ according to the level of involvement of the player.

A conceptual framework of childhood socialization into sport was developed using the Social Learning Paradigm as a basis for examining variables which were likely to be associated with child sport involvement (see Figure 4).

#### A Conceptual Framework of Childhood Socialization Into Sport

Two concepts were used to measure child sport involvement: (1) player skill--children participate in sport because they are seen as skillful players by their peers (teammates) and (2) player popularity--children participate in sport because they are well liked by their peers.

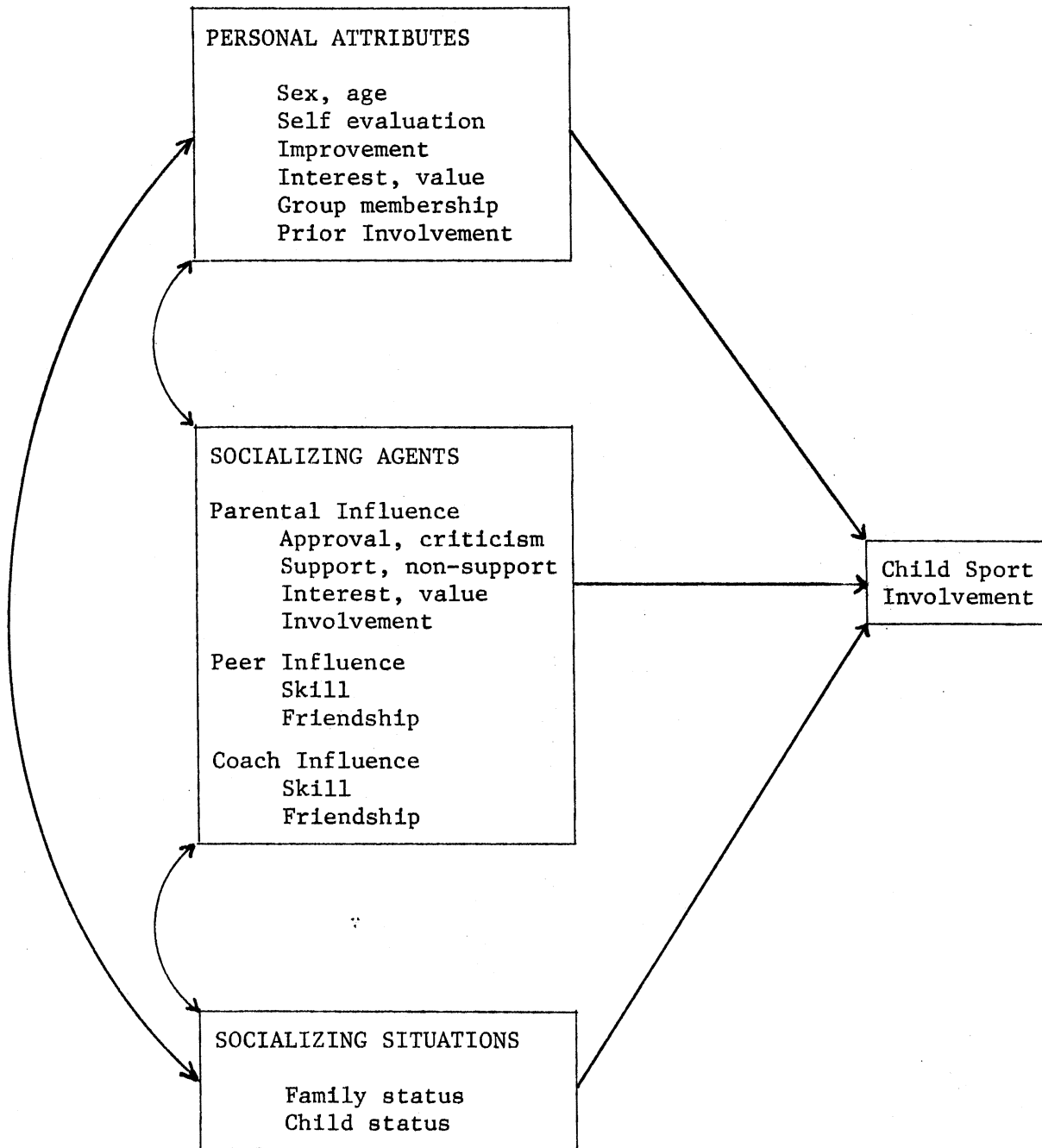


Figure 4. A Conceptual Framework of Childhood Socialization Into Sport



Player skill and player popularity were operationalized by a sociometric process described in Chapter IV, under Method of Analysis.

Utilizing factors which were prominent in adult sport participation, items were developed to measure concepts expressed in the sport socialization framework based on the following rationale:

1. Personal attributes:

- a. Sex, age: Children participate in sport because of their sex or because age may be related to sport involvement.
- b. Self evaluation, improvement: Children participate in sport because they view themselves as athletically skillful or because they see themselves improving in skill.
- c. Interest, value: Children participate in sport because they like it (their attendance is high, they desire to play again, they have favorite sports and sports heros) and they value these aspects of sport (playing well, playing to win, playing fairly, playing for fun).
- d. Group membership: Children participate in sport because they identify with the team.
- e. Prior involvement: Children participate in sport because they have played in sport before.

2. Parental influence:

- a. Approval, criticism: Children participate in sport to gain parental approval or to avoid parental criticism.
- b. Support, non-support: Children participate in sport to please their parents or to avoid censure of parents who expect them to play.

- c. Interest, value, involvement: Children participate in sport because their parents value, show interest, or are active in sports.
- 3. Peer influence:
    - a. Skill: Children participate in sport because their teammates regard them as good players.
    - b. Friendship: Children participate in sport because their teammates regard them as good friends.
  - 4. Coach influence:
    - a. Skill: Children participate in sport because they see the coach as a role model or as a father model.
    - b. Friendship: Children participate in sport because they see the coach as a friend.
  - 5. Socializing situations:
    - a. Family status: Children participate in sport because of race or family social class.
    - b. Child status: Children participate in sport because of birth order, family size, or influence of older siblings.

Altogether, 53 items represented the operational definitions for the three categories of social variables identified within the sport socialization framework (see Appendix for questionnaire items).

#### Summary

The Social Learning Paradigm, utilizing elements from symbolic interactionism, social systems, and social role theories, was found to be a useful conceptual framework for explaining different aspects of childhood involvement in sport. A relationship between three categories

of social variables (personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations) and childhood sport involvement was theoretically postulated and somewhat supported by a wide range of investigative and descriptive studies, but the overall socialization framework remained to be examined empirically. There was a noticeable lack of data using children in research on childhood sport socialization.

Two personal attributes, sport aptitude and perception of one's athletic ability, were important factors which influenced early participation in sport. For both male and female adult athletes, sport involvement began early (ages eight or nine), and was influenced particularly by three socializing agents: the family, the peer group, and the coaches. Family participation, interest, value, and encouragement of sport were four factors which precipitated and influenced child involvement in sport. The peer group stimulated and encouraged interest in sport, provided a means of status definition, and confirmed self perceptions of one's athletic ability. Coaches acted as important role models and teachers in developing interest and skill in sports. Data pertaining to socializing agent influence appeared to be sport specific and differential over time.

Involvement in sport appeared to be a function of the social class in which one is raised; it was not clear at this time whether it was a function of ordinal position or sibling distribution.

In summary, an effort was made in this selected review of literature to describe the current status of research in childhood sport socialization and to demonstrate a need to further substantiate the utility of the childhood socialization framework based on the Social Learning Paradigm by investigating differential levels of child involvement in sport.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODS AND OBJECTIVES

Five sections are presented in this chapter: (1) The Research Objectives, (2) The Subjects, (3) The Procedure, (4) The Questionnaire, and (5) The Method of Analysis.

#### The Research Objectives

The Social Learning Paradigm has been used to explain how childhood sport socialization is accomplished. In order to examine the process by which individuals become involved in sport, three general categories of variables have been identified: personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations. The two main objectives of this research are:

1. To see if the theoretical framework of childhood socialization into sport based on the Social Learning Paradigm is useful for explaining sport involvement for children.
2. To identify variables from the three general categories of the socialization framework--personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations--that are associated with varying levels of childhood sport involvement: players who are neither skilled nor popular, and players who are either skilled, popular, or both.

## The Subjects

Permission was granted by the local Parks and Recreation Department to study the children (players) in a three-month winter basketball program. The entire available sample of 471 subjects was used to test the large number of dependent variables (53) in this study.

The subjects consisted of three groups: 99 percent of the player population (193), 67 percent of the parent population (260), and all the team coaches (18). The players, 54 girls and 139 boys, ranged in age from nine years to fourteen years. The parents were composed of 139 mothers and 121 fathers--112 players with both parents represented, 36 players with one parent represented, and 45 players with neither parent represented. There were 20 playing teams, 16 coaches with one team each and two coaches with two teams each. Team membership averaged ten players and ranged from seven to fourteen members.

### The Players

The female players ( $\bar{X}$  age 11.87) were disproportionately older than the male players ( $\bar{X}$  age 10.96) because of a sex-age difference in eligibility. Males were eligible to play from ages nine to fourteen years and females were eligible from ages eleven to fourteen years. The sex-age discrepancy may also have accounted for the larger male population. One-half of the males and all of the females were middle school pupils; the remaining males were distributed among four elementary schools. The average family size for players was between two or three children and 47.6 percent of the players were the oldest child. Nearly three-fourths of the players (69.4 percent) reported that they had sport heroes although three times as many males had heroes as females. Basketball was the

favorite sport for a quarter of the players (26.9 percent) with males more inclined to favor it than females. Most of the players regarded three sport values as important: playing well (99 percent), playing fair (97.4 percent), and playing for fun (93.2 percent). A fourth value, "playing to beat the other team," was regarded important by 45.1 percent of the players, not important by 25.4 percent, and neutral by 29.5 percent. Four times as many males as females thought that beating the other team was important.

Generally, the players in this study were male, possessed sport heroes, and valued playing well, fair play, and fun in sports. Table I gives a detailed description of this group.

#### The Parents

On the parent questionnaire, 58 percent of the responses came from both parents in the same family, 18.7 percent came from one parent, and 23.3 percent of the parents did not respond. Most of the parent population was white (96 percent). Over half of the parents had college degrees (60.7 percent); three times as many fathers had completed graduate degrees as mothers and about one-third of the fathers were employed by the university as compared to one-sixth of the mothers. At least 65 percent of the families were in the upper-middle or high income range. The parents in this sample were more inclined to listen to or watch sport events frequently (61.5 percent) than attend sport events (50.7 percent) or to read sport news (45.5 percent) frequently. More parents (45.9 percent) reported infrequent participation in sports than reported frequent involvement (26.2 percent). Twice as many fathers were active in sports as mothers. Like their children, parents responded favorably

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTION OF PLAYERS

Characteristic	Category	Player		
		Male N=139 %	Female N=54 %	Total N=193 %
Sex		72.0	28.0	100.0
Age (years)	9	6.7	--	6.7
	10	18.7	1.0	18.7
	11	21.8	10.4	32.1
	12	20.2	11.9	32.1
	13	4.7	4.7	9.3
	14	--	1.0	1.0
Race	White	68.9	27.5	96.4
	Other	3.1	.5	3.6
Family Size (number of children)	1	5.4	2.1	7.5
	2	32.0	12.9	44.9
	3	24.3	10.9	35.4
	4	9.5	2.0	11.6
	7	0.7	--	0.7
Oldest Child	Yes	32.0	16.6	47.6
	No	40.1	12.2	52.4
Older Siblings in Sport	Yes	32.2	7.5	30.6
	No	49.0	20.4	69.4
Sibling in Program	Yes	4.7	0.5	5.2
	No	67.4	27.5	94.8
Parent Also Coach	Yes	1.6	1.6	3.1
	No	70.5	26.4	96.9
New Player	Yes	1.0	--	1.0
	No	--	--	--
School	H.P.	4.7	--	4.7
	S.	12.4	--	12.4
	W.	10.9	--	10.9
	W.R.	8.3	--	8.3
	S.M.S.	35.2	28.0	63.2
Sport Hero	Yes	52.3	17.1	69.4
	No	19.7	10.9	30.6
Favorite Sport Basketball	Yes	16.1	10.9	26.9
	No	56.0	17.1	73.1
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	Never	--	--	--
	Not Often	--	--	--
	Sometimes	0.5	0.5	1.0
	Often	3.6	2.1	5.7
	Very Often	67.9	25.4	93.3
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team	Never	11.4	6.7	18.1
	Not Often	5.7	1.6	7.3
	Sometimes	19.2	10.4	29.5
	Often	11.4	4.7	16.1
	Very Often	24.4	4.7	29.0
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	Never	--	0.5	0.5
	Not Often	--	--	--
	Sometimes	0.5	1.6	2.1
	Often	1.0	3.1	4.1
	Very Often	26.4	66.8	93.3
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	Never	--	1.0	1.0
	Not Often	--	1.0	1.0
	Sometimes	1.6	3.1	4.7
	Often	3.1	9.3	12.4
	Very Often	23.3	57.5	80.8

towards three sport values: playing well (96.8 percent), playing fairly (99.2 percent) and playing for fun (95.2 percent). For the last value, playing to beat the other team, two and one-half times as many parents did not favor it (46.7 percent) as parents who did favor it (19 percent). Some 34.3 percent of the parents were undecided.

