



3 1293 01409 8648

THESIS

3



This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled
Youth Sport Coaches' Education:
The Parent Perspective

presented by

Martha S. Litherland

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Physical Education &
Exercise Science

Martha E. Ewing
Major professor

Date April 13, 1995

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
JUN 11 2001	_____	_____
090601 JAN 19 2001 MAR 05 2002 MAR 05 2002	_____	_____
JAN 21 2004 JAN 13 07	_____	_____
APR 21 2007 041307	_____	_____
MAR 31 2008 0312	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

MSU is An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution

c:\circ\datedue.pm3-p.1

**YOUTH SPORT COACHES' EDUCATION:
THE PARENT PERSPECTIVE**

By

Martha Sue Litherland

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Physical Education and Exercise Science

1995

ABSTRACT

YOUTH SPORT COACHES' EDUCATION: THE PARENT PERSPECTIVE

By

Martha S. Litherland

The purpose of this study was to examine what parents (a) believed sport should be like for their children, (b) saw their rights and responsibilities to be in the youth sport setting, and (c) thought should be included in coaches' education curricula. Thirty-eight parents of 8 to 12-year-old children playing summer baseball and softball participated in 13 focus group interviews to share their expectations of the youth sport experience for their children. Parents suggested that sport should be organized to provide a positive, fun, developmentally appropriate, fair, and educational experience for the child. Parents recognized that the coach exerted a major influence on the quality of the child's sport experience and proposed that many of the coaches in these leagues placed too much emphasis on winning. Parents suggested that communication between parents and coaches was minimal in this setting and that the parent-coach relationship was threatened if parents disagreed with the coach's style. Parents perceived a barrier between coach and parent that discouraged many parents from approaching the coach to discuss a problem. The athletic triangle of coach, parent, and athlete was examined through a systems theory perspective to understand better this conflict between coach and parent. Recommendations from the parents regarding coaches' education curriculum included greater emphasis on practical application of concepts currently taught in these programs. Secondly, parents argued that coaches' education provides a forum for the articulation of goals and objectives that guide sport

programs. Finally, parents maintained that the curriculum should reflect an understanding of the total child, not just the child in sport.

**Copyright by
Martha Sue Litherland
1995**

**This dissertation is dedicated to
G. Duane Elliott (1928-1990)
who was a continuous source of
inspiration to put closure
to the project.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am extremely grateful to all who have supported me throughout the dissertation process. There were many times when their enthusiasm exceeded my own. My appreciation goes out to members of the dissertation committee as well as my advisor, Marty Ewing, for their insight and direction throughout the process. Thanks also to my Defiance College "family" (from staff to administrators) who assisted, advised, and accommodated my needs throughout the past year. Finally, I thank my very special friends, Cindy Elliott, Connie Collier, and Kathryn Waldron, for believing in my ability to finish what I started.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER I STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
Introduction	1
Rationale for the Study	1
Definition of Youth Sports	3
An Overview of Youth Sports	5
Youth Sport Research	7
Coaches' Education	11
American Coacing Effectiveness Program	13
National Youth Sport Coaches Association	14
Program for Athletic Coaches' Education	15
Other Programs	17
Coaches' Education Curricula	18
Research to Practitioner	26
The Athletic Triangle	30
Research on Parental Attitudes	32
Summary	42

CHAPTER II METHODS

The Qualitative Style of Inquiry	43
Theory Generation Versus Theory Testing	45
Depth Versus Breadth	45
Inductive Versus Deductive	46
The Interview Approach	47
Focus group interviews	48
Conducting effective interviews	50
Interviewer bias	52
About the Author	53
The Community	56
The Sport Programs	56
Selection of the Sample	58
Selection of Groups	60
The Number of Groups	60
The Size of the Groups	61
The Subjects	62
The Site	63
Recording the Interview	64
Interview Procedures	64
Confidentiality	66
The Interview Questions	66
Analysis of the Data	68
A Final Note	72

CHAPTER III RESULTS

Introduction	73
Technical Expectations	75
Knowledge of the Rules	75
Skill Development	77
Strategy	78
Synthesis of the Data	80
Interpersonal Expectations	82
Communicative Style	84
Positive versus negative	85
Supportive versus berative	87
Corrective versus critical	90
Synthesis of the Data	92
Understanding the Child	95
Patience and compassion	95
Understanding developmental range	96
The individual approach	99
Coach as parent or friend	102
Synthesis of the Data	104
Role Model	105
Synthesis of the Data	109
Managerial Expectations	110
Fairness	113
Amount of playing time	113
Playing time for the coach's child	115
Playing time and winning	117

CHAPTER III (cont.)

Synthesis of the Data	119
Emphasis on Winning	120
Synthesis of the Data	123
Atmosphere	124
Fun	125
Discipline	128
Teamwork	131
Synthesis of the Data	133
Expectations of the Parents' Role	135
Commitment to Program	137
Parent Involvement	140
Synthesis of the Data	142
Communication with Coach	144
Synthesis of the Data	147
Summary of Parent Expectations	149
Summary	150

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION

The Nature of the Sport Experience	151
Positive	151
Fun	153
Developmentally appropriate	155
Fair	159
Educational	161

CHAPTER IV (cont.)

The Role of the Parent	161
The Issue of Power	163
The Systems Approach	167
Coaches' Education Programming	169
Parent Involvement in Education as a Model	170
Implications for Coaches' Education	174
Guidelines for Coaches' Education	174
The Role of the Parent	176
Recommendations for Future Research	178
Limitations of the Study	178
The Need for Replication	179
Further Examination of the Data	181
Research With Existing Programs	181
Summary	182
APPENDIX A Coaches Code of Ethics	184
APPENDIX B National Standards for Youth Sports	185
APPENDIX C Objectives of Children's Sports Programs	187
APPENDIX D Bill of Rights for Young Athletes	188
APPENDIX E Coach Letter	189
APPENDIX F Parent Information Letter	190
APPENDIX G Script	192
APPENDIX H Consent Form	193
APPENDIX I Follow-up Response	194
APPENDIX J Raw Data Sorted by Themes	195
LIST OF REFERENCES	260

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Youth Sport Coalition Guidelines for Content of Coaches' Education Curricula	19
Table 2	Application of Coaching Curriculum Guidelines by Coaches' Education Programs	22
Table 3	Number of Subjects in Each Focus Group by League Affiliation	63
Table 4	Frequency of Coded Data	69
Table 5	Frequency of Data by Themes	71
Table 6	Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Positive	153
Table 7	Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Fun	154
Table 8	Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Developmentally Appropriate	156
Table 9	Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Fair	160
Table 10	Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Educational	161

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Research Perspectives in the Study of Youth Sports	8
Figure 2	Impact of Research Paradigms on Guidelines for Coaches' Education Curricula	20
Figure 3	The Generation and Transmission of Coaches' Education Curriculum	27
Figure 4	Major Themes and Sub Themes	74
Figure 5	Parents' Expectations of Coach's Technical Skills	76
Figure 6	Parents' Expectations of Coach's Interpersonal Skills	83
Figure 7	Parents' Expectations of Coach's Managerial Skills	112
Figure 8	Parents' Expectations of the Parent	136
Figure 9	Two Views of the Athletic Triangle	164

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine parent perceptions, attitudes, and concerns of their 8-12 year old children participating in baseball (for boys) and softball (for girls) in a small Midwest city. Specifically, parents were queried (through the use of focus group interviews) regarding their perceptions of outcomes derived from participation in youth sport, of positive coaching characteristics, and of important components of coaches' education curriculum.

Background on the institution of youth sport and an overview of research in this arena will be provided. Coaches' education programs will be reviewed and curriculum in these programs will be examined. Specific attention will be paid to the parents' role in the child's experience and an argument will be made that the parent's perception of the youth sport experience has not been examined previously in depth. (The term parent(s) will be used throughout to include any individual who provides primary care to the child, including adoptive parents, custodial parents, and guardians.)

Rationale for the Study

As the number of children involved in youth sports continues to grow in this country, greater and greater emphasis has been placed on educating the coaches who provide leadership to these programs. Critics have charged that the volunteer coach (one who gives freely of his/her time without financial reward) is unprepared to meet the challenges of guiding children through the sport experience so that participants can enjoy the maximum benefits of that experience. The well-meaning volunteer may be knowledgeable in the skills of the sport (based on his/her own participation and/or

interest), but uneducated in the critical components of successful youth sport programming (e.g., practice organization, teaching techniques, care and prevention of injuries, differences in psychological and physiological development, etc.).

Research done in the late 1970's helped researchers better understand the profile of the volunteer coach and his/her educational needs. Similar results obtained from two studies (Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978; Martens & Gould, 1979) described the volunteer coach as likely to be male, married, and in his 30's. He either currently or formerly had children involved in the program. His occupation was likely to be in business, skilled labor, education or another profession. The great majority of these coaches had graduated from high school and/or attended college, but only 14% held or were working on a degree in physical education or recreation. Over half of the sample had attended some sort of coaching clinic in the past and were interested in receiving further training.

Coaches were asked in both studies to rate topics for coaches' education workshops. Both samples of coaches ranked the following topics among the ten most important: teaching specific techniques in the sport, understanding warm-up and physical conditioning, developing sportsmanship, preventing and treating injuries, and using general principles for teaching sport skills. As Gould (1982) suggests, "While these results support the inclusion of this type of information into clinics, they also show that the coaches are interested in learning more about scientifically-based coaching principles and practices" (p. 6).

Scientifically-based coaching principles and practices have become the foundation on which current coaches' education programs are conducted. Supplementing the expressed needs of the coaches in the studies discussed above with the most current research in these areas has produced a well-accepted curriculum for coaches' development.

Curriculum development for these coaches' education programs has been driven by research in the youth sport milieu that has focused primarily on the participant and the coach. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes and values of a rather large segment of individuals involved in the youth sport experience who have not been an integral part of this previous research--the parents. An argument will be made that these individuals not only have a vested interest in the success of their child's sport experience, but can provide the research community with a better understanding of the dynamics of youth sport participation as well as insight into the educational needs of the youth sport coach.

Specifically, what do parents expect their child to get out of the sport experience? How do parents interpret their rights and responsibilities within the role of parent of a youth sport participant? Are there facts, concepts, and principles from the parent's perspective that are not being taught currently in coaches' education programs that should be?

Definition of Youth Sports

Youth sport is defined by those in the field in a number of ways. As Seefeldt, Ewing and Walk (1992) suggest, the term "youth sports" has been applied to "any of the various athletic programs that provide a systematic sequence of practices and contests for children and youth" (p. 3). They divide these numerous sport programs into six categories: agency-sponsored sport programs, national youth service organizations, club sports, recreation programs, intramural programs, and interscholastic programs.

Agency-sponsored youth sport programs are generally local sport programs affiliated with national sport organizations that are responsible for providing rules and regulations as well as district, regional, and national level competition for the participants. Examples of such organizations are Little League baseball, Pop Warner

football, and the American Youth Soccer Organization. National Youth Organizations are those that sponsor a variety of programs for children and youth with sport being one of these program offerings (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, YM/YWCA).

Club sport programs are defined as sport programs that conduct year-around practices and competitive opportunities (Seefeldt et al., 1992). Local swim clubs and gymnastic clubs are examples of these programs where children often start under the age of six and continue participation through the high school years. These programs often provide competitive opportunities for high school athletes in the off-season such as summer basketball and volleyball sponsored by the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and softball sponsored by the American Softball Association (ASA). Local recreation programs often sponsor sport programs within the community where competition is confined to a relatively small geographical area. Programs are generally characterized by maximum participation regardless of skill level and less emphasis on the competitive aspects found in other programs (e.g., tryouts, league standings, all-star games).

The final two categories in Seefeldt, Ewing and Walk's (1992) description of youth sports are conducted in the educational setting. Intramural sports involve competition among teams formed from students within a particular school. Interscholastic sports, on the other hand, provide competitive sport experiences for students between different schools. Where intramural activities in a variety of sports can begin as early as middle elementary grades, interscholastic competition between schools is most popular at the junior high and senior high levels. In addition, interscholastic competition is more structured than its intramural counterpart in that rules, regulations and guidelines are organized by the National Federation of State High School Associations for the purpose of providing fair competition.

Although the sections that follow will use the term “youth sport” in the context of research and programming, an effort has been made to focus on research and programming as it applies to the non-school setting. The target population of interest to this study is made up of athletes, coaches, and parents participating in agency-sponsored youth sport programs, national youth organization programs, club sport programs and recreational programs. Thus, participants in the school sport setting will not be addressed. It should be noted, however, that the aggregation of youth sport research often generalizes its findings to include both school and non-school sport participation, making a distinction between the two types of participants difficult.

An Overview of Youth Sports

Organized sport programs for children have been in existence in the United States since the 1920's (Brown, 1985). Originally established and supervised by public school personnel, these programs were widely accepted by the general populous as a positive experience in the child's development. Sport was viewed as an extension of the school curriculum in a related but unique environment.

As the popularity and acceptance of sport for elementary-aged youngsters grew, agencies outside of the school began to provide sporting opportunities for children. These program developers organized highly competitive sport programs (defined by the National Recreation Congress as “any athletic activity which involves a considerable amount of the leisure time of the youngster in formalized practice, which encourages extensive attendance by adult spectators, which is limited to the outstanding players, and which involves the selection of winners on a state, regional, or national basis”) (“Are Highly Competitive Sports”, 1952).

These programs were widely accepted by parents and youth welfare organizations as an opportunity for children to experience character-building activities in a wholesome and structured environment that would assist them in making the

transition from childhood to adulthood (Berryman, 1988). With the increase of leisure time occurring for adults at this same time, sporting activities were becoming extremely popular. It was a natural extension, then, that what was good for the adults would be good for the children.

This “adult” model was in direct violation of the philosophy of educators at the time. They refused to provide these highly competitive activities in the schools, believing that these programs were developmentally inappropriate (Berryman, 1988). This situation led to educational institutions denouncing their sponsorship of competitive sport for elementary-aged children in the 1930’s and claiming there was too much emphasis on winning, physical and emotional strain, and organized competition into leagues for championship play (Berryman, 1988). As Berryman suggests, this “opened the door” for voluntary youth-related groups in America to provide the service of competitive sport activities for children.

These groups had no educationally-imposed restrictions on their work for children and many times had the funds and support from parents and communities to provide elaborate and well-organized sport programs. The volunteer workers and members of these groups often had no educational training in child development or child psychology and operated with little or no restraints in providing the best for the children. Consequently, by giving up their support of youth sports, the school personnel could no longer enforce their rules and regulations for competition....With very few limitations and a single goal of serving children and making them happy, boys’ work groups saw no end to the sport situations they could provide. (p. 5)

Since this time in the 1930’s that marked the origins of youth sport opportunities outside of the school setting, participation has grown to include 20 million children between the ages of 8 and 16 (of the 45 million youth in this age range) in over 30 nonschool-sponsored sport programs (Brown, 1985; Kociolek, 1991; Martens, 1986; Smith, Smoll & Smith, 1989; Weiss, 1989). Examples of these programs include Little League baseball, Pop Warner football, and various sport opportunities sponsored by organizations such as the Catholic Youth Organization,

Boy/Girl Scouts, YM/YWCA, Police Athletic League, and local recreation departments.

Although great strides have been made within these organizations to recognize the developmental differences of their participants, educators over the past five decades have ranged from curious to critical of the effects of competitive sport participation on the child. This attitude, coupled with reports of negative incidents experienced by children in sport, led educators to research this phenomenon from a variety of perspectives.

Youth Sport Research

The interest in youth sport from researchers paralleled its growing popularity and reached its peak in the 1970's where, as Martens (1986) explained, "For a period of about 5 years (1976-81), conferences abounded, publications rolled off the presses, and academicians pontificated about youth sport in America" (p. 31). Although this fervor in youth sport research of the late 1970's has abated, there continues to be slow but steady progress in an attempt to understand the youth sport experience. These efforts of sport scientists have provided us with a breadth of knowledge from the psychological, sociological, physiological, developmental, and motor learning perspectives (For example, Brown & Branta, 1988; Malina, 1985; Smoll, Magill, & Ash, 1988; and Weiss & Gould, 1986).

Figure 1 depicts the various paradigms in the study of youth sport. The major areas of interest to researchers from a psychological perspective have been competitive stress (Gould & Petlichkoff, 1988a; Passer, 1988a; Roberts, 1986; Scanlan, 1986; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988; Smith, 1986; Smoll, 1985, 1986a); participation motivation and attrition (Gould & Petlichkoff, 1988b); competence motivation (Weiss, 1986; Horn & Hasbrook, 1986; Weiss, Bredemeier & Shewchuk, 1986); readiness issues (Passer, 1986); and sport enjoyment (Scanlan, 1989b). From

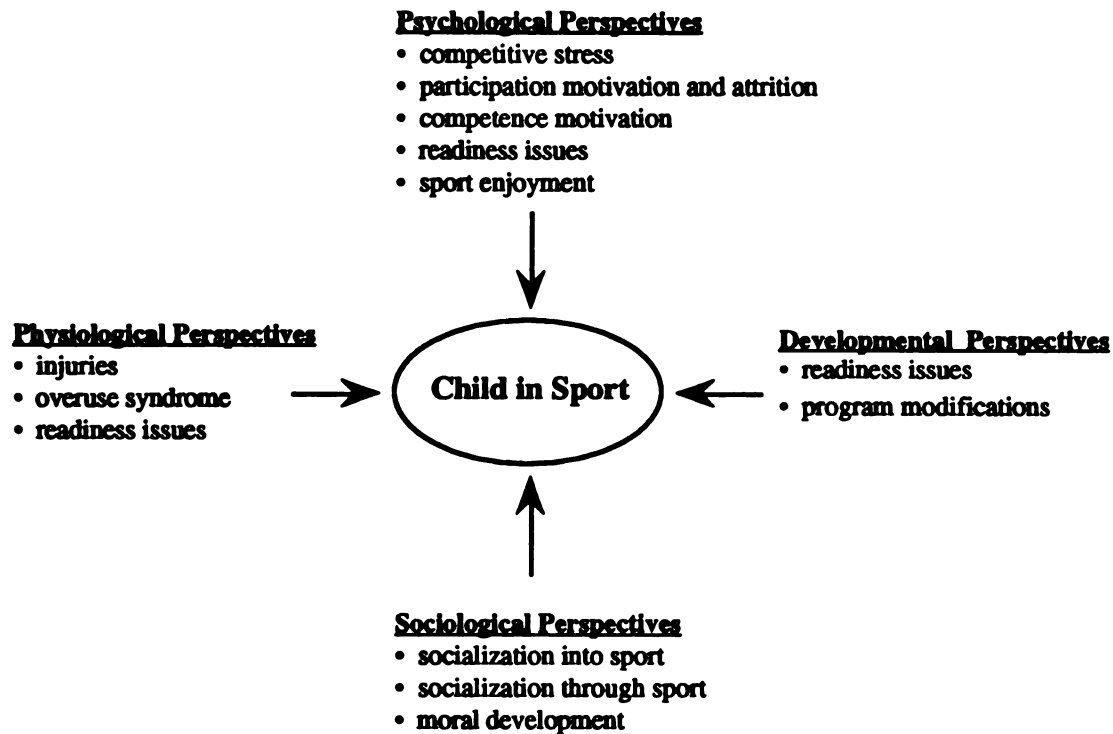


Figure 1. Research perspectives in the study of youth sport.

a physiological perspective, studies have focused on injuries (Brown, 1988; Micheli, 1988; Singer, 1986); overuse syndrome (Harvey, 1986; Kozar & Lord, 1988); and readiness issues (Bailey & Martin, 1988; Malina, 1988; Sharkey, 1986).

From a developmental perspective, emphasis has been placed on such areas as readiness issues (Magill, 1988; Malina, 1986; Seefeldt, 1988) and program modifications (Orlick, 1986; Pooley, 1986). Finally, the sociological paradigm has focused on socialization into sport (Lewko & Greendorfer, 1988; McPherson & Brown, 1988); socialization through sport (McPherson & Brown, 1988); and moral development (Bredemeier, 1988; Martens, 1988).

Although the topic areas listed above overlap in many instances and do not represent an all-inclusive list, they do reflect the major approaches to the study of children in sport. Excellent reviews of the research on children in sport have been

done that summarize these findings (Brown & Branta, 1988; LeUnes & Nation, 1989; Seefeldt, Ewing, & Walk, 1992; Smoll, Magill, & Ask 1988; Weiss & Gould, 1986). These researchers have provided guidelines and suggestions based on the most current research efforts for individuals in the youth sport field.

Researchers in the area of youth sport, however, are not unlike their counterparts in science, business, or education. Members of a research community focus their efforts on investigation of various questions and problems that are raised from either outside the community or from within. For example, research on in vitro fertilization came about as a result of a problem of infertility in a certain segment of society. From that initial problem came a variety of research efforts that investigated alternative methods of fertilization.

Youth sport research has paralleled this model. For example, within the paradigm of sport socialization, concerns have been raised regarding what is considered by many in the field as an alarming number of children who participate at an early age but drop out of sport around the age of twelve. This problem (as well as the concomitant issue of why children want to participate in sport) was addressed by the research community by conducting studies investigating motives for participation and attrition (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1989; Gill, Gross & Huddleston, 1981; Orlick, 1974; Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978). Results indicated that reasons for discontinuing participation fell into two main categories. One, youngsters got out of sport because of other interests (e.g., choosing to no longer play soccer so that time was available to be in the band). Two, youngsters got out of sport because there were characteristics of the program they did not enjoy (e.g., overemphasis on winning, lack of playing time) (Weinberg, 1981).

Similarly, much of the research done in the area of youth sports is a result of “spin-offs” of original questions. As Gould (1988) suggested, a study done to answer

one question will often lead to a multitude of further questions to be answered. An example of this phenomenon revolves around the results of the research cited above. As Ewing and Seefeldt (1989) noted, the principle reason children participated in sport was to have fun. Likewise, those who dropped out of sport made that choice because it was no longer fun. Follow up studies (e.g., Scanlan, 1989b; Wankel & Sefton, 1989) have attempted to define “fun” from the perspective of the participant. This line of research, like that involving participation and attrition, has attempted to provide researchers, educators, and programmers in youth sport a better understanding of the participants' needs and expectations of the experience.

Unfortunately, there remains a gap between what the research community knows and what the practitioner knows. All too often, research done in the field is digested and discussed by others in the research community, but fails to be transmitted successfully to those who actually work in the field (youth sport programmers, coaches, and parents). As Gowan, Botterill, and Blimkie (1979) suggest, the practitioner must be responsible to seek out research findings in these areas so that he/she is better prepared to perform his/her duties. Similarly, however, the sport scientist must be attuned to the problems in the sport setting from the *practitioner's* perspective. The lack of communication between these two groups, both with a vested interest in the betterment of youth sports, acts to slow the improvement in the experience for children.

The section that follows will provide background on coaches' education and will describe the method of disseminating research findings to the practitioner. It will demonstrate the process through which empirical evidence is transmitted to coaches and eventually parents and athletes. As the reader reviews this process, an overriding question that should be asked is, does what is currently known constitute what should be disseminated to coaches via coaches' education programs? Are there issues in the

area of youth sport that have not been researched and therefore not been disseminated to coaches? Do the perspectives of parents qualify as a viable line of research? Are sport scientists often times, as Gould (1988) suggests, asking the wrong questions?

Coaches' Education

The increase in empirical knowledge, coupled with growing reports of negative incidents in the youth sport setting, compelled leaders in the field to investigate methods of disseminating this information to practitioners. This interest was inspired by the work of Smoll and Smith (1979) and Smith, Smoll and Curtis (1979). Over a seven-year period, Smith, Smoll, and their associates conducted a two-phase research program. In Phase I, behaviors of youth sport coaches were related to players' attitudes toward their coach, teammates, themselves, and other aspects of their involvement in sports. Information gained from this initial investigation was used to design the Phase II preseason training program for an experimental group of 31 Little League Baseball coaches. Results indicated that participants who played for the experimental coaches had more favorable attitudes toward the experience and improved self-esteem as compared to a year earlier. This improvement in self-esteem was markedly greater for those youngsters low in self-esteem.

This initial success of Smith and Smoll's intervention program led the way for other coaches' training programs. Canada's National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) has served as a model for many of these programs initiated in the United States. The NCCP was launched in the early 1970's and consists of a five level training program for coaches from youth sport to national teams in over 60 sports (Coaching Theory Level 1, 1988). A volunteer coach can be certified at Level 1 after completing a 14 hour course in coaching theory. Greater depth of knowledge in content areas is achieved through completion of Level 2 (21 hours of study) and Level 3 (28 hours of study). Typically, youth sport coaches are trained within this

framework for the first three levels and make up the majority of coaches trained through the NCCP (Gowan, 1992). Levels 4 and 5 are programs designed for coaches preparing to work with elite athletes in the professional and/or Olympic arena.

The NCCP became a forerunner for the programs within the United States. Currently, there are three comprehensive coaches' education programs operating nationally with each possessing its own unique characteristics. The three programs, American Coaching Effectiveness Program (ACEP; Partlow, 1992), National Youth Sport Coaches Association (NYSCA; Engh, 1992) and Program for Athletic Coaches Education (PACE; Seefeldt & Milligan, 1992), vary in their commitment to the youth sport volunteer coach as a target audience. For example, NYSCA is designed exclusively for the volunteer coach. ACEP, on the other hand, has multiple levels that are designed to meet the needs of coaches from the volunteer level to career coaches. Technically, the PACE program is designed for the interscholastic coach and is not used at the volunteer level. It is included in this discussion, however, for three reasons. First, the PACE curriculum (in a different format) is currently being used by one national governing body (USA Hockey) to train its volunteer coaches. Second, the PACE curriculum (again in another format) has been used extensively to train numerous volunteer coaches within the state of Michigan. Third, and most important, the Youth Sport Institute (founder of PACE) has played a significant role in the development of curriculum for the education of youth sport coaches. A discussion of the development of coaches' education programs would be incomplete without including the contributions of the Youth Sport Institute. These three programs are described in detail in the following sections.

American Coaching Effectiveness Program

The American Coaching Effectiveness Program (ACEP) was developed by Rainer Martens in 1976. Initially, ACEP provided a single course for coaches at all levels. Since the early 1980's, however, the program has expanded to provide varying degrees of educational material to meet the needs of coaches at three different levels: volunteer, leader, and master. As Partlow (1992) explained,

The volunteer level is for volunteer coaches in community youth sports programs such as local recreation departments, boys' and girls' clubs, and national youth sport organizations. The leader level is for junior high or high school coaches who may or may not have received formal training. The master level is for anyone who wants to pursue coaching as a profession.

The Rookie Coaches Course (of greatest importance to this discussion since it is designed for the volunteer coach) involves three hours of clinic time with an additional expectation of two hours of self-study time. Coaches then take a self-administered test to assess recall of the principles presented.

A typical Rookie Course would include content from four areas. The sport science area focuses on the principles of coaching with emphasis on coaching philosophy, sport psychology, sport pedagogy, and sport physiology. The sport management component is included within the sport science area at this level and includes concepts on managing risk, the coach, and the team. The sports medicine area is introduced at the rookie level by means of teaching basic sport first aid. Finally, the sport techniques and tactics component of the program is specific to the sport of interest and involves additional study of a textbook for that sport (e.g., Rookie Coaches Basketball Guide, Rookie Coaches Soccer Guide).

Eight Olympic national governing bodies (e.g., United States Tennis Association) and certain national youth sport agencies (e.g., YMCA) use the ACEP program for coaches' development. Similarly, the ACEP leader level has been

adopted by nearly 30 states with “one or more state school sport or administrative organization...for professional preparation of interscholastic coaches” (Partlow, 1992, p. 39).

National Youth Sport Coaches Association

The National Youth Sport Coaches Association (NYSCA) was created in 1981 and is open to all volunteer coaches working with children in out-of-school youth league sports. To qualify for annual membership, coaches must attend a first, second, and third year certification program administered by a NYSCA certified clinician in their community. Coaches completing the certification program, which covers the areas of the psychology of coaching youth sports, maximizing athletic performance, first aid and safety, organizing practices, and teaching sports techniques, are required to complete an exam, sign a Code of Ethics Pledge, and pay a \$15 annual membership fee.

The First Year Certification Clinic is divided into two parts. Part one involves viewing a video which covers psychology of coaching children in youth sports, safety and first aid, the coach’s role in steering children away from drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse in youth sports, the enhancement of athletic performance, and other areas that will make coaches keenly aware of their responsibilities to children in sports (Pfahl, 1991a). Part two of the certification clinic provides coaches with information on practice organization, along with techniques on teaching the basic fundamentals for the sports of soccer, basketball, volleyball, hockey, baseball, softball, football, flag football, and cheerleading. The two-part NYSCA First Year Certification program requires an approximate six hour time commitment by the learner.

Recertification involves attendance at the second-year program which emphasizes, “helping coaches understand the different physical and psychological characteristics of children from ages 6-12...plus a special segment explaining how

coaches can work cooperatively with the players' parents" (Engh, 1992, p. 45). As in the first year certification, coaches must complete an exam, sign the Code of Ethics Pledge and pay the membership fee.

The content of the third and final year's program emphasizes teaching of sport mechanics. Upon completion of the final examination (which is cumulative to the material presented in each year's program), coaches again sign the Code of Ethics Pledge and pay the membership fee. Coaches can maintain their NYSCA certification/membership by signing the Code of Ethics and paying the annual fee. (A copy of the Coaches' Code of Ethics can be found in Appendix A.)

It may be important to note here that NYSCA operates in cooperation with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) as well as the Office for Substance Abuse Prevention of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration. These organizations provide federal grant monies and sponsorships to offset the costs of program administration.

Program for Athletic Coaches' Education

The Program for Athletic Coaches Education (PACE) is an outgrowth of work completed at the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, which is directed by Vern Seefeldt at Michigan State University. Originating in 1978 through action of the Michigan state legislature, the Institute's main goals have been to provide education and services to youth sport coaches within the state and to conduct ongoing research in the field of youth sports.

Although the PACE program is currently being used by five states as an educational medium for interscholastic coaches, the role of its curriculum in the development of volunteer youth sport coaches is the focus of this discussion. USA Hockey (the national governing body for the sport of ice hockey) uses the PACE curriculum as the foundation for its training manual for volunteer coaches.

Educational sessions are conducted by members of the Youth Sport Institute and USA Hockey coaching program where the Fundamental of Coaching Youth Ice Hockey Manual (Vogel & Blase, 1985) is the primary source of sport science principles and technical skills in the sport of ice hockey.

In addition to the sport specific skills in the hockey manual, the curriculum includes chapters on psychological principles (motivation, communication, discipline), injuries (care, prevention, rehabilitation), pedagogy (planning for the season, planning effective instruction, evaluation of instruction), conditioning, and legal liability. These basic content areas are presented in greater depth in the PACE materials used in education of interscholastic coaches.

Similarly, the curriculum content of PACE has been used specifically for the education of volunteer coaches within the state of Michigan. Since its inception, the Youth Sport Institute (YSI) has conducted clinics across the state for local youth sport organizations. Typically done in a three-hour format, coaches' are given instruction on sport specific techniques as well as two to three sport science content areas (e.g., motivation, communication). These local educational seminars, conducted by YSI personnel, were the forerunners to the Educational Program for Instructors' Certification (EPIC) (Seefeldt, 1988), which was designed to train program administrators to conduct their own training programs.

The coaches' education programs discussed above have been successful in providing educational services to a large number of volunteer youth sport coaches over a relatively short period of time. The American Coaching Effectiveness Program (ACEP) has trained over 150,000 coaches in the sport sciences over the past 11 years (Partlow, 1992). Similarly, The National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) claims to have had almost 450,000 coaches complete its three-year certification program (Engh, 1992). While PACE (Program for Athletic Coaches

Education) is the newest of these national programs (implemented in 1988), it is difficult to estimate the number of volunteer youth coaches who have received training from its curriculum since the curriculum is presented in so many different formats.

Impressive as these statistics are in terms of the number of youth sport coaches trained within the last 15 years, it is important to understand the proportion of these "trained" coaches to their non-certified counterparts. Kimiecik (1988) estimated that there are over 3.5 million volunteer coaches providing leadership to youth sport programs in America. Because the ACEP figures presented above do not separate volunteer youth sport coaches from interscholastic coaches trained through the program, it is being generous to estimate that slightly over 17% of youth sport coaches have received any formal training from these national programs. Others have estimated this figure closer to 5% (M.E.Ewing, personal communication, March 2, 1993).

Other programs

Other programs provide educational information to youth sport coaches, but are not targeted to a national audience. The North American Youth Sport Institute (NAYSI), founded by Jack Hutslar, provides educational material, a monthly newsletter and clinic speakers on a regional level. Similarly, national youth sport agencies (e.g., PONY Baseball, Police Athletic League) educate their sport-specific coaches through publications and local meetings.

In some cases, programs focus on specific content areas as opposed to the comprehensive approach of the national programs discussed above. The Coalition of Americans to Protect Sports (CAPS) is an example of one such program. In addition to its lobbying efforts in sports law at the national and state levels, CAPS provides

educational seminars for program administrators and coaches concerning effective risk management practices and safety measures (Lincoln, 1992).

It is not the intent here to provide a comprehensive review of sport-specific or content-specific programs that play a role in the education of volunteer youth sport coaches since this discussion focuses on national coaches' education programs. It is important, however, to recognize that national youth sport agencies, regional youth sport centers, and specific interest groups contribute in a variety of ways to the education of the youth sport coach. It would be unfair to discuss coaches' education in the United States without recognizing these contributions.

Coaches' Education Curricula

The development of content areas in the three national programs has paralleled guidelines suggested by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). Compiled by leaders in the area of youth sport (educators, physicians, national youth sport program directors) who make up the Youth Sport Coalition of NASPE, these guidelines reflect the "expert" opinion of what should be included in coaches' education curriculum at the youth sport level. A summary of Guidelines for Coaching Education: Youth Sports (National Association of Sport and Physical Activity, 1992) is presented in Table 1.

The reader will notice similarities between the suggested content areas proposed by NASPE listed above and the research paradigms discussed earlier in Figure 1 (psychological, sociological, physiological, and developmental perspectives of studying the phenomenon of youth sports). These directions for youth sport research are presented in Figure 2 as they relate to the NASPE guidelines.

There is a natural flow from research conducted in the area of youth sports to proposed guidelines for content in coaches' education programs. The one content area that is not reflective of the youth sport literature is the techniques of coaching area.

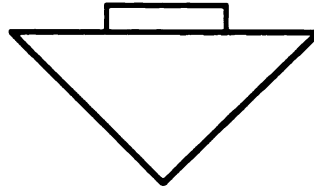
Table 1

Youth Sport Coalition Guidelines for Content of Coaches' Education Curricula

Medical	Growth/ Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care and prevention of injuries • emergency care procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developmental changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive levels • relationship of fundamental, motor, and cognitive skills to learning of sport specific skills • characteristics of early vs. last maturers
Psychological	Training/Conditioning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goal directed coaching • role model for appropriate behavior • communication skills • sportsmanship • motivation • stress management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic knowledge and techniques • adjustment of training/conditioning to meet developmental needs of athletes • adjustment of training/conditioning to meet environmental conditions (e.g., heat) • knowledge of result of overtraining
Legal	Coaching Techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe playing conditions • protective equipment • legal responsibilities of coaches • insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key elements of sport • teaching styles • practice organization • appropriate skills and drills • rule modifications

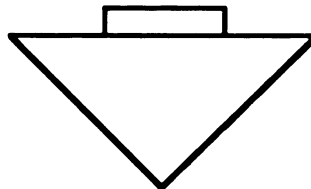
Research Paradigms

- psychological
- sociological
- developmental
- physiological



NASPE Guidelines

- psychological aspects of coaching
- growth, development and learning of young athletes
- medical aspects of coaching
- training and conditioning of young athletes
- legal aspects of coaching
- techniques of coaching young athletes



Coaches' Education Programs

Figure 2. Implications of Research Paradigms on Guidelines for Coaches' Education Curriculum.

This area, which is often taught separately from the sport sciences, draws its concepts and principles from the applied pedagogical research in the discipline of physical education.

As suggested in Figure 2, the three coaches' education programs central to this discussion reflect the objectives proposed in the NASPE guidelines. Table 2 demonstrates an outline of the curriculum content of each program within the parameters suggested by NASPE (Buckanavage, 1992; Engh, 1992; Partlow, 1992; Pfahl, 1991a; Seefeldt, 1991) .

Each program is committed to addressing the content areas suggested, although the degree to which the individual program emphasizes a particular content area may vary. For example, each of the three programs provides training in the area of drug education. The NYSCA program, however, places greater emphasis on the coach's role in prevention of substance abuse than the other two. This philosophy is evidenced in NYSCA's National Standards for Youth Sports (see Appendix B) where two of the eleven standards for parents involve drug- and alcohol-free statements (Engh, 1992). This standard may be a result of NYSCA's belief that "coaches can play a significant role in helping young people understand the dangers of abusing drugs" (Engh, 1992, p. 45) as well as NYSCA's collaboration with the Federal Office for Substance Abuse Prevention.

It is not surprising that both the ACEP and PACE programs are an outgrowth of the research in the area of youth sports. The founders of these programs (Rainer Martens and Vern Seefeldt, respectively) are both well-respected in the research community and have conducted numerous studies within the area of youth sports. Prior to the development of both ACEP and PACE, they worked together on the development of Guidelines for Children's Sports (Martens & Seefeldt, 1979) published by NASPE.

Table 2

Application of Coaching Curriculum Guidelines by Coaches' Education Programs

	ACER	NYSCA	PACE
<u>Medical</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care and prevention of injuries • emergency care procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first aid and safety • injury prevention • drug education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first aid • injury prevention • chemical health education
<u>Legal</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe playing conditions • protective equipment • legal responsibilities of coaches 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal issues • insurance
<u>Training/Conditioning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic knowledge and techniques • adjustment of training/conditioning to meet developmental needs of athletes • adjustment of training/conditioning to meet environmental conditions • knowledge of results of overtraining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conditioning, strength development, flexibility training, nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conditioning, weight training, nutrition, sports vision

Table 2 (continued)

Psychological

- goal directed coaching
 - role model for appropriate behavior
 - communication skills
 - sportsmanship
 - motivation
 - stress management
- sport psychology
- psychology
 - advanced child psychology
 - parent relationships
 - communication
 - motivation
 - positive coaching
 - discipline
 - awards and rewards

Growth/Development

- developmental changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive levels
 - relationship of fundamental, motor, and cognitive skills to the learning of sport specific skills
 - characteristics of early vs. late maturers
- developmental characteristics
 - physical and mental growth

Coaching Techniques

- key elements of sport teaching styles
 - practice organization
 - appropriate skills and drills
 - rule modifications
- sport pedagogy
 - sport specific skills and strategies
- practice planning
 - teaching of sport techniques
 - planning effective instruction
 - evaluating coaching effectiveness

As part of this effort to make practical application of the research findings in youth sport, Martens and Seefeldt did a content analysis of the literature at that time (over 400 articles) to produce a table of 20 different objectives of children's sports programs (see Appendix C). These objectives were condensed into The Bill of Rights for Young Athletes (Martens & Seefeldt, 1979) found in Appendix D.

The background and experience of these two individuals led to a commitment of a sport science research base in the development of curriculum in their programs. As explained by the codirector of ACEP, "ACEP has made an effort to pool the best research available in the sports sciences to make it meaningful for the everyday needs of the coach" (cited in Kimiecik, 1988).

It is not the intent here to argue that this approach to curriculum development is misguided. Certainly, the most appropriate curriculum in any area is one that is an outgrowth of the existing research. From that framework, one can be reasonably sure of the validity of the material presented and move toward the elimination of coaching actions based on myths, superstitions, and tradition. Or, as Smoll and Smith (1981) suggest, "a training program should be based on empirical evidence rather than athletic folklore and/or what we 'know' on the basis of informal observation" (p. 86).

Instead, this author would suggest that their development has come from a single perspective--the aggregated research in the field. Although this is a highly appropriate place to begin, one might question the comprehensiveness of these programs given their method of determining content. Simply put, do these programs cover the necessary content leading to coaching effectiveness at the youth sport level, or do they simply disseminate research findings to the practitioner?

Specifically, does the current curriculum address the major issues facing athletes, coaches, and parents in the youth sport setting? Are there "gaps" in the research relating to the involvement of these interacting participants, and therefore

“gaps” in curriculum content? Would these individuals (athletes, coaches, and parents) agree that what is now being taught in coaches’ workshops covers the most critical components of the youth sport experience?

These questions are the foundation on which this study was designed. It is important at this point in the development and transmission of coaches’ education curriculum to analyze content areas from the perspective of those directly involved (i.e., athletes, coaches and parents). Since there has been considerable research conducted regarding attitudes and opinions of athletes and coaches, the focus of this investigation will be from the parents’ perspective. Specifically, do parents see “gaps” in what their child’s coach is being taught? Are there needs in coaches’ education from the parents’ perspective that are not currently being addressed in coaches’ education curriculum?

Some may argue that parents are minor players in this arena of youth sport, that they are peripheral to the experience of the child in sport. Guidelines abound on how to educate parents so that they provide a positive and supportive environment for the child’s sport experience. From this perspective, they are another group to be educated. Perhaps it is time for the research community to turn the table on this argument and ask how parents can provide a better understanding of what needs to be taught in coaches’ education curricula to meet their child’s needs as a participant.

Evidence will be presented below to further this argument. The flow of information from research findings to curriculum developers to coaches, athletes, and parents will be explained in detail. Likewise, a comprehensive review of research conducted involving parental attitudes will be presented to expand the argument that parents are a neglected and viable source of information regarding coaches’ curriculum content.

Research to Practitioner

Figure 3 describes the flow of information from research to curriculum to learners. As a working model throughout this discussion, it will be used to conceptualize the transmission of knowledge from the “experts” to those with vested interests in the youth sport experience. In essence, research is done, digested by the research community, assembled by the program designers, and disseminated to youth sport coaches via coaches’ education programs scheduled at the local level by program administrators. This constitutes the primary influences depicted by the model.

On occasion, coaches seek out the educational experience directly from training programs instead of having it organized for them by a program administrator. For example, coaches can enroll in the ACEP program individually without sanction from the youth sport program in which they coach. Similarly, coaches can contact the state coordinator of NYSCA for a schedule of clinics in his/her area and attend the program independently. Although this too describes a primary influence, it is the exception rather than the rule. Most coaches’ training is scheduled for coaches by local program administrators.

At the local level, coaches may receive educational material directly from the program administrator. It is not uncommon for coaches to receive a packet of information during an orientation meeting that might include such things as playing rules, game/practice schedules, drills, teaching tips, emergency procedures and statements of program philosophies (for example, Grand Rapids Public Recreation Department, 1989). These kinds of educational material become an extension of the more formal coaches’ education programs conducted on a larger scale.

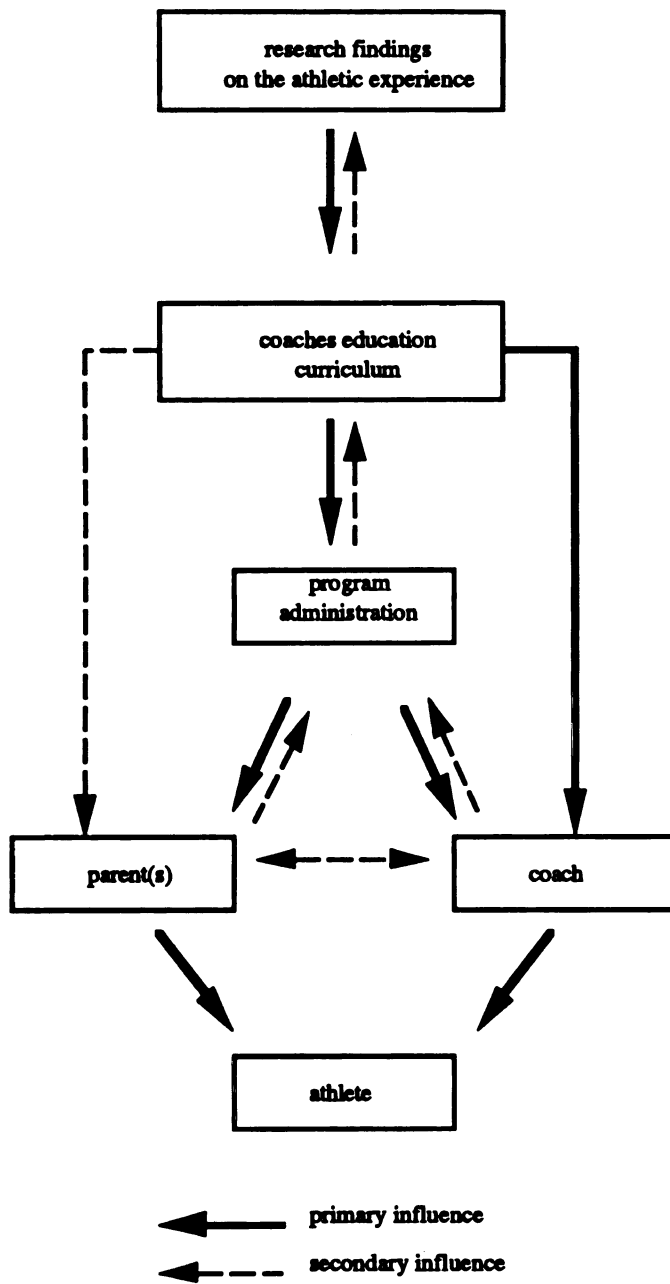


Figure 3. The generation and transmission of coaches' education curriculum.

Parent education is also a part of this informational flow. Perhaps less structured than that in its coaching counterpart, parents receive information from a variety of means. In some programs such as the YMCA Y-Winners in Metropolitan Los Angeles, parents attend an orientation meeting prior to the start of the season and are provided written take-home program materials called a Family Huddle. The program is designed to “encourage the family to participate and interact as a unit in total accord with the program philosophically” (Sutton, 1984).

Similarly, parents also receive educational material through a variety of informal means. Books have been written specifically for parents to assist them in understanding the youth sport experience and providing positive leadership for their child (Cratty, 1974; Hopper, 1988; Hutslar, 1985; Orlick & Botterill, 1975; Rotella & Bunker, 1987; Smith, Smith & Smoll, 1983; Smith, Smoll, & Smith, 1989). Each of the authors listed here are respected members of the research community and reflect the secondary influence of coaches’ education material presented in Figure 3. In addition, parents receive guidelines from the popular press from a variety of sources through either individual articles (for example, Snyder, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Weiss, 1989) or regular columns (for example, Griffith, 1982; Kociolek, 1991).

Perhaps the most common way in which parent education is designed to take place is from the individual coach. Through journals (Feltz, 1987; Hopper & Jeffries, 1990), books (Cratty, 1974; Martin & Lumsden, 1987; Smoll, 1986b; Thompson, 1993) and/or formal training in ACEP (American Coaching Effectiveness Program, 1991a; 1991b) or NYSCA (Pfahl, 1991b), coaches are trained to deal with parents and educate them about the factors interacting in the youth sport experience. This is summarized well by Smoll (1986b) when he said,

A coach’s success in dealing with parents can be very important to the success of a program. Through their cooperative efforts, many parents productively contribute to youth sport programs. Unfortunately, however, the negative impact that some parents

have is all too obvious. Some parents, out of ignorance, can undermine the basic goals of youth sport programs and rob youngsters of benefits they could derive from participation. Hopefully, as a coach, you will be able to channel parents' genuine concerns and good intentions in a way that supports what you are trying to accomplish. (p. 47)

Secondary influences depicted in Figure 3 are defined as feedback from one group to another that may or may not impact educational program design. An example of feedback that has affected program design was the coaches' responses to logistical questions concerning program implementation conducted in Phase II of the Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports (1978). Coaches' preferences on such issues as amount of time allotted for each training session and most convenient day of the week for training directly impacted the administration of program delivery. Other concerns, such as those of parents or coaches, may be expressed to program administrators at the local level but not be implemented into coaches' education programs because their problems may be unique to that particular setting (such as misuse or theft of equipment). Unless an issue such as this one was shared by a number of programs, it would not alter the national coaches' education curricula.

In summary, the preceding discussion has provided background on the empirical roots of coaches' education curricula development, an overview of the existing programs conducted at the national level, and a conceptual model of how these programs disseminate information to local coaches. The section that follows will focus on those groups depicted at the bottom of Figure 3 who are directly involved in the youth sport experience; coaches, parents, and participants. A review of the research conducted on the attitudes and values of these individuals will be presented with in-depth discussion of those studies which have focused primarily on parental concerns. A case will be made that this group has not had the empirical attention it needs given its important influence in the youth sport experience.

The Athletic Triangle

The bottom of Figure 3 represents three groups that are directly involved in the youth sport experience--parents, coaches, and athletes. Referred to as the “primary family of sport” (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988) and the “athletic triangle” (Smith, Smoll & Smith, 1989), it is well accepted that the interaction of these groups impacts the quality of the sport experience. LeUnes and Nation (1989) suggest that youth sport can be compared to a drama with the actors involved being athletes, coaches, and “extras”, where parents and spectators play a major role. But, what do we know about these groups and how have their attitudes and values influenced coaches’ education?

Research from the athlete’s perspective has had considerable attention throughout the years. Studies have ranged from examining competitive stress in youth sport (see Scanlan, 1986, for a comprehensive review), to reasons for participation and attrition (for example, Seefeldt & Ewing, 1988), to socialization into and through sport (for example, McGuire & Cook, 1983), to a definition of the concept of fun in sport (for example, Scanlan, 1989a). As Devereaux (1976) suggests, a concerted effort has been made to examine “what the ball is doing to the child” as opposed to what the child is doing to the ball.

A good example of the impact that this research has had on the development and refinement of coaches’ curricula is the line of research done by Smith, Smoll, and their associates (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977) on coaching behaviors and reinforcement styles. Their research brought to light the importance of the coach’s positive reinforcement of desired athlete behaviors and the impact this approach has on player satisfaction with the program. As a result, the “positive approach in coaching” is a staple of coaching curricula.

Although research on coach/athlete interactions has been a source of empirical information about the primary family of sport, only a few studies have focused exclusively on the coach. Much of the research has provided demographic profiles of those who coach (Martens & Gould, 1979; Gould & Martens, 1979; Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978), including their reasons for entering the coaching role and withdrawing from it (Weiss & Sisley, 1984). In addition, these studies surveyed coaches' attitudes in general and curriculum content areas in particular and provided great insight for curriculum developers. For example, coaches indicated a need for sport science background in addition to the technical aspects of the sport to work effectively in the youth sport setting. As a result, coaches' education developers were able to include sport science training with an assurance it would be accepted by coaches.

The third member of the athletic triangle, parents, has not had the research attention enjoyed by participants and coaches. It is ironic that the largest group in numbers and the group with perhaps the greatest sense of responsibility in providing quality experiences for the child has not been a more integral subject in the sport science literature. This irony is especially true given the shared belief that the number of parents negatively affecting the child's sport experience is large enough to warrant teaching coaches how to deal with parents (for example, Smoll, 1986b). Although the parent's role as a socializing agent (Greendorfer & Lewko, 1978) and a source of evaluative pressure (Feltz, Lirgg & Albrecht, 1992; Hellstedt, 1990) have been examined, only a few studies have examined parental attitudes toward sport involvement for their child. In other words, the focus has been on what parents do, not necessarily what they think.

Notable exceptions to this approach have been the work of Castle (1952) and Skubic (1956), who examined parental attitudes toward Little League baseball, and

more recently, Gross (1982), who compared the attitudes of parents versus coaches on the importance of coaches' training topics; Laurie and Corbin (1981) who investigated parents' attitudes regarding program and game modifications in youth baseball; Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports (1978) which compared the responses of athletes, non-athletes, parents of athletes, and parents of non-athletes on the beneficial and detrimental effects of participation; and Orlick and Botterill (1975) who interviewed athletes and parents on a variety of sport issues. Because each of these research projects have provided valuable information to program designers, a more thorough review of these studies will be presented below. Specific concerns regarding methodology and timeliness will be discussed as they relate to this study.

Research on Parental Attitudes

Five of the six studies mentioned above (Castle, 1952; Gross, 1982; Laurie & Corbin, 1981; Skubic, 1956; Michigan Joint Legislative Study, 1978) were quantitative in nature and done in a survey format. Castle (1952) reported results of a survey done by the Recreation Department of Oakland, California (referred to as the Fresno Study) where 150 parents were asked 19 questions regarding their son's involvement in Little League Baseball. Sample questions involved physical effects of participation (e.g., "Did he lose weight during Little League season?"), emotional effects of participation (e.g., "Did playing in Little League make him grouchy?") and educational effects of participation (e.g., "Did playing in Little League make him get along better with boys his own age?").

Parents unanimously expressed the opinion that Little League Baseball is a good thing for boys. In addition, 93% of parents thought that it made their child more serious about being on time, 92% expressed the opinion that the experience made their child get along better with other children, and 91% affirmed that participation made their child get along better with adults.

In addition to responding to the yes-no questions, such as “Do you feel that Little League is a good thing for boys?”, parents were asked to state why they responded positively or negatively. An example of the parents’ support for the program is presented below.

Yes. There is no question about what baseball means to my boy and every other healthy, normal boy. Here are just a few of the things that Little League has done for my boy already: He is more wide awake, has more pep, is learning teamwork and has companionship; not only [does he] learn how to play baseball but [he] learns how any game in life should be played in regard to teamwork, clean sportsmanship, the respect and good-will of associates and opponents alike. (p. 18)

This initial study in the investigation of parental attitudes toward their child’s participation in sport came at a time when organized sport for young children was being scrutinized for its possible harmful effects on the participant. Castle (1952) concluded that at least in the Fresno area, parents were extremely supportive of their child’s participation in Little League Baseball.

In a similar study, Skubic (1956) received 85 questionnaires back from a sample of 145 parents of boys who participated in Little League (ages 8-12) and Middle League (ages 12-15) Baseball. The questionnaire was divided into two equal parts where the first part asked parents about their child’s behavior as it related to the sport experience. Parents were asked such questions as, “Does your boy have leisure (spare time) interests other than baseball?” and “Does your boy become sullen or depressed after his team loses a game?” The second part of the questionnaire addressed parents’ attitudes relating to their child’s involvement in the sport. Examples of these questions include, “Do you think there should be less emphasis on winning the game?” and “How can the leagues be improved to provide better experiences for the boys?” Results indicated that parents strongly supported their child’s involvement in Little League Baseball, but suggested that the program could be improved by allowing each player to play in every game and by having those in

charge of the program being more selective in the recruitment of officials, managers, and coaches.

The work of Castle (1952) and Skubic (1956) were the first to address parents' attitudes toward their child's involvement in youth sport. Both involved subjects whose children participated in Little League Baseball and both found strong parental support for the programs. The results of their research quieted the criticism at that time from "educators, physical educators, and laymen over possible mental and physical harm that might result from early, intense athletic competition" (LeUnes & Nation, 1989). Interestingly, it was some time before the attitudes of parents toward youth sport programs became a topic of research interest again.

Twenty-five years later, Laurie and Corbin (1981) conducted a survey regarding parental attitudes toward modifications in their child's baseball program. A T-Ball program (where the batter hits the ball from a batting T rather than hitting a pitched ball) for 7- and 8-year-old children was modified in the following manner: (a) organizational changes such as a coach training session, a parent-coach meeting and a shortened 6-week-season with coed participation; (b) game philosophy changes where more emphasis was placed on skill development and fun than winning; and (c) game rule modifications which included no strike outs, equal playing time, mandatory rotation of playing positions, no score kept, and the use of a softer than normal ball.

Before the season began but after parents had been informed of the program changes, parents were asked to state whether they supported the proposed change, were neutral about the change, or rejected the change. Questionnaire items listed the program organizational changes, game philosophy changes, and game rule modifications outlined above. The identical questionnaire was completed at the conclusion of the season. A total of 214 parents returned both questionnaires.

Results indicated that parents supported all but two of the program changes before the season began (no score keeping and the parent-coach meeting). By season's end, the majority of parents supported the need for a parent-coach meeting as well. The number of parents who rejected the "no score" rule at the beginning of the season dropped significantly by the end of the season, but there were as many at the end of the season who endorsed the rule as those who were opposed to it. Based on the fact that 12 of the 13 changes were supported by parents, Laurie and Corbin (1981) concluded, "Game modifications can be desirable and will be supported by parents if the reasons for the change are made clear" (p. 108).

The Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports (1978) was prompted by a Michigan Senate resolution "to investigate and study youth sports activities programs, particularly the actual educational benefits that youth receive from these programs, the medical and legal problems that result from these programs, to consider plans to improve these programs so that youth will be protected while enjoying these recreational programs" (p. 1). A consortium of researchers from four Michigan universities gathered questionnaire data from athletes, parents of athletes, non-athletes, and parents of non-athletes (totaling 4,274 respondents). Comparisons on survey items were made between these groups as well as between male and female participants.

Specific to parent involvement and attitudes, researchers found

1. Nearly one-half of the parents indicated that objectives and policies pertaining to the program with which they were associated did not exist or were not available to them.
2. Most of the parents who received objectives and policies from the youth sports programs with which they were affiliated agreed with their content,

and thought the coaches, officials and administrators were trying to meet the program's objectives.

3. Participation in youth sports programs generally had a positive effect on the social and personal development of the athletes, according to the athletes and their parents...Although the majority of personal and social attributes were positively influenced by sports participation, there were indications that large numbers of young athletes did not derive some or all of the potential benefits generally associated with youth sports programs.
4. Most of the athletes and their parents approved of the manner in which coaches performed their duties. However, there were numerous indications that coaches did not allow all contestants to participate, stressed winning too much, and frequently argued with players, parents and officials.
5. Many parents were uninformed about the sports programs in which their children participated...This study implies that many youth sports programs may be functioning without the direct involvement of a substantial number of parents whose children participate in them (pp. 101-106).

The final study in this discussion of research done on parental attitudes through use of a survey format was conducted by Gross in 1982. This study, involving attitudes regarding coaches' education curriculum, asked both coaches and parents of soccer players ages 5-18 to indicate the degree of emphasis they preferred for various coaching skills in a coaches' education program. Some of the 10 coaching skills included knowledge of physical and emotional characteristics of age/sex group coached, communicating effectively with players, organizing practice, learning and demonstrating skills, winning techniques, and team strategy). Respondents were

asked to indicate whether they preferred the training clinic to provide in-depth emphasis, superficial emphasis or brief mention/omit for each of the coaching skills.

Results indicated parents and coaches agree that team strategy, rules of the game, and learning/demonstrating skills should be covered in-depth in a coaches' training program. Coaches felt more strongly than parents that techniques directed towards winning should be emphasized. Similarly, coaches felt confident in their ability to deal with parents and referees and needed only superficial emphasis in training while parents felt that skill needed greater emphasis. Parents felt strongly that characteristics of the age-group coached, communication, and motivation should be emphasized while coaches felt that these topics should receive only superficial emphasis.

The studies outlined above give designers of coaches' education programs a better understanding of parental attitudes toward youth sport participation; specifically, they indicate what items parents believe should be emphasized in coaches' education programs. Although each study asked different questions, they shared common methodologies in their use of a survey approach.

The advantage of the survey approach is its ability to provide attitudinal information from a number of subjects that can then be generalized over a population. Survey research is straight forward, it is relatively economical in terms of time spent by the subject, and its results can be statistically manipulated to identify and isolate particular variables.

The disadvantages, however, are threefold. First, when responding to a questionnaire, the subject is asked to respond to a series of specific questions. Skubic (1956), for example, asked parents if they felt that their baseball playing son "became too fatigued with long practices and long games" (p. 98). Of the 84 parents responding, 6 checked "yes", 58 checked "no", and 20 checked "sometimes."

Although this question can be interpreted that few parents felt their son became too fatigued during participation, the format was unable to give any meaning to those parents who found that to be true “sometimes.” This method of inquiring about parental attitudes falls short in describing the circumstances that led to the respondent’s choice. In essence, the survey format provides much needed information regarding *what* parents think, but falls short in explaining *why* they might feel a certain way.

A second disadvantage of this format in examining parents’ attitudes lies in question construction. When researchers base questions on their own background, experience, and knowledge, they run the risk of unknowingly including issues that are irrelevant to the respondent or those that reflect the researcher’s bias. For example, Gross (1982) developed his questionnaire based on his two years of experience as coaching coordinator of a local soccer club and the results of “informal interviews with coaches and parents” (p. 184). It is logical that selective recall of these experiences impacted question construction.

This explanation does not mean that all questionnaires share this hazard, but the survey format is designed to isolate particular variables and ask respondents to react to those presented. Researchers control which variables are selected for review as well as how each question is stated.

In some areas that study the youth sport phenomenon, questionnaire items have been developed that have been tested for their validity (e.g., competitive anxiety and competency motivation). Constructs are identified and the amount of variance is accounted for through statistical methods. These types of “tested” questions are currently not available to the researcher who studies the attitudes of parents in youth sports.

The third disadvantage of survey research is the potential problem of sample bias based on the number of individuals responding to the questionnaire. The response rate, or the percentage of individuals who complete and return the questionnaire, may or may not reflect the attitudes of the entire sample. For example, Skubic (1956) had a 58.6% response rate with her questionnaire. The results of this research are unable to provide the researcher or the research community with any information on the attitudes of the 41.4% of the sample who chose not to respond.

It is not the intent here to criticize survey research, as it has proven beneficial in helping sport scientists to recognize the priorities parents place on selected youth sport issues. Instead, one might question if this method of investigating parental attitudes gives the coaching curriculum developers a thorough understanding of parent concerns. Are there issues that parents are not being asked to respond to in these questionnaires? Are there issues that are not reflective in the current literature?

The exception to this methodological approach to studying parental attitudes is the interview approach used by Orlick and Botterill (1975). In their book, Every Kid Can Win, they provide actual excerpts from interviews with parents regarding their child's sports participation. Based on what they describe as "countless interviews as a counselor, as a coach, as a researcher" (p. 57), they were able to examine parental issues at a level beyond what can be done in survey research. For example, when asked if there was anything that they dislike about sports, one parent replied,

Yes. The attitude is you must win...win...win...That I don't like. I don't like it when it's so competitive that it spoils it. The kids are made to feel that it's so darned important that nothing else exists...and that's not true...it's just for the fun of the game...and if they lose, well better-luck-next-time type deal. They shouldn't be forced to feel bad about it...or that they're not up to standard or that they're inadequate in some way (p. 87).

This approach has been extremely helpful in getting the knowledge base beyond *what* parents feel to *why* they feel the way they do. It allows the researcher to examine the

meaning behind the answer rather than having to deduce what that meaning might be. When examining attitudes of people we know relatively little about, it is an extremely useful approach in an effort to gain insight and understanding of their feelings.

If we have this information from proven researchers in the field, why study it further? First, the Orlick and Botterill (1975) study is only one study that has examined parental attitudes through an interview format. No single study can provide definitive understanding in any one area. Second, it should be recognized that the interviews that were conducted by Orlick and Botterill were done in Canada as opposed to the United States. Although a common boundary is shared with the neighbors to the north, Canadian parents may or may not share the same philosophies about youth sport as American parents. Given societal differences, sport organizational structuring, and popularity of various sports, one might question if these parents would share the same values as American parents.

A third concern with the Orlick and Botterill (1975) study as well as the Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports (1978) is the timeliness of their findings. Have parental attitudes changed in the last 18 years? Do parents in the 1990's continue to "approve of the manner in which coaches perform their duties" (Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978)? Do today's youth league coaches continue to "not allow all participants to participate, stress winning too much, and frequently argue with players, parents, and officials" (Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978) as they were perceived to do in 1978? Coaches in Orlick and Botterill's (1975) study felt characteristics of the age-group coached, communication, and motivation should receive only superficial emphasis in coaches' education where parents preferred in-depth emphasis. Does that hold true for today's parents?

I would propose that during that time span a number of changes have taken place in the youth sport scene to warrant further investigation. Some examples might include the increase in single parent homes, the greater possibility of both parents working outside the home, the greater involvement of girls in the youth sport setting, the earlier ages at which children enter sport programs, the increase in popularity of certain sports (e.g., soccer), and the greater emphasis on winning at all levels. Although the work of Orlick and Botterill (1975) has provided tremendous insight into parent attitudes toward sport, it appears there is a need to reexamine parental issues in the United States in the 1990's.

A final question that must be asked is, does it really matter what parents think? Can they provide meaningful information for coaches' education curriculum designers? Some might argue that parents are not knowledgeable enough about youth sport issues to be able to contribute significantly to curriculum content. I would hypothesize that *at some level* these individuals have a sense of what works and what does not work, of what feels right to them about the programs in which their children participate and what does not feel right. For example, a parent may not know the term "pre competitive anxiety" but may be able to express a concern for his/her child being unable to sleep the night before a contest. The intent is not to compare parental attitudes to the already defined issues in youth sport; instead, the purpose is to investigate what *they* believe the issues to be from *their* perspective.

Others might argue that parents play a supportive role in the youth sport experience and are secondary actors compared to the coach/athlete dyad. From this perspective, parents' attitudes are simply not as important as those of either coaches or participants. This way of thinking, however, is not consistent with the "primary family of sport" (or "athletic triangle") depicted in Figure 3. Both Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1988) and Smith, Smoll and Smith (1989) suggest that each member of

these interactive groups plays a role in the youth sport experience. If their perception is accurate, it is important to investigate the attitudes of parents in greater depth.

Summary

The preceding discussion has outlined several important issues in the development of coaches' education programming in the youth sport setting. First, coaches' education programs have been designed as an outgrowth of research conducted in the field. Second, these programs have been developed with primary concern for the needs of coaches and players. Finally, research designed to examine the attitudes and values of parents may provide new insights into coaches' education curricula. At the very least, it may affirm that what is currently practiced meets the needs of all members of the athletic triangle.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore parents' attitudes and beliefs regarding their child's sport experience in baseball or softball. Because of the nature of the study, the qualitative method of focus group interviewing was used to collect data relevant to the question. This chapter will provide background on the qualitative style of inquiry and the focus group interview technique. In addition, the procedure used to collect data will be outlined, subjects will be described, and analysis of data techniques will be explained.

The Qualitative Style of Inquiry

The qualitative approach to research is one that views the world (and attempts to understand it) from a different perspective than its quantitative counterpart. These contrasting paradigms are often viewed as dichotomous, with the quantitative approach described as experimental, empirical, positivistic, and statistical, and with qualitative methodologies termed as naturalistic, ethnographic, descriptive, and phenomenological (See Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, for a thorough review of these styles.) Both represent research paradigms that provide researchers a framework to investigate human behavior much as social schemes help us all to organize a very complex world.

Historically, most of the research done in the social sciences was patterned after the quantitative paradigm of the natural sciences (Patton, 1990). Although the complexity of human behavior does not always lend itself to the study of isolated variables, this quantitative approach provided credibility to the findings of those studying human behavior. In recent years, however, greater attention has been given to the qualitative style as not only legitimate but as a necessary approach to selected research pursuits.

Scholars have argued and will continue to argue the merits of the two approaches. The primary question for the researcher is not (and should not be) which approach is better, but rather which approach is most appropriate to address the question driving the study. As Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (1987) suggest, "Ideology or personal preference in epistemology does not make it possible to fit round methods into square questions" (p. 89).

The question that guided this study dealt with parents' attitudes toward what coaches need to know in coaching their child. What should the relationship be like between coach and child? What rights and responsibilities does the coach have in the child's sport experience? What aspects of the sport experience should be emphasized by the coach? What do parents see their role to be?

Simply stating these questions may not lead the reader immediately to the conclusion that a qualitative method of inquiry is an appropriate approach to the investigation. As stated, these questions could be addressed by a variety of methodologies. The underlying issue in the selection of the research approach goes beyond the actual question itself. Rather, the focus must be on the *intent* of the question and the kind of data the researcher believes is most appropriate to understand the inherent issues.