Most of the parents, represented in Table II, were white, educated, middle class, and reported sport values similar to the players.

### The Coaches

A majority of the coaches were male (83.3 percent) and volunteers (66.7 percent) in the sport program. One-half was employed by the university and 11.1 percent were parents of players. Like the players and the parents, the coaches supported the following three sport values: playing well (94 percent), playing fairly (100 percent), and playing for fun (89 percent). The coaches were less inclined (33 percent) than the players (45.1 percent), but more inclined than the parents (19 percent) to value "beating the other team" in sports play. Table III provides a description of the team coaches.

### The Procedure

Throughout the three-month sport program, the researcher attended more than 60 one-hour practice sessions and games. An observation checklist (see Appendix) and notes were employed during and after each attendance. An extensive description of these observations are discussed in the first section of Chapter IV on Research Findings.

The players were administered Questionnaire Form A during the last three weeks of practice sessions. One week prior to administering the



TABLE II  
DESCRIPTION OF PARENTS

Characteristic	Category	Parent			
		N	Father N=139 %	Mother N=54 %	Total N=193 %
Parent Representation	Single	260	13.9	4.8	18.7
	Both		26.0	26.0	58.0
	Neither		11.6	11.6	23.3
Race	White	252	44.8	51.2	96.0
	Other		2.0	2.0	4.0
Education	Some H.S.	247	--	0.8	0.8
	Completed H.S.		5.3	10.5	15.8
	Some College		9.7	18.2	27.9
	Completed College		6.5	9.7	16.2
	Some Grad School		2.4	5.3	7.7
	Completed Grad School		23.1	8.5	31.6
OSU Employee	Yes	236	18.2	8.5	26.7
	No		28.4	44.9	73.3
Family Income	Less than \$6,000	124	--	--	3.2
	\$ 6,000-\$ 9,999		--	--	3.2
	\$10,000-\$14,999		--	--	6.5
	\$15,000-\$19,999		--	--	20.2
	\$20,000-\$24,999		--	--	18.5
	\$25,000-\$29,999		--	--	22.6
	\$30,000 or more		--	--	25.8
Read Sport News	1 Hardly Ever	251	3.6	17.5	21.0
	2		3.6	8.4	12.0
	3		8.4	13.1	21.5
	4		5.6	6.4	12.0
	5 Very Frequently		25.9	7.6	33.5
	Watch Sport Events	1 Hardly Ever	252	2.0	5.2
2			2.4	7.9	10.3
3			7.1	13.9	21.0
4			9.5	13.1	22.6
5 Very Frequently			25.8	13.1	38.9
Attend Sport Events		1 Hardly Ever	249	3.2	7.2
	2		5.6	4.8	10.4
	3		11.2	17.3	28.5
	4		11.2	10.0	21.3
	5 Very Frequently		15.3	14.1	29.4
	Active in Sports	1 Hardly Ever	218	16.1	29.8
2			6.0	7.8	13.8
3			6.4	7.8	14.2
4			8.7	3.7	12.4
5 Very Frequently			10.1	3.7	13.8
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.		1 Strongly Disagree	251	--	--
	2		0.4	--	0.4
	3		1.2	1.6	2.8
	4		6.3	7.1	13.4
	5 Strongly Agree		39.1	44.3	83.4
	In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team	1 Strongly Disagree	253	8.7	16.6
2			9.1	12.3	21.4
3			18.1	16.2	34.3
4			7.1	5.5	12.6
5 Strongly Agree			4.0	2.4	6.4
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.		1 Strongly Disagree	253	--	--
	2		--	--	--
	3		.8	--	.8
	4		1.2	--	1.2
	5 Strongly Agree		45.1	52.9	98.0
	In sports, it is important to play the game to have fun.	1 Strongly Disagree	253	--	--
2			.4	--	.4
3			2.4	2.0	4.4
4			4.7	3.6	8.3
5 Strongly Agree			39.5	47.4	86.9

TABLE III  
DESCRIPTION OF COACHES

Characteristic	Category	Coach		
		Male N=15 %	Female N=3 %	Total N=18 %
Sex		83.3	16.7	100.0
OSU Employee	Yes	44.4	5.6	50.0
	No	38.9	11.1	50.0
Volunteer	Yes	50.0	16.7	66.7
	No	33.3	--	33.3
Coach Also Parent	Yes	5.6	--	5.6
	No	82.4	11.9	94.3
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	1 Strongly Disagree	--	--	--
	2	--	--	--
	3	5.6	--	5.6
	4	16.7	--	16.7
	5 Strongly Agree	61.1	16.7	77.8
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team	1 Strongly Disagree	5.6	--	5.6
	2	16.7	5.6	27.8
	3	27.8	11.1	38.9
	4	27.8	--	22.2
	5 Strongly Agree	5.6	--	5.6
In sports, it is important to play the game for fun.	1 Strongly Disagree	--	--	--
	2	--	--	--
	3	--	--	--
	4	11.1	5.6	16.7
	5 Strongly Agree	72.2	11.1	83.3
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	1 Strongly Disagree	--	--	--
	2	--	--	--
	3	5.6	5.6	11.1
	4	5.6	--	5.6
	5 Strongly Agree	72.2	11.1	83.3

questionnaires, letters were sent to the parents informing them of the research project and enlisting their cooperation. After each session, players were given copies of the Questionnaire Form B for parents with a second letter asking for parental assistance in the project. They were requested to return the parent questionnaires to the coach at the next practice session.

Insofar as possible, the environmental factors of the data gathering were held constant for the administration of the player's questionnaire form. Data was gathered by team, during the same practice times, in the same room, and by the same administrator over a three-week testing period. Data for two teams was collected at a different site but under the same testing conditions. Collection sessions lasted approximately 20 minutes. During the initial collecting session, oral administration of the questionnaire proved unfeasible for the older players--they were too impatient to wait for items to be read aloud and preferred to work independent of the administrator. Therefore, oral administration was provided for seven younger teams (ages ten and under) and self administration for thirteen older teams (ages eleven or older). By the end of the second week, all teams had been given the questionnaire and only a few absentee players were tested the third week of practice.

Before each of the final games, the players were requested by telephone to return the parent questionnaires. The telephone reminders resulted in a fairly high parent response. The researcher had intended to follow up subjects who had dropped out of the program before its completion, but the dropout rate was so low (N=2) that this group was eliminated from the study. The mild winter climate this year may have been directly related to the high attendance rates. In two previous

years, when the winter weather was particularly severe, the player drop-out rate was as high as 10 percent.

### The Questionnaires

There were three different questionnaires used to measure factors related to player sport involvement: Form A for the player, Form B for each parent of the player, and Form C for the coach of the player (see each form in Appendix).

To explore the sport socialization framework, the researcher developed items measuring the concepts embodied in the three categories of variables (personal attributes, socializing agency influence, socializing situations) where developed scales could not be found. When used, published items were specified.

#### Form A for the Player

The six-page questionnaire consisted of 45 items with five Likert response categories ranging from "never" to "very often." The first four items identified the subject, his/her age, school, and team. Item 5 gave a roster of team players from which the subject was asked to select the three best players on the team. Subjects could choose themselves as one of the best players. Mother support of child in sport was measured in items 6, 7, and 10. Six items (8, 9, and 11-14) were taken from a short form of the Cornell Parent Behavior Description by Bronfenbrenner (1961) to measure mother support and control behavior. The nine mother support items were repeated for the father at the end of the questionnaire (items 36-44). Various items were measures of coach influence (items 15 and 17), of individual interest in sport (items 21

and 23), of group identity (items 24 and 25) and attendance (items 26 and 27), and of four sport values (items 28-31). Three of the four sport values, adapted from Webb (1969a), were modified to include a fourth value, "playing for fun." They were also used on the Parent Questionnaire Form B (items 19-23) and on the Coach Questionnaire Form C (items 7-10). Self-rated improvement, self-rated skill, and sport hero were measured in items 20, 32, and 33, respectively. On the final page of the questionnaire, the subject was asked to select three players for "best friends" from a second roster.

The Bronfenbrenner short form was chosen for use in this study on the basis of a literature review by Siegelman (1963) and Ellis, Thomas, and Rollins (1976) who considered it to be a widely used, reliable, valid instrument. The short form was, however, shortened from twelve items to six items on the recommendation of a child reading specialist who felt the overall player questionnaire was too long. The specialist helped reduce the overall length of the questionnaire, simplify the response categories, improve the visual format, revise negatively worded items, and further recommended that the instrument be administered orally to child subjects.

Questionnaire Form A was revised and subsequently administered orally to a class of 20 third-graders (ages 8-9) for comprehension and length. No difficulties ensued from the pre-test.

#### Form B for Each Parent of Player

The three-page parent questionnaire included 57 Likert items with five response categories which ranged from "very frequently" to "hardly ever," "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," and "strongly

emphasized" to "not emphasized." Items 1-8 identified parent sex, race, employment, education, size, and composition of the family. Parent interest and participation in sport were measured in items 9-18 and four sport values were measured in items 19-23. Fifteen items, 24-37, were taken from Spreitzer and Snyder's 1975 questionnaire and revised to measure parental perceptions of sport for children. The Spreitzer and Snyder items were chosen on the basis of a positive evaluation of instrument reliability and validity given by Grove and Dodder (1979).

Some final items, 38-57, taken from a study done by Larson, Spreitzer, and Snyder (1975) and designed to measure parent perceptions of ideal and operative goals of sport programs, were not used in this study, but were included in the questionnaire for the sport program personnel.

#### Form C for the Coach of Player

The coach questionnaire was three pages in length, included 28 items, and used the same Likert response categories as Parent Form B. Items 1-5 identified the subject, profession, team, employment, and volunteer status. Item 6 asked the coach to rank order his players according to skill. Four sport values were measured in items 7-10. Sixteen items (11-26) measured ideal and operative goals in the sport program. Coaches were asked to rank players on improvement and friendliness on a scale from 1 to 5 (items 27 and 28).

#### Questionnaire Revisions

A Pearson's Correlation was performed on groups of related items taken from questionnaire forms A and B to determine if the items

warranted summation. Subjectively, correlation coefficients of  $r = .50$  or more were desired. In practice, lower coefficient values were accepted when the paired items were positively correlated. See Table IV for a list of the ten summated variables.

In addition, the 15 Spreitzer and Snyder items were factor analyzed using the Varimax procedure. The rotated factor loadings were not completely congruent with the findings of Spreitzer and Snyder (1975) or Grove and Dodder (1979). An error in the personalized wording on item 14, "Sports are not a source of satisfaction in my youngster's life," may have accounted for its independent loading. Also, by modifying all items to relate to "youngsters" in sport, the original meaning of each statement was altered. Nevertheless, the loadings were similar enough to warrant replicating the original two sport functions (social and psychological) in this study. Items 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 were summated to measure the social sport function, items 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15 were summated to form the psychological sport function, and items 1, 4, and 13 were not used. See Table V for the unrotated and rotated factor loadings.

Invariably, a number of shortcomings in questionnaire design are noted. Although a few open-ended questions were used in Form A for players, most of the questions used predominately forced-choice responses. The same response categories were used throughout Form A to simplify comprehension, but these categories were not always well matched to the questions (see items 28-31). On the parent questionnaire Form B, item 5 on "income" was considered too personal by several respondents and may have affected the overall response rate of the parents. Inclusion of the word "optional" next to the item would have been useful and

TABLE IV  
 PEARSON CORRELATION SCORES ON ITEM SUMMATIONS  
 OF 10 SOCIALIZING VARIABLES BY  
 MOTHER, FATHER, AND PLAYER

Variable	Inter-Item Correlations		
	Among Fathers	Among Mothers	Among Players
<b>Parent Support*</b>			
1. When he punishes me, he explains why.		.38	
2. If I have any kind of problem, he helps me out.	.40	.38	.51
3. He says nice things about me.	.40 .40	.38 .51	
<b>Parent Non-Support*</b>			
1. He scolds me.			
2. He spansks me.	.37	.25	
<b>Parent Interest in Sport</b>			
1. I read the sport news.	.82	.73	
2. I watch and listen to sport events.	.60 .67	.53 .33	
3. I attend sport events.			
<b>Parent Active in Sport</b>			
1. I participated actively in sports in elementary school.			
2. I participated actively in sports in high school.	.52	.73	
3. I participated actively in sports in college.	.41 .64	.42 .47	
4. I participate actively in sports currently.	.30 .35 .47	.14 .24 .28	
<b>Parent Interest in Child Sport</b>			
1. I attend my child's practices.		.51	
2. I attend my child's games.	.40	.51	
3. I buy sports equipment for my child.	.25 .35	.21 .39	
<b>Coach Support</b>			
1. The coach says nice things to me.			
2. The coach helps me when I'm having a problem.	.38		
<b>Group Membership</b>			
1. I feel the team needs my support.			
2. I am glad I belong to the team.	.36		
<b>Attendance</b>			
1. I attend my basketball practices.	.49		
2. I attend my basketball games.			

\*Mother items used "she".



TABLE V  
UNROTATED AND ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS  
ON 15 REVISED SPREITZER AND  
SNYDER SPORT ITEMS

Items	Unrotated Factors			Factors Rotated Orthogonally		
	I	II	III	I	II	III
1. Sports for youngsters are <u>not</u> particularly important for the well being of society.*	<u>.51</u>	-.14	.46	.26	.12	<u>.64</u>
2. If more youngsters were involved with sports, we would not have much trouble with drugs.	<u>.71</u>	-.27	-.30	<u>.79</u>	.19	.04
3. Sports are valuable because they help youngsters become good citizens.	<u>.82</u>	-.10	-.28	<u>.78</u>	.40	.07
4. The emphasis that sports places on competition causes more harm to youngsters than good.*	<u>.36</u>	-.20	.62	.13	-.03	<u>.74</u>
5. Sports are valuable because they teach youngsters respect for authority.	<u>.69</u>	-.37	-.13	<u>.76</u>	.10	.20
6. Sports are valuable for youngsters because they contribute to the development of patriotism.	<u>.67</u>	-.45	-.11	<u>.78</u>	.01	.23
7. Sports are valuable because they teach youngsters self-discipline.	.52	.11	-.03	<u>.50</u>	<u>.51</u>	.24
8. Sports are valuable because they provide an opportunity for youngsters to get ahead in the world.	<u>.52</u>	-.35	.27	<u>.46</u>	-.02	<u>.50</u>
9. Sports promotes in youngsters the development of fair play.	<u>.78</u>	.15	.00	<u>.49</u>	<u>.56</u>	.28
10. Sports are a good way for youngsters to relax.	.35	.68	-.14	-.05	<u>.77</u>	-.10
11. For youngsters, sports are pretty much a waste of time.*	<u>.45</u>	.22	.24	.11	<u>.41</u>	.36
12. Sports participation is a way for youngsters to get together with friends and have a good time.	<u>.56</u>	.22	-.18	.36	<u>.51</u>	.01
13. Sports help youngsters to become well-rounded people.	<u>.71</u>	.12	-.09	<u>.49</u>	<u>.51</u>	.17
14. Sports are <u>not</u> a source of satisfaction in my youngster's life.*	<u>.34</u>	.40	.52	.17	<u>.47</u>	<u>.54</u>
15. Sports help youngsters to get away from the worries and pressures of the day.	<u>.61</u>	.45	-.06	.21	<u>.71</u>	.10

\*Negatively worded items.

appropriate. Despite the aforementioned problems, the three research questionnaires represented satisfactory data gathering instruments.

### The Method of Analysis

#### Preliminary Procedures

The following procedure was used for determining player classification. Skill was defined by a mean score (number of team votes received on skill, divided by team size) as was popularity (number of popular votes, divided by team size), with a mean score range of zero to one. The mean scores of all players on skill and popularity were computed and placed on a plot. Two cutoff points, 15 percent and 70 percent, were established on the basis of natural breaks in the frequency distribution of mean scores. Five types of players were identified for analysis and illustrated in Figure 5:

1. Low Players - less than 15 percent of the votes in both skill and popularity.
2. Pop Players - 15 to 70 percent of the votes in popularity but less than 15 percent of the votes in skill.
3. Skill Players - 15 to 70 percent of the votes in skill but less than 15 percent of the votes in popularity.
4. High Players - 15 to 70 percent of the votes in both skill and popularity.
5. Star Players - 70 percent or more of the votes in skill and popularity.

		POPULAR		
		<.15	>.15<.70	>.70
SKILL	<.15	LOW N=56	POP N=40	
	>.15<.70	SKILL N=10	HIGH N=69	
	>.70			STAR N=18

Figure 5. Typology of Players

Thirty-eight items operationally defined the following three categories of dependent variables: personal attributes (15 items), socializing agency influence (16 items), and socializing situations (6 items). Five player types operationally defined the independent variable. Since little was known about specific parent influences on childhood sport socialization, mothers and fathers were treated separately in the analysis, thereby increasing the total number of dependent variables to 53.

Mean scores on each dependent variable by sex were computed to determine if sex was to be a relevant factor in the overall analysis. A high mean score meant "more" endorsement (i.e., more skill, interest, support), and a low mean score meant "less" endorsement (i.e., less skill, etc.). An examination of the mean scores by sex of player did not warrant separate treatment of male and female players (see Table VI). Findings in the literature (Greendorfer, 1978; Malumphy, 1968) indicated that early female sport participation was likely to involve the same socializing influences as early male sport participation.

TABLE VI  
RANGES, N'S, MEANS, AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF 47  
SOCIALIZING VARIABLES BY SEX AND CATEGORY

Variable	Sex	Range	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
<u>Personal Attributes</u>					
Age	M	9-14	139	10.9	1.1
	F		54	11.9	0.8
What kind of athlete are you?	M	1-5	139	3.8	0.9
	F		54	3.6	0.8
I feel I am getting better after each practice and game.	M	1-5	139	4.2	0.8
	F		54	4.2	0.7
Group Membership	M	1-10	139	8.3	1.5
	F		54	8.1	1.4
Attendance	M	1-10	139	9.4	1.0
	F		54	9.5	1.1
I wish I could quit when I am not playing well.	M	1-5	139	1.7	1.0
	F		54	1.8	0.8
I would like to play basketball again next year.	M	1-4	139	3.8	0.5
	F		54	4.1	0.4
Team sports played before.	M	1-11	139	4.1	1.8
	F		54	3.8	2.0
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	M	1-5	139	4.8	0.5
	F		54	4.8	0.5
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.	M	1-5	139	2.4	1.2
	F		54	2.2	1.1
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	M	1-5	139	5.0	—
	F		54	5.0	—
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	M	1-5	139	4.9	0.4
	F		54	4.9	0.5
<u>Socializing Agents</u>					
<u>Mother</u>					
Mother Support	M	1-15	139	12.2	2.4
	F		54	13.1	2.4
Mother Non-support	M	1-10	139	8.3	1.5
	F		54	8.1	1.4
She wants to know where I will be when I go out.	M	1-5	139	3.9	0.9
	F		54	4.3	0.8
She is pleased I play in sports.	M	1-5	139	4.6	0.7
	F		54	4.7	0.6
She criticizes me when I do not play well in sports.	M	1-5	139	1.6	1.0
	F		54	1.8	0.8
When I join a sport team, she expects me to finish the season.	M	1-5	139	4.3	1.2
	F		54	4.4	1.1
Mother Interest in Sport	M	1-15	93	9.2	3.5
	F		39	9.6	3.3
Mother Active in Sport	M	1-20	69	9.3	3.8
	F		27	9.9	5.1
Mother Interest in Child Sport	M	1-15	94	11.8	2.1
	F		37	11.2	2.8
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	M	1-5	95	4.8	0.5
	F		39	4.8	0.5

TABLE VI (Continued)

Variable	Sex	Range	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.	M	1-5	95	2.4	1.2
	F		39	2.2	1.1
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	M	1-5	95	5.0	--
	F		39	5.0	--
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	M	1-5	95	4.9	0.4
	F		39	4.9	0.5
Social Function of Sport	M	1-30	89	21.5	2.9
	F		37	21.5	2.3
Psychological Function of Sport	M	1-25	94	21.9	2.6
	F		39	22.3	2.8
<u>Father</u>					
Father Support	M	1-15	137	12.6	2.4
	F		51	12.2	2.6
Father Non-support	M	1-10	137	6.5	1.6
	F		51	5.9	1.5
He wants to know where I will be when I go out.	M	1-5	137	3.6	1.3
	F		51	3.9	1.1
He is pleased I play in sports.	M	1-5	137	4.8	0.5
	F		51	4.7	0.6
He criticizes me when I do not play well in sports.	M	1-5	137	2.0	1.3
	F		51	1.9	1.1
When I join a sport team, he expects me to finish the season.	M	1-5	137	4.6	0.7
	F		51	4.4	1.0
Father Interest in Sport	M	1-5	86	12.0	3.1
	F		30	11.5	3.7
Father Active in Sport	M	1-20	64	13.6	4.3
	F		26	13.5	5.5
Father Interest in Child Sport	M	1-15	86	12.1	2.2
	F		30	11.1	3.1
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	M	1-5	88	4.8	0.6
	F		31	4.9	0.3
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.	M	1-5	88	2.8	1.2
	F		31	2.7	1.2
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	M	1-5	88	4.9	0.3
	F		31	5.0	--
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	M	1-5	88	4.8	0.6
	F		31	4.8	0.5
Social Function of Sport	M	1-30	83	22.8	2.6
	F		30	22.7	2.7
Psychological Function of Sport	M	1-25	86	21.7	2.7
	F		31	21.5	3.2
<u>Coach</u>					
Coach Support	M	1-10	139	7.9	1.6
	F		54	7.8	2.0
<u>Socializing Situation</u>					
Family Income	M	1-7	90	5.3	1.5
	F		34	4.8	1.8
Mother Education	M	1-8	94	5.7	1.4
	F		37	5.5	1.3

TABLE VI (Continued)

Variable	Sex	Range	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Father Education	M	1-8	85	6.7	1.5
	F		31	6.5	1.6
Family Size	M	1-7	106	2.7	0.9
	F		41	2.4	0.8

A high mean score indicates a higher endorsement.

## The Data Analyses

The questionnaires, upon completion, were prepared for data processing, key-punched, and verified. The scoring on the three test instruments resulted in mean scores and standard deviations for 47 variables and frequency distributions for five dichotomous variables.

The data were analyzed by using a two-tailed t-test of mean differences on the 47 variables between the following pairs of player types: Low vs. Skill, Low vs. Pop, Low vs. High, and Low vs. Star. An F test was used to determine homogeneity of variance and the alpha .05 level of confidence was selected to test differences between group means (Blalock, 1970). Chi squares were performed on the five dichotomous variables between all pairs of player types with the alpha accepted at the .05 level.

The data were further analyzed using a stepwise multiple regression analysis for establishing which combination of dependent variables were good predictors of two criterion variables examined separately--skill and popularity. This second analysis provided two advantages: (1) a more stable measure of skill and popularity by utilizing the entire player population (N=193), and (2) cross-validation for the overall evaluation of the data. Again, the agreed upon acceptance region was an alpha level of .05 for establishing the significance of the partial regression coefficients of variables subsequently stepped into the regression analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### Introduction

Two research methods were employed in this study to measure childhood sport involvement: (1) a qualitative measure--simple observation of interactions between players, parents, and coaches at practice sessions and games, and (2) a quantitative measure--questionnaire data from players, parents, and coaches.

Simple observations were employed for several reasons. The researcher wanted not only to become better acquainted with the sport program and its participants, but also to determine whether the program was generally conducive to child sport involvement. The attractiveness or unattractiveness of the sport program was seen as a possible intervening variable. Finally, the observations were meant to supplement the quantitative findings in the study by providing additional background information about the sport program and its participants.