The discussion below expands on the intent of this study by listing and explaining various characteristics of qualitative research and how each relates specifically to this investigation. The list is not all inclusive; instead, it focuses on those characteristics germane to the method of inquiry selected for this study. An excellent review of the nature of qualitative research can be found in Bogdan and Biklen (1982); Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (1987); and Patton (1990).

Theory Generation Versus Theory Testing

The qualitative approach is often used when little is known about a phenomenon. Use of qualitative methods can provide researchers with a foundation on which ultimately to build theory through a better understanding of individual or group behavior within a particular context. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state, "The qualitative researcher plans to use part of the study to learn what the important questions are. He or she does not assume that enough is known to recognize important concerns before undertaking the research " (p. 29).

The review of literature on parent attitude in the youth sport setting presented earlier in this discussion emphasized the point that research attention toward this member of the athletic triangle has been minimal. Literature abounds with the problems associated with parents in youth sports as well as strategies to address these problems, but little has been done to *understand* the parent's role in the youth sport setting from the parent's perspective. Because this is a relatively unexplored area in the field of youth sport, it seemed logical to explore it initially by examining the parent perspective through their own eyes rather than through the testing of formalized theory within that context.

Depth Versus Breadth

An advantage of the qualitative approach is that its nature directs the researcher to understand and describe a particular phenomenon in great depth. If the intent is to understand *what* an individual's attitude might be on a given topic, there are numerous quantitative methods that afford the researcher access to that information. If, however, the intent is to understand *what leads the individual to believe that way*, the qualitative approach is the appropriate choice. Qualitative methods are designed to address the contextual and cultural ramifications of human behavior. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggest,

Qualitative researchers in education can continually be found asking questions of the people they are learning from to discover what *they* are experiencing, how *they* interpret their experiences, and how they themselves structure the social world in which they live. (p. 30)

The intent of this study was to explore the *why's* of parent attitude in order to understand better their role in the child's athletic experience. With the exception of Orlick and Botterill's (1975) research on parent attitudes where interviews with parents were the primary focus, little research had been conducted to investigate the underlying issues that lead parents to the attitudes they might have. The goal of this investigation was to examine not only the beliefs of parents, but also the processes that lead them to those beliefs.

Inductive Versus Deductive

The collection of raw data through qualitative means leads the researcher to make assertions relating to the respondent's attitudes. This inductive approach is consistent with the philosophical paradigm of qualitative research. As Patton (1990) suggests,

Qualitative methods are particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery, and inductive logic...the research attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomenon or setting under study. Inductive analysis begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns. (p. 44)

The flexibility of the qualitative approach was important to this study. A basic tenet of qualitative research is that the focus may change (from slightly to dramatically) during the course of data collection. Because attitudes of parents in youth sport have gone relatively unexplored, it was important to have this kind of flexibility during the study.

To summarize, the nature and purpose of this study dictated the qualitative approach. The purpose was to understand in some depth how parents made sense of their role in the youth sport setting, what they believed the coach is responsible for in

providing a positive experience for their child, and how that experience might be improved. This could only be accomplished by attempting to understand the parent's world from their perspective.

The Interview Approach

Procedures used in data collection will be addressed later in this chapter, but prior to that discussion it is important to provide some background on the selection of the group interview as the methodological tool for this study. Given the myriad of qualitative options available to the researcher (from participant observation to open-ended interviews to review of documents), decisions had to be made.

The subjects of interest to this study were parents of 8-12 year old participants in baseball/softball leagues in a relatively small town in the midwest. Sharing certain characteristics, with the primary one being to have their children participate in a sport setting, these individuals did not necessarily share group membership from a sociological perspective. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) explain,

When we talk about a *group* in an organization as the foci of study, we are using the word sociologically to refer to a collection of people who interact, who identify with each other, and who share expectations about each others' behavior. (p. 60)

Because the intent of this study was to determine parental attitudes and expectations of the sport setting and not to identify which parents form groups in this setting nor to study their interaction, the most appropriate method to address the questions of interest was the open-ended interview. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) make this distinction clear:

Individuals who share a particular trait, but do not form groups, can be subjects in a qualitative study, but interviewing is usually a better approach here than participant observation. What they share will emerge more clearly when you individually solicit their perspectives rather than observe their activities. (p. 60)

The interview format of inquiry provides the researcher the opportunity to focus on relatively specific issues germane to the goals of the study. Interviews provide opportunities to examine the participants' perspectives as well as explore their rationale for certain attitudes and values. As in any method used in research, there are inherent disadvantages to the interview approach. Guidelines to address these concerns will be discussed in the following sections. In addition, the interview format and design will be addressed with particular attention to selection of participants, interview strategies and logistics of data collection.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviewing was introduced as a method in social science research in the late 1930's. The emergence of this technique was based on concerns about excessive interviewer control and limitations of predetermined, closed-ended questions of more traditional methods. This methodology remained popular throughout the 1940's (Krueger, 1988). In the last 30 years, however, focus groups have been used extensively in marketing research with little application in the social sciences. According to Krueger (1988), the evolution of the focus group interview technique and qualitative methods in general was delayed because of a "preoccupation with quantitative procedures, assumptions about the nature of reality, and a societal tendency to believe in numbers" (p. 21). As in other qualitative methods, its usefulness has been "rediscovered" in recent years and it is currently a widely-used research tool in the social sciences (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

The focus group interview is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. As Patton (1990) suggests, it is not a discussion and it has a clear purpose and agenda. Its purpose is to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. Size of the group typically ranges from

6 to 10 participants (Krueger, 1988; Patton, 1990) who share at least one common characteristic important to the study.

In this study, the common characteristic of the subjects was that they were parents of children participating in a summer sport league. They were selected and placed in groups according to this criteria with efforts to place individuals in groups where they did not know any of the other participants. Familiarity with other members of the group is not necessarily reason to eliminate subjects, but it can lead to what Patton (1990) refers to as "unexpected diversions" where "conflicts may arise, power struggles may be played out, and status differences may become a factor" (p. 336).

The focus group interview technique was selected because of its inherent advantages in this type of research. First, it provides for efficient collection of data where a number of subjects can be interviewed in about the same amount of time as a single subject interview. Second, focus groups allow respondents to react to and build upon the responses of other group members. This synergistic effect of the group setting may result in the production of data or ideas that might not have been uncovered in individual interviews (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). As Patton (1990) suggests, this group interaction provides checks and balances on individual attitudes and perceptions that tend to weed out false or extreme views.

Much like the single-subject interview, focus group interviewing allows the interviewer to interact directly with the respondents. This process provides for clarification of responses, for follow-up questions, and for probing responses (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The format allows the interviewer not only to listen and record verbal data, but also to observe nonverbal responses that can be beneficial in putting the spoken word in its proper context. Finally, interviewing provides great flexibility to the researcher. The facilitator has the freedom to examine an issue in as much

depth as necessary to elicit data that sufficiently explains the attitudes of the respondents.

As with any research method, there are inherent disadvantages and drawbacks to the focus group interview approach. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) summarize these concerns:

1. The small numbers of respondents that participate even in several different focus groups and the convenience nature of most focus group recruiting practices significantly limit generalization to a larger population. Indeed, persons who are willing to travel to a locale to participate in a one-to two-hour group discussion may be quite different from the population of interest, at least on some dimension, such as compliance or deference.
2. The interaction of respondents with one another and with the researcher has two undesirable effects. First, the responses from members of the group are not independent of one another, which restricts the generalizability of results. Second, the results obtained in a focus group may be biased by a very dominant or opinionated member. More reserved group members may be hesitant to talk.
3. The "live" and immediate nature of the interaction may lead a researcher or decision maker to place greater faith in the findings than is actually warranted. There is a certain credibility attached to the opinion of a live respondent that is often not present in statistical summaries.
4. The open-ended nature of responses obtained in focus groups often makes summarization and interpretation of results difficult.
5. The moderator may bias results by knowingly or unknowingly providing cues about what types of responses and answers are desirable. (p. 17)

Conducting Effective Interviews

Because the interview was the central focus of data collection, it is important to outline general guidelines to effective interviewing. A thorough discussion of interview styles and techniques can be found in Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Krueger (1988), Patton (1990) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990). The following list

represents a summary of the principles of interviewing in a group setting presented by these authors:

1. *Explain the purpose and importance of the research project.* Subjects are more likely to participate fully if they believe they can contribute in a meaningful way.
2. *Encourage an atmosphere where the subject is at ease.* It is important that the interviewer create an atmosphere where subjects feel comfortable (both physically and emotionally) and recognize that their responses will be met with a non-judgmental reaction.
3. *Assure subjects of the confidentiality (and the limitations of that confidentiality) of their remarks.* In order for group members to respond openly and honestly to questions, it is necessary that they understand both the interviewer's attitude toward confidentiality and the actual procedures to insure confidentiality throughout data collection and analysis.
4. *Encourage participation by all.* A group interview runs the risk of strong personalities and highly opinionated members controlling the discussion. Transition questions that focus the attention to other members of the group can neutralize this problem.
5. *Avoid questions that can be answered with either "yes" or "no".* Attempts to understand an individual's attitudes and the foundation on which those attitudes were developed are generally ineffective by asking dichotomous questions.
6. *Use probes to understand fully the meaning of the response.* Follow-up questions to a response (e.g., "I'm not sure what you mean.", "Can you explain?", "Would you give us an example?") lead to a greater understanding of the response and less likelihood of misinterpretation. Encourage the participant to elaborate.
7. *Be conscious of your own nonverbal behavior.* It is important to create an environment where subjects feel the interviewer is totally focused and interested in their responses.

Successful interviewing techniques are not automatically achieved by simply taking part in the interview process. Practice and experience are necessary to develop interviewing skills that lead to effective data collection. Stewart and Shamdasani

(1990), however, suggest that good qualitative researchers/moderators of focus groups share certain personal traits. Good moderators:

are genuinely interested in hearing other people's thoughts and feelings, are expressive of their own feelings, are animated and spontaneous, have a sense of humor, are empathetic, admit their own biases, are insightful about people, express thoughts clearly, and are flexible. (p. 79)

Perhaps this is the foundation on which training and experience help to develop effective interviewing techniques.

Interviewer Bias

The preceding discussion outlined the importance of interview management to the effective collection of data. This point cannot be made too strongly for it is the interviewer who controls the validity of the study. As Patton (1990) explains:

Validity in quantitative research depends on careful instrument construction to be sure that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The instrument must then be administered in an appropriate, standardized manner according to prescribed procedures. The focus is on the measuring instrument-- the test items, survey questions or other measurement tools. In qualitative inquiry *the researcher is the instrument*. Validity in qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence and rigor of the person doing fieldwork. (p. 14)

Understanding that the researcher is a key element to the success of the study and that his/her background and experience might impact the tone and direction of data collection, it is important to identify any potential preexisting attitudes of the researcher that might influence the study. This exercise is common in most qualitative research so that the investigator's biases are identified prior to the onset of the study. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggest, elimination of biases in any kind of research is the ultimate goal that is achieved only in degrees, but not in totality. Qualitative research recognizes that investigator bias exists and addresses its potential impact on the study prior to the collection of data. In so doing, the investigator remains aware of

these potential hazards throughout data collection in an effort to reduce/eliminate their impact on the outcome.

The section that follows is a brief autobiography of the researcher with pertinent information relating to background and experience that might affect the study. Also addressed are experiences in conducting qualitative research as well as an overview of expected outcomes of the study.

About the Author

Having spent over 20 years of my life involved in competitive athletics as a participant, I often relate to the drive and determination exhibited by athletes today. From my first organized kickball game at age 7 (girls were not allowed to play anything else in those days) to participating in the finals of a national softball tournament at age 30, I was driven to excel by my own goals. As a youngster, I "hung around" a women's fast pitch team shagging balls and handling the equipment to learn the game in anticipation of the day when I might be able to compete at that level. I would spend hours alone facing the hard wooden garage door throwing a rubber softball into it to improve my skills. I did it not for approval and recognition from others (in fact, many of those in the neighborhood thought I was somewhat strange), but for the sense of achievement I received for "winning" the imaginary challenges I would set for myself.

As I grew older and became involved in organized high school sport, I struggled in a system which at the time allowed girls to compete only in a "modified" way compared to their male counterparts. At that time, boys had interscholastic athletics with league championships, state playoffs and tremendous interest from the local community. Girls' athletics were structured in athletic associations which provided "play days" for participants where girls from one high school would compete against those from another high school in various sports. The philosophy at the time

was one that encouraged interaction and social contact with girls from other schools and downplayed the competitive aspects of participation. Socializing was the goal; competition played a part only to bring the various groups together.

I was able to have my competitive urges satisfied in an avenue outside of school when I became a member of a fast pitch softball team that traveled across three states and into Canada in order to compete. At the time, it was the largest women's major fast pitch league in the country and the challenges suited my needs. I was extremely successful as a player participating in numerous all-star games and receiving All-American status from the Amateur Softball Association, but the recollections that are most meaningful to me were the times when I was called on to perform my best and I was able to do that.

My first teaching position involved coaching basketball and teaching at an elementary school. I expected the same kind of commitment and dedication from my players that I expected from myself. During my tenure there, the team's win-loss percentage improved dramatically and we were considered a success by many parents and fans.

At that same time, I volunteered to coach a fourth and fifth grade girls' softball team. As a young coach who held winning to be extremely important, I was proud of our undefeated record and league championship. Parents were also excited and gave each of us a generous present at season's end.

It was not until years later when I matured as a coach and, perhaps, put winning in some kind of perspective, that I thought back to the young girls on that team that did not share my commitment to excellence. I often remember hitting ground balls to these young girls as hard as I could with the thought that if they could catch them in practice, they would have no problem in a game. Only later did I

wonder how many of them were turned off to the game because of the fear I evoked in them.

My involvement as a coach at the youth sport level has been minimal in the last 14 years during which my energies have been directed more toward coaching and teaching at the college level. I did coach another young girl's softball team in recent years and had the opportunity to coach a T-ball team just this past summer. My philosophy in coaching these young athletes has changed considerably since those early years; winning was of little importance to me. I attempted to create an atmosphere where enjoyment and participation by all were the keys.

I suppose at some level my background impacted the study, but I recognize my change in attitude toward children in sport came about slowly over time as I matured. If anything, it taught me how adults can often play out their own agendas through the participation of children. I believe that is one reason I was so curious about the attitudes of parents and their impact on their child's involvement.

My expectations for the results of this study were quite open-ended. I anticipated the possibility of new issues for coaches' education programs might come about as a result of examining parents' attitudes. I believe parents are an untapped resource in our desire to understand more about the youth sport experience. On the other hand, if parents' expectations paralleled the current curriculum content areas, the very least that could come out of this study was an affirmation of the soundness of current coaches' education programs. In other words, I did not feel it necessary to "make" something out of the data in an effort to be a "contributor" to the body of knowledge in youth sport.

My experiences in research were of value to me throughout this investigation. My course work contributed to my skills in qualitative research through the fieldwork project I did with a young girl's basketball team. Interviews were a part of that

research and my additional course work in interviewing skills in the counseling area was very beneficial to the collection of data in this study.

The Community

The subjects for this study were parents of children participating in summer baseball/softball leagues in a community in the midwest with an approximate population of 17,000. (The pseudonym Dickerson will be used to describe the community throughout this discussion.) The city of Dickerson is the county seat of an area in the midwest where farming and auto manufacturing are primary industries. Fifty-eight percent of the community lives in married-couple families and 28% of the population is made up of children under the age of 18. The vast majority of the population is Caucasian with nearly 12% of Hispanic origin and 2% African American.

The selection of this particular community was based on three factors: One, the community is typical of many small cities in the midwest in its size, demographics, and sport offerings for children. Second, its location was convenient for the researcher to organize and conduct interviews. Third, the researcher knew the recreation director of Dickerson which facilitated entry into the youth sport population.

The Sport Programs

Summer recreational activities take on many forms in Dickerson, but popular to the youngsters in the city are baseball and softball. Leagues are organized in baseball for boys and softball for girls through the Dickerson Parks and Recreation Department. The recreation director, in conjunction with the Dickerson Parks and Recreation Board, assigns fields to the league administrators at the beginning of the season and is responsible for maintaining those fields for play. Administration of the actual programs, however, is conducted by volunteers in each division. These volunteer duties included registration and team placement of participants, scheduling

of fields for practices and games, recruiting of coaches, and calculating league standings.

The Dickerson Baseball Association organizes competitive opportunities in baseball for youngsters ranging in age from 7 to 12. Participants are divided into three groups by age and/or level of ability. The Bunny League typically includes boys in the 7 to 8-year-old range, although some 8-year-olds are assigned to the next higher league based on ability. (Parents of players from the Bunny League were not a part of this study.) The Boys' League acts as a "farm system" for the better skilled Little League. Both the Boys' League and the Little League serve youngsters 8 to 12, but the lesser skilled youngsters (primarily 9-and 10-year-olds) are assigned to the Boys' League. Players in the Boys League can "move up" to the Little League in subsequent years as their skills improve. All players who do not have a team from the previous year are drafted onto various teams during a registration/tryout session held prior to the beginning of the season. Following this session, players are placed on a team and notified of their team affiliation and coach.

League play continues until the third week in July with the exception of Little League. The Little League season concludes early in July at which time the most skilled players are selected to participate on traveling teams that compete against other local Little League teams. This play continues through August. During the time of the study, the Dickerson Baseball Association had 90 players registered in the Bunny League, 170 in the Boys League, and 170 in the Little League.

The Little Girls' Softball League also assigns players to teams as a result of a registration/tryout session. They do not, however, have divisions based on age or skill. Instead, both skilled players and non-skilled players are distributed across the teams of the league in an effort to create a balance of skill and experience. The Little Girls' League had 234 players ranging in age from 8 to 12 participating on 18 teams.

Selection of the Sample

Based on problems that will be discussed below, securing subjects to be part of the study was a challenging process. Efforts to recruit subjects began in the summer of 1993 when initial contact with league organizers was made. League organizers were reluctant to provide the researcher with names and telephone numbers of parents from the registration session because of confidentiality dealing with unlisted telephone numbers. As a result, coaches were given a letter (distributed by the researcher at one of their games) explaining the purpose and procedures of the study (See Appendix E). Enclosed in this packet of information was a letter for the parents that was to be taken home by the players (See Appendix F). Included was a return envelope for parents to submit their form to the researcher expressing their interest to participate.

There were problems associated with this method of distribution. First, the researcher delegated the distribution of parent consent forms to the coaches. It is probably safe to say that not all of the coaches shared the researcher's enthusiasm for the project. How many of the forms actually got distributed and taken home to parents is unknown. There were few subjects identified through this procedure.

The second issue involves the time frame of the study. League play continued until the third week in July. Forms were distributed to coaches in mid June and the researcher was concerned that parents would be reluctant to participate once their child was no longer participating. Many parents schedule vacation time and trips around these summer sports schedules.

As a result, the researcher adopted a different strategy after receiving little response through the coach distribution method. The researcher went to Boys', Girls', and Little League games and talked with parents in the stands about the study. Parents were given the parent letter and encouraged to participate. It was thought that actually meeting the researcher would personalize the experience and dispel some of the

reluctance to participate. This method provided a larger pool of potential subjects and as a result, six interview groups were conducted in the summer of 1993: three from the Girls' League, one from the Boys' League, and two from the Little League.

It was decided to suspend the data collection process after six groups were interviewed until the next summer for three reasons. First, the researcher had nearly exhausted the pool of parents who had expressed interest in participating. Second, parents seemed less enthusiastic about participating after their child had moved from playing baseball/softball to other pursuits. Third, and perhaps most important, the researcher wanted to conduct the interviews when the parents were directly involved in the sport; during a time when they could reflect on the experience of recent events rather than have to rely on memories of months gone by. It was believed that delay would impact the quality of the data.

In the early summer of 1994, the researcher again contacted league organizers to discuss the continuation of data collection. After being informed of the problems of securing subjects the previous summer, the league organizers provided the researcher with team rosters that included players' names and telephone numbers. The rest of the potential subjects were contacted via telephone, told of the nature of the study, and invited to participate. A modified random sampling procedure was used to select parents that were called. Contacts continued until an adequate number of groups were interviewed. In the summer of 1994, seven additional interview groups were conducted: one from the Girls' League, three from the Boys' League, and three from the Little League. Across the two summers, a total of 13 interviews were held. From the summer of 1993 to the summer of 1994, no significant changes were made in the structure of any of these leagues. As a result, the researcher was confident that interview data from the two groups could be combined for analysis.

Selection of Groups

The leagues chosen for this study (Girls', Boys', and Little) were selected for three reasons. First, by including all three leagues, there was an adequate number of subjects to draw from to provide an appropriate number of focus groups. Second, the researcher was curious initially if responses to interview questions would differ from parents whose child was in Boys' League to those who were involved in Little League. Third, the Girls' League was chosen to allow for evaluation of gender differences in parental expectations during data analysis. Although the study was structured to permit these comparisons, the major themes that emerged from the data were not analyzed according to groups. It was determined that these comparisons created a significant extension of the study, and should be postponed to a later date. As a result, Chapter 3 will present the data irrespective of group membership.

The Number of Groups

It was difficult at the onset of a study of this nature to determine the number of focus groups needed to examine parental attitudes adequately. As Patton (1990) suggests, it is not the number of groups that is the issue, but the kind of data that are being collected in subsequent groups that should be the focus. Guidelines suggest that when themes emerge from the first few groups and are repeated in subsequent groups without the introduction of new themes, the issues have been thoroughly examined. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sample selection to the point of "redundancy":

In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion. (p. 202)

While Lincoln and Guba maintain that redundancy is not necessarily related to specific numbers of groups, Krueger (1988) recommends guidelines for the number of sessions to reach redundancy.

c

a

b

A

C

P

m

P

w

A

A

h

of

as

A

the

col

the

Typically, the first two groups provide a considerable amount of new information, but by the third or fourth session, a fair amount may have already been covered...So the suggested rule of thumb is to plan for four groups with similar audiences, but evaluate after the third group. (p. 97)

At the end of three interviews within each group, the researcher felt relatively comfortable that the data had reached a level of redundancy where no new attitudes and ideas would come forth from additional interviews. There were concerns, however, regarding the total number of participants (which will be explained below). As a result, interviews were continued until a total of four had been conducted with Girls' League parents, four with Boys' League parents, and five with Little League parents. Data collection was concluded at this point following the advice of two members of the dissertation committee.

The Size of the Groups

Focus groups generally range from six to ten participants (Krueger, 1988; Patton, 1990). Because the goal of the investigation was to study parental attitudes with relative depth, the goal was to keep the group size at the lower end of that range. As Patton (1990) suggests,

Because the amount of response time to any given question is increased considerably by having a number of people respond, the number of questions that can be asked is limited. (p. 336)

At the same time, however, it is necessary to adjust the number of subjects scheduled higher than the goal to allow for those who do not make it to the session for a variety of reasons. As Steward and Shamdasani (1990) suggest, "A good rule of thumb is to assume that at least two participants will not show up for the interview" (p. 57). As alluded to earlier, there was considerable difficulty getting parents to participate in the study. On average, it took 10-12 telephone calls to find someone who would commit to attending a group session. The night before the interview was to take place, these subjects were called again to remind them of the session. Although groups were

structured to include generally seven to nine subjects, no group actually had more than five people participate. On many occasions, the actual participants of a session were smaller in number than the "no shows."

With this ongoing concern for small numbers in a group, the goal was raised. Still, the numbers in each group were smaller than anticipated or desired. On five different occasions, only one parent attended. After waiting a period of time in hopes that others would follow (but never did), the interview was conducted anyway. Technically, then, these five single interviews were not conducted using the focus group method because there were no other participants to allow for an interactive interview. The data from these interviews are included, however, because they reflect the same major themes as those coming from the focus group structure.

Because group size was typically small, it was decided to extend the number of groups within each league (beyond the four suggested by Krueger) in an attempt to develop a level of confidence that no new data would be omitted. After completing the 13 interviews, the researcher felt certain that the themes generated from the data were sufficiently repeated to reach a level of redundancy.

The Subjects

The subjects consisted of 38 individuals from 13 different focus group interviews. All of the subjects were classified as either parent or step-parent for the child who participated in the sport. Table 3 provides summary information on the subjects.

It was hoped that there would be a relatively equal number of fathers and mothers. Unfortunately, more mothers were willing or able to be a part of the interview process. Mothers made up 71% of the group. Ten of the subjects attended the interview with their spouse.

Table 3

Number of Subjects in Each Focus Group by League Affiliation

League	Interview Session					
Girls' League	#1	#2	#3	#4		Total
Males	2		1	1		4
Females	2	1	2	2		7
Boys' League	#1	#2	#3	#4		
Males		1	1			2
Females	5		2	1		8
Little League	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	
Males	2	1			2	5
Females	3	4	1	1	3	12
Total						38

Although parents attended the interview based on their child's participation in one of the three leagues, 14 of the subjects also had a child (or children) in the other leagues. In addition, six of the parents served as a coach for their child's team. No interview group contained more than one person who coached in these leagues, but some had coached in other sports (e.g., soccer) or programs (e.g., YMCA).

Parents varied in age, number of children, and experience in the sport setting. Although no data were collected regarding the subjects' ages, it was estimated they ranged from 30-50 years old. Parents ranged from having a single child whose only experience in sport was baseball or softball to having a number of children who participated in a variety of sports.

The Site

All interviews were conducted in a 16' X 24' conference room at the local college. The room allowed for a group of six to 10 people to sit comfortably around a

conference table so that participants could "lean forward and be less self-conscious about their bodies" (Krueger, 1988). Subjects were positioned so that they could make eye contact easily with all group members. The room had few distractions and was relatively free of images that might evoke inhibitions or reactions from the participants (such as rooms in police stations or churches might). It was carpeted and fairly well insulated from nearby noise. Ample parking was nearby and problems were minimal in locating the site.

Recording the Interview

All but one focus group was audio taped. Because microphones tend to inhibit some individuals, a single PZM microphone was located in the center of the table. This type of microphone allows for recording audio signals in an 180 degree arc. The microphone led to a recorder with micro-cassette capabilities that facilitated transcription.

The session was also video-taped with a single stationary camera positioned so that the entire group could be seen. The video recording was used to (a) match interview data to the correct subject once the interview was transcribed, (b) act as a second source of audio data if the cassette recorder malfunctioned (which happened in one of the interviews), and (c) provide audio data when there were lapses in the audio tape (e.g., at the end of one side of the tape).

Interview Procedures

Upon entering the conference room, subjects were asked to identify themselves at a registration table and congregate in that part of the room that has lounge type chairs. There were sodas and light snacks there and they were encouraged to make themselves comfortable until the interview began. Once all members had arrived, subjects were instructed to take their place around the table. All subjects were given

name tags identifying them by first name only. As Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) suggest, this provides a basis for "building greater rapport among group members" (p. 88).

Once all members were seated, the researcher introduced herself and briefly explained the purpose and procedures for the interview session. This introduction to the session encompassed the following concepts: (a) introduction of the researcher, (b) explanation of the research project, (c) explanation that questions are designed to elicit parent opinion and that there are no right or wrong answers, (d) review of procedures to maintain confidentiality throughout collection and analysis of data, (e) overview of the process of posing the questions and the manner in which subjects are requested to respond, and (f) completion of the consent form.

A script explaining this introduction to the interview is provided in Appendix G. Following the introduction and fielding of any questions that were posed, subjects were asked to read and sign the consent form (Appendix H). Individuals were given the opportunity to discontinue their participation in the project at that time if they chose to. None of the subjects chose to do this.

The researcher asked all of the subjects in turn to provide their first name, the age of their child, how long he/she has been involved in organized sport (either in this league or others) and any other children who might be involved in sport. This provided background information on each respondent as well as gave each subject an opportunity to go through the process of the question/answer format.

Interviews ranged in length from 50 minutes (one of the single interviews) to 2 hours and 20 minutes (one of the Little League groups of five). After the introductory round, the researcher asked the interview questions in order with numerous probes and follow-up questions.

At the conclusion of the interview, subjects were given a Follow-up Form (see Appendix I) and a return envelope to take with them. This form was designed to elicit any further comment from the subject which did not come to mind during the interview or opinions that the subject did not want to share in the group setting. Four subjects returned these forms with additional comments. These were attached to the transcribed data.

Within two days after the interview, the researcher sent out hand written thank you notes to each participant. A free pass to one of the local college's athletic events was included as a sign of appreciation for their participation. Subjects were not aware they would receive this pass.

Confidentiality

Issues involving confidentiality are accounted for in the letter distributed to parents (Appendix F), the script introducing the group interview (Appendix G), as well as the consent form (Appendix H). To summarize these procedures, subjects were informed of their rights as part of a research project. They were known only by first names during the interview process and were given pseudonyms during the transcription of data so that their identities would not be revealed.

The Interview Questions

Open-ended questions were selected to use in this study. In an investigation such as this one that deals with attitudes, and the thoughts that lead to the formation of these attitudes, it is recommended that open-ended questions be employed to allow the respondent "the opportunity to structure an answer in any of several dimensions" (Krueger, 1988, p. 60).

Similarly, the funnel approach to questioning (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) begins with broad questions followed by gradually more narrow questions. This style is generally most appropriate for "topics that are considered fairly sensitive, and where

the interviewees are quite knowledgeable but need more time and freedom to express themselves in the beginning of the interview before they can be probed effectively" (p. 76). With these factors in mind, the questions listed below were designed to provide a comfortable interview style where respondents could share openly their opinions relating to their child's sport experience, while at the same time move from the general to the specific elements of this research.

1. What do you believe are the positive outcomes of your child's participation in sport?
2. What do you believe are the negative outcomes of your child's participation in sport?
3. How would you typify the "ideal" coach for your child?
4. If you were responsible for training coaches that might work with your child, what kinds of things would you want them to know?

The few number of questions allowed for adequate discussion and probing without feeling that there was a need to "rush" an answer to get to the next question.

As Krueger (1988) suggests,

The series of questions used in a focused interview or questioning route look deceptively simple. Indeed, novice interviewers tend to include far too many questions in the questioning route. Regularly, a focused interview will include less than ten questions and often around five or six total. If these questions were asked in an individual interview, the respondent could probably tell you everything known about the questions in just a few minutes. When these questions are placed in a group environment, however, the discussion can last for several hours (p. 59).

The initial questions (regarding positives and negatives) were important in that they encouraged the subjects to begin thinking about their child's sport experience from a somewhat global perspective, while at the same time, provided a background or framework for analysis of their responses to the remaining questions. Overlap in

responses to questions was common and expected. Data analysis was challenging because of this overlap, but the overlap provided greater confidence in the development of themes.

Analysis of the Data

All interviews were transcribed and subjects' pseudonyms assigned to corresponding comments. Line numbers were identified in each interview transcript. Because data collection extended over such a long period of time, actual data analysis did not begin until all of the interviews were completed and transcribed.

Hand written descriptors were then assigned to individual comments or segments of data in each interview. No effort was made at this point to consolidate these descriptors into categories. Rather, the intent was to read the passage and identify it with a word or phrase that described it without restricting the reader's reaction. Once this had been done to all transcribed data, a list of 193 descriptors had been created. Many of these descriptors were duplicates. For example, "teamwork" was written six different times.

The next step was to group these descriptors into meaningful categories. For example, the descriptors of "camaraderie", "team", "team concept", "team support each other", and "teamwork" combined to form the category of "teamwork." This process was continued with all descriptors until 42 categories were created. Table 4 presents the frequencies of subjects' comments relating to these categories of descriptors. A total of 340 remarks made by the subjects were coded into categories. Other comments made during the interviews unrelated to data collection were not included. The reader will note some duplications in the data presented in Table 4 (e.g., role model). These were combined during theme development.

In order to sort the data so that categories from different interview groups could be combined and a composite of all the data created, each data segment was

Table 4

Frequency of Coded Data

#	descriptor	freq.	#	descriptor	freq.	#	descriptor	freq.
<u>Positives</u>			<u>Negatives</u>			<u>Ideal Coach</u>		
1.	fun	16	11.	coach yelling	22	21.	fairness	34
2.	discipline	17	12.	impt. of winning	23	22.	role model	15
3.	friends	9	13.	coach cursing	1	23.	developmental	10
4.	exercise	4	14.	structure	9	24.	impt. of winning	10
5.	respect	4	15.	role model	3	25.	know. of game	8
6.	winning=fun	1	16.	rejection	2	26.	positive	35
7.	self-concept	17				27.	comm w/parent	12
8.	keep kids busy	5				28.	game vs. kids	3
9.	teamwork	10						
10.	sportsmanship	5						
	total	88		total	60		total	127
<u>Coach's Education</u>			<u>League Structure</u>			<u>Parent</u>		
31.	rules	2	41.	draft	6	51.	interfere coach	8
32.	role model	2	42.	parent as coach	2	52.	feed.to coach	8
33.	developmental	8	43.	season structure	2	53.	parent support	2
34.	motivation/psy.	2	44.	admin. structure	3	54.	par. guidelines	4
35.	positive	3	45.	good coaches	1			
36.	know. of game	3						
37.	game vs. kids	3						
38.	impt. of winning	3						
39.	sportsmanship	3						
	total	29		total	14		total	22

assigned a number corresponding to category of interest. For example, a segment of the data in the Girls' League Interview #1 that related to the category of "fun" was assigned a code of "01-gl 1-999-0006." The first part describes the number assigned to the category of "fun" (01), the second part identifies the interview group (gl 1), and the third part states the line number from the transcribed data of that interview (999-0006).

Once sorted, the data were analyzed again to determine if and how these categories of descriptors merged together to formulate major themes. The themes and subthemes that will be discussed at length in Chapter 3 are an outgrowth of the categories of descriptors presented above. The development of these themes was influenced by two criteria: (a) the frequency of recurring issues and ideas on the part of the subjects, and (b) the consistency of the subjects' attitudes toward these issues.