#### The Observations

In this study, the Park and Recreational Department was seen as an extensive activities center serving a midwestern university community of approximately 40,000 people. It provided a wide variety of leisure time programs to a wide variety of residents. Activities were geared for the old and young alike and ranged from senior citizen classes, Special



Olympics for the handicapped, year-round organized sport programs to "Multigraphis" community arts, festivals, bicycle parades, pet shows, and other numerous events. All the park programs relied primarily on volunteer help and collectively, 500 volunteers were involved in programs for over 7,000 participants during the year. The winter basketball program had the second largest sport enrollment, after softball, with approximately 1,120 men, women, and children players. The main focus of the observations were centered upon the children participants of this sport program.

Two goals were set in the observations: to determine whether the sport program was attractive to children, and to identify and record observable supports between players, parents, and coaches (see Observation Checklist in Appendix). The observations were collected over a three-month period and totaled approximately 60 hours of accumulated viewing time.

The first observations began in mid-December when the players tried out for teams. Although the purpose of the tryouts was to equalize team talent, selection was also based on age and school. The males were first divided by age, then by school, and finally by skill (Class A, advanced players, and Class B). The females were only classified by skill since all were eleven years or older, and all attended the same school. The tryouts were bedlam; each player was observed dribbling the ball and making layup shots in the basket. All team assignments were made by program personnel, and it was difficult to determine what criterion was used for level of ability. At times it appeared to be random. Coach assignments were made after the teams were formed.

Since neither the coaches nor the players were aware of the intended research project, the first two months of observations were unobtrusive. Few parents attended the practice sessions, and the majority of the initial observations were made between the players and the coaches. The quick pace and continuous action of the exercises during the practices curtailed socializing between players. Most of the players appeared to be too absorbed in playing or watching play to interact with one another.

The practices were surprisingly low-keyed. On the whole, the coaches were easy-going and helpful. There were coaches who were more experienced at coaching than others. From the start, a few coaches were noticed to favor players with whom they were already acquainted. These players received more verbal attention, more and longer opportunities to play, and more individual instruction. On one occasion, one coach devoted an entire practice session on one player while demonstrating passing techniques. Another coach spent the entire season working with his two star players, while his assistant worked with the rest of the team. This extreme type of favoritism was the exception, however, rather than the rule. It was also noted that minority players and more passive players consistently received less playing time and attention. On the other hand, there were coaches who were exceptionally democratic in their efforts to see that all team members had equal playing time and instruction. These coaches appeared to be less concerned with individual players and more concerned with team cooperation and solidarity.

Competitive games were begun the second month and the schedule became more demanding with two practices and one game every week. Only about a dozen of the same parents attended most of the practice sessions.

One father, who came regularly, said it was his policy to be present at all his child's practices and games. Later, this individual was the only father to be chosen as a "sport hero" by his son.

The coaches continued to maintain a casual pace, but the favoritism toward more familiar players was gradually replaced by greater attention paid to more skillful players. The same subtle reinforcements were applied--better players played more often and for longer periods at a time. Less skilled players were more often benched or used as short-term substitutes. Several teams were excluded from this type of discrimination because of size. Their total membership was seven members each, and invariably, a few players would be absent. Hence, all players would practice nearly the entire session. This was a decided drawback in games, however, when these teams had no substitutes to relieve them, and the players often played past the point of exhaustion.

Observation of the parents at practices was unrewarding. Few attended, and those who came were apt to be there as chauffeurs rather than as supportive parents. At the games, however, about half the parent population attended regularly and provided much vocal support from the sidelines, particularly parents of female players. Except for vocal reinforcements, the parents were not demonstrative as a group. Informal discussion with random parents revealed that most were generally satisfied with the basketball program. Several parents related unpleasant experiences with problem coaches and problem parents in the Little League summer sport program.

At the end of the second month, the coaches were told about the research study and asked to help distribute letters and collect parent questionnaires. Only one assistant coach reacted negatively to the news

and spoke hostilely to the researcher. All other coaches and their assistants were helpful. Acknowledgment of the research project and the researcher's presence appeared to have little or no effect on the subsequent behavior of the staff and players.

By the third month, the busy but casual pace had begun to give way to a much more tense atmosphere. Many of the team coaches began to speed up the pace of the practices, and team play became noticeably more active and aggressive. The coach of one particularly passive team expressed concern about the excessive fouls committed by players of more aggressive teams. He said he had begun to teach his players how to foul in return as a means of self-defense. The more aggressive teams spent more time planning strategies and some acquired arousal techniques--team chants, "GO!," and hand claps after group huddles.

Although the final weeks were charged with much excitement and strong competition, the general atmosphere of practices and games remained friendly. For the most part, both the coaches and parents were observed to be supportive of the players. Verbal support was the most common reinforcement. Physical support (hugging) by family and friends usually appeared after the games. Public disappointment was rarely displayed, although parents frequently reported that their children cried at home after losing games. During the entire season, only one player was observed crying after a defeat.

The highlight of the observations culminated in an exciting final game between two girls teams who played for the championship title. The gymnasium overflowed with enthusiastic spectators, parents, relatives, friends, children, and players from other teams. The atmosphere was electric and expectant--everyone was anxious for the game to start.

Team "A" was particularly noted for its two "star" players--one player for her speed and agility and the other player for her superb scoring ability. During the season, the coach of team A had devoted all his time working with these two players while his assistant had coached the rest of the team. Ultimately, the organizations of team A revolved around the two star players. Team "B" was noted more for its group cohesion. The coach of team B had been observed rotating his players on a regular basis in every game, regardless of player skill.

The final game began promptly at the schedule time. The players moved awkwardly at first, but as they became more involved in the action, the momentum of the game picked up. Cheers roared from all sides of the gym as scores mounted up for each team. Coach A strategically played his best players the entire first half (and indeed the entire game) while Coach B typically rotated all his players. By half-time, Team A was leading Team B by ten points. It was interesting to observe the dilemma of Coach B at the start of the second half of the game. His entire team wanted to win. In order to succeed, he would have to depend predominately on his best players.

A victor was proclaimed when a winning basket broke the tied score in the last few seconds of the game. The winner? The winner was Team B, whose best players won the game. However, it was nice to note that every player (Low Players included) on Team B shared in the glory of the win.

In summary, both observation goals were accomplished. The overall sport program was evaluated as generally positive and conducive to its participants although in varying degrees. More skilled players appeared to have few more supports than less skilled players. A variety of supports were observed throughout the season. Player to player support

consisted mainly of sideline reinforcements (cheers, praise) directed toward friends who played (often times the better players). Parent to player support was verbal (encouragement, approval) and physical (hugs, pats, smiles), but it was difficult to assess which players received the greater support. Coach to player support included more personal attention and more frequent opportunities to play. Sometimes, the more skilled and popular players had these advantages, but not always. In spite of these differences, most of the players were observed to be either involved or interested in team play. Last but not least, expectations and images of the interfering parent, the browbeating coach, and the downtrodden player were not actualized in these observations.

#### The Players

Five types of players were identified for analysis in this study as defined in the methodology section: Low (low skill, low popularity), Pop (low skill, high popularity), Skill (high skill, low popularity), High (high skill, high popularity), and Star (very high skill, very high popularity). The Low Players were compared with all other player types (Low vs. Pop, Low vs. Skill, Low vs. High, Low vs. Star) on 47 variables using mean difference scores on the t-test and five dichotomous variables using a chi-square analysis.

The t-test results for each of the four player comparisons are presented on Table VII, followed by a summary of the chi-square findings on Table VIII. A second statistic, a multiple regression analysis, was performed using all 53 variables as possible predictors of player skill and also of player popularity. The multiple regression statistics are presented on Table IX.

### Low Players vs. Pop, Skill, High, Star Players

The t-values for each variable are presented in sequence by category--personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations. Low Players were always entered first in the t-test calculations. The higher mean scores indicated higher endorsement. See Table VII for a description of the findings.

#### Personal Attributes

Twelve variables measured personal attributes of sport involvement: age, self evaluation of skill and improvement, group membership, attendance, desire to quit, desire to play again, previous sport involvement, and four sport values (playing well, playing to win, playing fair, and playing for fun). Nine of the twelve measures proved useful in discriminating Low Players from other players.

Three variables, self evaluation of skill, group membership, and attendance, proved to be the most important discriminators of Low Players from all other players. Low Players evaluated themselves significantly "less skilled" than Pop Players, High Players, and Star Players. They also felt significantly "less involved" with the team than Pop, High, or Star Players. They reported significantly "lower attendance" than Skill, High, or Star Players.

How players assessed their improvement, their desire to play again, plus their value towards playing well in sport were three strong discriminator variables. Low Players reported significantly "less improvement" than High Players or Star Players. Low Players were also significantly less likely "to want to play again" the next year than Pop Players

TABLE VII  
 N'S, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-VALUES  
 OF 47 SOCIALIZING VARIABLES BY TYPE  
 OF PLAYER AND CATEGORY

Variable	Player	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Values
<u>Personal Attributes</u>					
Age	Low	56	11.11	1.03	
	Pop	40	11.11	1.06	0.18
	Skill	10	12.00	2.56	-1.77
	High	69	11.17	1.09	-.044
	Star	18	11.72	0.82	-2.37*
What kind of athlete are you?	Low	56	3.27	0.98	
	Pop	40	3.73	0.68	-2.70**
	Skill	10	3.60	0.84	-1.00
	High	69	4.29	0.69	-6.59**
	Star	18	4.11	0.68	-3.39**
I feel I am getting better after each practice and game.	Low	56	3.87	0.85	
	Pop	40	4.20	0.79	-1.89
	Skill	10	4.30	1.05	-1.40
	High	69	4.36	0.89	-3.10*
	Star	18	4.38	0.67	-2.07*
Group Membership	Low	56	7.43	1.71	
	Pop	40	8.08	1.40	-1.96*
	Skill	10	8.40	1.65	-1.66
	High	69	8.75	1.05	-5.06**
	Star	18	9.44	0.70	-7.12**
Attendance	Low	56	9.02	1.31	
	Pop	40	9.35	1.00	-1.34
	Skill	10	9.70	0.67	-2.47*
	High	69	9.64	0.80	-3.09**
	Star	18	9.89	0.32	-4.55**
I wish I could quit when I am not playing well.	Low	56	1.98	0.98	
	Pop	40	1.70	0.94	1.41
	Skill	10	2.10	1.52	-.024
	High	69	1.57	0.90	2.47*
	Star	18	1.56	1.04	1.58
I would like to play basketball again next year.	Low	56	3.71	0.62	
	Pop	40	3.93	0.27	-2.25*
	Skill	10	3.60	0.97	.36
	High	69	3.94	0.29	-2.52**
	Star	18	3.89	0.47	-1.09
Team Sports Played Before	Low	56	4.05	3.80	
	Pop	40	4.17	3.17	-0.31
	Skill	10	3.10	2.77	1.45
	High	69	3.96	3.54	0.98
	Star	18	4.56	4.14	-0.80
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	Low	56	4.82	0.47	
	Pop	40	4.92	0.27	-1.37
	Skill	10	4.90	0.31	-0.51
	High	69	4.98	0.12	-2.54*
	Star	18	5.00	0.0	-2.84**
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.	Low	56	3.30	1.29	
	Pop	40	3.33	1.62	-0.07
	Skill	10	3.60	1.43	-0.66
	High	69	3.43	1.44	-0.53
	Star	18	2.61	1.24	2.00*



TABLE VII (Continued)

Variable	Player	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Values
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	Low	56	4.89	0.41	
	Pop	40	4.85	0.66	0.36
	Skill	10	4.80	0.63	0.45
	High	69	4.91	0.33	-0.30
	Star	18	5.00	0.0	-1.10
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	Low	56	4.82	0.54	
	Pop	40	4.65	0.80	1.17
	Skill	10	4.40	1.07	1.21
	High	69	4.72	0.57	0.97
	Star	18	4.61	1.04	0.82
<u>Socializing Agents</u>					
<u>Mother</u>					
Mother Support	Low	56	12.38	2.53	
	Pop	40	12.20	2.69	0.33
	Skill	10	12.60	2.07	-0.27
	High	69	12.75	2.31	-0.87
	Star	18	12.22	2.56	0.22
Mother Non-support	Low	56	7.73	1.60	
	Pop	40	7.35	1.72	1.12
	Skill	10	7.60	1.27	0.25
	High	69	7.33	1.61	1.33
	Star	18	7.39	1.82	0.77
She wants to know where I will be when I go out.	Low	56	4.05	0.99	
	Pop	40	4.17	0.96	-0.60
	Skill	10	3.80	0.92	0.75
	High	69	4.27	0.98	-1.25
	Star	18	3.38	1.20	2.34*
She is pleased I play in sports.	Low	56	4.54	0.69	
	Pop	40	4.68	0.53	-1.08
	Skill	10	4.50	0.85	0.15
	High	69	4.60	0.83	-0.53
	Star	18	5.00	0.0	-2.86**
She criticizes me when I do not play well in sports.	Low	56	1.82	0.92	
	Pop	40	1.58	0.87	1.32
	Skill	10	1.30	0.43	2.66*
	High	69	1.65	1.17	0.88
	Star	18	1.77	0.94	0.17
When I join a sport team, she expects me to finish the season.	Low	56	4.37	1.02	
	Pop	40	4.15	1.31	0.95
	Skill	10	4.50	0.97	-0.36
	High	69	4.26	1.33	-0.54
	Star	18	4.83	0.38	-2.80**
Mother Interest in Sport	Low	39	8.44	3.25	
	Pop	26	9.46	3.37	-1.23
	Skill	4	9.75	4.50	-0.74
	High	52	9.37	3.24	-1.35
	Star	11	11.64	4.32	-2.67**
Mother Active in Sport	Low	28	10.71	4.32	
	Pop	22	10.00	4.04	0.60
	Skill	2	9.50	4.95	0.38
	High	39	8.51	3.89	2.18*
	Star	5	7.20	5.02	1.64

TABLE VII (Continued)

Variable	Player	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Values
Mother Interest in Child Sport	Low	38	11.63	2.34	
	Pop	27	11.44	2.62	-0.30
	Skill	5	11.60	3.43	0.03
	High	50	11.68	2.23	-0.10
	Star	11	11.63	1.94	-0.01
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	Low	39	4.82	0.51	
	Pop	27	4.78	0.42	0.36
	Skill	5	5.00	0.0	-0.78
	High	52	4.76	0.51	0.48
	Star	11	4.91	0.30	-0.55
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.	Low	39	2.13	1.21	
	Pop	27	1.93	0.78	0.82
	Skill	5	2.40	0.89	-0.48
	High	52	2.71	1.24	-2.24*
	Star	11	2.27	1.01	-0.36
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	Low	39	5.00	0.0	
	Pop	27	5.00	0.0	--
	Skill	5	5.00	0.0	--
	High	52	5.00	0.0	--
	Star	11	5.00	0.0	--
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	Low	39	4.79	0.52	
	Pop	27	4.96	0.19	-1.84
	Skill	5	5.00	0.0	-2.45*
	High	52	4.84	0.46	-1.56
	Star	11	4.81	0.60	-0.13
Social Function of Sport	Low	36	22.67	2.21	
	Pop	25	20.84	2.59	-2.77**
	Skill	4	22.75	2.63	-0.40
	High	51	22.31	3.07	0.80
	Star	10	23.00	2.49	-0.65
Psychological Function of Sport	Low	39	22.26	2.58	
	Pop	27	21.96	2.39	0.47
	Skill	4	20.25	4.86	0.81
	High	52	22.02	2.70	0.42
	Star	11	21.91	2.07	0.41
<u>Father</u>					
Father Support	Low	54	11.98	2.73	
	Pop	40	12.72	2.09	-1.44
	Skill	8	11.25	2.87	0.70
	High	68	13.03	2.19	-2.36*
	Star	18	12.11	2.74	-0.17
Father Non-support	Low	54	5.94	1.63	
	Pop	40	6.35	1.58	-1.29
	Skill	8	6.25	0.89	-0.32
	High	68	6.50	1.56	-0.83
	Star	18	5.94	1.73	-0.76
He wants to know where I will be when I go out.	Low	54	3.57	1.21	
	Pop	40	3.90	1.10	-1.34
	Skill	8	3.13	1.46	0.96
	High	68	3.94	1.18	-1.69
	Star	18	3.11	1.32	1.38

TABLE VII (Continued)

Variable	Player	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Values
He is pleased I play in sports.	Low	54	4.76	0.58	
	Pop	40	4.73	0.60	0.28
	Skill	8	4.50	0.76	1.13
	High	68	4.88	0.44	-1.33
	Star	18	5.00	0.0	-3.05**
He criticizes me when I do not play well in sports.	Low	54	2.29	1.33	
	Pop	40	1.90	1.24	1.47
	Skill	8	1.75	1.17	1.10
	High	68	1.85	1.22	1.91
	Star	18	2.17	1.34	0.36
When I join a sport team, he expects me to finish the season.	Low	54	4.56	0.90	
	Pop	40	4.48	0.91	0.43
	Skill	8	4.38	0.74	0.54
	High	68	4.64	0.75	-0.61
	Star	18	4.72	0.47	-0.75
Father Interest in Sport	Low	32	10.63	3.56	
	Pop	23	11.43	3.20	-0.33
	Skill	3	11.33	4.04	-2.42*
	High	46	12.50	3.07	-2.48*
	Star	12	13.58	2.23	-2.67*
Father Active in Sport	Low	27	12.70	4.41	
	Pop	18	13.67	4.92	-0.68
	Skill	2	16.50	0.71	-1.19
	High	34	13.62	5.23	-0.72
	Star	9	15.00	2.60	-1.47
Father Interest in Child Sport	Low	32	11.91	2.37	
	Pop	23	10.61	2.31	2.02*
	Skill	3	12.00	1.00	- .07
	High	46	12.20	2.64	- .50
	Star	12	12.58	2.11	- .87
In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	Low	34	4.89	0.41	
	Pop	24	4.63	0.71	1.60
	Skill	3	5.00	0.0	-1.68
	High	46	4.76	0.52	1.12
	Star	12	4.92	0.29	-0.27
In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.	Low	34	2.82	1.27	
	Pop	24	2.38	0.97	1.46
	Skill	3	3.67	1.53	1.09
	High	46	2.83	1.20	-0.01
	Star	12	2.83	1.03	-0.02
In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	Low	34	4.94	0.34	
	Pop	24	4.95	0.20	-0.24
	Skill	3	4.33	1.15	0.91
	High	46	4.97	0.15	0.59
	Star	12	4.91	0.29	0.22
In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	Low	34	4.82	0.46	
	Pop	24	4.75	0.74	0.43
	Skill	3	4.66	0.58	0.56
	High	46	4.74	0.61	0.68
	Star	12	4.83	0.39	-0.07
Social Function of Sport	Low	32	22.66	2.46	
	Pop	24	21.83	3.10	1.90
	Skill	3	23.33	4.67	-0.82
	High	42	23.33	2.38	0.26
	Star	12	22.75	2.47	-0.43

TABLE VII (Continued)

Variable	Player	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Values
Psychological Function of Sport	Low	32	21.53	2.95	
	Pop	24	21.88	2.33	-0.47
	Skill	3	21.67	3.21	-0.08
	High	46	21.43	3.17	0.14
	Star	12	22.33	2.40	-0.84
<u>Coach</u>					
Coach Support	Low	56	7.64	1.66	
	Pop	40	7.65	1.69	-0.02
	Skill	10	8.10	2.18	-0.77
	High	69	8.13	1.64	-1.64
	Star	18	8.22	1.83	-1.26
<u>Socializing Situation</u>					
Family Income	Low	36	5.00	1.35	
	Pop	24	5.33	1.52	-0.89
	Skill	5	3.80	2.68	1.63
	High	49	5.30	1.46	-0.98
	Star	10	5.60	2.27	-0.80
Mother Education	Low	38	5.50	1.33	
	Pop	27	5.93	1.30	-1.28
	Skill	4	6.00	1.41	-0.71
	High	51	5.57	1.37	-0.24
	Star	11	5.55	1.81	-0.09
Father Education	Low	33	6.39	1.48	
	Pop	22	6.77	1.54	-0.92
	Skill	3	6.67	2.31	-0.29
	High	46	6.57	1.54	-0.49
	Star	12	7.00	1.54	-1.20
Family Size	Low	44	2.39	0.78	
	Pop	29	2.55	0.83	-0.86
	Skill	6	2.33	1.21	0.15
	High	56	2.66	0.94	-1.56
	Star	12	2.58	1.08	-0.71

\*Significant ( $p < .05$ )\*\*Significant ( $p < .01$ )

or High Players and they viewed "playing well" in sport significantly less important than High or Star Players.

Weak discriminating variables associated with player type were: age, desire to quit, and playing to win in sport. Low Players were significantly younger than Star Players. They expressed a significantly stronger "desire to quit" than High Players. They valued "playing to win" significantly more than Star Players.

Three remaining variables, prior sports involvement, playing fairly, and playing for fun, did not discriminate between player types. However, Low Players were more likely to value "fun in sports" than all other players, but not significantly.

With regard to personal attributes, the Low Players presented this composite image:

The Low Players saw themselves as the least skillful players, and they least identified with the team. They perceived the least improvement in their playing during the season, which was strongly reflected in their low attendance. They expressed a stronger desire to quit and the least amount of interest in playing again. "Playing to win and playing for fun" were the more important to the Low Players, but least important was "playing well." The Low Players were sometimes the younger players. Last, according to the chi-square findings reported in the following section, Low Players were found to be the least likely to possess a "sports hero." Not surprising, fewest Low Players selected basketball as their "favorite sport."

### Socializing Agents

Mother. The 15 mother variables included these concepts: mother support, non-support, control, approval, criticism, expectations, interest, active in sport, four sport values (playing well, playing to win, playing fairly, and playing for fun), and attitudes toward the social and psychological functions of sport for children. Nine of the 15 mother variables discriminated weakly between Low Players and other players: mother control, approval, criticism, expectations, interest, active in sports, playing to win, playing for fun, and social functions of sport for children.

Low Players reported that their mothers were significantly "more critical" of their playing than Pop Players. Low Players also reported more than Star Players their mothers as being significantly "more controlling," "less pleased" about their sport involvement, "less expectant" that they finish the season, and "less interested" in sports.

Low Player mothers were significantly "less fun oriented" than Skill Player mothers. On the other hand, they valued the "social functions of sport for children" significantly more than Pop Player mothers.

Contrary to some previous findings, mothers of Low Players were found to be significantly "more active" in sports than mothers of High Players. At the same time, they did not value "winning" as significantly as High Player mothers.

Six variables, mother support and non-support, interest in child sport, playing well and playing fairly in sport, and psychological functions of sport for children, were non-discriminating variables between the player types. It was noted that Low Player mothers were viewed as "most punitive" by their children and that they scored highest in

approving of the psychological functions of sport for children, although not significantly.

The Low Player mothers were portrayed in the following composite view:

Low Players reported their mothers to be more controlling and non-supportive than other players. They also reported that their mothers are more critical and less approving of their playing. Unexpectedly, Low Player mothers were more active in sports than other player mothers, but they were not more interested in sports (reading sport news, watching or attending sport events). Mothers of Low Players appeared to be aligned with socially acceptable attitudes in sport. Although they had less regard for "winning or fun" in sports, they tended to approve of the social and psychological functions of sport for children.

Father. The same 15 variables that applies to the mother were applied to the father (see Mother). Of the 15 father variables, one variable, "father interest in sport," was found to be the best discriminator of Low Players and all other players. Low Player fathers were significantly less interested in sports than Skill, High, or Star Player fathers.

Three additional variables, father support, father approval of offspring playing in sport, and father interest in child's sport, proved to be weak discriminators between Low and other player types. Low Players viewed their fathers significantly "less supportive" than High Players. They also reported significantly "less approval" from their fathers about their playing than Star Players. Fathers of Low Players, however,

reported significantly more interest in their child's sport involvement (attending practices, attending games, buying sport equipment) than fathers of Pop Players.

The remaining 11 father variables--father non-support, control, criticism, expectations, active in sport, four sport values (playing well, to win, fairly, and for fun), and both social and psychological functions of sport--were non-discriminating between the players. Of these 11 non-discriminating variables, two non-significant trends were recognized. Low Players saw their fathers as "most critical" of their playing and Low Player fathers were the "least active" fathers across all player groups.

The following composite description was drawn of the Low Player fathers:

The fathers of Low Players were not as interested in sports nor as active in sports as fathers of other players. Low Players reported that their fathers were not as pleased about their participation in sports as other players reported, and their fathers tended to be critical instead. To the contrary, Low Player fathers more than Pop Player fathers reported more interest in their child's sport activities by attending games, practices, and buying sport equipment.