Table 5 summarizes the frequency of interview comments which reflected specific themes or subthemes. (The raw data from which these themes emerged can be found in Appendix J). Although frequency was important in the development of themes, the second criteria (consistency of the subjects' attitudes toward the issues) played an integral part in theme development as well. In other words, comments that demonstrated similar attitudes from the subjects but were few in number could become a theme. The deciding factor was often the conviction of the subjects' beliefs as evidenced by the power demonstrated in their words.

Parents were relatively clear in their beliefs regarding what the sport experience should and should not be like for their child. The phrase "parents' expectations" emerged as the overarching theme that tied together the more specific themes represented in Table 5. The data presented in the following chapter will demonstrate that the subjects not only had feelings and attitudes regarding their child's participation, but *expected* certain things from the experience.

Table 5

Frequency of Data by Themes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Sub theme</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	
		<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>Category Total</u>
Technical expectations of coach			25
	Rules	(7)	
	Skill development	(13)	
	Strategy	(5)	
Interpersonal expectations of coach			115
	Communicative style	(50)	
	Positive vs. negative	(22)	
	Supportive vs. berative	(18)	
	Corrective vs. critical	(10)	
	Understanding the child	(41)	
	Patience and compassion	(6)	
	Developmental range	(20)	
	Individual approach	(15)	
	Role model	(24)	
Managerial expectations of coach			111
	Fairness	(35)	
	Emphasis on winning	(35)	
	Atmosphere	(41)	
	Fun	(15)	
	Discipline	(16)	
	Teamwork	(10)	
Expectations of parent			37
	Commitment to program	(10)	
	Parent involvement	(5)	
	Communication with coach	(22)	
	Grand Total	288	288

A Final Note

Conducting the interviews proved to be an enlightening and rewarding experience for the researcher. The parents who chose to be a part of this study were, for the most part, cooperative, receptive, responsive, and articulate during the interviews. With the exception of two interviews (a single interview where the subject's only agenda was that the coach had been unfair to her child, and a second interview where a parent/coach stated early in the interview that he could explain to each of the subjects why the Dickerson Baseball Association organized the program the way it did), the researcher assessed that parents felt free to state their concerns in the interview setting. In fact, two groups were difficult to restrict to the promised range in interview length as they were anxious to continue their discussion.

A second point that should be made at this time regards the analysis of data. A second researcher (or group of researchers) reading through the data from this study might have interpreted the emerging themes in a different way. That is quite common in this kind of research. However, every effort has been made in data analysis to remain objective and detached in the formulation of themes.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the questions asked during the interview process do not directly reflect the research questions. As mentioned earlier, certain interview questions were designed to get the subjects into a "mind set" of discussing their child's experience in sport. The questions regarding the ideal coach and coaches' education programs better reflect the concerns of this study. However, a great deal of meaningful data from the earlier questions will be presented in the following chapter as that data serve to support these questions.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Introduction

Parents in the study had certain expectations of the coach which included technical, interpersonal, and managerial skills. Subjects discussed the need for coaches to be knowledgeable in the technical aspects of the game: (a) an understanding of the rules, (b) the knowledge to teach the fundamental skills of the game, and (c) the ability to teach and execute effective strategy. Issues revolving around the coach's ability to relate to the players emerged from the subjects' interpersonal expectations of the coach. These included: (a) the coach's communicative style with the athletes, (b) the coach's understanding of the developmental needs of the athletes, and (c) the coach's ability to act as a role model for the athletes. Finally, parents articulated specific managerial expectations of the coach including (a) the coach's ability to be fair to all team members, (b) the emphasis the coach placed on winning, and (c) the general atmosphere created by the coach.

The second higher order theme that emerged from the data involved the parents' expectations of parents. Parents' primary concerns about themselves and their peers related to the role they felt parents should play in the child's participation. This involved (a) the impact the parent has on the commitment of the child to the program; (b) the multiple roles of teacher-coach-parent the parent fulfills during the experience; and, (c) the role the parent plays in the coach-parent relationship.

Themes of expectations regarding the coach and the parent are presented in Figure 4. Interview data that reflect these themes will be presented sequentially in the sections that follow. Direct citations will be labeled by league: Girls' (gl), Boys' (bl),

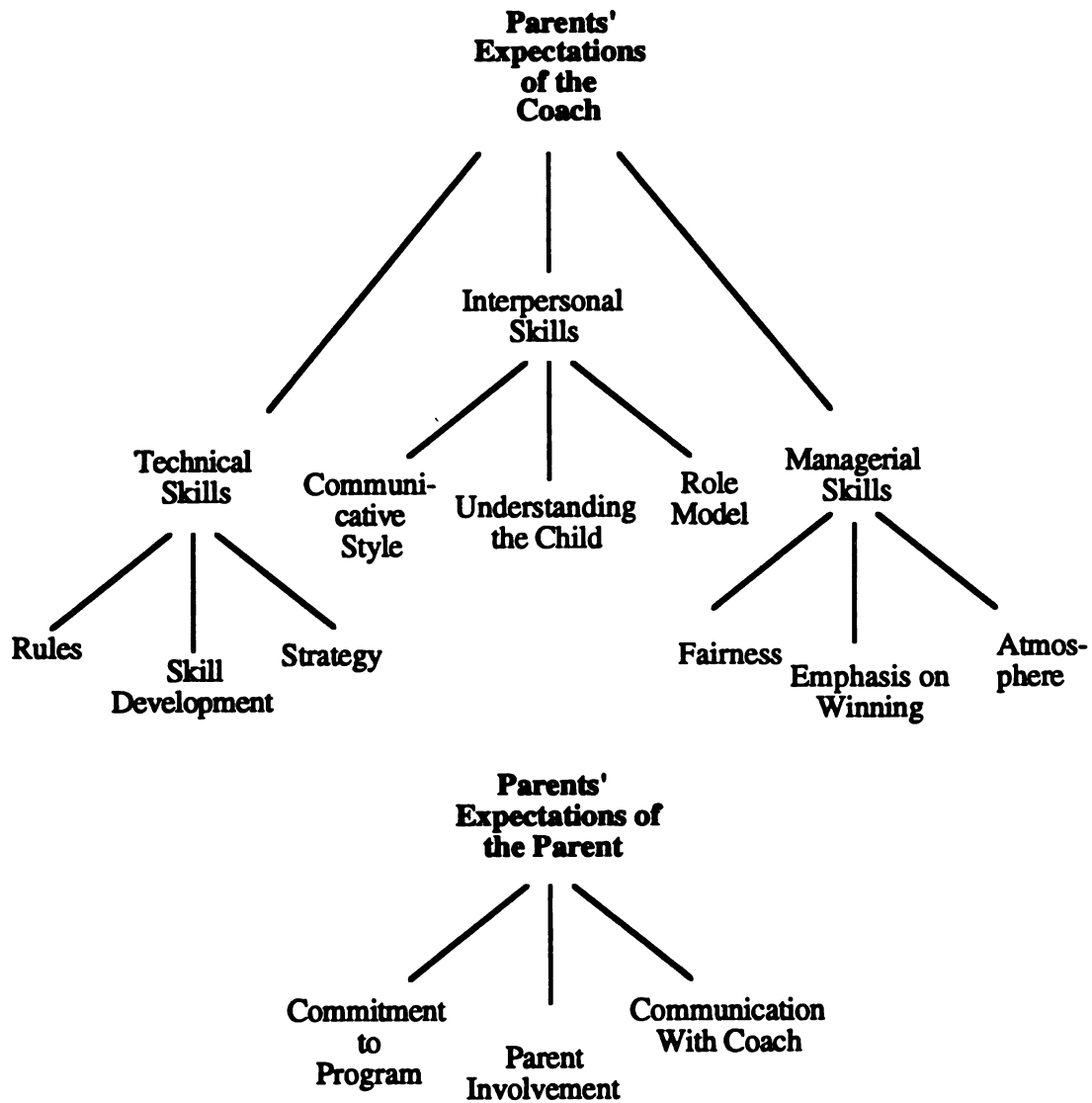


Figure 4. Major themes and subthemes.

and Little (11); interview session number within league (1-5); and line number of the transcribed data.

Technical Expectations

"The rules, the fundamentals and I think that's all a coach at that level really needs."
(gl 1, 690-691)

Parents' expectations of coaches regarding the knowledge of the game fell into three categories as depicted in Figure 5 (indicated by bold lines): rules, skill development, and strategy. Data that reflect these expectations are presented below. The reader will note that these parents' comments often integrated the three components.

Knowledge of the Rules

An integral part of any sport is the mutual understanding of the rules of the game. Players, coaches and fans all need to be "on the same page" in their knowledge and interpretation of the rules. Subjects recognized the importance of the coach understanding the rules and being able to convey that knowledge to the players. As one parent noted,

I think they [need to] know the fundamentals of the game. Other than that, as far as the rules or anything like that, I think they [need to] know the rules and the fundamentals. (gl 1, 691-692)

Another parent from the Girls' League stated it this way:

Rules of the game. Be sure they have the basic knowledge of how to throw a ball. Now that's not the rules of the game, how somebody holds the bat, but fundamentals as well as the rules. (gl 3, 264-270)

This conceptualization of the rules and fundamentals of the game as being closely tied together was consistent throughout the data. Although knowledge of the rules was an important factor, it appeared that many parents took for granted that coaches knew the rules. As one Little League mother stated:

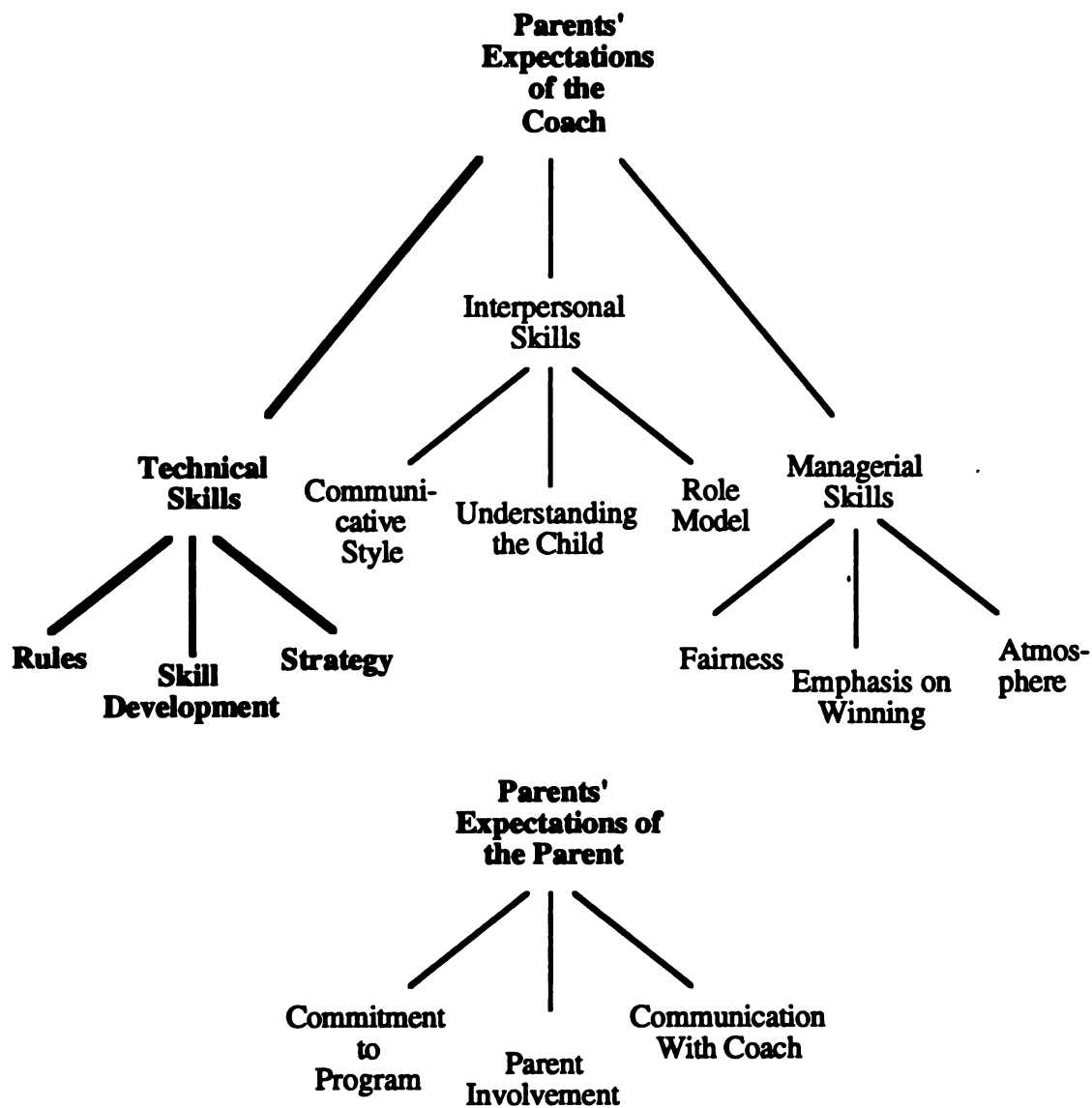


Figure 5. Parents' expectations of coach's technical skills.

When I think about the coach, I don't think about the rules and stuff, because most of them do know that. (l1 5, 549-550)

Skill Development

The coach's ability to teach the fundamentals of the game to his/her players was an integral part of the parents' expectations. Again, the term "fundamentals" had a broad meaning for some parents, incorporating both skill development and strategy. For many parents, however, this ability to teach skills was critical to the successful coach.

Parents suggested that the coach's role of teacher was an important aspect of the player's experience. In order to be effective, the coach needed to know the basic skills and be able to teach them. As a Girls' League mother pointed out,

I think it's very important that the coach knows something about the game. Now some might disagree, but I think at the younger age, it's less important to know the basics inside and out. You have to have a basic knowledge, you have to be patient and kind and all that. But as they grow, and they're still in it at age 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, then they're more serious about it. Then they gotta start getting the skills. It's terrible for a coach of 13 or 14 year olds to be out there and not know the rules of the game. You see some excellent athletes get stymied because they didn't have the proper coaching. They've got the ability, but don't know what to do. It's very important, even at the younger age, that they be taught the basic skills. (gl 3, 239-248)

One of the Boys' League fathers, who explained that he had never been involved in organized sport as a child and had little background in baseball, suggested that teaching the basic skills was not a monumental task:

They'd have to be able to teach. I think that's a given. They have to be able to teach the basic skills at least. Which really isn't that hard. I didn't know anything about teaching kids how to play baseball. I've just picked it up here and there. Trying to help him, I pick up things from coaches, coaches on other teams, baseball on television. He's a pitcher. Obviously, during a ball game they're always talking about the pitcher. They talk a lot about his mechanics. Really, it's pretty simple. So really it's not that difficult to teach the basic skills at least. Anybody who took their time and tried to learn those things could do it. (bl 3, 366-378)

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

Similarly, a mother from the Girls' League suggested that for some players, learning the game may take the form of very simple kinds of things:

You get an eight-year old whose parents weren't athletic and you have to start from the beginning. Which glove do I put the hand on? Which way do I run if I hit the ball? We've had little girls that ran to third base. (gl 1, 633-637)

A Little League father who had coached at the Little League level for four years analyzed this element of teaching from a developmental perspective:

The ideal coach would take each individual kid and take them from where they're at, individually, and improve on whatever they're working with. If they could do that, because you have a very broad range of ability and physical development in those kids, and you can take each one exactly where they're at and work with them to improve that or to encourage that kid at that ability to improve, that to me is what an ideal coach would do. I think that would be probably my number one emphasis. (ll 1, 1249-1258)

Parents seemed to be consistently concerned about the coach's ability to teach the game. Although some suggested that the "basics" were relatively easy to acquire and teach, others (as in the Little League father/coach) recognized that to individualize this instruction may present challenges for the coach. The implications of the coach's approach and teaching style will be addressed in the section on parents' interpersonal expectations of the coach.

Strategy

In addition to the coach's responsibility to teach skills, he/she is also expected by parents to teach the necessary strategies of the game. Where executing a steal might be defined as a skill, knowing *when* to steal requires an understanding of strategy. In games as complicated as baseball and softball, these strategies are numerous and vary in their degree of sophistication. As a Girls' League mother pointed out, some strategies that the coach needs to teach are fairly simple. In describing her daughter's coach this year, she said,

m
ad
be
a
Li

the
in t
A E
inc
Lea

Yeah. He's a great coach. And he played ball when he was in high school and he knows the fundamentals and you can see it where the girls are much better as far as they don't throw behind the runner so much. Even something little like that you see all the time, throwing behind the runner. Those girls normally try to throw it to be base ahead of the runners. Just little things like that. (gl 1-689-691)

As the skill level increases, the coach's knowledge and use of strategy becomes more sophisticated. Because the Boys' League acts as a feeder system for the more advanced Little League, it is reasonable to assume that higher level strategies would be employed at the Little League level. Some parents, however, suggested that even at the Little League level, teaching the strategies of the game could be simplified. A Little League mother of an All-Star player summed up what should be taught this way:

You know, at this level, teaching the basics of the game. The basic rules, the basic of the ball's hit here and you're playing here and this is where you throw it. There seems to be so much finesse, rather than the basic learning of the game [and] the rules. Like they're all Barry Bonds at age 10. What ever happened to "Okay shortstop, you get the ball and there's a guy on first and a guy on third, where does that ball go?" (ll 2-461-468)

While some parents were concerned about the teaching of "finesse" plays at the Little League level, an even larger group was troubled about the use of strategies in the Boys' League that might conflict with the learning of the game's fundamentals. A Boys' League mother expressed concerns regarding the use of strategies at that level interfering with her son's development in preparation for the more competitive Little League:

Teach them the basics, don't try and stretch the rules. There's a lot of walks in the league and a lot of base stealing. That's basically how they get their runs in. I mean there aren't very many hits (laughs). And some of these coaches. They would get walked to first and then they'd steal second right away. You know, they just kinda take advantage and they're not really teaching their kids anything, because once they get up to Little League, they're not going to be able to do that. They're just doing it to try to get the runs in. (bl 4, 398-404)

A
b

e
in
ki
S

ke
at
st
fu

at
si
T

is
vi
Du
e
is

Another parent expressed a similar concern as she discussed some of the coaches she had seen at the Boys' League level:

Winning can be important later on. I've noticed on a lot of the teams, they teach the kids to steal the bases like crazy, so they win the game with a lot of runs in by steals rather than working on hitting. There's two teams in particular like that. Our coach didn't like our kids to steal like crazy. A couple of times after being up against these teams our kids were like "If we're gonna win, I guess we're gonna have to do this too", which we didn't like to see our kids do. Especially when we were up against a team that wasn't playing that way. (bl 3, 564-573)

The impact of strategies employed by coaches for the sake of winning will be explored in greater depth in the section on managerial expectations of the coach. It is important to point out here, however, that parents have certain expectations for the kinds of strategies taught to their children at the various levels.

Synthesis of the Data

The data presented above suggest that parents expect coaches to be knowledgeable about the game to the extent that they (a) understand the rules, (b) are able to teach the basic skills involved in the game, and (c) employ reasonable strategies. These expectations appear as reasonable of the coach in that teaching the fundamentals of the game is a common understanding of the coach's role.

Perhaps of greater interest and more germane to this study is the manner in which parents expressed these concerns. Remember, the format of this study was to ask the subjects open-ended questions such as, "What is the ideal coach like?" Therefore, parents were not prompted to discuss specific issues such as rules. The fact that parents did not point this out as integral to the coach's being effective, as evidenced by the lack of data to that effect, might suggest one of two things. First, it could suggest that parents find that knowledge of the rules is a relatively minor part of the coach's role. Parents could believe that the rules simply are not that important at this level.

Secondly, it could suggest that knowing and understanding the rules is a "given." As one subject pointed out, "Most of them do know that" (ll 5, 549-550). Perhaps understanding the rules of the game is a "non-issue" to parents simply because most of the coaches in these leagues demonstrate competency in this area. It is interesting to point out, however, that if a coach does not know the rules, it is certainly noticed. This is illustrated by the statement, "It's terrible for a coach ...to be out there and not know the rules of the game" (gl 3, 239-248).

Issues of skill development seem related to teaching the most fundamental skills. Parents suggest that sophisticated knowledge of teaching techniques and skill analysis is not a critical component of the coach's role (bl 3, 366-378). This may suggest that parents have a pretty good understanding of the skills necessary at this level. It is important to note here, however, that parents expressed great concern about the *manner* in which skills were taught. Data to support this assertion will be presented in depth in the next section that discusses parents' expectations of the way in which coaches communicate with their athletes.

Finally, parents focused on their disagreement with certain strategies used by coaches. It is not surprising to find parents who disagree with the way in which a coach might manipulate his/her players for the purpose of winning. After all, this "armchair quarterback" approach is a common phenomenon in the world of sport. What is interesting, however, is the rationale for the criticism.

The data presented above suggest that parents have clear feelings regarding what approach should be taken at this level. The comments of the two Boys' League parents imply that parents of children at the lower level are concerned about their children being taught the necessary skills needed when they advance to the higher level. As a result, one might get the impression from their statements that winning at the Boys' League is secondary to skill development.

Both these comments from the Boys' League parents, as well as the Little League parent's concern for the teaching of "finesse" skills, hint at a concern from parents about the coach's emphasis on winning at this level (bl 4, 398-404; bl 3, 564-573; ll 2, 461-468). Because of the large amount of data related to this issue, it will be discussed at great length in the section on managerial expectations of the coach. It is important to recognize here, however, that (a) parents are quite aware of strategies used by the coach; and (b) they have specific concerns about the use of these strategies.

To put these issues regarding technical expectations into some kind of perspective relative to the rest of the data, it should be pointed out that there were fewer comments regarding this particular sub theme than any other. Twenty-five statements emerged to create this group of expectations as compared to 115 for interpersonal expectations and 111 for managerial expectations. Although the frequencies were only one criterion in theme development, the reader may also recognize that data presented in the interpersonal and managerial expectations of the coach tend to be stated with more emotion and power.

Interpersonal Expectations

"But I see a good coach is one who tells the kids, 'Good job' and not putting the kids down. Focusing more on the kids as individuals and team players. To me, the boys are the most important thing out there, not the game."
(ll 5, 547-550)

Parents interviewed in this study had strong feelings regarding how they expected coaches to relate to their children. These interpersonal expectations were categorized in three ways as presented in Figure 6: (a) the way in which the coach should communicate with the players (communicative style), (b) the knowledge and expectations the coach should have of children of this age (developmental understanding), and (c) the coach's understanding of how he/she serves as a role

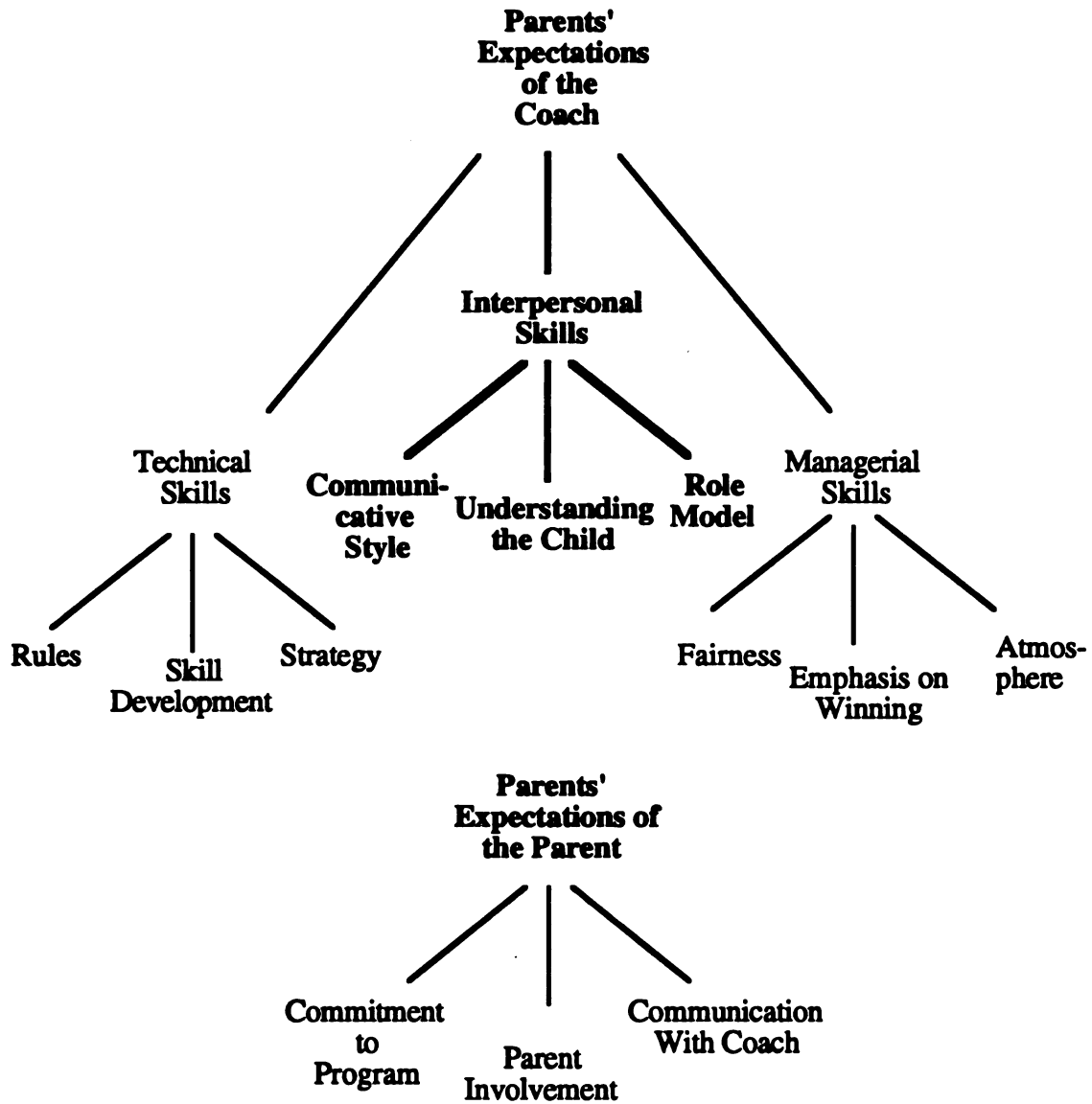


Figure 6. Parents' expectations of coach's interpersonal skills.

model for young players (role model). Fifty comments created the data set for communicative style, 41 for developmental understanding, and 24 for role model.

Parents typically took one of two approaches to expressing their concerns in these areas. Many would describe coaches who exhibited the kind of attributes they desired, while others would summarize negative behavior that typified the kind of coach they did not want for their child. Both approaches provide the reader with an understanding of the importance these parents placed on the coach's interpersonal skills.

Communicative Style

**"...and when the kids are doing good, let them know they're doing good. There are some coaches where the only time they even talk to a kid is when he makes a mistake. The rest of the time, you don't know they're out there"
(b1 2, 304-307)**

Individuals who assume any kind of role that involves working with others are often evaluated on their effectiveness in that role by their ability to communicate. A coach's communication skills are critical in such areas as teaching the skills of the game, implementing strategies, managing players and other coaches, and conducting efficient and effective practices. Although these actions were noted by subjects as important to competent coaching, the vast majority of the data reflects a concern for the manner in which a coach communicates individually with the athlete. For these parents, the focus of communication skills involved a general atmosphere of positive versus negative, supportive versus berative, and correction versus criticism. The impact of the coach's communication style in these areas had a direct impact on the parents' evaluation of the coach's effectiveness.

Positive versus negative. The need for the coach to be positive with his/her players was an underlying theme throughout the interview data. Parents noted that the positive approach was not only preferable from their perspective, but an important aspect of a child's experience. One of the Girls' League fathers put it this way:

I think that they have to be as positive as they possibly can in as many situations as they can. I mean like even if they lose, you've gotta find something good about what they did in losing. You know. You have to want to make them come out the next day and play again. Because if they don't want to come and play, you don't have anybody to coach. So, you know, they have to want to be there and know that, "Hey he did notice that I didn't strike out but I didn't get called out, but I swung it was a good pitch." You know, because man, that's the name of the game over there. There are some little girls that they're not gonna hit the ball right away, but you know learning to judge where it's at is a big step to them, so. Positive. Positive. I think they have to be positive all the time. (gl 1, 375-386)

Another Girls' League parent suggested that instilling a positive attitude in the players was part of the coach's responsibility. Below she describes her child's coach and how the coach interacted with the players.

Fortunately, as I said before, the one lady we had is so excellent ... She was the head coach of our team and then she quit for a while and now her youngest daughter is playing so she is back and she is so, well she's a teacher so she is around kids a lot. She is very, very good at what she does because she always finds something positive. She is always encouraging and she wouldn't think of making somebody so upset that they would cry. I think that's important. You have to care about your kids because they're not winning for you. You want them to win for themselves. Are you gonna get a head coaching job someplace if you go 14-0 in a little girls softball league? Give me a break. The best thing you want your coach to do is instill a positive attitude in your little girls for themselves. I think that's vital. (gl 1, 529-548)

A third parent concurred on the importance of being positive:

The quality that I see in the coach that we have now I think is just wonderful is it's a positive quality. He has a tendency to focus on the positive of the girls, and maybe when she isn't up to par he will say, "You could have done better, I know you can do better than that." And most of the times the girls will agree with him when it comes to that. He works at problem solving. A coach is a positive problem solver. (gl 2, 224-233)

Finally, a Boy's League parent discussed the importance of the coach taking a positive approach relating to skill development. In an exchange with the interviewer, the parent suggested that the coach impacts the player's feeling of him/herself:

S...They have to know each player, in a sense so that they can react to each player and really build on each player to know from the beginning of the season to the end of the season. Like, my son, quite frankly, is a lousy ballplayer. I mean he is, but he's out there for fun, that's the whole ball game. So I'm hoping the coach will look at him saying he's improved with his batting, he's improved, rather than degrading him and putting him down and so forth. Actually, I saw him get worse this year, rather than better, because he realized he was bad for the first time in his life, and the other kids put him down, and one of the coaches put him down, not all the coaches. It was really a hard experience for him to learn.

L...So how would the ideal coach handle your son?

S...When he [coach] sees him doing something good and doing something better, then make sure he knows that he knows he's doing something better. (bl 1, 556-567)

Not all parents, however, suggested that being positive was the only approach to take. A Boys' League mother implied that there is a time for praise and a time for other methods:

And on a coach, I don't expect it to be all praise. If they are screwin' up, if they're just standing there looking at the stars or just daydreaming or something, that coach needs to get on their cases, no questions about it. I don't believe that it should be completely 100 percent praise. If they need to get after them, then they should have that liberty to get after them and scold them and get their heads screwed on straight and remind them why they're out there. They want to go out as a team and do their best. (bl 1, 668-674)

Another father concurred in his attitude toward this balance between positive and negative:

For a lot of the coaches, this is like the World Series. There are coaches that swear at kids and really tend to rip their ass, and I really don't think that's right. I think if a kid messes up, he's not doing what he's suppose to do, it's OK to scold him, but you're not playing the World Series. You know these are kids that are 10 to 12 years old and it's really hard for a parent to sit there and let them scream at your kid. (bl 2, 6774)

The data above provide clear examples of the importance of the positive approach for these parents. Even the latter comments do not imply that praise is inappropriate; rather, that praise alone may not be suitable in every situation. The reader will find further support for this positive approach in the sections that follow. The difference, however, is that data reported below tend to focus more on the negative approaches that should be avoided by coaches as opposed to the model that coaches should follow. As suggested earlier, this was one method used by the subjects to describe coaching behavior.

Supportive versus berative. Interestingly, parents used the words *berate* and *belittle* frequently to describe coaches' inappropriate communication with athletes. The dictionary definition of *berate* is "to rebuke or scold angrily"; *belittle* is "to represent or speak of as contemptibly small or unimportant" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992). The data imply that "scolding angrily" and "speaking of as small or unimportant" do not represent the communicative style of choice by the parents. In describing her son's experience with one of his coaches, a mother explained,

I...Is it just personality and the approach of coaches?
 S...It was the personality because it was solid screaming and yelling and he would not give the positive reinforcement. He would always do the negative, in fact, he belittled the boys. The ones that came up from Boys' league and went up to Little League, he belittled them. Just really put them down. You know, even at practices and stuff, he'd say "He's gonna be my home-run kid." Well, he was a home run hitter this year, no questions asked, but he expected this and he played in a couple of the games and he [the coach] blamed. He got up there was two outs and he struck out and the coach stood there and yelled and screamed and told him he was the cause of them losing that game; no one was to blame but him. He was in tears and he's never walked away in tears in any sort of a sport like that. And he refused their treat and everything, then the coach calmed him down. That shouldn't happen. (b1 1, 262-272)

Another parent expressed his concerns this way:

Yeah, but I believe there's a proper discipline and an improper discipline. If I have a 9 year old and I tell him he's a dirty little asshole for missing it and you see that happen a lot. And nothing upsets me more. Even if it's not my child. No way does a coach talk to a child that way. Absolutely not. (bl 2-239-243)

Some parents described not only concern for what was said or done to their children, but the importance of the social context in which the behavior occurred. For them, it appeared that public display of the coach's displeasure made matters worse for their child:

The degrading; the coaches making them feel so belittled, like they are nothing. I've seen coaches get right out there in front of everybody, I mean the crowd, the other players, their teammates, and point out exactly all the things they did wrong, instead of what they could have done differently to change the situation and make it better. (bl 1, 139-144)

A Little League mother shared similar coaching behavior she had witnessed and the impact it had on her as the parent of the child being berated:

What would I rather have had for him? I would rather he had not have this experience. I would rather have him not sworn at in front of the crowd. I would rather that he was not humiliated and berated; which not only he. He was not the only one, but he was the only one that was mine. (ll 2, 281-285)

A Little League mother explained how her coach was different than the others when communicating with the players on the team. Again, there was reference to dealing with the child individually instead of in front of others.

You never hear him say a swear word, you never hear him berate a child in front of parents or other people. He's the type, if he wants to talk to you individually, he takes you away from it and does not make a big deal in front of anybody. I really can't give a negative about him, so I think we have found a great one. (ll 2, 268-271)

Finally, one of the parents suggested that the treatment her son received affected him physically as well as mentally. The exchange between two subjects in a Boys' League interview group is presented below.