Coach. The one coach variable, measuring support, was not significantly associated with any particular player type. However, Low Players reported "less support" from the coach than all other players.

#### Socializing Situations

Four variables--family income, mother and father education, and



family size--were measures of family social situation. None of these variables discriminated between player types. One non-significant directional trend was detected: both mothers and fathers of Low Players tended to be the least educated parents among all player types. A fifth variable (reported in the next section under Chi-Square Findings) indicated that Low Players had significantly fewer "older siblings who played in sports" than High Players.

#### Chi-Square Findings

Chi squares were calculated between Low Players and other player types (Pop, Skill, High, Star) on four dichotomous variables: sport hero, favorite sport basketball, oldest child, and older siblings in sport. A fifth variable, race, was eliminated from the analysis because of an insufficient number of minority players. The findings (based on one degree of freedom) are presented on Table VIII and summarized briefly. These findings were also incorporated in the summary descriptions of Low Players and Socializing Situations in the preceding section.

Significantly fewer Low Players reported "sport heros" than Pop, High, or Star Players. Low Players were significantly less likely to select basketball as a "favorite sport" than Star Players, and they had "fewer older siblings who played in sport" than High Players.

#### Predicting Player Skill and Predicting Player Popularity

##### Predicting Player Skill

The operational definition for the first criterion, player skill, was a mean score based on the number of team votes received on playing

TABLE VIII  
 N'S AND CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF  
 FOUR SPORT VARIABLES  
 BY TYPE OF PLAYER

Variable	Player	N	Chi-Square Values
Sport Hero	Low	56	
	Pop	40	3.92*
	Skill	10	1.35
	High	69	14.56**
	Star	18	4.28*
Favorite Sport Basketball	Low	56	
	Pop	40	.04
	Skill	10	1.25
	High	69	.05
	Star	18	20.03**
Oldest Child	Low	44	
	Pop	29	.11
	Skill	6	.33
	High	56	.57
	Star	12	.42
Older Siblings in Sport	Low	44	
	Pop	29	1.79
	Skill	6	.51
	High	56	4.09*
	Star	12	.07

\*Significant ( $p < .05$ )

\*\*Significant ( $p < .01$ )

skill divided by team size. Of the 53 variables used to predict player skill, only four significant predictors resulted from the regression analysis and were reported on Table XI. The four variables which significantly predicted skill of player were: (1) self evaluation, (2) father interest in sport, (3) group membership, and (4) father social function of sport for children.

Self evaluation or perceived ability proved to be the best predictor of player skill, and by itself, accounted for 18 percent of the total variation suggesting substantive significance. In agreement with previous findings in the literature, self rating of skill was found to be a strong predictor of player skill. This meant that self ratings of skill agreed significantly with peer ratings of skill. The less skillful players rated themselves, the less skillful their peers tended to rate them. Team identity was also significantly related to player skill: the less players identified with their team, the less skilled they were rated by their peers.

In this analysis, there was a noticeable absence of mother influence in the variables that predicted skill of player. Instead, two father variables, interest in sport and attitudes towards the social function of sport for children, were most significantly related to player skill. The less interest fathers showed in sport and the less they valued the social functions of sport for children, the less skilled their children were viewed by their teammates. Altogether, these four variables predicted 31 percent of the variance for player skill.

#### Predicting Player Popularity

The second criterion variable, player popularity, was also defined

TABLE IX  
 BETA WEIGHTS AND EXPLAINED VARIANCE FOR SIGNIFICANT  
 STEP-WISE PREDICTORS FOR SKILL AND POPULARITY

Criterion	Predictor	Steps					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Skill</u>							
N=193							
<u>Beta Weights</u>							
	Self-Evaluation	.42	.40	.32	.34		
	Father Interest in Sport	--	.25	.22	.21		
	Group Membership	--	--	.22	.20		
	Father Social Functions in Sport	--	--	--	.18		
	<u>Explained Variance</u>	.18	.24	.28	.31		
<u>Popularity</u>							
N=193							
<u>Beta Weights</u>							
	Group Membership	.40	.36	.38	.30	.29	.32
	Father Interest in Sport	--	.28	.26	.25	.24	.23
	Race	--	--	.22	.21	.20	.20
	Self Evaluation	--	--	--	.21	.21	.20
	Mother Active in Sport	--	--	--	--	-.17	-.16
	Player Value Fun in Sport	--	--	--	--	--	-.16
	<u>Explained Variance</u>	.16	.24	.29	.33	.36	.38

by a mean score (number of popular votes received by teammates divided by team size) and described on Table IX. Out of 53 predictor variables, six variables were found to significantly predict popularity of player: (1) group membership, (2) father interest in sport, (3) race, (4) self evaluation of skill, (5) mother active in sport, and (6) player value of fun in sport.

Three strong predictors of skill of player (group membership, father interest in sport, and self evaluation) were also strong predictors of popularity of player. Player skill and player popularity were highly correlated ( $r=.74$ ) which explains the high degree of overlap of predictor variables in these two analyses.

Group membership or team identity was the best predictor of player popularity and explained 17 percent of the variation. As in player skill, less popular players were found to identify significantly less with the team than more popular players. Father interest in sport was a salient element in player popularity. The less popular players had fathers who were less interested in sports than other player fathers. Finally, less popular players exhibited consistently lower self ratings in skill than all other players.

The picture of the less skilled player and the less popular player was remarkably consistent with the image of the "Low Player" in the previous analysis. These findings have helped to confirm that players who do not rate themselves high in athletic skill, who do not identify strongly with their team, or who have fathers who show little interest in sport, are apt to be Low Players (players who are rated low in skill and popularity by their peers).

The remaining three variables, race, mother active in sport, and player view of fun in sport, were all significantly correlated with popularity of player. Not unexpectedly, race played a role in player popularity. All the minority players were accounted for in the least popular player group. Again, only tentative conclusions were to be drawn from the small N (7).

Mothers active in sport proved to be a significant predictor of player popularity. Apparently, the most active mothers were associated with the least popular players. This variable was also a significant discriminator between Low Players and High Players, and the direction of the relationship was consistent throughout player types. Low Player mothers were the most active in sport while Star Player mothers were the least active.

"Playing for fun" was significantly associated with the less popular player and also the Low Player type. Low Players and less popular players were found to value the "fun" element in sport significantly more than popular players and all other player types. A reasonably high proportion (39 percent) of the total variance for player popularity was accounted for by all six variables.

#### Summary

The findings in this chapter have provided a fairly consistent picture of a select group of children involved in sports. These children, referred to as Low Players, were seen as neither skillful nor popular by their peers, by their coaches, and by themselves. During the playing season, these players were also observed by the researcher as receiving fewer reinforcements from their coaches and possibly, teammates.

Low Player parents were found to be differentially supportive and non-supportive. For example, mothers of Low Players were frequently more active in sports than all other player mothers. They also valued the social functions of sport significantly more than Pop Player mothers. Although not significant, they valued the psychological function of sport for children more than all other player mothers. In other respects, Low Player mothers did not regard "winning" as significantly important in sports as High Player mothers nor "fun" as important (non-significant) as all other player mothers.

Fathers of Low Players expressed significantly more interest in their child's sport than fathers of Pop Players. However, compared to fathers of all other players, they were significantly the least interested in sports. They were also the least active fathers, but not significantly so. Together, Low Player parents were reported by their children as being significantly less approving and significantly more critical of their involvement in sport.

Despite the general lack of support from parents, peers, coaches, and a weak self image in sports, Low Players continued to play in the sport program and all completed the playing season. An interpretation and discussion of these findings are presented in the next chapter (see Chapter V) together with further summary descriptions of other player types.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### Introduction

Two main purposes of this research study were to determine the utility of the Social Learning Paradigm in explaining childhood socialization into sport and to identify variables within the paradigm that would distinguish players who varied in skill and popularity. Fifty-three items were developed to measure concepts in the three broad categories of social variables of the Social Learning Paradigm. These items were analyzed statistically to help locate meaningful relationships between the three social categories and child sport involvement. The discussion section begins with a summary description of four other player types and their involvement in sport. This is followed by a discussion of how and to what degree each of the social categories--personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations--were related to child sport involvement. Finally, the chapter ends with some concluding remarks about the research study as a whole.

#### Summaries of Pop, Skill, High, and Star Players

In addition to providing a very useful conceptual framework for testing factors related to child sport involvement, the three categories of the Social Learning Paradigm provided useful descriptive features for all player types in this study. Although the focus of the



discussion is on Low Players, brief summaries are offered of the other players for points of comparison. Overall, the variables in the socialization framework least discriminated characteristics of Pop Players and Skill Players, highly discriminated for High Players, and most discriminated the characteristics of Low Players and Star Players.

Pop Players. With regard to personal attributes, Pop Players were not distinctive from any other players except Low Players. They rated themselves more skilled, more strongly identified with the team, more inclined to have sport heroes, and had higher attendance at practices and games than did Low Players (all significant). Only one parent variable was highly associated with Pop Player parents. Pop Player mothers (significant) and Pop Player fathers (not significant) "least valued" the social function of sport for children. Pop Players were rated "popular" (chosen as best friends) but not skilled by their teammates. Coaches also ranked Pop Players low on skill.

Although not skilled in sport, Pop Players probably participated in sport because of peer influence (friends on the team). There was no indication of positive parental influence from the home or from the coaches of Pop Players.

Skill Players. Skill Players were the "oldest" players in this study (not significant). They valued "winning" more than any other players and "fun" the least of all players (not significant). Mothers of Skill Players were viewed as the "least critical" (significant) by their children. Like their offspring, they also valued "fun" the least (significant) of all player mothers. Skill Player mothers and

fathers were the "least approving" (not significant) of their child's sport participation. Skill Player fathers were the "most active" (not significant) of all player fathers. Although Skill Players were rated high in skill by their teammates, they were not chosen as best friends. Coaches' rankings of Skill Players were higher than Low and Pop Players but lower than High and Star Players.

Skill Players most likely participated in sport because they were good players. They had active fathers in sport (role models) who were not seen as particularly approving. Skill Player mothers were also not seen as particularly approving, but perhaps more important, they were seen as accepting or "not critical" of Skill Player involvement in sport.

High Players. High Players rated themselves "best" (significant) in athletic ability and the ones who had "improved the most" (significant). They were the most likely to have a "sport hero" (significant) as well as the group most interested in "playing again" (significant).

Mothers of High Players were not active in sport (significant). Mothers (significant) and Fathers (not significant) of High Players valued "winning" more than any of the other player parents. High Player mothers (not significant) and fathers (significant) were also reported as being the most "supportive" of all the parents. High Player fathers were significantly interested in sports. Teammates ranked High Players high in skill and popularity. Coaches' rankings of these players were also high.

High Players had many reasons for participating in sport. They not only viewed themselves as good players who continued to improve, but they exhibited high interest in sports (desire to play again, possession of sport hero). They had parents who were differentially involved in sports, but who were both supportive and achievement oriented. Lastly, they had teammates who viewed them as skilled players and as friends, and coaches who ranked them high in skill.

Star Players. Although Star Players rated themselves high in skill (significant), they appeared to be most concerned with group membership and identifying with the team (significant). Star Players also had sport heroes (significant) and reported the "highest attendance" (significant) of any of the player types. They valued "playing well" more important and "winning" least important than all other players (both significant).

Star Player mothers and fathers expressed the "most approval" towards their child's sport involvement. Their parents were also the "least controlling", but the "most expectant" that their child complete the sport season. In the three examples given, the mother variables were significant and the father variables were not. Both parents of Star Players were significantly "more interested" in sport than all other player parents. This finding was particularly important because it was the only one that significantly involved "both" parents. Star Players received the greatest number of votes in both skill and popularity by their teammates. They were also ranked "highest" in skill by their coaches.

Star Players accrued all the benefits needed for them to become future "star" athletes. They had high sports aptitudes, high ludic self esteem and strong identities with their team. They were highly motivated (high attendance) and interested in sports (sport hero). Star Players placed more importance on playing well than on winning. They had encouragement from both their parents who exhibited strong interests in sport. They were seen by their peers and coaches as "winners"--both as players and as people.

It was proposed in the Review of Selected Literature that variables which explained successful adult sport participation were likely to be the same variables which explained child sport participation. When analyzed, these variables discriminated well between less successful child sport participants and highly successful child sport participants. In particular, the characteristics of the successful child sport participant in this study were surprisingly consistent with with the characteristics of successful adult athletes.