S 1 .At the beginning of the ball year, my son, my oldest son, was drafted and put up a league, and thank goodness, his last year's coach, he had ball players quit and he needed kids, and he requested Jeff to come back down to play. I am very, very glad he did. I talked to our coach now, because this coach [he had before he was asked to be traded] did nothing for three-hour practice on a Saturday. He did nothing but scream and yell at these kids and belittled them, and he [my son] lost all self-confidence in himself playing ball. He felt that he wasn't worth anything, and he was one of the better ones. I'm not saying that as a parent..

S 2...No, he was..

S 1...And you know, it really wore on him. I never had problems with his asthma during the summer. He has asthma and it acts up during the fall and the winter. He, on Saturday practices, especially after he'd scream and stuff, I'd always have to give him his medication because he'd go into an asthma attack. When he gets upset, that's one of the triggers, right there he told me. He's the type of child, he's all sports. He's the type that says "Mom, you don't say nothing, you don't butt in, you let me handle it" And he says, "Mom will you please talk to the coach?" And right there I knew that something had to be done. He said, "Mom, it's just not fun," and I said, "Honey that's why you're in ball, it's first of all for fun. If it's not fun, what's the use of going through it." I talked to the coach and it didn't do any good.

In all of the interviews, subjects were asked to share what coaches at this level should be taught in coaches' education programs. In response to this question, one of the fathers suggested,

Of course there are obvious things. You shouldn't yell at them, you shouldn't berate them. For some people it doesn't seem obvious I know. For some coaches, it's not obvious. For those few, it should be strongly emphasized. At least that could be a starting point.. "don't do this, this and this." Don't tear them down ever. Look for something to compliment them. (b1 3, 528-534)

These data present a strong case that these subjects believe a coaching style that includes berating and belittling players is unacceptable and unjustified. Concerns appear to revolve around two issues. One, there is evidence to suggest that communicating with a child in that way may negatively impact the child's experience (through the eyes of the parent). Certainly, the data here do not reflect the child's

perception. The importance of the concerns expressed by parents is that they *perceive* this action to be negatively affecting their child's experience.

Two, there appears to be a continuum of severity in this kind of negative coaching behavior. Where it may be inappropriate to berate a child individually (as in a private conference between coach and player), it appears that to berate a child in front of others (e.g., team members, fans, parents) is unacceptable. Again, the social context in which the behavior occurs plays a role in the perceived severity of the misconduct.

Corrective versus critical. In order to improve in any skill, the learner must make adjustments in the motor pattern from an ineffective style to an efficient and effective style. A major player in this teaching/learning experience is the coach. Earlier, it was suggested that parents expect their children to learn the game and improve their ability to perform fundamental skills. In order for the coach to be instrumental in the process, he/she must be able to correct errors. The coach's ability to correct the performer's errors but, at the same time to motivate the player to want to change the ineffective style, is critical to this process of improvement.

The data imply that many of the subjects distinguished between correction of errors and criticism. The issue focuses not on what specifically was said to the child, but the communicative style used in making the correction. A Little League father interpreted the effect of the coach's approach in this way:

You notice the boy's expectation is different when he's met with a positive criticism. He responds to that like, "Well, OK. I'm gonna go do it," and attempts to make the change. Whereas, when it comes across to him that wasn't good enough, he doesn't deal with that well. It becomes a self-fulfilling thing. If the coach doesn't expect the kid to get a hit, he won't. Where if I expect you to hit, he will. It's real subtle. You don't see a big difference in tone and how he's done it. It does have to do with tone. It has to do with, "Well, you didn't do this good" or maybe he wasn't complimented on what he did do. (ll 1, 655-665)

A Girls' League mother echoed this sentiment of positive criticism:

Kids pick up right away whether you know what you're doing, too. They [coaches] need to be knowledgeable. The kids have to have confidence in them that when they tell them something, it's probably the right thing. A kid will bust his butt for you for just a little bit of encouragement or praise. I think a coach has to know how to give constructive criticism. You can correct someone without reaming them. (gl 1, 528-536)

Another parent suggested that there needs to be a balance between correction of errors and recognition when something is done correctly:

The girls could hear them telling them when they did something wrong, but sometimes they lacked hearing praise when they did it right. There has to be that complete cycle there of being able to correct the errors so that they know what they did wrong and how they can correct it but they also need to be praised when they get it right. I think that would help a lot this year. (gl 1, 493-498)

According to the subjects, this balance between correcting errors and providing encouragement to the athlete appears to be an important component in the coach's strategy for teaching skills. It is interesting to note that parents did not give specific ways in which this should be accomplished, but they felt strongly that this should be done.

In addition to providing guidelines in how coaches should provide constructive criticism, some of the subjects analyzed the complexity of the teaching/learning process. Those who tried to put themselves in the "coach's shoes" recognized how difficult correcting errors in a young athlete's skills can be. One father explained how teaching does not necessarily equate to learning:

[Knowledge is not as important] as it is the ability to communicate that to kids. To get it across to them and to know when they're understanding and know when they're not. Because sometimes kids will go "Yeah, yeah, yeah, just let me hit." You've got to know whether they're getting it or not. You can say something to a kid 100 times and if it doesn't click with that particular kid, it doesn't matter how many times you tell him. If you're saying it in a way that doesn't communicate to him, his mind isn't set up to pick that up, it doesn't matter how many times you tell him. But sometimes somebody else can

come along and say one simple thing or show him one little thing, and the light comes on. That's probably more important than having a great deal of ability or skill. I've seen it in the major leagues. The best players are not necessarily the best coaches. Time and time again, mediocre players become great coaches or great managers not because they have the great skill or knowledge, but because they watch and listen well and they can communicate it in a way that others can understand without making them feel that they're putting them down because people will turn off right off the bat too. (bl 3, 381-402)

Of all the parents who emphasized that the preferred communicative style was positive rather than negative, supportive rather than berative, and corrective rather than critical, only one offered an explanation for coaches communicating in a negative manner. His analysis (although unsupported by other data) provides a different perspective:

I can visualize that happening so many times. Coaches are screaming because they [coaches] know they [players] know what they're [players] supposed to do, but they're confused. Especially the younger girls who have never had the fundamentals. You can't expect them to learn them in one year. So all the coaches can do is stand on the sidelines and scream. (gl 1, 157-162)

It is beyond the scope of this investigation to analyze the motives for coaches interacting with their players in a negative way. Obviously, that would entail looking at some of these same issues from the coaches' perspective rather than the parents' perspective. It is interesting, however, that one parent was able to look at an inappropriate communicative style (screaming) and try to offer an explanation for its occurrence.

Synthesis of the Data

The preceding section supports the notion that the manner in which a coach communicates something to the athlete may be equally important, or of greater importance, than the actual message being conveyed. For the parents of this study, a positive approach in communicating with athletes is not only preferred but expected if the experience is to be beneficial for the child.

It is not surprising that parents would want their children to be involved in an activity where positive communication is the norm. There are some aspects of their expectations, however, that warrant further consideration. First, subjects seem to imply that if a coach communicates with an athlete in a positive manner there is greater likelihood that the child will have a positive experience (gl 1, 529-548; bl 1, 556-567). The following questions might be asked: Does a positive communicative style on the part of the coach correlate positively with satisfaction in playing on the part of the athlete? Is this the single most important factor for player satisfaction, a major component, or simply one piece of the puzzle? From the parent perspective, how critical is this supportive and encouraging environment? The data do not provide an answer to the question, but it might be safe to say that parents would at the least consider it an important piece of the puzzle.

Secondly, there is not consistent agreement that the positive approach should be used in all situations. Where some parents took the stand that the positive approach should always be used (gl 1, 375-386), others suggested that there is a time for praising and a time for scolding (bl 1, 668-674). Because these comments were pulled from separate interviews, it was not possible to probe further to determine if they meant the same thing but said it differently, or whether there was fundamental disagreement on the manner in which coaches should communicate with children.

Finally, and perhaps of greatest interest, is the issue of coaches communicating in a way that berates or belittles the child. This is especially noteworthy because of the consistency in the terminology used by the subjects (from separate interview groups) and the intensity of emotion apparent in their remarks. Both terms (i.e., berating, belittling) used to describe this communicative style denote an attitude that goes beyond being negative or non-supportive. Rather, the terms might imply a form of malice in the communicative style. At the very least, to use words that mean "to

scold angrily" or "to speak of as contemptibly small or unimportant" in describing coaches' behavior suggests that the parents might see the communication going well beyond scolding and more toward anger, disappointment, or dislike for their child. Perhaps it is not surprising that parents share these concerns with such emotion (e.g., "he wasn't the only child, but he was the only one that was mine") (ll 2, 281-285).

Related to the terminology used to describe the behavior is the issue relating to the social context in which the behavior occurred. Subjects seemed especially concerned when the child was berated in front of others instead of privately (bl 1, 139-144). Perhaps parents find this behavior so troublesome because of a concern for the feelings of the child. Many of us have been rebuked in front of others and can easily remember the feeling of humiliation that accompanied the act. It seems reasonable that parents might worry how the child will react to such behavior and what impact it might have on his/her self-esteem. This issue of the coach's impact on the child's self-esteem will be addressed in greater depth in the section on managerial expectations, but the reader may want to consider the likelihood of the child's self-esteem being linked to communicative style as well.

A second possibility to explain the emotional reaction to this form of coaching behavior might revolve around the parent's inherent need to protect the child. From birth, parents act to shield their child from dangers. Perhaps the verbal abuse is seen as a danger by the parent because it is a situation in which the parent is unable to actively intervene. The data do not reflect nor suggest this, but it might be seen as a reasonable explanation.

Understanding the Child

**"Listen to your instincts, know your kids and be there for your kids. Great coaches have always loved their teams and loved their kids. They have treated them just like their own."
(11 1, 1027-1030)**

In order to teach, coach, or lead people, an individual must have an understanding of the group in order to be effective. Because the group is made up of individuals, the leader must also be effective in knowing individual differences and treating group members accordingly. These two components of successful coaching were identified as important by the parents. In the section that follows, parents' expectations relating to the coach's ability to understand children of this age will be investigated. Issues focusing on the coach's understanding and philosophy of working with a group will be addressed in the next major section on managerial expectations.

The parents expressed concern in four different yet related areas regarding the coach's ability to understand the individual child. From their perspective, coaches should (a) be patient and compassionate with the child, (b) have an understanding of the developmental range of the athletes, (c) work with each child from an individual approach, and (d) serve in the role of both parent and friend.

Patience and compassion. Parents recognized that patience and compassion were important tools used by successful coaches. The coach's ability to accept mistakes in performance and at the same time recognize improvement are important components of the coach's effectiveness. The importance of the positive approach (recognition of improvement) has been discussed in earlier sections. The focus here is on the coach's ability to show patience and compassion when things do not "go as planned." A Girls' League mother stated it this way:

I'd want them to be a little compassionate. There's nothing worse than some girl, I mean every kid, boy or girl or whatever, they go out there and they try their hardest. They give 100 percent. Sometimes they fail and sometimes they succeed. If they fail, that coach should have a little compassion for them.

And a lot of time you see coaches just blow up. I think they should be honest with kids, straight forward. I think honesty and compassion are two that I would like to see. As far as winning and losing, you like to win, but you're still, it's out there it's a sport, if you win you win if you lose you lose. I don't really think as far as getting a coach who is hell and brimstone you know who wants to go out there and win, win, win. I don't really care for that. I want to see a coach who wants his kids, who does his best in how he's training the kids, take them out there and put them on the fields and encourage them and do everything he can, but be understanding too. (gl 1, 451- 467)

Another parent from the Girls' League agreed:

I guess just to be patient with the kids. Encourage them, like you were saying earlier. I know with Karen's team last year, they never won a game. They got a new coach this year, and it's amazing, like a total turnaround. I don't know what he did like in the huddle and stuff, but I guess just patient and encouragement. Her coach this year was the ideal coach to me. (gl 3, 211-215)

A Boys' League father recognized that patience is not exclusive to the mistakes made by the players. He emphasized that coaches being patient with their own mistakes as well:

The ideal coach in my book is a guy or a woman that earns the kids' respect. Not out of fear. He has the patience to sit down and talk with the kids and to admit he's made a mistake. And all the kids on that team know they're all human. And even though the coach is an older guy and he's been around, he's not afraid to admit he's made a mistake. They'll listen to him and they'll respect him. (bl 2, 280-286)

Finally, one parent discussed how working with young players who never played the game before requires great patience on the part of the coach. She stated, "I think you need someone who knows the game and has patience, with a capital P" (gl 1, 635-637).

Understanding developmental range. Although patience and compassion were identified as important to effective coaching, the parents suggested that many of the interpersonal skills used by the coach should be impacted by the developmental level of the child. Simply put, coaches should be aware of developmental differences in

children and have expectations of the athlete according to those differences. Some parents recognized these differences from a physical standpoint.

For one thing, when Sean went to the first practice (after the draft), there he is eight years old practicing with these kids that could have been close to 13. That's a big difference. Going from Bunny League having the coach pitch to you to having these fast balls thrown at you by a 13 year old. That's tough. (bl 4, 155-159)

Others reported that physical stature was only a part of the developmental process.

Like, my son is going to be 13. He'd kill me if he ever heard me say this, but his body is being over-run by hormones and as the hormones come in the brain cells are leaving. And I'm watching it before my very eyes, you can see them drifting out of his earlobe. The coaches need to realize what level these kids are at from nine to 12 years old. So he's gonna have some of these 12-year-olds that are going through puberty and are sometimes a little bit more awkward, that have had a huge growing spurt, like I said before, they almost have got to be teachers. They have to learn what's going on up here as well as the rules of the game. They need to know that some of these 12-year-olds and 11-year-olds have got a little problem that may seem menial at nine years old is just a huge proportion at 12, and that maybe they can't come and talk to mom and dad about it because it's too embarrassing, only because that's the way their mind is at that point. These coaches may be confronted with some of these things. (bl 1, 724-735)

The following discussion between three Little League mothers was typical of the concerns expressed by parents:

S 1.. Maybe a little psychological lesson as to what 9, 10, and 11 and 12 year old children are feeling and thinking.
 S 2.. And what they're capable of as a child.
 S 3.. Right. First of all, I don't agree with the way the system is set up. I don't agree with nine [year olds] being with 12 [year olds]. I think you have a totally different set of expectations and physical makeup that a coach could understand. At 10 years old. These are the things that bother 10-year-old kids. They're worried if they have to wear glasses, they're worried if they don't have the same kind of glove that the other kids on the team have. To know a little about the makeup of the child at that age would be helpful. (ll 2, 680-689)

While some parents identified specific aspects of child development (i.e., physical, emotional, psychological), others approached developmental concerns from

a broader perspective. As they provided guidelines for coaches during the interviews, many suggested that coaches needed to remember that their athletes were "just kids."

Just that they're kids. They really are kids. It's different like in high school, like Mike said. The older they get, up in college, because they're grown, they're adults. This age group from five, six up to, I don't know, even some of the younger teenagers, like 13. They're kids. Coaches should just remember that they are. And they're gonna mess up. And they're gonna forget. Or they're gonna not do what they're told. To me, that's part of being a coach and part of being a parent. And it's hard sometimes because they want them to do good. (gl 3, 342-348)

A Boys' League father concurred as he stated,

One thing, and I don't know how you teach it, is just to remember that they are kids. These are not professional athletes that are earning a salary. I mean they're kids. They're just learning. Try and teach them. Don't get mad at them if they do something wrong. They're just learning. I don't know how you teach somebody to be like that. But I think that's real important, because I think they don't always understand that. (bl 4, 454-461)

Because all of these aspects of understanding the child are so interrelated, it is not surprising that one parent discussed them in that vein. A Little League father proposed that this understanding is especially important since it comes at the child's earliest experience with the game. In providing guidelines for coaches' education programs, he suggested,

I wish in this camp that we would send the coaches to, that they would learn some compassion and some understanding that they're working with eight and nine and ten and 11 year old children and not with grown men who have gone through how many years of playing the game. This is the kid's beginning with baseball. (ll 5, 670-674)

Similarly, a Girls' League mother, who happens to be a nurse, felt that the training she had received regarding developmental differences was important information for coaches as well.

And I would say probably most important, and this is one that might be lacking in a lot of coaches in this area, and this again comes from my nursing background, developmental stages of children at this age. There's not a great understanding of that,

especially if you haven't dealt with it. Just because you are a parent of a child doesn't mean that you are excellent at it and maybe that needs to be something that is gone over, the developmental [aspects] of this age group that you're dealing with. Because some things are impossible for kids at that age and some things are just unhealthy for kids at that age...If they [players] want to be involved in sports later on they [coaches] can really do damage if you're not knowledgeable about those aspects and that comes from my nursing. But I do believe that there's a development there that is different from the development of a high school versus a college [player] and I think you have to deal with that and I think they have to be knowledgeable about that. (gl 2, 470-494)

Perhaps it is not surprising that these parents concentrated on the importance of the coach understanding developmental differences in children and finding the patience and compassion to accompany these differences. This emphasis on understanding the child with his/her concomitant unique characteristics becomes the focus of the following section discussing individual differences.

The individual approach. As the parents discussed how coaches should be able to deal with each athlete as an individual, they once again approached it from different perspectives. While some suggested coaches must look at individual differences in performance of skill, others stressed the emotional uniqueness of children and how children respond differently to forms of communication. A third point involved an understanding of different motivational styles.

A Boys' League father stressed that the athlete should have some latitude in terms of the way he/she executes a particular skill. His concern involving skill development was expressed this way:

I think I would want the person who coaches to look at each child as an individual. He might show him to do something this way, but it might work in a different way and it might work better. I think the coach should look at that. He shouldn't say, "Well, you're not doing it my way. Do it my way or don't do it at all." No, I don't agree with that. I think he should look at each child as an individual and how they do something whether it works or not. (bl 3, 455-460)

The significance that this father placed on allowing athletes to explore their own style in executing skills was not mentioned by other parents in that way. At great lengths, this father explained the rationale behind his point. It appeared there was a disagreement between the effectiveness of different pitching styles between his son and the boy's coach. The description was quite lengthy, but the father summarized the problem below:

I think everybody is an individual and should be looked upon that way and not just a group. Like here's my group of pitchers, you all do it this way. No. It doesn't work for everybody the same way. What made me think of that was Bobby's pitching. He pitched his way and the coach didn't like it. And he went back and he said "Bobby, pitch this way, you can do it." Well Bobby couldn't pitch for squat like that. He pitched perfect his way and the coach just didn't like it. And he was afraid to tell the coach it wasn't working. Like "Why, what's he gonna do?" "Well, he won't let me play if I tell him" and it's like, "Bobby, just tell him." (bl 3, 471-485)

From this single incident, it is difficult to determine if individual differences in skill execution are really that important to parents. The lack of supporting evidence makes the assertion weak at best. It is included here, however, because the reader must be careful to separate a single parent's individual agenda from a more widespread agreement among parents that would serve as guidelines for coaches in this league. In other parts of the interview, this particular parent shared at length his knowledge and interest in pitching. It should be pointed out that the parent also disagreed with having Bobby's pitching style changed.

Consensus on the part of parents was certainly greater regarding the need for coaches to treat children as individuals from both emotional and psychological perspectives. In regards to motivation, one mother suggested,

Development and I think self-esteem and motivation have to be huge, too, because each child is motivated by different things and so coaches pretty much have to have the psychology too so that's part of it too. The team effort and how to get the most out of the people that you've got is part of it too. (gl 2, 501-506)

Much of the discussion revolved around treating individuals differently based on the fact that there was such variance in age among the athletes on any particular team. A father and coach explained how similar performance by two players might be received differently by him based on the age of the two athletes:

...the same play could happen, whether it's in any sport, could happen to an older, experienced player the same as it could with a younger, less experienced player. But on one side of it you give the kid an "atta boy" because he tried for it, but the other kid might not have come up with but you knew he didn't give you 100 percent on that effort. The same result but the means were different. That's what I found to be sometimes the most challenging thing is to separate those two incidents with those two separate individuals and handle them individually, not as a group, because if you lean on the nine-year old the same way you're leaning on the twelve-year old, the nine-year old is going to be the worser [sic] for it, because they're going to be afraid to make the mistake....The twelve year olds, those older players I expect good judgment from. Not perfect, but good judgment. That's a fine line, that's a difficult line and as coaches and as teachers we cross the line back and forth once in a while. They're not perfect and the whole thing of it is that through time you'll gain that. (ll 1, 729-759)

Similar sentiments were expressed and reported in the section above relating to developmental differences. The two sections compliment each other in that data presented in both sections acknowledge that differences are dramatic within this age range of children. As a result, each child must be handled differently.

Although much of the discussion revolves around children of varying ages and the different ways in which coaches should interact with them, few parents focused on the uniqueness of children of the same age. One father, however, who is also a coach, maintained that this too was an important consideration for the coach. He noted,

There's definitely a maturity in 5 and 6 year olds. One out of a hundred you might be able to scream at or be aggressive and actually get the results...which is what the coach is after. They're after them to perform like they know they can perform. As they grow older and kids mature and become tougher mentally, sometimes they need a little more push to kick in that gear that this is serious, I don't know if serious is the right word,

whatever I am doing to the best of my ability and all that, but I need to try and that's the thing. Sometimes a kid needs a sterner word, but it varies from child to child and the older they get, the higher percentage of children that can accept further direction to the point that when you get into high school and college, the vast majority can take the sterner direction without having some kind of an emotional problem, but still there's different coaching. Different strokes for different folks and that's all the way up through college. In the age group we are talking about, we feel the kids are in it to enjoy the sport and they're not going to enjoy the sport, typically, if they're being belittled. The coach could have the best intentions in the world but that's not the way to handle kids at that age. (gl 3, 133-149)

Parents have proposed that coaches need to understand the characteristics of children at different ages and be able to adapt their treatment of these children accordingly. This is especially true from a psychological and emotional standpoint. In addition, there appears to be some evidence that coaches must also be aware of the differences in children at the same age. Each must be treated according to his/her unique qualities.

Coach as parent or friend. As important as this is, however, the parents implied that another critical piece to the puzzle is the coach's ability to serve in the role of parent or friend. Coaches should have a genuine concern for the children with whom they work much like a parent would. As the quote that prefaced this section implies, "Great coaches have always loved their teams and loved their kids."

Parents suggested that caring about the players goes beyond practices and games. Coaches need to show an interest in the players as individuals. As one of the parent/coaches stated:

I think from the other side of it, when you begin to become friends with the kids, when you put your hand on their shoulders and you can joke around with them. I'll always ask all kids what their favorite major league team. You try to involve them in association with the kids so you understand, when they have a problem they're coming to you. The last thing you want is for that kid to feel that they can't talk to you. I want my kids to talk to me. (ll 1, 929-938)

A Little League mother from the same interview group agreed:

Communication. Like John says, talking with the kids, finding out a bit about them. It's just not there for practice and doing this and this and this; but conversing with the kids and I think when you do that they are probably more open to talk to you. Anybody is...Show them a little interest. (ll 1, 1214-1218)

Another mother concurred as she described her son's coach:

I think bottom line.. He cares about kids. He wants to win, but he seems to have a mixture of love and paternal instinct for the kids but he also has a way of bringing out the best in them by positive criticism. (ll 2, 246-253)

One of the Boys' League fathers described ideal coaches as those that,

take an interest in the kids. They make sure the kid's got a ride home. They make sure if they can't make it, they'll stop by and pick him up. Those are good coaches. Those are good people. (bl 2, 472-475)

As consistent as the data are in support of the coach caring about the players and getting to know them from a personal standpoint, one parent suggested that being friends with the players was not what she expected from the coach. She associated being the players' friend with possible loss of respect.

So you have to be a friend to them but you also have to keep them under control because there's a lot of the teams this year, not just in soccer, but in baseball that, I think, the coaches are trying to be the kids' best friends and then its like. Our coaches, you always call them 'Mr. So-and-so'. A lot of the teams call the coaches by their first names. I think, at this age, they need to have respect for authority and let them know you're in control but they can still have fun. But you're not going to let them run around and be little crazy rug rats. (ll 3, 332-338)

As a group, these parents suggested that coaches should be aware not only that children at different ages and developmental stages need to be handled differently, but also that children at about the same level are unique in their response to the coach's behavior. Again, parents related this understanding back to the issue of communicative style as they discussed these differences in that context.

In addition, parents emphasized the importance of coaches caring about the athletes much like a parent would. It appears that this group of parents expect coaches to be concerned about the athletes in a way that goes beyond the actual game itself and includes an awareness of the child's interests and issues outside of the game. In short, the coach should care about the child for his/her special qualities that transcend his/her ability to play the game.

Synthesis of the Data

The coach's ability to understand the athlete as an individual appears important to this group of parents. From their perspective, coaches need to (a) show patience and compassion for children as they learn the game and the new skills associated with it, (b) understand that there is a wide range of developmental differences in children on any given team, (c) recognize (as a result of this range) that children need to be viewed and treated as individuals, and (d) care about these individuals as people as well as players.

What does this tell us? Perhaps the underlying theme throughout much of the data in this section and beyond is that these parents view the game as an activity involving only one part of the child's life. The popularity of the sport certainly makes it an integral part of the life of some children, but from the parents' perspective, the experience is one of many in the child's life.

Their focus, then, is the total child. They may be just as concerned about how their child reacts to having to wear glasses as how he/she reacts to striking out in a big game (ll 2, 680-689). They may recognize the changes that have taken place in their child as a result of puberty, understand that it is a difficult time for the child, and pray that the coach will recognize this as well (bl 1, 724-735). Perhaps they see the child as a person all the time, as a ballplayer only part of the time.

From the parents' perspective, then, how would they view the coach in this context? Do good coaches also approach the athlete from the "total child" perspective? Do bad coaches, in the parents' eyes, see the child only as the ballplayer and not as the person? Do coaches enter the season focusing on the opportunity to impact the "total child" or the team?

There is no direct evidence to support this notion. There is, however, an underlying concern on the part of these parents that the coach needs to care about the child aside from his/her athletic ability (ll 1, 1027-1030; ll 1, 1214-1218). From this perspective, it is not surprising that conflicts arise between parents and coaches if parents view the coach as more concerned about the game than the children playing the game (gl 1, 451-467).

The intent here is not to convince the reader of this as a possible explanation of parent/coach conflict. Rather, the question is being asked so that the reader might analyze the remaining data from this framework and see if it fits. This issue will be revisited in the section discussing managerial expectations of the coach.

Role Model

"Last spring before ball season started, my daughter was gonna play t-ball, hadn't played for a couple years. Her brother was out there trying to teach her what to do. He was getting nasty.

Finally I opened up the door and asked what he was doing, "She's just a little girl, she's not going to play like you do." He said, "I'm just talking the way my coach talks."

(ll 5, 799-803)

It has been widely recognized in the institution of sport that coaches serve as role models for their athletes. The level of competition often dictates the perceived responsibilities of the coach. For example, the public may view the responsibilities of the professional coach as a role model quite differently than it would the expectations of the Little League coach. The assumption is that the younger the athlete, the more

the adult in authority impacts the education of the athlete in terms of appropriate behavior.

The parents interviewed in this study recognized the importance of the coach serving in the role of educator and model for appropriate behavior to the young athlete. Their concerns revolved around three different but related concepts. First, they recognized that coaches at this level are important role models. Second, they emphasized appropriate versus inappropriate behavior on the part of the coach that they wanted their children to model. And, third, they implied that the coach as a role model might be of greater importance to some athletes than to others. Each concept will be discussed below.

Parents saw the coach as a role model for their children. How the coach behaved was interpreted as part of the total learning experience. One mother expressed the importance of the adult in authority making an impact on the child's life:

Plus if you ask kids who was your best teacher, or what is one of the people that you idealize or learned a lot from. I know my husband would probably say it's one of his coaches because he respected him. It doesn't even have to be coaches, it could be a band director or choir teacher or your drama or whatever. Any one in authority needs to be aware of the impression they are making on everyone because these people are at a young age. (gl 1, 570-592)

Although parents recognized the importance of the coach's role, they emphasized that the coach should understand it as well. When asked what coaches should be taught in a coaches' education program, one father suggested,

I like what Grace said about the coaches' behavior being the very important thing for all the coaches to realize. They are a role model and kids are looking up to them. Whatever they do kids are going to copy. So act like civilized human beings. (gl 1, 358-362)

Another parent expressed it this way in an interchange with the interviewer about the coach as role model:

S...I think they should know that they're a role model. They're an example. Everything they do they have fourteen little pairs of eyes looking at them. Maybe not all at once, but I can guarantee you, most of the time there is somebody looking at what they're doing. So, I think they need to be aware that what they do is scrutinized all the time. So you have to be an example.

I...Well, what if I never had to be an example?

S...Then you have a problem.

I...Maybe with my own children, but I never had to be an example to another group.

S...Then it's going to be learning experience for you too. As long as you know you're gonna be one. Whether you like it or not. If you're gonna coach, you're gonna be an example. (gl 1, 824-847)

A Little League father confirmed the idea that being a role model is part of the responsibility of coaching.

When you're an instructor, whether it's a Sunday school teacher or an English teacher. There's a certain code of behavior (certainly you know as an educator) that you have to maintain. It doesn't mean that you're that way all the time, that you don't swear in your private home or that you don't smoke or drink. That's not the issue. But in that role, as you take on that garb as a coach or a Sunday school teacher or whatever, you must maintain a certain kind of decorum because that's what you owe them, a certain kind of responsibility. Some coaches have not grasped the meaning of that. I'm not saying that they don't slip off the saddle and don't occasionally lapse, but they regard that as a lapse, and hop back on. (ll 2, 658-667)

Parents expressed concerns about the actual behavior of the coach and its impact on the athlete. As was the case in many of their descriptions of coaching behavior, their emphasis tended to be on the negative; how coaches should not behave as a role model. Below are five descriptions of what these parents perceived as inappropriate:

Because kids at that age are very impressionable and if they see a coach stand around stomping and cussing at one of their players and belittles [them], they think how can that be wrong? (bl 2, 156-158)

I know if the coach swore a lot I would not want my child on that team at all. I'd even go as far as pulling him off the team and getting him a different team. I think the guy's personality and character are important. You know, if he goes out and

drinks or is a woman beater or whatever, I don't care how good he coaches, I don't want him around my son. (bl 3, 427-436)

I think the worst thing they learn is that they can act like the coach. Like, "OK, we're gonna throw the bats and throw the helmets. We're gonna argue every call with the umpire. We're gonna make an idiot out of yourself." These kids are supposed to look up to their coach. They're a person in authority so if they can do it why can't I act like that. So I think if your coach is maintaining a little control your team maintains a little control. To me, that would be a real negative if you had a coach who was a little over zealous. You can see their team act the same way...So I think they need to learn and realize that your kids are learning from you. You're setting an example. (gl 1, 372-382)

S 1...I'd change a lot of things about how they select coaches and who gets to coach and starting off, they shouldn't be able to sit out there and smoke and coach. That drives me nuts.

S 2...They do have to leave the dugout this year; you must have made some progress.

S 1...Before, they could stand out there on the field and puff away. (ll 2, 205-210)

When you see adults acting like that, how are kids supposed to act? That's what I mean by a good role model. Self-control. Not that you should hide your emotion but I don't think that you have to go out of control. That's something that a lot of times is learned at home. That can't be a coach's total responsibility for someone. Some of that comes from the home and from the people they're around. Kids look up to adults. That's where you're at with development...They're still looking for a lot of guidance and positive role models...It's like a hero-type worship for a lot of kids that age. I think it's detrimental to have coaches that do that. It's saying something and if they [the kids] don't have any experience with another coach, that's their impression. (gl 2, 658-676)

The behaviors listed above are similar to those described as inappropriate by parents in earlier sections. The difference here, however, is that parents describe them in the context of coaches acting as a role model for the athletes. These parents seemed convinced that these coaching behaviors created a negative role model for the child.

The third concept discussed by the parents involved the idea that the coach as a role model might be more important for some children than others. Specifically,

children from single parent homes may look to the coach as a role model in a different way. One single mother described it this way:

I didn't realize how important that is because in my situation I'm allowing someone else to give something to my daughter that I can't. That's really quite important; a person that gives her the right attitude about competition and how to go about competing in this world today... There are a lot of single parents these days trying to fill both roles and if you're a single mom you're hoping that, or even a single dad (we have a girl on our team whose mom is deceased), you're looking for someone to fill a hole that you can't fill. It's a shame that you can't be a little bit more selective about who is filling that hole. (gl 1, 578-592)

A mother of a Boys' League player suggested that the male role model a coach can provide was important for her son.

And there's a lot of boys that don't have a father. My son didn't have a father for about five years. I was fortunate enough to have brothers-in-laws and brothers and a father that spent a lot of time with him, but they didn't really play ball with him. So a lot of these kids are comin' right out of a, how do you say?, a women-run home. Which is not bad by far, sometimes I think it's better, but they don't have someone roughin' and toughin' them up and sayin' "oh, come on, this and that, and lets go out and pitch some balls and stuff." They don't have that at home, so for a lot of these kids, these coaches are the first males to rough and tough "em and throw a ball 90 miles an hour at their face and say, "catch it," and call it fun. They [coaches] have to be aware of this. (bl 1, 743-752)

Parents recognized the importance of the coach serving as a role model for young athletes. From the parent perspective, however, they appeared to have definite attitudes toward what was considered appropriate behavior on the part of the coach in that role. Just as their emphasis was on a positive communicative style, so was there emphasis on a positive role model.

Synthesis of the Data

The responses above emerged from two of the interview questions: "How would you typify the ideal coach?", and "What should coaches be taught in a coaches' education program?" This is mentioned only to illustrate that the parents were not

prompted to discuss the matter of the coach as a role model; rather, the concept was repeatedly mentioned by a variety of parents in different interview groups.

It seems, then, that this is an important responsibility of the coach as perceived by the parents. Based on their comments, one might suggest that although these parents acknowledge this importance, are they questioning if coaches see themselves in the same way as role models? Do coaches realize the impact they make on their players in terms of setting the standard for appropriate behavior? The data might imply that these parents see the coach playing a greater role in the life of the athlete than perhaps the coach does.

It is possible, on the other hand, that the coaches described by parents understand quite well their influence as a role model, but see nothing wrong with it. The coach may see his/her behavior as appropriate since it is an extension of his/her behavior in other aspects of life. Some might refer to it as the "what you see is what you get" mentality.

This investigator is inclined to believe that coaches often do not realize the impact their behavior has on the impressions of their athletes and the likelihood of those impressions lasting for some time. If they did, it is hard to imagine that they would consider cursing, belittling players, arguing with umpires, and smoking on the bench as appropriate behavior. As one of the parents above suggested, being a role model is part of the package of being a coach and cannot be ignored.

Managerial Expectations

"Don't put the game above the kids."
(11 5, 757-758)

In any coaching situation, the coach is in a position to impact as many players as there are involved in the activity. As a result of this status, and the power associated with the role, it is most often the coach who determines the goals of the program. In some youth sport programs, the coach is provided with guidelines that

assist in the formation of a coaching philosophy; specific objectives that outline the expectations of coaches who participate in the program. Others, as in the case of these leagues, rely on the coach to understand the goals of the experience and interpret that meaning to the players.

As a result, coaches who are left to "figure it out" for themselves often demonstrate a wide variety of coaching styles and agendas. The preferred manner in which a coach directs the team and the principles he/she upholds is the focus of this section regarding managerial expectations of the coach.

Themes that emerged regarding the coach's managerial style related to three issues. One, the parents shared concerns about issues of fairness. Fairness involved discussions associated with (a) the amount of playing time each player should get, (b) the discrepancy of playing time enjoyed by those players whose parent was in the role of coach, and (c) the perceived connection between the coach's philosophy regarding playing time and the coach's philosophy regarding winning. The data presented below come from a pool of 35 comments relating to the issue of fairness found in Appendix J.

Second, parents expressed their feelings regarding the role that winning should have at this level and their concerns when it was overemphasized. This sub theme emerged from 35 statements. Third, managerial expectations on the part of the coach involved the atmosphere created for the team. Parents preferred to see a team which emphasized the learning of discipline and teamwork, but one where the central focus was to have fun. These three components of atmosphere developed from a data set of 41 comments. Each of these themes (fairness, emphasis on winning, and atmosphere) will be discussed in order.

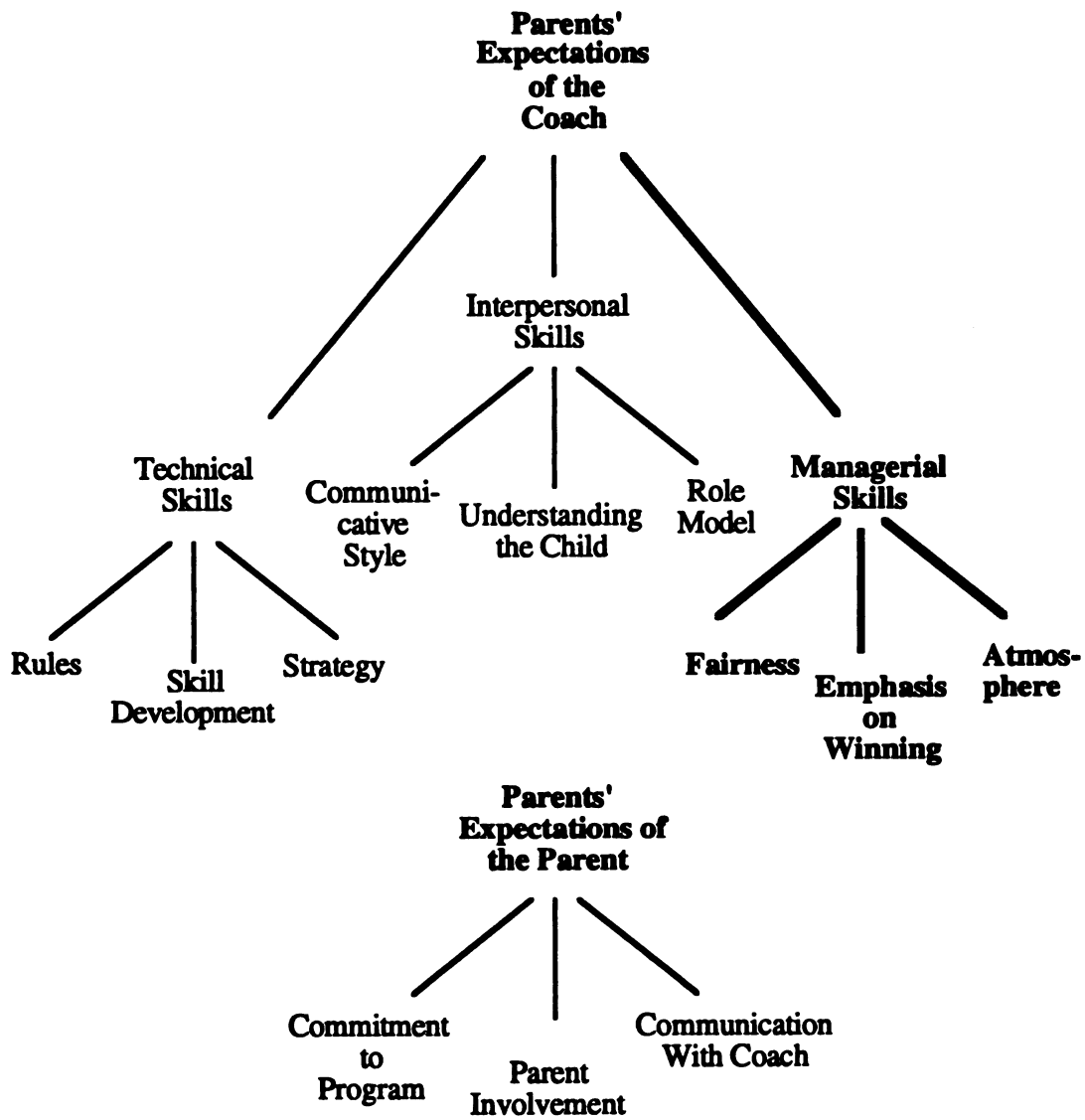


Figure 7. Parents' expectations of coach's managerial skills.

Fairness

**"I think the fairness is really important in a coach. You know, if all the kids are there at practice and they're giving their 100% and then they come to the game, and there may be three kids that start the game and play the entire game but all these other kids who have paid their dues only get to play half the game. I wonder sometime why some men coach: a) Do they want to make their child the best player? Or b) Do they want to teach something?, Or c) Is it for their own self worth? You know, 'I'm really this great coach'."
(11 1, 150-159)**

Being treated fairly by the world in which one lives is a common goal for most people. Similarly, parents want that same goal for their children. When conflicts arise, or when an individual feels that he/she has not been treated fairly, it often involves a difference in perception by the parties involved. While the decision maker may perceive the action taken as fair to all, the individual who is affected by the decision may have a very different perception altogether.

The participants in this study expressed a good deal of concern about the issue of fair treatment on the part of coaches. Their perceptions of unfair treatment by the coach focused exclusively on the question of playing time. League rules state that all players are to get one at-bat per game and at least two innings in the field. If they do not, they must start the next game. When these rules were not adhered to by the coach, parents felt their child was being treated unfairly.

Amount of playing time. A common theme expressed by parents throughout the interviews was that, at the minimum, all members of the team should get to play in every game. As one parent suggested, this was not often the case for the younger players:

Another thing, and this is something that I'm not terribly critical with our team, but I think it happens on most teams, is they bring a certain number of nine-year-olds into Little League, but they are a very select group, and I think our nine-year-olds sit too much. I would like to see them play more equally with the others because (we missed some of the last games and I didn't

keep track or anything) but I know our three little guys didn't play as much as the older ones. (ll 2, 473-478)

Another parent discussed the same concern, but looked at it from the advantage of the twelve-year-old rather than the disadvantage of the nine-year-old:

It varies, too, from year to year. This year, well, I'm sure every year, but this year it seemed like there was an overabundance of 12-year-olds on every team and they're not gonna pull 12-year-olds, at least I've seen that on our team. They're not gonna pull them, they're gonna play them the whole game through no matter if they make 15 errors, they're not gonna pull them. (ll 5, 306-310)

Not all parents, however, had this kind of experience with their child. In discussing this issue of keeping the younger player back in Boys' League when he was invited to move up to Little League, one mother talked about her nine-year-old:

In our case, they asked and we said "no" because we felt the same way you did. If you're gonna sit on the bench, how are you gonna learn; if you're playing you have a better chance of learning it. And then Jack Baker, who we didn't know from Adam at that point, kept calling us and talking and saying, "Look, really, you don't know me, but I'll play him, I'll try and work with him, and I think you'll find he'll be okay." And maybe like stupid idiots we just took his word for it, but as it turned out, it was fine. A very positive situation. (ll 2, 499-505)

(It should be pointed out that there was agreement among members of this interview group that the player discussed above was very talented even at nine years old.)

For some parents, the issue was not specifically related to the age of the players, but to all players who were not the best skilled members of the team. One father of a Boys' League player suggested,

I think sometimes it comes through that if you don't perform or don't get the hits, then you don't get to play as much. And that's their goal. They want to play. They want to be out there...I know that the older they get and the higher they move up that it moves toward being more of a competitive atmosphere where you're gonna play the kids who perform. The ones that are better are gonna rise to the top and they're gonna be the ones that are starters and play the whole game and like that, but I'm not too sure that at the Little League level that that's really a good thing. It seems to me that at this age it would be better if

everybody just played the same amount of time. Regardless. You know, then the pressure's off. (bl 3, 227-234)

He returned to that same thought later in the interview:

Well, if I was gonna do it, that would be my approach. I'd just tell them up front from the beginning that you're all gonna play equal time, so nobody's under any pressure. Just go out there and do your best. If you want to win, play hard. But you're not gonna have to perform up to any standard just to play...I think that would take a lot of pressure off. Just go out there and have fun. That's what it's all about. (bl 3, 621-628)

The following exchange between two Boys' League parents expresses their concerns about the opportunities for the less skilled players:

S 1...Play them all, whether they're good or bad. You don't learn anything if you already have it.

S 2...You learn it by experience, not by sitting on the bench.

S 1...That's right. And if your sittin' on the bench, you're not gonna learn a thing and you're not gonna come back. You're gonna lose the kids.

S 2...I can't remember exactly, but the only thing about that, I agree, I really feel that the kids should get equal amount of play even if they're poor, because they are still in their growing years. They're still learning. I see this even happen in schools. The coaches will bench them; they're not very good so I'll just bench them. And my son on the Bunny League last year, the coach would have practices for the good players, and wouldn't even call the other kids for practice because he thought they weren't even worth working with. Ha! Guess whose son didn't get called for practice? (bl 1, 684-696)

Playing time for the coach's child. A second major concern on the part of the parents regarding fairness related to the parent serving in the role of coach. Many of the parents suggested that players whose fathers coached the team had an unfair advantage in terms of playing time. A Boys' League father stated,

And like I mentioned, none of the nepotism. I mean if I'm coaching and my boy's good, he'll play, but there will be other times when he won't play. And I'm fair. And that one thing the coach has to do is be fair...That's one of the first things the kids notice "how come he's out there six innings, and I didn't play at all?" (bl 2, 308-313)

One interview group had the following discussion regarding playing time of the coach's son:

S 1...That's not right. I think if you want to coach a team, fine, but you should not coach your own son's team. That's not fair to all the other boys on that team at all

S 2...But in Little League, it was a totally different story. The coach's kid played every inning., every game.

S 1...There were four kids on the team that were the coaches' kids. They played every game, every inning, never sat out

S 3...And had the best positions. (bl 3, 170-184)

Not all of the parents interviewed had negative experiences with coaches showing preferential treatment toward their children. When asked what she looked for in the ideal coach, one mother said,

Fairness. We've had one coach for a long time and I think he's quite fair...He does some things I don't agree with all the time, but. All the kids on our team pretty much get to play every game even in close games going down to the wire. Most of the kids (if not all of them) almost always got in the game. Sometimes it backfired and sometimes it didn't. (ll 5, 456-460)

Another Little League father shared an experience with his son's coach:

When Bobby was in Boys' League it wasn't too bad. The first year we kinda felt like he didn't get to play very much. And the coach was kinda wrong for that. The next year he [the coach] came back and said he made a mistake not playing him more than he did. But he was real fair most of the time I thought. Even though he has his own son on the team. He didn't play him all the time or anything. (bl 3, 153-160)

Finally, a Little League mother whose son had the experience of playing in a different community before moving into this league made a comparison between the two:

They were a lot more fair about it, because even the coaches' kids didn't play the whole game. I remember one season my son's team did really really great. The coach was so fair...Everybody would start, but he would constantly be mixing kids up in positions. He wanted to give kids experience at positions they wouldn't normally play. And he would get flack from parents, but why not let these kids play different positions if you're ten runs ahead? It just wasn't as cut throat there. That coach was just great. (ll 5, 503-509)

Although each of these parents provide examples of coaches whose managerial style was viewed as fair, it is interesting to note that they mention fairness in the context of the coach's child playing a comparable amount of time to all other players.

Playing time and winning. In the discussion of fairness and playing time, some of the parents equated the coach's choosing to play some players more than others to a need to win. In this way of thinking, it is justified to play the better skilled athletes more in an effort to win games. In discussing the negative aspects of sport, one Little League father responded,

An overemphasis on winning. The focus is gonna be on winning, the kids are gonna force that. You can say, "Well it's not whether you win or lose." Kid's are going "You're nuts, we're gonna go out there and kick some butt." Because that's what they watch on TV. That's what they see their dad doing when he plays (or mom). To tell them it's not important to win or lose, they say, "Oh yeah it is, because that kid on second base, I go to school with him, and I want to be able to say to him, We beat you." But I think an over-emphasis from the parent or the coach can really mess that up. Where they say, "You can't play this game because we really want to win it, and I'm going to go with my best guys all the time." That I think is a real problem for the kid who is on the team and has heavy expectation to play and doesn't. I think that's a real negative for that group. (ll 1, 601-616)

While this father suggested that winning acts as one of the motives from the child's perspective for him/her to play, problems arise when the adults involved overemphasize it. The coach who plays the best players all the time (at the expense of the less skilled players opportunity to play) may interfere with the poor players' enjoyment of the experience.

Another parent relayed a conversation he had with her son's coach which serves as a good example of the coach's perspective on winning:

I tried talking to this coach as an adult, on an even level and without raising my voice and losing my temper. I was just curious because there is a rule that each kid has to play a certain number of innings and if they don't play one game they have to start the next and that stuff. After our team had played, maybe 30 innings, Jason had maybe nine or ten innings. I'm not sure of the numbers, but it wasn't what it should be. I asked the coach if he realized he was labeling Jason as a bench warmer because he wasn't given the opportunity, and how will he learn if not given the opportunity of playing in the game? He said it was because Jason came up to Little League as a twelve-year-old. Well, that wasn't his fault. That was one reason and

another reason was that he had coached this team for ten years and he was here to win. He had seven players who would win the games for him and they were the ones that were going to play. And that's the way it's gonna be. I thought it was really sad that that's why you're here and then it progressed to him yelling and saying that if I thought I could do better I could get out there and do it. Then he stormed away. I told him that Jason did not want me to talk to him because he (Jason) was afraid he would take it out on him. I told him I'd better never hear of that happening, but of course it did. (ll 2, 341-361)

This altercation with the coach (where the coach says he will play only those players who will help the team win and the father argues that every child should play) was a recurring source of conflict throughout the data. Not all parents had this negative experience, however. A mother expressed her gratitude for her son's coach who took the opposite approach:

I've talked to a lot of people who have had bad experiences, but we have never had a bad experience with a coach and number one, they always come to the first meeting and always tell us that winning is not their goal. We have been so fortunate because a lot of people base everything on winning and our coaches have always said that everyone gets to play and no one is better than anyone else and so we have been very, very lucky and they all just want everyone to play and learn. They always say that they are going to teach the fundamentals. They don't care if they win a game this year, the kids are going to learn to do it correctly. We've been very, very lucky. (ll 3, 79-87)

In summary, parents were relatively clear in their attitudes towards fairness in the way a coach should manage his/her team. First, parents were consistent in their approach to the interpretation of the term fairness. Fairness to them meant that all players who followed team rules (i.e., attending practices) should play. Although there was disagreement on the amount of time they should play (some thought everyone should play equal time while others were comfortable with coaches being in compliance with the league rules), the example of playing time was uniformly associated with the issue of fairness.

Secondly, parents expressed concern that the coach's child got preferential treatment in terms of playing time and that was unfair to the rest of the players. In talking about the coach's ability to be fair, parents expressed that the good coach had his/her child out of the game at times where the unfair coach tended to play his/her child an inordinate amount of time.

Finally, parents suggested there was a connection between a coach not being fair to all players in amounts of playing time and the coach's emphasis on winning. They implied that coaches whose primary goal was to win would be more likely to be unfair in their distribution of playing time.

Synthesis of the Data

As an introduction to this section on fairness, it was pointed out that the issue of fairness is often analyzed based on the perceptions of the individuals involved. In reviewing the data, it might be valuable to revisit this assumption and how it might impact the attitudes of the parents.

If fairness is based on the perception of the actors involved, do these parents have a biased perception of what a "fair" coach should do in regards to playing time? It seems reasonable that parents would be likely to view this issue through the eyes of the child, and since they report that children want to play, to be fair the coach should make sure that each child plays. They argue that if the player does what he/she is supposed to do according to the rules set forth by the coach, the player has the right to enjoy the benefits (playing time) consistent with other players (bl 3, 227-234; ll 1, 150-159).

The underlying question, then, is whether parents are "fair" (or unbiased) in their expectations of the coach's management of issues regarding playing time. Their argument is supported by the league rules which provides guidelines for distribution of

playing time, so it could be suggested that their criticism of coaches not following these rules is well founded.

Why, then, do coaches not follow the rules? Parents suggest the coaches "bend" the rules for the sake of winning (ll 2, 341-361). If this is the only reason (and it is the only one that parents offered), perhaps fairness in playing time is an indicator of a more serious difference in approach between these parents and their coaches. Perhaps the fundamental differences lie in the importance of winning as perceived by the two groups. Perhaps the goal of winning has a different emphasis for coaches than it does for parents. This argument will be discussed in greater depth in the next section.

Emphasis on Winning

**"The whole thing I think with kids and sports is nobody wins
and nobody loses, everybody plays. Some just play better than
others."
(b1 2, 487-489)**

Athletic competition involves two opponents playing a game in which a winner is determined at the conclusion of the game. As a result, winning and losing are an inherent part of the experience. The role that winning takes in terms of importance is often based on the level at which the competition occurs. At the t-ball level, many programs do not keep track of the score in an effort to de-emphasize the importance of winning. At the highest level (Major League Baseball), the emphasis on winning is at its pinnacle, where both players and coaches earn their livings based on their ability to win.

At the youth sport level (in this case, eight to twelve-year-olds), the emphasis on winning varies from program to program and from coach to coach. Again, the Dickerson Baseball Association and the Little Girls' Softball League do not take a position on winning, but league standings and game results are posted in the local newspaper. In addition, league champions have their photograph published.

The extent to which winning plays a role in the sport experience for these children was an underlying theme throughout the interview data. Parents expressed concern for what they perceived to be an overemphasis on winning at this level. While many considered themselves to be most interested in their children learning the game and having fun, they saw the coaches more focused on the competitive component of the experience.

Although the parents' attitudes toward the emphasis placed on winning varied, some were quite adamant that it was overemphasized. A Little League mother shared her perception:

I think sometimes, not always, it gets too competitive for kids and it loses its fun and its worthwhileness and it gets down to. Especially with my older son's experience this summer it just was, "we will win and this is how we will win" and that's the whole point of being there. (ll 2, 143-146)

A father in that same interview group agreed:

They don't see this Little League as a growing experience. They see this as an opportunity to win come hell or high water, and they wanted to get their Little League team...Most of these guys don't even have kids on the team. A lot of them, they've wanted to coach this Little League team and there's nothing more important in their life than this and they need strict rules just about everything, or they will break them and push 'em too far. Common sense has long since gone out the window. (ll 2, 160-168)

Some of the parents agreed with the preceding statements, but approached the issue from the parent's perception of the importance of winning at this level. A Girls' League mother suggested that the coach's attitude affected the player's understanding of the game:

Yeah, they're learning the wrong philosophy. They're not out there to play. You know to give it their best shot, if they win they win, if they lose, they lose. What they're learning out there is they gotta win. If you don't win, you're nothing. (gl 1, 388-392)

A similar sentiment was expressed by a Girls' League parent who suggested there were more important elements of the game to emphasize:

As far as winning and losing, you like to win, but you're still. It's out there. It's a sport. If you win, you win, if you lose, you lose. I don't really think as far as getting a coach who is hell and brimstone you know who wants to go out there and win, win, win. I don't really care for that. I want to see a coach who wants his kids, who does his best in how he's training the kids, take them out there and put them on the fields and encourage them and do everything he can, but be understanding too. (gl 1, 456-467)

Some of the parents pointed out that the overemphasis on winning was not characteristic of every coach. One parent recognized that throughout his experience as a parent in softball, coaches had approached the game differently:

Yeah I don't think parents get near as upset if their team goes 2-10 as they do if they see the coach out there mishandling the kid, yelling and screaming and carrying on. My boys, when they were in Little League, they never really were all that successful. Their teams, I think one year they finished .500 and that was it. And that never bothered me. I mean I didn't really care whether they won or lost but the coaches up until the last couple of years I thought the coaches were terrible, but the first couple of years they were in it their coaches were good and the kids really enjoyed it. And to me that was the important thing that the kid really enjoyed playing, looked forward to playing. In the last couple of years they had a turn-over in coaches and it was just the opposite. They just got to the point where it ain't fun for them anymore. (gl 1, 984-996)

A Boys' League mother shared the following when asked what she perceived to be some of the negatives in sport:

Some of the other problems in the Boys League, not with Mark's team, but I think some of the kids drop out because of the coaches. The coaches are that gung ho about "we have to win, we have to win." Mark's coach in Boys League, he felt it was more of a learning league. You learn the basics and you learn how to play all the different positions, rather than "we have to win every game and I'm gonna throw my best players in the best spots." (bl 4, 255-274)

A third parent had the following response when asked why some coaches overemphasized winning:

Well, I would call that lack of character on the coach's part. I think sometimes the coaches, some of them and not all of them by any means, because these people are all volunteering their time. These aren't paid jobs. It is a lot of time that they put in, but some of the coaches want to win. If you ask some of the girls some nights, they don't know whether they won or lost. (gl 1, 307-313)

Not all parents, however, agreed that wanting to win was negative. One mother suggested that there were positive and negative consequences of playing for a coach who emphasized winning. The ideal coach to her was one who runs the program where,

not everything being win, win, win. I know there are a lot of coaches around here like that. They have to have winning teams and they're gonna make those kids win no matter what they do to them. In some ways, they're good. Malen had a coach like that, and he did teach him a lot, but then Malen got discouraged when he got on teams that didn't win every single game...So I think if they go into it thinking that they're gonna teach the kids and not necessarily win. (bl 4, 493-501)

Finally, a father who had never coached, but admitted to being highly competitive, seemed sympathetic to the coach's issues about winning:

You know, I can understand coaches' disappointment. Sometimes you get beat by one run or it's a sloppy play or because somebody wasn't paying attention. But it's kids sports. They learn from winning, they learn from the loss. There's no big contract. There's no TV rights. Who are you gonna impress when you go out there and scream. Are you gonna impress me as a parent? No. (bl 2, 472-485)

While this father seemed to understand the frustration encountered by coaches, the emphasis for him was not winning, but being able to learn from both winning and losing.

Synthesis of the Data

The data suggest that an overemphasis on winning appears to be a source of conflict for the parents interviewed. Most of the parents agreed that winning at this level was not the most critical component of the experience, and they perceived it to be a primary goal on the part of many coaches (gl 1, 456-467; gl 1, 388-392; ll 2, 143-

146). Although they recognized that not all coaches ascribed to this philosophy, they were certainly more pleased with those coaches who were not "gung ho" about winning.

In previous sections and in other discussions throughout this report, the concern on the part of parents regarding an overemphasis on winning is a recurring theme. It was suggested in the preceding discussion that lack of "fairness" on the part of the coach was an outgrowth of the coach's need to win. Here, the discussion was even more clear as parents stated their dislike for a coaching philosophy that emphasized winning.

Perhaps the parents' concern about winning relates back to an earlier suggestion regarding the parent's concern for the "total" child and the perceived coach's concern for the game. It seems reasonable, given the supporting evidence, that the focus for the parent involves what the parent senses to be best for the child; whereas the focus for the coaches perceived as poor is on the competitive aspects of the game. How these parents viewed the preferred method to handle this conflict will be addressed in the section discussing expectations of the parents regarding the atmosphere created by the coach.

Atmosphere

"I think besides having fun, regardless of how far the individual child takes it or the coach takes it,... I think it gives the kids a sense of responsibility, and of course, being part of the team is very important; knowing that people depend on you for certain things (they might not understand that), but that's what they're getting and its a sense of responsibility."

(gl 3, 51-56)

Throughout sport, as well as within a particular sport, teams are often described as having certain characteristics that distinguish them from others. In any program, the character of a team is impacted greatly by the philosophy and standards



set forth by the coach. The coach, then, determines what is important and what is not and teaches the players accordingly.

The final grouping of managerial expectations of the parents has been identified as atmosphere. In this context, atmosphere is defined as those things that are emphasized by the coach that create a certain kind of team identity. This team identity takes on many forms from the style of playing the game (e.g., a team that emphasizes base stealing) to the manner in which the players conduct themselves (e.g., a team that "talks trash") to the degree individual players are singled out for recognition (e.g., a team that has a star player and all others are considered part of the supporting cast).

Some of these issues related to team atmosphere have already been discussed in the sections on expectations of coaches regarding fairness and emphasis on winning. Each of these create a kind of team atmosphere and are dictated by the coach. The remaining themes related to team atmosphere are grouped together below and represent what these parents prefer to see as major components of the team's identity.

Specifically, parents implied that a coach should create an atmosphere where three elements of sport are emphasized: (a) fun, (b) discipline, and (c) teamwork. The data suggested that most parents preferred a coaching approach that stressed discipline and teamwork, but made the experience fun at the same time.

Fun.

"I just wanted him to have fun; that's my ultimate goal."
(b1 1, 25)

Parents were consistent in their feelings that the sport experience needed to be fun for the participants. As one Girls' League mother suggested,

But in this age kids I mean you know now ten years from now who is going to remember who won this tournament here? Or

the league, or who did good or you know, put it all in perspective I think. It was fun and that was the bottom line. (gl 1, 492-495)

A Little League father put it this way:

To remember that these are kids, and that it should be fun and it's for the kids. It's not for the coaches to say, "My team won so many games." (ll 2, 437-438)

Parents talked about the importance of the experience being fun for the child, but had difficulty at times trying to articulate how fun was defined. One parent suggested that it is apparent the player had fun if he/she wanted to participate again:

I think the expectation there, if it's not met, would be harmful to the kid and that if they continue doing it, it's not fun for them. That's the important thing with all these things is that the kid can come away from the season wanting to do that again. But [if] they want to do this again, I think you've accomplished the goal of what the whole program is all about. If that is missed, then that can be a real negative. (ll 1, 525-544)

A Little League mother concurred when asked specifically how she explained the concept of fun:

S... I think it should be fun for the kids. I don't think it's really worthwhile if there's no fun involved. At this age, they're just kids.
I... At this age what do you think involves "fun" to them? How would they define it?
S...If it's something that they enjoy doing, and if they look forward to it. If it's something they look forward to going to whether it's practice, the game, whatever. If they feel it's worth their time and if they just enjoy it. (ll 2, 69-75)

In emphasizing the importance of the experience being enjoyable, one Girls' League mother suggested that the coach was directly responsible for creating an atmosphere of fun:

Our daughter, the coach that she's been under, all through the year has said, "Don't go out to win, just have fun" and I think that's what my daughter has gotten out of it, just going out there and having fun, playing hard and yet having fun, not getting worried if she loses. Just having fun. Her coach is (inaudible)

about that. I think that's why it's kept her in it so long because her coach taught her to have fun. (gl 3, 44-49)

Many of the parents recognized the choices young people have today in how to spend their time. Given the variety of ways in which a child can spend his/her time, these parents preferred them to be involved in sport. A Girls' League mother stated,

Well that's bottom line. They have to be having a good time because there's too many things, I mean they can sit at home on their butts and play video games or watch TV or whatever and we want to encourage them to be more active really. It doesn't have to be softball it could be a lot of things, but you know, so I think we need to make things enjoyable for them or else they are gonna say, "Hey, I don't need all this hassle. I'll find something else to do."(gl 1, 999-0006)

A Boys' League parent agreed and suggested he liked the idea of his child being involved in sport compared to the alternative choices he could make:

If it's done properly, kids learn sportsmanship and they learn discipline and they learn respect and it beats hanging out at the mall and playing videos. (bl 2, 53-55)

Two parents had the following exchange that serves to support this concept:

S 1 Don't put the game above the kids.
S 2...Right. I really just want my kids to have fun when they're doing it. I don't expect my kid to end up in the major leagues. That doesn't happen to everybody, obviously. I just want them to have some fun and get them out of the house. I don't want them sitting in front of the TV all summer, I want them out doing things. (ll 5, 757-762)

Parents were consistent in their attitude that the experience should be fun and that, at the very least, sport was a better activity for their children to choose than sedentary activities such as television. Investigating this concept of fun further, however, some parents suggested that having fun was only part of the package. They implied that sport participation was more than just having fun if it was done right. In their minds, good coaches create an atmosphere where fun is balanced with other things to be learned through sport. A father of a softball player who also coaches young boys' basketball in the winter talked about this balance:

Make it fun, but still it has to be a serious endeavor. If there's no purpose behind it, let's stay home and play jacks. You can get the same thing there, or shoot baskets, or play softball in the

front yard. There's one thing to play the game. It's another thing to participate on a team. There's a purpose behind that. So, if it gets going too far one way, it's the coach's responsibility to make it more fun. And if you're not really getting anything out of a game or practice, then the coach has to bring it back in without smacking them around or being harsh or damaging their self-esteem. Just bring them back to reality. With some kids you can't do that. Then you accept the lot you've got. (gl 3, 221-231)

Although the comment above reflects a single example, it provides a good introduction for the two remaining components of team atmosphere, namely discipline and teamwork. Parents suggested that having fun was critical for their children in sport, but they also recognized that sport should do more; that coaches should create an atmosphere where the teaching and learning of life's lesson should take place. These concepts of discipline and teamwork are presented below.

Discipline.

Well I think discipline is a big thing kids learn in athletics. I think discipline is maybe the biggest thing they learn besides teamwork. I think discipline is big.
(gl 1-105-107)

Discipline can be defined in a number of ways. When discussion regarding discipline came up during the interview process, the goal was to determine how the parents defined the concept. As parents discussed the notion of discipline in the interview groups, three underlying themes emerged. First, parents described discipline as learning to respect the coaches and doing what their coach told the player to do. Secondly, parents believed that discipline was depicted as a sense of responsibility to the team. Finally, parents suggested that discipline taught through athletics involved learning to work hard toward achieving a goal.

In terms of doing what was asked of them, parents implied that sport teaches young people to respect the person in that position and do whatever he/she requested. One of the mothers discussed the idea of doing what you are told to do because that is part of being a team member:

They learn discipline. The coach says, "You gotta' do this." So they should be able to do that. Being a team player, it's not always "I", "me", "this is what I want", you learn to be part of a group with the give and take. (ll 2, 65-68)

Another mother agreed when she stated,

Just being able to get along with other children and having some respect for adults too as far as the coaches. You know, listening to what they tell you. (bl 4, 86-88)

A slightly different perspective came from a father/coach who talked about teaching discipline from a coach's point of view:

The first part of our season in getting ready we try to make, we have basic rules that when a coach talks you listen or you run. As simple as that. We want them to pay attention because everything we are going to tell them is going to be important for them to know. Because as a team they're going to have to know their responsibilities and they are going to have to work with each other. Once the game starts those positions begin to play themselves and the kids take on the responsibility of being the team leaders. (ll 1, 920-925)

Coupled with this sense of understanding that the coach was the authority figure in sport was a belief that being a part of a team meant an awareness that team membership involved responsibility to the team. Again, the father/coach described how important this was to him as he stated,

One thing I've learned, and we try to stress with our kids, is the discipline side of the game and the commitment to what you are doing, or what that child is doing and there's also a commitment to their teammates. Now, the object of it is to make it fun so the commitment does not become a burden. It's still along with commitment but they do maybe learn at a young age that there is responsibility to it. It's important to be there at practice, it's important to be on time when you go to practice, it's important that you don't disrupt the flow of practice. (ll 1-131-141)

A Girls' League mother stated it in a slightly different way:

Making the commitment to be on a team is big. You're gonna be there for the games because all the other girls are counting on you to be there. I think that's a big thing and it's not "I want to go swimming today," it's this game. (gl 1, 172-175)

In the eyes of these parents, this sense of responsibility goes beyond responsibility to team and includes responsibility to self. Through responsibility to themselves, players learn the self-discipline necessary to set goals and achieve them. Parents believed that the lessons learned through athletics could easily be applied to other aspects of the child's life. One mother made this connection when she said,

And the practices. Marty would some days say, "Ah, I don't want to go to practice." And that kinda shows him that you do need to practice to get any better. He just thinks he can go out and play the game and that's how he can get better which isn't true. We've tried to teach him that. That you do need to practice. Which I kinda think carries over to school too that you don't just go to school and do it there. That you do have to do some outside studying. (bl 4, 79-86)

A Girls' League mother concurred when she responded to the question involving the positive aspects of sport:

I think I can see a couple of them. Discipline is one of them. They learn that if they want to excel at something they have to work at it. I see a camaraderie or team, working with the team versus working for self-interest. I see that ability to follow through something until the end. (gl 2, 76-80)

One mother summed up her feelings toward discipline by recognizing both issues of responsibility and hard work:

I think besides having fun, regardless of how far the individual child takes it or the coach takes it, it varies from team to team and sport to sport and league to league. Some leagues are more competitive than others. But regardless of that, I think it gives the kids a sense of responsibility and, of course, being part of the team is very important; knowing that people depend on you for certain things. They might not understand that, but that's what they're getting and so it's a sense of responsibility. It's a development. It's being at one point in your life and having a goal and doing something to work toward and get better and again, that doesn't have to be a competitive attitude as much as it's a self-pride attitude and I think athletics extends that when you see some child or some older, even an adult, when they watch them on TV and they say, "I want to do that" and then they work hard to accomplish that. (gl 3, 51-73)

These parents suggested that being part of a team can be a learning experience for youngsters that goes beyond the mechanics of the game. Discipline is a part of

that experience from learning to listen to coaches, to being responsible to the team, to working hard to achieve a goal. Notice that the parents did not discuss this concept of discipline at the exclusion of having fun. Rather, they implied that these principles can be taught concurrently while having fun in the sport experience. As one suggested, "...the object of it is to make it fun so the commitment does not become a burden."