#### Discussion of the Findings

Taken by category, the strengths and weaknesses of the Social Learning Paradigm as applied to sport socialization are presented and discussed. The interpretation focuses mainly on the significant findings between Low Players and other players. Insignificant but interesting trends are also mentioned. Specific limitations and recommendations are offered where they are appropriate.

#### Personal Attributes

Eleven of the fifteen personal attribute variables discriminated

between Low Players and other player types. Four of these variables were particularly noteworthy discriminators: self evaluation, group membership, sport hero, and attendance.

Self evaluation was found by other sport researchers (Kenyon, 1973; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978; Orlick and Botterill, 1975) to be significantly related to adult sport involvement. In the present study, players who evaluated themselves low in playing skill were also rated low by their peers and by their coaches, and the reverse was true for players who had high evaluations of themselves. It seems apparent that the evaluative interaction between players and significant others in the sport social environment has consequences on the development of player self esteem. "Ludic self esteem" was a term employed by McPherson, Guppy, and McKay (1976) to refer to the degree individuals held favorable evaluations of themselves in sport involvement.

The present finding indicates how group identity is associated to player involvement. A reciprocal effect takes place--as the best players contribute significantly to their team, they are appreciated more by their teammates. As a result they feel more strongly identified with their teams. Conversely, players who are least needed by their team also feel least identified with it. At the same time, it is important to note that as the season progressed, Low Players were able to gain vicarious identity with "winning" teams such as described in the observations and this unexpected source of reinforcement was not anticipated before the data was collected.

On the strength of two studies in the sport literature (McPherson, 1973; Greendorfer, 1978), the variable "sport hero" was used as a measure of sport involvement. McPherson found that all his star tennis and hockey players had "sport idols" and Greendorfer found that most of

her female athletes had sport role models or heroes throughout their early years of sport involvement. The present results draw the same conclusions--that the more skilled players (who also tended to be the more popular players) were significantly more apt to have a sport hero than less skilled players.

It follows that self evaluation, group identity, and possession of a sport hero were related to frequency of attendance. Players who had low evaluations of their sport ability, low group and sport identities, reported low attendance. When players did not feel skilled nor important to the team, their motivation to attend practices and games was adversely affected.

Although less important than the four variables just discussed, a second set of variables, improvement, playing well, and playing again, were found to be strong discriminators of player involvement in sport. Low Players saw themselves improving the least during the season. This was a consistent evaluation with their low self image.

Low Players also did not value "playing well" while High Players and Star Players did. Again, there was little motivation for Low Players to value playing well when they viewed themselves as poor players who were improving little. The last variable, playing again, reflected a basic level of satisfaction players had toward their sport experience. As expected, Low Players least wanted to "play again" while Pop Players and High Players were anxious to repeat their sport experiences. Pop Players had the companionship of their teammates, High Players had status and friendship, but Low Players did not have the benefit of either.

A third set of variables discriminated weakly between Low Players and other players: age, playing to win, quitting, and basketball being their favorite sport. In this study, Low Players were significantly younger than Star Players and age may have accounted for part of their status as Low Players. Presumably, younger players would not be as physically developed nor as experienced as older players.

Low Players were also found to value "winning" significantly more than Star Players. In a study involving 2,400 hockey players between the ages of seven and sixteen, Vaz (1974) found that as play "age" increased, players assigned increasingly more importance to playing well than to winning. Unfortunately, no mention was made of player skill. Since both age and winning are significantly associated with level of player skill, further analyses are needed to determine their joint relationship to sport involvement. Lastly, it follows that Low Players, who were somewhat alienated from their teams because they lacked playing skills and social skills, were the least likely to select basketball as their favorite sport.

Four variables did not discriminate between player types: sex, prior sport involvement, playing fairly, and playing for fun. One explanation for the lack of differences in sex of player and sport involvement was provided by Malumphy (1968) and Greendorfer (1978) who found that females were basically socialized into sport the same way as males. Encouragement came from essentially the same sources (family, peers, coaches), regardless of sex. It was thought that prior sport involvement would be associated with current sport involvement but this did not appear to be the case. Low Players had participated in the same number of prior sports as other players. Perhaps in the early stages

of childhood sport socialization, it is not the number of sports in which the players participate that determine future sport involvement, but the kinds of experiences (positive or negative) which result from the sport involvement. On the variable "playing fairly", no differences were found between player types. Parent and coach responses on this variable were also consistent with player responses. All three groups view fair play as highly important.

"Playing for fun" was a fourth variable added to the orientation toward play measure by Webb (1969a). Surprisingly few studies used "fun" as a measure of sport involvement. Although it was not a significant discriminator of player type, Low Players did value it more than High or Star Players. It was found to be a significant predictor of popularity, however. Less popular players valued fun in sport significantly more than popular players.

One speculation about this finding is that less popular players who are also likely to be Low Players rationalize their involvement in sport because it is "supposed" to be fun. More popular players play because of their friends and more skilled players play because they are good in sport. Another possible explanation why Low Players rated fun important in sports is that the sport involvement was basically enjoyable. The observations of the researcher confirm this conclusion. Despite differences in coach treatment of players, all participants had opportunities to play throughout the season. Also, basketball was seen as an intrinsically interesting sport--fast paced, competitive, and group oriented. It may be that other players related fun with other benefits such as group identity or playing well, which Low Players were not able to do.



The measures of personal attributes discriminated well between Low Players and other players. Interestingly, they more adequately explained why "other" players were involved in sport than Low Players. For example, skilled and popular players had high sports aptitudes according to their peers and coaches, high ludic self esteem, high interest and motivation to play, and identification with the team. On the other hand, the data which described Low Players reflected more why they might "not" be involved in sport and therefore subject to "dropping out" (except for the last measure, "playing for fun").

### Socializing Agents

Parents were seen as one of the most important socializing agents in early childhood socialization of sport because of their prestige and power to distribute rewards and punishment, mechanisms for confirming values, sanctions, and normative behaviors. The findings shows that mothers and fathers were differentially influential in child sport involvement. Mothers tended to have a wider but weaker range of influence while fathers tended to have fewer but stronger types of influence. Two sets of perceptions were collected on parents--six variables measuring child perception of parents and nine variables measuring parent perceptions of themselves.

Mothers. Four of the six variables measuring player perceptions of mothers significantly discriminated between Low Players and other players (although weakly): mother criticism, control, approval, and expectations. Low Players reported that their mothers frequently

criticize them when they do not perform well in sports. Their mothers are highly controlling--they want to know where their children are much of the time. They do not act pleased that their children play in sports. Finally, Low Players perceive of their mothers as not caring whether or not they finish the season. Numerous studies cited in the review of literature also found that socially competent behaviors in children (e.g., self esteem, achievement) were associated with parental support and control behaviors. The present data provide evidence that non-supportive mothers are also associated with non-skilled and non-popular players in sport.

Five of the nine variables measuring mother perceptions of sport were weak but significant discriminators of Low Player mothers and other player mothers: interest in sport, active in sport, values playing to win and playing for fun, and social function of sport for children. Mothers of Low Players were the least interested in sport than all other player mothers. They were not inclined to read sport news, listen or watch sport programs, or attend sport events. Low Player mothers also did not value "winning" in sport and "fun" in sport. Based on these three variables, mothers of Low Players did not appear to be strongly sport oriented.

Unexpectedly, mothers of Low Players were the "most active" in sport. They reported having participated more in sport (elementary school, high school, college, and currently) than all other player mothers. This variable was not a significant discriminator for player type but the mean scores of Low Player mothers indicated they were the most active mothers. Also, mother activity in sport was a significant predictor of player popularity.

There appears to be a significant difference between mother spectators (interest in sport) and mother participation (active in sport) in this study. The following explanation, although speculative, is offered for this particular finding. It may be that mothers active in sport (play golf regularly, bowl with a league team, play tennis with friends) may be devoted to their specific activity but not really interested in sport events outside their own participation. Likewise, mothers who are not inclined to be active in sport, may be interested spectators and readers of sport news. Mothers who are active in sport may also be more concerned with how well their children perform because of their own involvement in sport. When their children do not perform well, they are apt to be more critical than less involved mothers. Active mothers may also spend less time involved in supportive activities (such as running car pools, providing refreshments, offering assistance) than less active mothers and thus be seen as less supportive parents by their children.

Low Player mothers were also found to value significantly the social function of sport for children. They were more inclined to view sport as a means for acquiring "good citizenship, a competitive nature, respect for authority, the development of patriotism, self discipline, and fair play and the chance to get ahead in this world." Although not significant, Low Player mothers also valued the psychological functions of sport for children more than all other mothers. These functions included concepts which related sports to "relaxation, good times with friends, a source of satisfaction in life and becoming well rounded." Mothers of Low Players may have perceived these two sport functions as being "good" for their children. Therefore, they may have exerted

some pressure on their children to be involved in sport. If the children resented this pressure, they might perform badly. In doing so, their mothers reacted critically and in turn, set fewer expectations on their child completing the season.

Six mother variables were nondiscriminating between player types: mother support, non-support, sport values playing well and playing fair, mother interest in child sport, and psychological functions in sport. One reason the three mother support items failed to discriminate better between different players may have been because the support scale was considerably shortened (see Questionnaires, Chapter III). In this study, the sport values "playing well and playing fair" were not viewed differentially by mothers. They all saw playing well and playing fairly as important. Another nondiscriminating variable, mother interest in child sport, was measured by how frequently mothers attended practices and games and how often mothers purchased sport equipment for their children. Apparently all mothers expressed similar amounts of interest in their child's sport. Although Low Player mothers placed more importance in the psychological functions in sport for children (as discussed in the above paragraph), the finding was not significant.

Taken together, the nine significant mother variables pieced together a rather complex, but consistent picture of mother influence for Low Players. Low Player mothers were distinctive from other player mothers in that they were more critical, less approving of their children in sport. They were more active in sport and valued the social and psychological functions of sport for children, more than other player mothers.

Fathers. Only four of the fifteen father variables discriminated between Low Players and other players. One variable, father interest in sport, was particularly important because it was the single best discriminator of player type out of all the parent variables. Father interest in sport was also a significant predictor of player skill as well as player popularity.

Father interest in sport was measured by three items: interest in sport news, watching, and attending sport events. One explanation for the importance of this variable may have been that more of these fathers took the time to share their sport interests with their children--they shared the sport news, watched sport programs together, took them to sport events. As these children became interested in sports themselves, they also became involved in sport to gain further approval and encouragement from their fathers. A positive evaluation of sport by parents was also found to be related to high sport interest among their children (Pudelkiewicz; 1970, Orlick, 1976; Kelly, 1978; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978). In addition, Snyder and Spreitzer (1976a) reported that father interest in sport was a significant variable in explaining childhood sport participation of female athletes in gymnastics, basketball, and track.

Three father variables were weakly associated with Low Players and other players: father support, approval, and interest in child sport. The first two variables were player perceptions of father interest in sport. Low Players reported their fathers as being "less supportive" and "less approving" of their sport involvement than other players. The father support items reflected three concepts, "he says nice things

about me, helps me when I have a problem and when he punishes me, he explains why". Low Players did not feel their fathers were as supportive in these ways as other players. The approval item referred to "how pleased" the father was that the child played in sports. Again, Low Players did not perceive that their fathers approved of their involvement in sport. The last variable, father interest in sport, indicated that fathers of Low Players had some interest in their child's sport by attending practices and games and buying them sport equipment. It is likely that Low Player fathers did not take the time to play with their children so that their small gestures of interest such as buying sport equipment were not perceived as particularly supportive or approving by their children.

The remaining eleven measures of father influence were nondiscriminating. Fathers were similarly perceived by all players in non-support (punishing), criticism (of player performance), control (wants to know exactly where child is), and expectations (wants child to finish season). Fathers also did not differ in sport activity (participation), four sport values (playing well, to win, fairly, and for fun), or in the social and psychological functions of sport (see mother variables for precise descriptions). On the latter variable, father value of psychological functions in sport for children was a significant predictor of player skill. Presumably, the more fathers value these sport functions (relaxation, good time with friends, source of satisfaction, well roundedness), the more skilled their offspring.

Like mothers of Low Players, the evidence of any kind of strong support from fathers of Low Players was not readily apparent. Mothers of Low Players were active in sport and valued the social and

psychological functions of sport for children. Fathers of Low Players showed some interest in their child's support by attending practices and games and by buying sport equipment. In fact, when viewed together, the parents of Low Players provide extremely minimal kinds of support for their child's involvement in sport. Since there are few clues from the self images of Low Players, these few supports may be what keep Low Players involved in sport.

There were several limitations in the parent analysis. Few of the significant differences found between Low Players and other player involved Skill Players. As a group, they were most like the Low Players and also underrepresented (N=10). For some variables, the number of parent responses for Skill Players ranged from two to eight responses (see Table VII). The same limitation applied to Star Player representation where the number of parent responses ranged from five to eighteen. It was also conceivable that some of the significant findings were the result of chance because of the large number of t-tests which were performed (N=188). Because of these limitations, the researcher sought to locate more consistent "patterns" of influence rather than rely strictly on the results of single findings. As in the case of the variable, father interest in sport, a second analysis was used to substantiate the finding.

#### Social Situations

Five of the six social situation variables were not discriminators of child sport involvement. However, it was not surprising that race, parent education, and family income were not discriminators of player types. The population in this research study was too homogeneous to

provide an adequate test for any of the above variables. The parent sample was 96 percent white, 56 percent had college or higher degrees, and 87 percent fell into the middle or high income brackets. Under child status, the lack of results in the variables birth order and family size were not inconsistent with previous findings. The only variable which proved to be a weak but significant discriminator of Low Players and other players was "older siblings involved in sport". This was yet another aspect in which Low Players were lacking--the added benefit of an older sibling who was involved in sport with whom they could identify and imitate.

#### Summary

Approximately 47 percent, or 25 of the 53 variables analyzed in this study, were found to be significantly associated with child involvement in sport although in varying degrees of association. An interpretation of the significant findings together with insignificant trends were presented in each of the three social categories of the Social Learning Paradigm.

Overall, the category of personal attributes was found to provide the most information about child sport involvement. Eleven of the fifteen variables were significant discriminators of Low Players and other players. The category of socializing agents indicated that parent influence was differentially supportive and non-supportive. Mother influence in sport was broadly defined but weak, and father influence was more specific and stronger than mother influence.

The social situation category provided the least information on child sport involvement because of problems with the size and



composition of the population. While these and other limitations were recognized, it was felt by the researcher that the conceptual framework based on the Social Learning Paradigm identified and related significant variables to child sport involvement and essentially provided support for the further development of a theoretical model of childhood socialization into sport.

#### Final Remarks

The conceptual framework of childhood socialization into sport based on the Social Learning Paradigm was highly useful in developing a set of variables for measuring child sport involvement. Measurement of the three categories expressed in the paradigm (personal attributes, socializing agents, and socializing situations) provided contrasting perceptions of individuals involved in the sport socialization process-- player perceptions, parent perceptions, peer perceptions, and coach perceptions.

Variables which measured player perceptions or personal attributes were found to be most closely associated with child sport involvement. In particular, the variables--self evaluation and group identity--were strong discriminators as well as strong predictors of player skill and player popularity.

Variables measuring parent perceptions of sport showed that parents differed in the ways they influenced their children in sport. Mothers of players had more but weaker influences associated with child sport involvement and fathers had fewer but stronger influences. The most important parent variable which discriminated and predicted skill of player and popularity of player was father interest in sport. Variables

used to measure social situations were not significant discriminating measures because the population tested was not diverse enough in terms of race, education, and income.

The utility of the conceptual framework became more apparent when the perceptions of the players, parents, peers, and coaches were examined together. Descriptions of five distinctive types of players and their families were found. One of the more enlightening findings showed that only minimal kinds of support were found to be associated with players who were neither skilled nor popular.

Although few supports were noted for players who were popular only, their popularity with teammates was sufficient to keep them involved in sport. The same was true of players who were only skilled but not popular. They had few supports except for their skill to associate them with sport involvement. Players who were both skilled and popular had the kinds of support that were expected to be associated with child sport involvement. They had high evaluations of themselves and received many kinds of support from parents, peers, and coaches.

The findings showed how children's self perceptions, the collective support of various important socializing agents (parents, peers, and coaches), were related to less positive or more positive types of sport experiences. Parents played particularly critical roles in influencing child sport involvement through interest, approval, and encouragement (or by the lack of these characteristics). Peer evaluations of skill and popularity were highly related to how players rated themselves in sport. Coaches also played crucial roles in determining whether children had positive or negative sport experiences through adequate instruction and non-preferential treatment.

What emerged from this exploratory research study on childhood sport socialization were a set of variables associated with child sport involvement that were empirically tested and worthy of further consideration in future studies on children in sport. In future studies, it would be profitable to examine more closely the nature of mother and father activity in sport as it is related to child sport involvement. It would be useful for predictive purposes, to do a follow up study on these players to see if they continue to be involved in sport as they mature. Also, it would be interesting to see if the variables in this study produce similar findings in a different population of players or in a different sport, such as baseball or soccer.

The selected variables by no means exhausted all possible influences related to childhood sport involvement, although this study made an effort toward substantiating factors that had been posited in the literature as significant socializing influences in the sport socialization process of children. Also, this research attempted to provide new understanding of the socialization process that involved specifically children and their families in sport programs.

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APPENDIX

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST AND QUESTIONNAIRE

FORMS A, B, C

## OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Practice \_\_\_\_\_

Game \_\_\_\_\_

2. Boys 12A 1 2 3 4                      10A 1 2 3                      Girls 1 2 3 4 5  
       12B 1 2 3 4                      10B 1 2 3 4

3. Coach                      critical    helpful  
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Peer                      tense    relaxed  
    Interaction                      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Parent                      hostile    friendly  
    interaction                      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Overall                      negative    positive  
    atmosphere                      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

---

 Notes:

## FORM A

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age on last birthday \_\_\_\_\_
3. Team \_\_\_\_\_
4. I attend \_\_\_\_\_ Highland Park School  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Skyline  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Westwood  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Will Rogers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Stillwater Middle School
5. Please put a check (✓) next to the names of the three best players on your team.  
 (You may choose yourself.)

Please answer these questions about your mother. Check (✓) ONE answer for each question.

6. She is pleased that I play in sports.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
7. She criticizes me when I do not play well in sports.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
8. She scolds me.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
9. When she punishes me, she explains why.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
10. When I join a sport team, she expects me to finish the season.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
11. If I have any kind of problem, she helps me out.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
12. She says nice things about me.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
13. She spansks me.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often

14. She wants to know exactly where I will be when I go out.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Please answer these questions about your coach. Check (✓) ONE answer.

15. The coach says nice things to me.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

16. I try to do what the coach says.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

17. The coach helps me when I am having a problem.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Please answer these questions about yourself. Check (✓) ONE answer.

18. Whose idea was it for you to play basketball?

- My own
- My mom's
- My dad's
- My friend
- Other person

19. How do you get to team practices and games?

- Mostly walk or ride bike
- Mostly ride with friends
- Mostly ride with mom
- Mostly ride with dad

20. I feel that I am getting better after practice and game.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

21. I wish I could quit when I am not playing well.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

22. Who would be the most disappointed if you quit the team?

- Mom
- Dad
- Friend
- Coach
- Other person.

23. I would like to play basketball again next year.

- Yes
- Maybe
- Not sure
- No

24. I feel the team needs my support.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

25. I am glad I belong to the team.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

26. I attend my basketball practices.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

27. I attend my basketball games.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

28. In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

29. In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

30. In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

31. In sports, it is important to play to have fun.

- Never
- Not often
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

32. What kind of athlete are you?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Fair
- Poor

33. I have a sports hero.

- No
- Yes

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name?

34. After school and during the summer, check (✓) which team sports you have played on before.

- Basketball
- Baseball ( or T ball)
- Softball
- Soccer
- Gymnastics
- Tennis
- Swimming
- Wrestling
- Karate
- Football ( or Flag football)

35. Circle your favorite sport above.



Please answer these questions about your father. Check (✓) ONE answer.

36. He is pleased that I play in sports
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
37. He criticizes me when I do not play well in sports.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
38. He scolds me.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
39. When he punishes me, he explains why.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
40. When I join a sport team, he expects me to finish the season.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
41. If I have any kind of problem, he helps me out.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
42. He says nice things about me.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
43. He spanks me.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
44. He wants to know exactly where I will be when I go out.
- ( ) Never  
 ( ) Not often  
 ( ) Sometimes  
 ( ) Often  
 ( ) Very often
45. Please put a check (✓) next to the names of three teammates you would like as best friends.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP AND  
 COOPERATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

FORM B

Your responses to all items in this questionnaire will be kept ANONYMOUS.

- 1. Parent or Step-parent  
 Mother  
 Father
- 2. Ethnicity/Race  
 1. Black  
 2. Mexican American  
 3. Native American  
 4. White  
 5. Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Profession \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Are you employed by OSU?  yes  no
- 5. Family income for 1979?  
 1. less than \$6,000  
 2. \$6,000 - \$9,999  
 3. \$10,000 - \$14,999  
 4. \$15,000 - \$19,999  
 5. \$20,000 - \$24,999  
 6. \$25,000 - \$29,999  
 7. \$30,000 or more
- 6. Level of formal education completed?  
 1. Some grade school  
 2. Completed grade school  
 3. Some high school  
 4. Completed high school  
 5. Some college  
 6. Completed college  
 7. Some graduate school  
 8. Graduate school degree (M.A., Ph.D., etc.)
- 7. How many children in the family?  
 1. Boys - Ages:  
 2. Girls - Ages:
- 8. How many of your children were enrolled in sport programs in 1979?  

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Sport</u>
-------------	--------------

Circle One answer for each question.

	Very Frequently				Hardly Ever
9. I read the sport news.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I watch and listen to sport events.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I attend sport events.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I participated actively in sports --in elementary school	1	2	3	4	5
13. --in high school	1	2	3	4	5
14. --in college	1	2	3	4	5
15. --CURRENTLY	1	2	3	4	5
16. I attend my child's practices	1	2	3	4	5
17. I attend my child's games.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I buy sports equipment for my children.	1	2	3	4	5

Circle One answer for each question.

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
19. In sports, it is important to play as well as you can.	1	2	3	4	5
20. In sports, it is important to beat the other player or team.	1	2	3	4	5
21. In sports, it is important to play the game fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
22. In sports, it is important to play to have fun.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Sports for youngsters are <u>not</u> particularly important for the well being of society.	1	2	3	4	5
24. If more youngsters were involved with sports, we would not have much trouble with drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Sports are valuable because they help youngsters become good citizens.	1	2	3	4	5
26. The emphasis that sports places on competition causes more harm to youngsters than good.	1	2	3	4	5

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27. Sports are valuable because they teach youngsters respect for authority.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Sports are valuable for youngsters because they contribute to the development of patriotism.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Sports are valuable because they teach youngsters self-discipline.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. Sports are valuable because they provide an opportunity for youngsters to get ahead in the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Sports promotes in youngsters the development of fair play.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Sports are a good way for youngsters to relax.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. For youngsters, sports are pretty much a waste of time.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. Sports participation is a way for youngsters to get together with friends and have a good time.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Sports help youngsters to become well-rounded people.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. Sports are <u>not</u> a source of satisfaction in my youngster's life.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Circle One answer for each question.

Strongly Agree
----------------

Strongly Disagree
-------------------

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. Sports help youngsters to get away from the worries and pressures of the day.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. Sports are just as important for youngsters as school work (academic studies). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Sports teaches youngsters valuable lessons for life.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. Though winning isn't everything, it is the most important.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. Kids have more fun when they organize their own games.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

What should be emphasized in children's sports?

Strongly Emphasized
---------------------

Not Emphasized
----------------

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42. Learning to compete                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Importance of winning                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. Developing sports skills                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. Learning team work                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. Having fun  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Learning sportsmanship                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. Belonging, being part of a group                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Learning discipline                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| What <u>is</u> being emphasized in this sports program? |   |   |   |   |   |
| 50. Learning to compete                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. Importance of winning                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Developing sports skills                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Learning team work                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Having fun  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. Learning sportsmanship                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56. Belonging, being part of a group                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. Learning discipline                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Thank you very much for your help and cooperation in this research study.



Roster of playersQuestion 27  
ImprovementQuestion 28  
Relationship

Questions 27 and 28 will refer to the roster of players above.

27. Put a number beside the names of the players to show how much you think they have improved this season.

- 1 - no improvement
- 2 - a little improvement
- 3 - some improvement
- 4 - much improvement
- 5 - a lot of improvement

28. Put a letter beside the names of the players to describe your relationship with them.

- A - very friendly
- B - friendly
- C - neutral
- D - difficult
- E - very difficult

Thank you very much for your help and cooperation in this research study.

VITA

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