Teamwork

**"That's the team concept that I was talking about. Everybody plays together and tries to help each other. Depending on each other to perform and support each other."
(gl 1, 239-242)**

The final component of the atmosphere created by the coach is teamwork. Parents expressed interest in their children learning the values of teamwork as they participated in these programs. The two comments listed below typify this attitude:

They all know that they have to work with each other and count on each other. You can't do it yourself. In soccer you have to pass to the different people, you can't do it all yourself. The same with baseball, one person cannot play all nine positions. They've really learned that they can work with other people and count on each other. (ll 3, 70-74)

The sports my children are involved in, it's all teamwork so it's not an individual thing that they're trying to strive for themselves. They're learning to work with other kids at the same time, which I think is good. (ll 5, 98-100)

Parents suggested that this concept of working together as a team goes beyond two players combining for a force out at first base. It was seen as a pervasive attitude that creates an atmosphere preferred by parents. Again, the coach creates this emphasis on teamwork and helps youngsters to understand its importance. One mother implied that teamwork can be taught in subtle ways:

The quality that I can think of is for a coach to be able to instill in those kids who aren't playing to be supportive of those who are. So many times the kids are on the field, but the ones in the dugout are having an absolutely fun time. I've seen a team

score and the kids in the dugout were so busy they didn't even notice. That really good player who gets replaced should be supportive of his replacement. The coach controls that. (l 5, 533-537)

Another mother relayed an incident between her son and his coach describing how the coach impacts the player's understanding of acceptable behavior toward teammates:

For my son, our coach has done wonders in getting my son to handle his temper. My kid has got a terrible temper, doesn't he Brenda? And Max will just flat out turn around and bench his little butt and I will go over and say "Micky, what's wrong?" And he'll just start screaming. Max will give him a look like "You'd better knock it off right now." Their coach does not handle temper tantrums, he does not handle bad sportsmanship, he does not take another team member bad-mouthing another team member. The values that he carries through with the team are what we try to carry through at home. And in order for him to be able to play, he has to keep his temper in line. He's learning to check it at home too. Not as quickly as I'd like, but it's helping. (b 1, 102-110)

Finally, a Girls' League mother described how her daughter's coach helped one of the players understand the concept of teamwork:

The other thing at problem solving is one instance where one of the girls and like I said this was not usual for this team, this team was one that worked a lot together. I saw a lot of camaraderie and a lot of working together and they usually did not put each other down. One girl was just like she wanted to pitch, she had never even been asked to pitch. They tried her and she did OK that day. The next game they put her in and it didn't work out well but it was a weak game and so she was taken out and it was interesting what happened to her at that point because she just didn't want anything to do with it. She quit playing in the middle of the game and I think he handled it well. He took her aside and he talked about being part of the team and you do what's best for team. It wasn't a reflection on her but trying to pull the team together for a win. There was even talk that she wasn't going to come to the next game because of this. She ended up that she did show up and she ended up pitching the next game and did well. I can see where a coach there, if they have an attitude, that they might be likely not to play then this is risking a whole game. He played her and it worked out real well for both of them. I think she learned something from it. (g 2, 273-295)

To summarize the expectations of parents regarding the atmosphere created by the coach, three important components were identified. First, parents suggested that the ultimate reason children participate in athletics is to have fun. Therefore, making the experience enjoyable for the child is part of the coach's responsibility as seen from the parent perspective. Secondly, parents wanted the experience to be fun but not to the exclusion of other aspects of being involved in sport. Parents implied that they wanted their child's participation to be a learning experience as well. Specifically, the parents saw the learning of discipline and teamwork as a necessary part of playing the game. Although parents were not asked directly if one aspect of participation was more important than another, the data suggests that they all play an integral part of the experience from the parent perspective.

Synthesis of the Data

Parents suggested throughout the interview process that having fun was a necessary part of the sport experience (bl 1, 25; gl 1, 999-0006; ll 5, 757-762). In reviewing the data relating to the issue of fun and how enjoyment impacts the player's perception of the experience, three questions come to mind.

First, parents implied that they wanted their children to have fun in sport. Why? It seems reasonable that having fun in a voluntary experience would be the goal of all persons, parent or child. It also makes sense that parents would want that for their children. Is it possible, however, that parents recognize that (a) sport is good for children (based on the positive attributes that they have shared above), and that (b) if it is not enjoyable, the children will not want to participate again?

Similarly, if the child does not want to continue participation in sport, the other positive attributes of the experience (i.e., discipline and teamwork) cannot be learned in that context. Quite simply, the child will not have the opportunity to learn these lessons perceived as valuable by parents in the sport experience. Certainly, the child

can learn these lessons in other activities (e.g., church groups, scouts, 4-H), but these parents suggested that sport is an ideal context in which these things can be learned.

The other two questions to be addressed deal with the coach's role in creating this atmosphere. Because the sport experience involves three different groups of individuals (players, coaches, and parents), is it possible that fun for the players, fun for the coaches, and fun for the parents might be defined differently? Parents suggested earlier that an overemphasis on winning from the coach was a negative attribute. To them many coaches got too focused on the competitive nature of the game at the expense of the child's enjoyment. If that is true, then perhaps fun for these coaches relates to winning while fun for the participants revolves around other aspects of the game.

The third question poses a similar problem, but in a different context. To this point, the discussion has focused on the possibility of inconsistent goals among the participants in children's sports: players, coaches, and parents. If there is disagreement among these groups in the definition of fun, could there be other areas in which they differ? For example, parents suggested that teamwork was an important principle to be taught through sport. They cited examples where sacrificing your own wishes for the good of the team was part of the learning experience (II 5, 98-100; II 5, 533-537). If the goal of any team is to win, coaches may view playing the more talented players in order to win as a good learning experience for those less talented. They would be learning the lesson of self-sacrifice for the betterment of the team.

In other discussion, however, parents were clear in their views regarding playing time. In general, those coaches who gave all players the opportunity to participate consistently were viewed more favorably than those coaches who played only the best players. On one hand, the parents supported the concept of teamwork (sacrificing individual goals for the goal of the team). On the other hand, parents

suggested all players should be treated fairly (given comparable playing time). These parents may see fairness to the child and fairness to the team in a different light than the coaches do.

This argument may or may not be valid based on the data presented, since so much of it is speculation on the thinking of coaches, about whom no data are available from this study. Perhaps the most important issue to consider, however, is that there are potentially different goals present among the parties involved in youth sport. If so, there exists great potential for conflict.

Expectations of the Parents' Roles

S 1...I don't even know if we would allow that kind of abuse from a teacher, I mean it happens. But it wouldn't happen if we were all sitting in the classroom watching. I wish we would care as passionately about our kids' English teachers and biology teachers and chemistry teachers as we do our coaches. Our big debate, that you have from now on until they graduate from high school, is coaches. You care passionately because you are watching the whole thing in front of you.

S 2...It's such a public display...
 II 2, 362-369)

The discussion up to this point has focused on the parents' expectations of the coach in the sport setting. Parents' expectations of the coach in technical, interpersonal, and managerial aspects of the sport experience have been identified and discussed. Much of the discussion in the earlier portions of this report has revolved around what parents wanted for their children in the sport experience. The emphasis has been on what the child should get out of participation and how the coach should serve as a facilitator in the process.

This section investigates the expectations parents have relating to their own role in the activity. Parents suggested that the parent too has certain expectations in youth sports. These expectations involve the parent's relationship with the child and the parent's relationship with the coach.

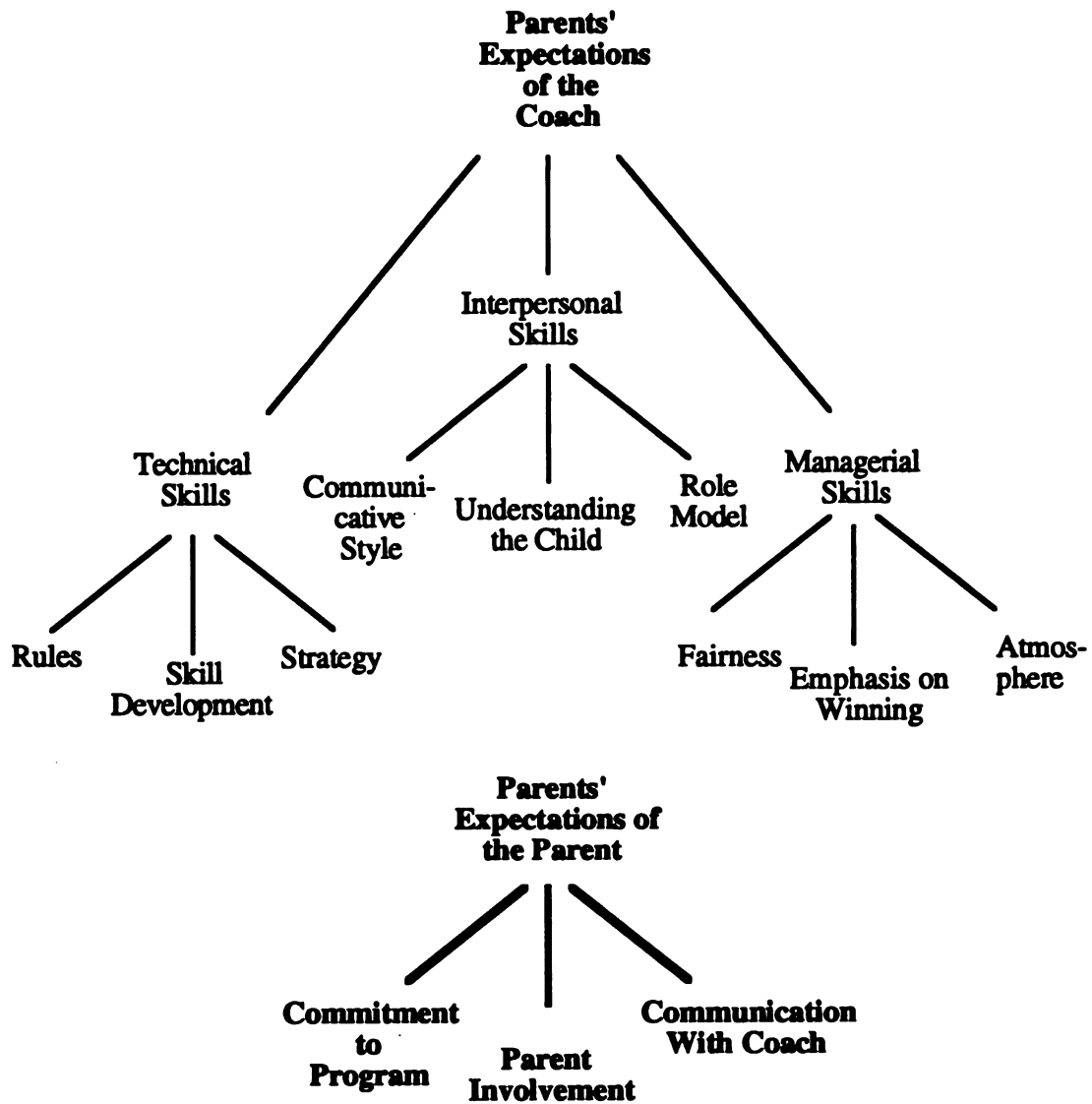


Figure 8. Parents' expectations of the parent.

As a major theme emerging from the data, the expectations that parents have for themselves and other parents is drawn from a relatively small data set. Thirty-seven comments comprise the data from which the sub themes were drawn. Although statements are few in number, they provide interesting insight into these parents' approach to the role of the parent.

The parent/child relationship in sport is a broad issue and was not the central focus of this investigation. As an outgrowth of the interview sessions, however, two elements of that relationship emerged and need to be discussed. First, parents were concerned about the parent's role in the child's commitment to the program. They implied that the parent had great influence on the approach the child would take if he/she no longer wanted to participate. Secondly, parents suggested that the parent had a responsibility to be supportive and involved in the child's experience. The parent role involved being knowledgeable and interested in what the child was doing and being supportive of the child throughout. Each will be discussed below.

Commitment to Program

"I think commitment is a big word here because I think kids need to learn commitment. As far as we've always told Tim at home, if you start something you finish it. If you don't like it, you don't go out next year. So we've always told the girls whether it's choir or band or ball or whatever, you started it, you're not quitting in the middle of the year. And I think too many times that happens. Parents allow their kids to quit. I don't think you ought to let them quit. They ought to have to finish that season or whatever and if they don't like it then they don't go out the next year."
(gl 1, 178-188)

Commitment to a program involves many different components. In the section regarding discipline, parents suggested that attending practices and games were elements of commitment a child learns when becoming involved in sport. The discussion here, however, centers more on a general commitment to the program; in short, whether the child continues to play if he/she no longer enjoys it.

Parents were divided regarding this issue of quitting. While some took the approach that quitting was not an option, others recognized there were circumstances that might warrant it. In support of the notion of commitment, a mother and father shared an incident with their son when he first started playing organized baseball:

S 1...Our older boy, he started and he didn't like the two and three hour practices where you had to get in line and take your turn catching the fly ball and then you had to wait. He just didn't like it. He didn't want to go but we said, "No, we're committed, we're gonna do it." I think he was testing us to see if we'd tell him he didn't have to go if he didn't want to. It didn't work. So after we established the fact that he was going to go and if you don't play all the game, that's just the way it is. Once he understood that we weren't going to give in, once we were committed to it, and then it went on...

S 2...Once they got to the actual games he loved it, he really enjoyed it. It was the practices that he hated. But, then again, he learned that you have to go through some of the junk to get to the big stuff. (l 5, 177-188)

To these parents, learning to stick with something (even though it was not enjoyable) was part of the learning experience. To them, quitting was not an option. A mother whose son started playing baseball in another community and then became involved in this program agreed with this approach:

He's gotten very upset with how seriously it's taken [here], yeah. He would have enjoyed playing with his friends, too, he really would have, especially since they were the team that ended up winning the championship this year. That's life. I also told him if he didn't want to play he didn't have to, but he made the choice to play so he's playing. Once you start the season, you don't quit half-way through either, I agree with that, once you make the commitment you finish. (l 5, 286-291)

A Boys' League mother concurred when she was asked to describe what children should be getting out of sport:

One would probably be that once you make a commitment that you're going to do something, you continue with it...I don't let my kids quit anything unless it's really bad of which I haven't had that experience, but I tell them if they want to do a sport or an activity through school or church or whatever, they're gonna start it and they're gonna finish it...And I think that's a good way to teach self-discipline. (b1 4,70-74)

What, then, does the parent do when "it's really bad" and commitment to the team is threatened by the experience the child is having? One of the parents interviewed had this happen to her husband and her and discussed how difficult it was to make the decision to take their son out of baseball:

After we made the decision that Richie would not finish the season, and that was a hard decision because we've always told our kids that once you start something you finish. None of this, "I don't like it, I don't want to go to practice, I'm gonna quit." So it was a real hard decision and we went back and forth with it for several weeks before we just decided that it was no longer fun. It was no longer worth our time. It got to the point where Richie came off the field crying. After we made that decision, then I wrote a letter to the DBA saying that we did make this decision and why we made this decision, cited dates and incidents that had happened and things, and my final remark was that I questioned the motivation for this person to be coaching; why does he coach when he has to resort to humiliation tactics to get kids to do what he wants them to do. (I 2, 624-640)

Earlier in that interview, the same mother described an incident where another parent removed her sons from the team. Below is a discussion of members of that group relating to the incident.

S 1...One time, early in the season before we caught on to all that was going on, Richie made an error on the field, or he struck out, that's what he did, struck out, and he was on his way back to the dugout and the coach came out and put his arm around him, and I thought that was nice until Richie asked me, "Are coaches allowed to swear at you?" I asked why and he said the coach asked him, "Why did you swing at that (blank)..."

S 2...Was it s-h-i-t?

S 1...Yeah!

S 2...Well, could be worse.

S 1...It got worse. He would say things to the team as a whole after they had lost a game; he'd tell them he knew they couldn't do it, that they'd lose....

S 3...Was this the team where some of the kids were pulled off the team?

S 1...Yes, one mother did get up in the middle of a game and took her kids off the field and they never did return. He [the coach] threw a temper tantrum and threw his clipboard down and started screaming and yelling at our catcher.

S 4...Who pulled them off?

S 1...The mother...Her one son was catching and her other son was in left field. At this game, it happened that the

grandparents were there, two of his aunts were there, several cousins. It was a Sunday game, so the whole family came to watch. And this kid missed a catch and he fumbled around looking for the ball and in the meantime, two runners came in and our coach got furious and threw his clipboard down and started screaming and pointing across the field at the catcher. The mother just got up out of the stands and walked down and said "Steve, take your gear off, we're leaving," and she pulled her other son out of left field and they never returned. (ll 2, 294-323)

Parents on one side of this issue approached the issue of quitting as unacceptable. The argument was that children must learn that to start something means to finish it regardless of how one might feel about it. Other parents, however, saw quitting as the only possible alternative when the situation became intolerable.

Parent involvement

"As a parent, I don't know what kind of things my boy is learning if I don't take the time to be there. That's important to me and I think it is to most parents."

(bl 4, 106-107)

In order to make these kinds of decisions about the value of continued participation, or to judge the worth of the experience in general, parents suggested that parents must be involved. To them, parents must be active participants as opposed to simply dropping the child off at the field so he/she can participate.

One parent implied that being involved meant that the parent needed to spend the time to be knowledgeable enough about what is going on to provide a kind of "check and balance." In discussing coaches, he stated,

And so they don't need to be absolutely perfect, you know they're "you-know-what" is going to stink like everybody else's, and if they're 'gonna take the time to be out there, hey, more power to them. And I think it has a lot to do with these parents doing checks and balances; showing up for the games; maybe staying for fifteen or twenty minutes before practice and getting there fifteen or twenty minutes early at the end of a practice. You need to get these parents involved and it's the parents who are not involved, as you have found out, are the ones who are going to be screaming and bitching the loudest because their son is not this and their son is not that and the coach is doing this. And that's where it gets sad because these coaches are

under so much scrutiny and ridiculed so much by the parents that will not take an hour and-a-half, two hours out of their precious evening to come and talk to the coach about this. They are going to be up there screaming and yelling the most and then that's what's going to run the good coaches out. And that's sad, it really is. (b1 1, 1094-1107)

A Boys' League father agreed with the importance of being present at the games:

The parents are gonna be there. At least, good parents are. That's why I don't think it's that critical to teach these coaches about first aid and stuff. Whenever something bad has happened on my boy's team, the parent is there to take the kid to the hospital or whatever. But the bottom line is that the parent needs to be there for the kid. If I'm in the stands, my kid knows I care enough about him to want to be involved in what he's doing. I can't just ask him about it when he comes home and I'm sitting there watching TV. What kind of a message does that send to him? (1l 2, 406-418)

Although parents implied that being present at games was important, they also suggested that being involved meant supporting the child regardless of his/her performance. Caring about the child and sharing in his/her accomplishments and disappointments was considered an important role of the parent. One of the Girls' League fathers summarized it this way:

I think there ought to be a way. I wish there was a way. Sometimes in the stands, this is what I see; I see parents that aren't supportive of their own child. You know, and I wish that, and I know it's hard sometimes to not say, "Why didn't you do this or you should have done this," but I think your big role as a parent is for you to be supportive and positive with your child when they come home because nobody feels worse than them if they dropped the ball or if they struck out or whatever and I don't see that in the stands half the time. I think parents are their own kids worse critics, sometimes. And you know I really hate that, especially if the coach is their dad. You know? It's a lot harder on them and I think that's a shame. I really do. I think that we as parents, our big role is to be as positive. There's that word again. I wish we would think of a better word for it, for your child that you can. You know. You might not like what they do all the time, like maybe you're not a band person or a choir person or a football person or whatever, but they might like that. So, like you [referring to one of the other group members], you don't like girl scouts but your daughter likes it, so you know, you made the effort to be a girl scout leader. And I'm sure that she appreciates that. And it'll pay off down the road I think. Kids have got to know that they can come home and be hugged, loved, cared for, you know? And

know that at least I know when I go home they're not gonna yell at me. In case they're gettin' it some place else. You know. So I think that as parents, in the stands lots of times, I don't see that. I see really critical [parents], you know and I think that that's a shame. (gl 1, 416-440)

A Little League father shared a similar sentiment:

If your kid knows that if he played poorly that you would still love him, and there are parents who convey the idea that if you don't do well, I don't love you. We've seen these at games. If we were gonna bring up any discussion, it would be the parents in addition to the coaches. There should be a guidebook for parents. Most parents are pretty good, it's not like what I envisioned, people screaming. But you still have it; like in Boys' League, with the mother's smoking and yelling, "Jesus f--ing Christ, can't you play anything..." Just that kind of thing. (ll 2, 816-822)

In summary, the parents who were interviewed expressed concern that parents should be involved enough in the program to know how it is conducted. In addition, being involved meant caring for the child in a way that the child's performance did not threaten the parent's love for him/her.

Synthesis of the Data

The parents' interpretation of parents' responsibilities regarding involvement in the child's sport activity comes as little surprise. It makes sense that parents would see that as an integral part of their role. It should be pointed out, however, that the parents interviewed for this study were a voluntary sample. In order to participate, they had to commit an evening of their time to share their thoughts and beliefs. Perhaps those individuals who were willing to donate their time in that way would also be more likely to support the notion that parents should be involved.

Possibly of greater interest are the data presented relating to commitment to the program. This investigator was surprised by the strength of conviction expressed regarding quitting the team when it was no longer enjoyable (gl 1, 178-188; bl 4, 70-74). Previously, the parents stated quite strongly that the primary purpose of participation was to have fun. In this section, the suggestion is that even if it is no

longer fun, the child should finish the season (unless, of course, it becomes unbearable). Are these approaches inconsistent with one another?

Some might suggest that committing oneself to finish the season is a similar lesson to be learned through sport like discipline and teamwork. This argument would propose that having fun must be balanced with other responsibilities related to participation in this case, commitment to finish what was started. The experience for the child, then, could fall along a continuum from having a great time (where commitment comes easily), to having a not so great time where the child perseveres to complete the season in order to learn what commitment is all about.

Finishing what is started is certainly a value to be admired. One might question, however, the efficacy of parents emphasizing the learning of this lesson for those children who have never been involved in organized sport previously. Does the first time participant, who knows little of what to expect from the experience, have the right to try it out and quit if he/she does not enjoy it? Perhaps these parents might argue no, that starting something new is a risk-taking venture and regardless of enjoyment, it must be completed. Others might suggest that forcing a child to continue participation in something they do not enjoy could have an effect on their willingness to "take the risk" in other sports, that a negative initial experience might steer the child away from trying sport again.

A second issue related to this concept of commitment involves the dilemma faced by parents who feel strongly about finishing what is started, but who recognize that the sport experience is not good for the child. The mother's quote submitted above suggesting the difficulty encountered in making the decision to take her son off the team describes this issue (ll 2, 624-640). What are the options for parents who find their child in a negative situation but believe in the value of commitment to the

season's end? Much of this has to do with their ability (or perceived ability) to discuss the problem with the coach. This concept is investigated in the next section.

Communication With the Coach

Well Nick (father) went to talk with him, very nicely. And the coach come at him like a ton of bricks. Like, "How dare you question me, I'm the coach" and that's like, "Wait a minute, that's our child." But it was like that was his time, and we didn't matter. I didn't agree with him. I'm a parent all the time whether he's playing this game or not.
(bl 3, 616-620)

Communication between parent and coach can have a major impact on the sport experience for the child. Because both the parent and the coach serve in the role of authority figures for the child, conflict between the two can easily put the child in the middle. These issues were previously discussed in the section describing parents' expectations relating to the coach's interpersonal style.

The focus here, however, is on the parents' perceptions of the *parent's* role in this discourse. Does the parent have the right to initiate discussion with the coach when the two disagree? Is that perceived as interfering by the coach? What is the parent's role in this athletic triangle of player, athlete, and coach? Observer? Supporter? Actor?

Parents suggested that initiating communication with the coach regarding issues with the child was something that needed to be thought out carefully before doing it. While some focused on the strategy for communicating with the coach, others were concerned with the possibility of its being construed as interfering. Still, others viewed it as part of the parent's responsibility.

One father cited an approach for parents to use in communicating with the coach about the athlete:

That's why I think as a parent maybe you should, if you feel a little hesitant about something that occurred, maybe you should go say, "Hey, I know from experience at home that running him into the ground doesn't solve any problem. If I want to get

something out of him, I've got to encourage him a little bit. He'll bust his butt for you." Whereas, like you say, it might be the opposite for someone else. But you as a parent are the ones that know them better than the coach. If you, in a decent way, would go to them and say, no, I'm not (ran out of tape.) (gl 1, 935-944)

While some parents might be willing to approach the coach, others appeared hesitant to make that step. One mother stated,

Sometimes I think they treat the kids like it's the World Series they're going out to win, I really do. They treat these boys like they're grown-ups and that they shouldn't make these mistakes and that this is it. They put so much pressure on them that sometimes it's not as fun as what you'd like it to be. So, that's kinda hard sitting up in the bleachers biting your tongue. I said if my kid ever got really reamed I don't know if I'd be able to sit there very long. I just think there's a lot of pressure involved with it. (ll 5, 227-233)

Others suggested that to say something to the coach might jeopardize the child's relationship with the coach.

I know the soccer coach she's talking about, he is wonderful. We ran into one of our baseball coaches who had, this summer, made derogatory statements to my son about how much better baseball was than soccer and he knew my son played soccer and that really irritated me. I told my son I'd talk to him if he wanted me to but my son said "No, he'll just take it out on me." So I thought, fine, I won't say anything now, but when he's not playing with this guy anymore, I may just say something. There's just no reason for that. I thought it was just awful that he was like that. (ll 5, 421-428)

One father was concerned that he might be viewed as interfering if he expressed his concerns with the coach:

I've seen it happen a lot. I think a lot of parents don't like it but they hesitate to interfere. In my experience I never did interfere. There were times I felt things weren't handled properly and I had a notion to say something but I didn't want to interfere and be labeled as somebody as interfering with the team or something like that so I didn't. But looking back on it there are several times I wish I would have said something because I think the coaches were out of line and I think when they are out of line they are teaching your kids. They are responsible for your kids. I think if there is something that you're unhappy about I think you should approach them about it. (gl 1, 888-899)

At the other end of the spectrum, however, was the Little League father who saw this kind of communication as not only his right but his responsibility:

S 1...I think we have the responsibility to do that. Whether I have the right or not. I have the responsibility to let my kid's coach know what I expect. It makes it seem awfully black and white, but I think it's my responsibility...If I see something that is unpleasant, it's my responsibility to go to the coach and say, "Can you explain why this is?" Not go in and say, "I demand you change [your] policy" or whatever.

I...Some parents may be concerned about doing that because they're afraid the child will suffer.

S 2...That's right.

S 1...One of the most important things as a parent is to try to teach concepts to your children and in those two hours of practice, you're kinda putting the coach as a contact person. You hope that they might be the same and not contradict each other. I mean, if we're out there saying that winning's not everything...Just play and have fun. And the coach is down there saying winning is everything, that's contradictory. The poor child's going in circles. (ll 5, 646-662)

Parents appeared divided on their perception of the parent's role in initiating communication with the coach. There were some, however, who proposed an early season meeting as a way to open lines of communication between parent and coach. One mother suggested:

I don't know if you could do some kind of seminar and get much accomplished. I think most of it would go in one ear and out the other, and they'd go back to doing what they wanted to do. But I really think one of the neatest things possible would be, maybe like you said, before they start playing ball, the coaches and the parents have a meeting. Just a friendly meeting. Like an orientation kind of thing. Let them know what it's gonna be like. Go over the rules for the parents. Explain how you plan to substitute. Then maybe meet back every once in awhile. Maybe discuss some ideas that maybe the parents might have for the coaches and go back and forth that way to where you don't have parents up in the stands blowing steam out of their ears. And they don't take that home with them. They take it right down there on the field where the boys have to see this blowup. That does absolutely no good for anybody. (ll. 5, 600-611)

A Little League father agreed:

It's so easy for us to just sit here and say because it's just another thing we gotta do, but you wonder what one little thing

you could do. If you had this parent meeting at the beginning with the coaches, I would guess that the parents that really should be there probably won't be there. But usually food is a pretty magic thing. You offer a picnic or something and you'll get a much better turnout. Entice them to get them there and you can learn an awful lot that way. Maybe a preseason picnic would be the ticket. (ll 5, 854-860)

A third parent offered an explanation as to how this might be beneficial:

I strongly suggest that they make time to intermingle with the parents. To get to know them. If you're on the side of the parent and they're on your side, you're gonna have the kid too. Many times we've had parents get just irate. When we first started into baseball, people told us, "Hey, it's more fun in the stands." But we've not noticed it so much but every once in awhile, you'll have somebody who you'd just kinda wish they'd leave. Not so much [yelling] at the kids, but at the umpires. But if the coach could somehow maybe have a parent meeting, without the kids, and explain what their policies are, the parents would know a little bit what's going on. Sometimes the parents don't care. (ll 5, 581-589)

Finally, a Girls' League father offered an alternative to direct communication with the coach. His proposal was an end of season questionnaire to provide feedback to the coach.

Or maybe at the end of the season a questionnaire. Distribute a questionnaire for all leagues that parents or the coach can get. You can lay it out on the line for the coach. If you're upset with some of the things he's said or did or on the other, conversely, you know, pat him on the back and say you did a real good job. You didn't win a game, but I was happy about the way that you handled the kids, treated the girls. (gl 1, 964-970)

Synthesis of the Data

Based on the data presented above, it may be safe to say that these parents demonstrated concern in initiating communication with the coach (gl 1, 888-899). Perhaps it is because they recognize that coaches are not paid, and as a result of their volunteer status, they would appear to be ungrateful if the parents approached the coach. Perhaps they believe that in the coach's eyes, to question is to criticize.

To develop this argument further requires an analysis of the player-coach-parent triangle in more depth. One of the parents alluded to the fact that both coach

and parent serve as authority figures for the child. Another referred to the coach as a "contact" person (ll 5, 646-662), an individual who he hoped would not contradict what the parents were teaching the child at home. If both parent and coach, however, feel that they have the right and/or the responsibility to teach and direct the child, it seems reasonable that conflicts might occur (ll 5, 646-662).

The hesitancy expressed by these parents to "interfere" may lead the reader to presume that their input was not welcomed by the coach. Because similar data from coaches is unavailable on this matter, a conclusion to that effect would be unfair. The issue is not necessarily what actually happened in the incidents described by parents, but how they *perceived* the event. If the parent's perception is one of conflict between two adults who both think they know what the best course is for the child, and if they feel that they should share in decisions made by the coach, the parent may well feel as though he/she is excluded.

The coach-parent relationship becomes confrontational instead of invitational as perceived by the parent. The parent is not encouraged to communicate concerns and issues to the coach. The coach becomes an individual who talks but does not listen, who demands but does not negotiate, who avoids but does not resolve. The parent who feels he/she knows the child well and sees the impact of perceived negative communicative or managerial styles on the child might hesitate to share those concerns. When the concerns grow in intensity but remain unspoken, the parent eventually approaches the coach. The end result becomes an incident as opposed to open communication.

The concept of invitational as opposed to confrontational coach-parent communication will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter. Its introduction here, however, supports the strategies suggested above by parents that communication between these two groups of adults can be improved within this sport experience.

Summary of Parent Expectations

Parents recognized that the parent possesses certain responsibilities in the child's sport experience. Although the data were not as plentiful as they were in the coach's expectations section of this report, they were rich with concerns regarding the parent as part of the process. (Perhaps it is not surprising that parents had more to say regarding the coach's responsibilities since it is often more comfortable to analyze other's behavior than critique one's own.)

Themes focused on expectations of the parent relating to the child and the role the parent should play in the sport context. In general, parents suggested that the parent was accountable to see that once the child chose to participate on a team, he/she was committed to the program until the end of the season. Only extreme circumstances would permit a change in this sense of commitment.

Parents also expressed concerns regarding the parent's involvement in the activity. Two issues emerged. First, the parent needed to be active in the child's participation. The parent was expected to attend games, be aware of the team's activities, and monitor coach-player interactions before and after practices. Being knowledgeable about the child's activity was perceived as part of being a parent. Second, parents believed they had a responsibility to care for the child regardless of his/her performance. The concern here was that parents should share in the child's accomplishments and disappointments with an equal distribution of love and attention.

In regard to the relationship between parent and coach, parents suggested that initiating communication with the coach was troublesome if it involved parent's suggestions, concerns, or criticisms of coaching behavior. Parents were divided regarding the role the parent should play in this parent-coach relationship, but offered a variety of methods that might be used to improve communication.

Summary

The data presented in this chapter represent the major issues as perceived by these parents regarding their child's participation in sport. These issues focused on the parent's expectations of the coach and the parent's expectation of themselves.

Expectations of the coach involved: (a) technical skills (rules, skill development, and strategy), (b) interpersonal skills (communicative style, an understanding of the child, and the coach as a role model), and (c) managerial skills (fairness, emphasis on winning, and the atmosphere created by the coach).

Expectations of the parent in the child's experience included the parent's impact on the child (the child's commitment to the program and the parent's involvement in the program) and the parent's relationship with the coach (communication). The manner in which these expectations serve to answer the research questions will be explored in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The discussion that follows is presented in three major sections. First, the research questions will be addressed as they relate to the data. Specifically, (a) expectations of the parent for the child's sport experience will be explored, (b) rights and responsibilities within the role of parent of a youth sport participant will be discussed, and (c) current practices in coaches' education programs will be examined. The second major section will examine implications for coaches' education as a result of the data. While the section addressing the research questions will argue that coaches' education programs must emphasize parental involvement in youth sport through collaboration with the coach, this discussion will focus on the manner in which that might be operationalized. The final section will outline recommendations for future research involving parents of youth sport participants as the focus.

The Nature of the Sport Experience

Parents were homogeneous in their view of the kind of experience they preferred for their children in sport. Although a number of characteristics could be extrapolated from the data, there were five that seemed to permeate most of the findings. Parents appeared consistent in the belief that the sport experience should be (a) positive, (b) fun, (c) developmentally appropriate, (d) fair, and (e) educational. Each will be discussed briefly below and a summary of parental expectations will be presented by listing what the coach should and should not do.

Positive Experience

Parents suggested that making the experience positive was often the result of the coach's interpersonal and managerial style. How the coach interacted with the athlete on an individual level and what the coach emphasized on a team level both contributed to the degree in which the experience was positive.

The list of do's and don'ts presented in Table 6 reflect the parents' interpretations of actual coaching behavior that either provide a foundation for or interfere with the likelihood of the experience being positive for the child. The reader will notice that the guidelines suggested by parents are more interpersonal in nature than managerial.

These parents were in agreement with many of the research findings discussed in Chapter 1 (e.g., Gross, 1982; Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978; Orlick & Botterill, 1975). Parents continue to want the child's experience in sport to be positive. For these parents, a coach's ability to praise, criticize, encourage, be patient with, and care for the child were critical components of coaching behavior. Interestingly, however, is the emphasis these parents placed on the coach's interpersonal skills in accomplishing this goal. Data reflecting issues of the parents' interpersonal expectations of the coach created the single largest subset of the data (115 comments). In short, parents felt strongly about the importance of these interpersonal skills. Guidelines for these skills are presented in Table 6.

Parents in the Gross (1982) study also recognized the importance of interpersonal skills. They believed topics of communication and motivation should be emphasized in coaches' education programs in an in-depth manner. Coaches, however, felt it should receive only superficial emphasis. Although corresponding data from coaches are not available from this study, parents continue to emphasize these interpersonal skills.

A component of the coach's interpersonal skills that was of special interest to these parents was the negative behavior of berating or belittling the child. It was raised consistently by the parents and one has to wonder if this style of communication is simply unique to some of the coaches in this league or a reflection of a growing trend by adults to mistreat children verbally. Some might suggest that societal norms

Table 6

Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Positive

<u>Do</u>	<u>Don't</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point out good play. • Recognize hard work. • Emphasize improvement over outcome. • Look for something to compliment. • Encourage. • Balance criticism with praise. • Expect good performance. • Be patient with poor performance. • Have compassion. • Care about the child in other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make them cry. • Berate or belittle. • Swear at the child. • Scold a child in front of others. • Put the game ahead of the child. • Overemphasize winning.

aspects of his/her life have changed to the point that this kind of treatment is more commonplace today than it was in the 1970's when the previous research on parental attitudes was done. Perhaps verbal abuse of children in athletics is an issue that needs further investigation.

Fun

Making the experience fun for the participant places a greater emphasis on managerial rather than interpersonal expectations of the coach. Certainly, the extent to which the experience is positive also impacts whether the activity is fun or not. In other words, if the coach is not positive in his/her approach to the child as an individual, it is unlikely that the coach will be able to make the experience fun from a managerial standpoint. However, parents focused on certain coaching characteristics that go beyond being positive. Coaching characteristics that set the stage for the child to have fun in sport are summarized in Table 7.

Parents had a difficult time articulating the definition of fun, but they were consistent in their belief that the experience had to have the element of fun in it in order to be worthwhile for the child. Again, the emphasis appeared to be on the

Table 7

Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Fun

- | <u>Do</u> | <u>Don't</u> |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate a child's attitude toward the experience by whether he/she wants to play next season • Make practice something to look forward to • Recognize that many children equate playing with having fun • Provide social gathering for the players | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume that winning is the primary way to have fun in sport • Forget that it's a kid's game • Be too serious. |

experience being positive for the child, one that he/she looked forward to repeating and one that provided social as well as physical opportunities.

The understanding of what constitutes "fun" for children in sport continues to be unclear to the research community. The work by Scanlan (1989b) provides better understanding of sources of enjoyment for the elite performer, but it is still vague how children 8-12 years old in a community recreation setting might define it. The work by Harris and Ewing (1993) with 8-12-year-olds in a tennis setting attempted to address this question when they asked participants at different ages how they might define what they enjoyed most from participation. Eight-year-olds suggested that fun was being able to hit the ball, where the nine-year-olds maintained being able to hit the ball hard made the game enjoyable. At the 10-year-old level, fun was being able to rally with a friend. Eleven- and 12-year-olds placed greater emphasis on the competitive nature of the game in defining fun. All five age levels articulated that fun to them was directly related to the skills of the game (e.g., hitting, rallying). The authors concluded that fun was greatly influenced by skill level and argued that skill development should be emphasized in coaches' education.

Parents in this study, however, stressed other components of the competitive experience over skill development (e.g., positive communication, knowing and caring

about the child, etc.) as important for the child's enjoyment. It is unfair to compare these findings with the research of Harris and Ewing (1993) because their study focused on the athlete's attitudes while this study addressed the parents' point of view. Certainly further research is necessary on what constitutes fun for the participant. Research which has examined the recreational youth sport participant's attitudes (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1989) has suggested that having fun was the single most important criteria for children to get involved in sport and to continue participation.

Although this investigation provides little help in defining what fun is to the young athlete, it does point out two issues regarding fun that may be valuable to future researchers. One, these parents were able to identify the outcomes of an enjoyable experience for their children (e.g., the child wanting to participate again), but not describe or explain the concept of what fun meant to their children. Their comments suggest that it would behoove the research community to examine the issue directly from the child's perspective as in the work of Harris and Ewing (1993). Parents may be ineffective in describing the concept for their children.

Secondly, parents suggested if the experience was not fun for the child, he/she would not want to repeat it. They argued that today's child has numerous options from which to choose how he/she might spend leisure time. As a result, youth sport is only one of many things the child can do. These parents wanted to see their children involved in sport, but they cautioned that if sport was not conducted properly, the child would quickly move to other options. From a marketing perspective, sport administrators may need to review the product line if it wants to keep the customer.

Developmentally Appropriate

Consistent with the approach taken in the previous sections, parents recognized that the coach controls the balance between what he/she expects from the child and what the child is developmentally capable of doing. Similarly, since development is

along a continuum and is individual in nature, parents recognized the importance of the coach viewing each child as an individual and treating the child accordingly.

The concept of winning, or rather an overemphasis on winning, is included in this section because of its developmental nature. Parents did not argue that winning was unimportant in sport; rather they suggested it was not appropriate to emphasize it in these leagues with 8-12 year-old participants. They argued that winning was important to the adults who coached, but not as important to the players or the parents. The overemphasis on winning, in their minds, detracted from the benefits that could be derived from sport and was a major issue in the problems encountered by players and parents in these leagues.

Parents offered guidelines throughout the interviews relating to developmental issues. Most of them focused on individual development issues and concerns for an overemphasis on winning as described in Table 8.

Table 8

Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Developmentally Appropriate

<u>Do</u>	<u>Don't</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that different children will react differently to the same coaching style • Recognize that motives dictate behavior and are individual in nature • Get to know each child to better understand him/her • Understand transitional issues for young players entering the league • Care about the players as people first, players second • Remember that they are just kids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect the child to view the game in the same way as an adult would • Expect all children of a given age to behave the same • Expect mental toughness from children at this age

The issue of winning and how much importance should be placed on it at the youth sport level is not new. Coaches in other studies (Gross, 1982; Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978; Orlick & Botterill, 1975) put greater emphasis on the need to win than did parents. As a result, coaches' education programs have continued to stress the need to keep winning in perspective relative to other outcomes goals of youth sport. An overemphasis on winning continues to be an issue regardless of these educational efforts.

As long as adults view the youth sport experience as a watered-down version of the adult model (i.e., collegiate, professional sport), it is unlikely that the importance of winning will change. In adult sport, winning is more than an important outcome of sport; it is often the most critical component of the experience. Many adult coaches in the youth sport arena may be unable to divorce themselves from this belief.

Many volunteer coaches may perceive or be told that their success as a coach is measured by their win-loss record. Measuring success by the number of wins a coach accumulates is extrapolated directly from the adult model of sport. A new definitions of success in the *youth* sport setting needs to be employed to create a distinction between adult sport and youth sport. Once these criteria for success have been communicated to the coach, administrators would be responsible to evaluate the coach's effectiveness according to these criteria.

Perhaps one way to look at the problem is to examine the context in which youth sport is perceived by adults. Little League baseball (and other youth sports) is viewed as a sport played by 8 to 12-year-olds as opposed to 8 to 12-year olds who happen to be participating in sport. The focus is the game as well as the development of skills and strategies to play that game, not necessarily the social, emotional, and physical development of children who play the game. Because winning is believed by

coaches to be the ultimate goal of the game, it takes precedence over other valuable outcomes.

It is not surprising that coaches focus on the game. Program administrators recruit people to coach who have played the game and understand the skills necessary for success. They are generally people who have spent a large amount of time involved in the adult model of sport. They love the game. To be able to view the game from the perspective of the child addressing his/her needs may be seem both foreign and unnecessary to them.

We train these individuals in coaches' education programs through two primary components: (a) how to teach and manage the game, and (b) how to understand and work with children. They come to these programs anxious to learn more about the skills and drills of the game, but less anxious to know more about the needs of children. Their primary focus continues to be the game regardless of educational efforts.

The parents in this study argued that the child was more important than the game. Their focus was the child, not the strategies to win. Their concerns were for the individual and developmental needs of that child, not the needs of the coach to win. To them, success was having the child's needs met.

Imagine if youth sport coaches were recruited for their love of children as a primary concern and love of the game a secondary consideration. Perhaps then the emphasis would be on the "total child" as the parents in this study stressed so much. As one subject stated, "To me, the boys are the most important thing out there, not the game" (ll 5, 547-550). Youth sport, in this context, would no longer be driven by an adaptation of the adult model. It would take on its own approach where the child is the primary focus.

Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect those involved in youth sport to make such a dramatic change in focus. This is especially true since the only model that currently exists for youth sport programs to follow is the adult model. It seems reasonable, however, that this different perspective for youth sport must originate from those responsible to educate coaches. Coaches and league administrators must review the existing goals for their programs; what more appropriate setting than through coaches' education?

Aside from a concern about the overemphasis on winning at this level, parents suggested another issue that warrants further discussion. First, they suggested that coaches need to understand that each child is an individual and needs to be treated that way. As one subject said, "Different strokes for different folks" (gl 3, 133-149). Certainly, this individual approach proposed by the parents is related to the "total child" concept discussed above, but it may mean more to coaches' education.

Much of the developmental research in youth sport (Magill, 1988; Malina, 1986; Orlick, 1986; Pooley, 1986; Seefeldt, 1988) has concentrated on understanding the child and his/her capabilities at various levels. Coaches' education programs have disseminated this kind of information to coaches so that they might better understand the children under their care. There has been far less emphasis in coaches' education, however, on the importance of understanding individual characteristics of the child. Perhaps greater emphasis should be placed in future educational programs on recognizing that children may react differently to the coach's attempt to motivate, criticize, and teach skills.

Fair

Parents suggested that the sport experience should be fair to all participants. Fairness was characterized by the granting of comparable or equal playing time to all players. Concern existed regarding the perceived preferential treatment given to those

players who were coached by a parent. Parents argued that it was common for the "coach's kid" to consistently play more than others. A summary of these concerns is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Fair

- | <u>Do</u> | <u>Don't</u> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be consistent in enforcing team rules • Allow comparable playing time for all participants • Treat your own child like all of the other players (if coach is coaching own child) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force younger players to participate less • Take advantage of the position of coach to give more playing time to preferred players • Let an emphasis to win dictate how much players will play |

The issue of equal or comparable playing time expressed by these parents is consistent with the parents in the Michigan study (Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978). Both suggested that coaches distribute playing time unfairly.

To address these issues of fairness, youth sport coaches and programmers might consider a number of possible alternatives. First, as some of these parents have suggested, program rules could dictate that all players play an equal number of innings in all games. They argued that to be fair a child not only had to play in a game, but must get comparable or equal playing time to his/her peers regardless of skill level or age.

Second, coaches might alternate players so that all players start an equal number of games as opposed to some being designated as "substitute" players. Finally, coaches could teach, and provide playing time for, all players in all positions. This eliminates a further distinction between those players who always play the valued positions (shortstop) and those who play peripheral positions (right field).

Educational

Parents implied that the sport experience should have an educational component. They maintained that organized sport provides children an opportunity to learn valuable concepts in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The data suggest that learning affective concepts such as teamwork and discipline were important to these parents. Other affective concepts (e.g., sportsmanship, appropriate language, emotional reaction to losing) were identified as subtle learning that takes place through the coach acting as a role model for the players. Psychomotor and cognitive skills were often discussed in the same context since these were the kinds of concepts related to improving the player's performance (e.g., skill development, strategy). Again, the coach was identified as the person responsible for teaching these concepts. Guidelines which emerged from the data are presented below in Table 10.

An interesting distinction between these results and those from previous studies relates to the importance placed on coaches knowing the rules, strategies, and

Table 10

Guidelines for Coaches to Make Sport Educational

- | <u>Do</u> | <u>Don't</u> |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage an understanding of the team concept • Earn the child's respect • Provide a positive role model • Recognize that the coach's behavior will be modeled by the athletes • Stress the importance of hard work paying off in the end • Teach the fundamental skills of the game • Prepare players for the next level of competition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on individual performance as compared to team performance • Make the commitment of being part of a team a burden for the child • Neglect the poorer skilled player |

skills of the game. In the study conducted by Gross (1982), parents agreed with coaches that team strategy, rules of the game, and learning/demonstrating skills should be covered in-depth by coaches' education programs.

The parents in this study, however, implied that the technical aspects of the game are of secondary importance to interpersonal and managerial concerns. Of the 288 comments coded by themes, only 25 comments comprised the sub theme of technical expectations of the coach (rules, skill development, and strategy). This constituted 8.6% of the total data base.

There are three potential reasons for this discrepancy. First, perhaps these leagues in which the parents' children participate are blessed with well-qualified coaches who are good at teaching the rules, strategies, and skills. If so, parents failed to discuss it in detail because it was more important to talk about the shortcomings of coaches rather than their positive attributes.

On the other hand, perhaps these parents simply do not see the technical aspects of the game to be nearly as important as the coach's relationship with the player, his/her communicative style, and the issue of having fun. As a result, lengthy discussion focused on the salient issues in the minds of the parents. If this is logical, then perhaps these parents had more concern for some of the other aspects of sport than did those in the Gross (1982) study.

Third, some might argue that the high percentage of mothers (71%) who participated in this study may have impacted the tone of the data. The argument could be made that attitudes of mothers might differ from attitudes of fathers regarding what aspects of the games are most important. This way of thinking might reason that fathers would put greater emphasis on skill development while mothers would value interpersonal aspects more. These data were not analyzed to address this concern, but

the concept of stereotypical attitudes toward parents' expectations in sport warrants further research.

The Role of the Parent

A discussion of the parent's rights and responsibilities in the child's sport experience requires a re-examination of the athletic triangle (Smith, Smoll & Smith, 1989) or primary family of sport (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988) presented in Chapter 1. Perhaps the original intent of the development of the athletic triangle concept was simply to identify the primary actors in the youth sport experience. If so, the equilateral triangle approach recognizes those individuals, but is deceptive because it implies that all three have equal rights and responsibilities.

Parents in this study might view the athletic triangle as isosceles rather than equilateral with the coach's style and manner affecting both athlete and parent. The data suggest that the parents view the coach in a position of power to dramatically affect the child's experience. As a result, the coach's right to control over the child's experience also impacts the parent. Figure 9 depicts these two views of the athletic triangle where (a) is the traditional approach and (b) is the way parents in this study describe the relationship.

The coach's position of authority over the athlete may or may not be detrimental. The positive or negative impact made by the coach is often a product of how he/she exercises the power inherent in the role. Since these parents suggested that the coach who uses power in a way to negatively affect both athlete and parent created conflict between parent and coach, a more thorough investigation of the concept of power is warranted.

The issue of power

According to Wrong (1988), individuals in positions of power can intentionally influence others to act in a way that is consistent with the power holders'

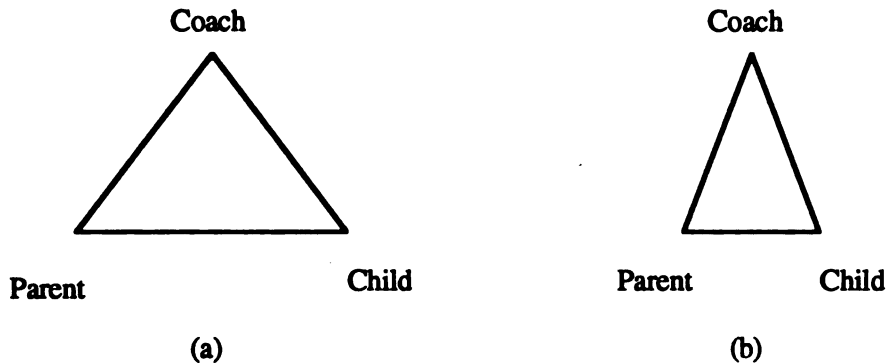


Figure 9. Two Views of the Athletic Triangle.

wishes. In the same way, power implies that one person has the capacity to follow a line of action despite interference or resistance from others (Weber, 1968). Because the coach is in the position of power within the athletic triangle, he/she has the capability to both to influence others to act in a way he/she wishes (e.g., controlling the player by deciding who is to play and who is not to play), and to resist interference in that decision (e.g., ignore the parent who says his/her child should be playing).

The parent, too, is in a position of power over the child, but his/her power is limited only to the child in the context of sport. The parent has the authority to control the child's ability to participate (e.g., keeping the child from playing a Saturday game because of a commitment to a family reunion) as well as the freedom to ignore resistance (e.g., the child complaining that he/she would rather play ball). The parent's power is limited to the child, however, and he/she does not have the power to influence the coach to act in a way the parent wishes (e.g., making sure the child will play the next game even though he/she has missed this one).

Parents suggested that poor coaches in this position of power can negatively affect the experience for the child, and in turn, the parent. When the sport experience becomes negative for the child, the parent finds him/herself in a dilemma. Given the

parents' conviction to teach a sense of responsibility through sport, namely finish what you start, taking the child out of the experience is not an option. The parent's concern for what the sport experience should be like for the child (but is not) creates conflict between parent and coach. Confounding the problem, however, is the parent's attitude that the coach's position of power makes him/her inaccessible to the parent. The parent, then, sees the child unhappy in sport as a result of the coach's style, but hesitates to approach the problem with the coach. Some parents never do confront the coach and are grateful when the experience is over. Others postpone approaching the coach until the pent up emotion associated with the concern for the child makes the meeting a battle between two opposing forces instead of a discussion between two adults concerned about the child's best interests.

The parent's role in the youth sport experience has been referred to as problematic for probably as long as there has been sport for children. The "problem" parent or the "Little League parent" conjures up images of the parent butting in where he/she does not belong, of the parent who is critical of the coach in the stands (but never to his/her face), and of the parent who believes that his/her child should be playing more than he/she is. Perhaps the parent finds him/herself in a position in conflict with the *power* exercised by the coach as much as the coach him/herself. Certainly, the more the parent feels justified in his/her position, the greater the conflict between parent and coach.

This potential conflict between parent and coach can be compared to similar problems that can occur between parent and teacher. In an educational setting, the teacher controls both the child and the parent much like the coach does in sport. A relationship between teacher and child that is perceived to be negative by the parent creates a similar kind of dilemma for the parent. The parent may hesitate to approach the teacher for fear of being viewed as an "interfering parent". Or, the parent may

avoid confrontation with the teacher to escape the teacher "taking it out" on the child. Some parents who disagree with the teacher's policies and practices may never approach the teacher and be grateful when the child is promoted to another grade and teacher.

Some researchers (Borich & Tombari, 1995; Comer, 1988; Lightfoot, 1978) argue that conflicts between parents and teachers are almost inevitable based on the different priorities set for the child by these important adult figures. Although both parents and teachers play an important role in socializing and educating the child, their perspectives vary considerably. The parent expects the school to do what is best for the child. He/she views the experience through the lens of the child and evaluates the child's experience based on the benefits the child has received. Teachers, on the other hand, must work within a system where their primary responsibility is for groups of children. Albeit important for teachers to recognize the needs of the individual, their focus is on management of the entire group with group needs superseding individual needs.

This parallels the conflicting perspectives of parents and coaches. As suggested by the data, these parents expected coaches to recognize and meet the needs of the individual child. As simple as that may sound, it could be quite challenging for a single adult to (a) know each individual child (out of a group of 15-20) well enough to recognize his/her needs, and (b) to organize a group of that size so that each child's needs could be met simultaneously. When the coach is unable to meet these expectations of the parent, conflict occurs.

Although the parent-teacher and the parent-coach relationship provide similar opportunities for conflict, the structure in the contexts of school and sport are different in two significant ways. First, teachers are professionally trained to educate children where few coaches receive any training to serve in that role. One might suggest that

parents' faith in teachers to educate children appropriately would be greater than their faith in coaches because of this difference in educational background. Secondly, in a school setting, there are optional methods that can be used by the parent to resolve conflict between parent and teacher. Principals often act as an alternative source for resolving parent-teacher conflict. Parents in sport programs such as these in Dickerson have no alternative source for conflict resolution than the coach.

The systems approach

A second explanation for the likelihood of conflict between parents and coaches also comes from systems theory, but focuses on the system of the family as it relates to other systems in society. Bronfenbrenner (1979) identified a four-stage level of systems (known as the human ecological system) within which the family operates. The first level, or microsystem, involves the interaction of family members within the family itself. The second level, or mesosystem, refers to the interactions among various systems such as the family, workplace, and school. The third level, or ecosystem, involves the major institutions of society. The final level, or macrosystem, identifies the impact of cultural values and expectations on related systems. (For a detailed explanation of the systems approach to understanding the family, see Roberts, 1994.)

In analyzing the parent-coach relationship from an ecological system perspective, it could be suggested that all four levels impact the nature of that relationship. In fact, Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that behavior of any family member must be considered on a number of levels in order to be understood fully. It makes sense that interaction among family members and the ongoing relationships within a family may affect how the parent or the child behaves as they relate to other systems (e.g., coach or teacher at the mesosystem level).

The parent who motivates his/her child through positive reinforcement in the home setting provides an example of the parent's values at the microsystem level. When the parent expects these values to be consistent in other systems (i.e., the system of sport), but are not (e.g., an atmosphere where coaches belittle children), expectations go unmet and lead to internal conflict on the part of the parent. The parent, then, must either adjust his/her expectations within the system of sport, or make an attempt to alter the child's sport experience to compliment the parent's value structure. To change the sport experience, the parent must influence the coach.

Confounding these interactions at the micro- and mesosystem level, is the parent's interactions with major institutions of society (ecosystem level) and the impact of cultural values and expectations (macrosystem level) on the parent's attitudes and behaviors. The parent who accepts the precepts of sport, who believes in the beneficial potential of the child's participation in sport, and who considers the child's participation valuable from a developmental perspective, may well view sport as an institution (ecosystem level) over which the parent has little influence for change. Similarly, the value that the American culture places on sport (macrosystem level), and the concomitant power inherent in the role of coach within sport, could serve to keep the parent from "interfering" with the process.

As discussed earlier, youth sport is patterned after the adult model of sport with only minor modifications. As a result, one might suggest that the interaction between systems (from the microsystem level to the macrosystem level) relies heavily on the attitudes and values inherent in the *adult* model of sport rather than the *youth* model of sport since a clearly delineated model for youth sport does not exist. It seems reasonable to suggest that until the expectations of youth sport parallel the needs of *children* in the sport setting as opposed to the accepted needs of the adult model, conflicts will continue to occur between parent and coach. More research in

the youth sport arena from the human ecological systems approach may help researchers to better understand the phenomenon in hopes that this understanding might lead to more effective strategies for resolving the sources of conflict.

Coaches' Education Programming

One way to address the parent-coach relationship is through coaches' education programming. Coaches have traditionally been anxious to learn how better to handle difficult situations with parents and coaches' education programs often address how to "deal with" parents. "Dealing" with parents, however, can create an image of controlling, managing, or manipulating parents as opposed to "working" with parents. Although some may argue that the distinction is simply a matter of semantics, others might view the choice of terms as an indicator of the approach taken by coaches' education programs.

This confrontational mindset of adults involved in youth sport becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If we recognize potential conflict between coaches and parents, but focus our attention on how to *deal* with the conflict instead of how to *reduce or eliminate* it, the conflict will always be the focus. A confrontational instead of invitational approach to working with parents in sport is counterproductive at this level. If the ultimate goal of youth sport is to provide an enjoyable experience for the child, conflict between parent and coach puts the child in a position where he/she cannot please both of the adults who control the child's world.

Current coaches' education curricula focus attention on how to manage and deal with parents as opposed to inviting parents to be an active player in the child's sport experience. The PACE, ACEP, and NYSCA programs all suggest that coaches conduct a pre-season parent orientation meeting in order to "set up a communication system, express your objectives for the team, alert parents to the inherent risks of the sport, and let them know what you expect of them" (Martens, 1990, pp. 158-159).

Communication with parents in addition to players is often stressed in coaches' education programs. As the NCCP Coaching Theory Level 1 suggests, "Recognize the need for regular, open communication with parents. Since misunderstandings between coach and parents are usually the result of poor communication, it is important to work hard at such communication" (Coaching Association of Canada, 1991, p. 20).

The concept of inviting parents to be actively involved in the youth sport experience is not currently addressed in coaches' education programs. It is, however, becoming a common theme in books written for the youth sport coach (Thompson, 1993; Wolff, 1993) and the youth sport parent (American Coaching Effectiveness Program, 1994; Smith, Smith & Smoll, 1983; Smith, Smoll & Smith, 1989). Parents are encouraged to become involved through active communication with the coach, support of the child, and attendance at practices and games.

This kind of involvement may improve the relationship between coach and parent as long as the parent remains in a role that is supportive of the coach. The model that is being proposed here, however, involves the parent at a higher level where his/her voice might be heard.

Parent Involvement in Education as a Model

The concept of the athletic triangle (coach, parent, child) in sport is quite similar to what might be called the educational triangle (teacher, parent, child) in schools. In schools, issues that arise between parent and teacher are somewhat similar to those issues discussed here between parent and coach. While the teacher may expect certain things from the parent (e.g., getting the child to school, making sure homework gets done, supporting the tenets prescribed by the teacher), the parent also expects certain things from the teacher (e.g., fairness, a patient and compassionate

approach, emphasis on values similar to the parent). In the education setting, as in sport, conflicts occur between these two groups.

A traditional approach in education to "bridge the gap" between parent and teacher has been the parent-teacher conference. This method has been well-accepted as an opportunity to bring parent and teacher together for healthy dialogue. Much like the parent orientation meeting in sport, however, its usefulness is often limited to providing a forum for the teacher to explain his/her expectations and request the parent's support. As Epstein and Becker (1982) suggest, it provides for a "polite exchange between parents and teachers" (p. 113), but does not lend itself to parent involvement.

The education model of parent involvement goes well beyond polite discourse. Educators have recognized the importance of involving parents in the educational process and research suggests that well-designed parent involvement programs can have a positive effect on student achievement (Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985). Programs designed to integrate parents into the educational process have received substantial support both theoretically (Austin & Willeke, 1986; Jowett & Baginsky, 1991; Sutton, 1987; Thomas, 1991; Utterback & Kalin, 1989) and financially (Chrispeels, 1991; Epstein, 1984; Epstein, 1991; Epstein & Becker, 1982) .

The scope of parent involvement is broad. A comprehensive program might follow the policy adopted by the California State Board of Education in 1989 that calls for programs and actions that:

1. Help parents develop parenting skills
2. Give them information on how to foster their children's learning
3. Use community resources to support families and students
4. Promote two-way communication between home and school
5. Involve parents at school as volunteers in both instructional and support activities

6. Involve parents in school governance and in advocacy roles (Chrispeels, 1991, p. 368)

These six levels range along a continuum from parents being taught specific facts and concepts (e.g., parenting skills) to parents being counted on to provide their expertise within the school system (e.g., serving on governance groups). The intent of these programs is to get parents initially involved at a level appropriate for their background and experience with the ultimate goal to be involving them in some kind of advisory fashion.

Examples of programs that involve parents at the highest level (e.g., 6. above) are called school-based management (David, 1989) or site-based management (SBM) (Ambrosie & Haley, 1991). This system of reform in managing schools is designed to "empower school staff to improve education practice through fundamental change in district management functions" (David, 1989, p. 46) Individual schools are given the decision-making authority in areas of budget, staffing, and curriculum as opposed to being relegated to the mandates of the district in these areas.

Parent involvement is considered a key element to effective site-based management. The role of parents may differ from one model to another, but they are considered a part of the decision-making team usually in an advisory capacity. Parent input is not only accepted but encouraged. They become part of the process as opposed to being on the periphery.

There are advantages of having parents as a part of educational reform. As Austin and Willeke (1986) suggest, "People support what they help create." The thinking here is that the more parents are involved and understand the schools, the more they support them. Another advantage, according to Epstein (1984), is the more parents feel involved in the education of their children, the more they will "recognize the efforts and merits of teachers" (p. 72). They will recognize the challenges faced by teachers and appreciate their hard work.

If parents were invited to participate in decision-making practices in youth sport in the same way they have in educational pursuits, could we expect these same kinds of advantages? It makes sense that using the educational model in sport could lead to a better relationship between parents and coaches in four ways. One, participation in making decisions that affect others generally leads one to take ownership for those decisions. Involving parents to the extent that their voice is heard empowers these individuals. They have an opportunity to feel a part of the solution as opposed to being viewed as a part of the problem.

Two, parent involvement can lead to better parent understanding. By becoming more involved in the child's sport program, the parent becomes more knowledgeable about the total program; the strengths of the program as well as the limitations. For example, parents in this study expressed concern for the late night games that were played at the beginning of the season while the children were still in school. Parents who were also coaches, however, explained how the limitation on the number of fields made it necessary to play three games on a field as opposed to two. Parents began to understand the reason behind the policy. Some still disagreed with the practice, but at least they understood. The more parents become integrated into the program, the more they understand how and why the program operates the way it does.

Three, parent involvement in a variety of ways in youth sport can lead to greater opportunities for parent-coach interaction. Those involved in the educational model suggest that parents "recognize the efforts and merits of the teacher." Working with others often helps us to appreciate what they do. Perhaps parents would begin to understand and appreciate the merits of the coach if parents felt "part of the team."

Finally, research suggests that the educational model and its involvement of parents in the educational process leads to improved student academic achievement.

Is it possible that greater involvement of parents in youth sports can lead to improved athlete satisfaction? If parents feel empowered, have a sense of ownership for the program, and have a greater appreciation for the coach's role, perhaps the confrontational aspect of the coach-parent relationship would be diminished. It seems possible that the child would feel less torn between these two adults and have a greater chance for an enjoyable experience.

Some of the implications for coaches' education that follow are a reflection of the researcher's suggestion that the educational model should be explored in youth sport. The invitational approach to involving parents in youth sport, and the concurrent need to train coaches in this regard, redefines the traditional understanding of the coach-parent relationship.

Implications for Coaches' Education

The implications for coaches' education programs listed below are an outgrowth of the data. Although the limitations of this particular study will be examined in the future research section in greater depth, it should be pointed out here that the ideas presented below are specific to this group of parents and may reflect issues that are unique to them and not shared by other parents.

Implications are divided into two categories. General guidelines for coaches' education include suggestions that come from the data from a variety of sources. These guidelines range from minor changes in presenting material to major concepts that need to be added to current programming. The second category relates specifically to implications regarding the parent role in the sport experience. Guidelines are presented that need to be addressed in coaches' education.

Guidelines for Coaches' Education

Be specific about appropriate and inappropriate behavior. With the volume of material to be covered in coaches' education sessions, it is easy to become abstract

rather than concrete. As a result, coaches must interpret abstract concepts into operational behavior. Parents in this study would suggest that coaches they know need to work from the obvious (e.g., don't swear, don't belittle) before they can appreciate the broader concepts (e.g., the positive approach to coaching) espoused in current coaches' education programs. As one of the parents pointed out, what appears to be common sense to some must be spelled out for others.

Provide guidelines for the development of program goals and objectives. If other programs exist like the one in Dickerson where goals have not been established, teaching coaches about the need for a program philosophy would be valuable. Some might argue that establishing a philosophy belongs within the realm of program administrators and inappropriate for coaches' education. However, by educating coaches that goals and objectives should exist, coaches can initiate discussion or express concerns for not having a clear direction for the program. With their increased knowledge, they can influence the attitudes and behaviors of program administrators.

Emphasize the "total child" concept. These parents saw the sport experience as only a part of the child's life. As important as sport was, it was only one aspect. Perhaps coaches' education programs need to emphasize keeping sport in perspective to a greater extent than they currently do. Coaches need to understand that success in youth sport coaching must be defined differently than in its adult counterpart. The emphasis, concern, and interest on the part of the coach in this context should be on the child and his/her needs and the coach must be an advocate for seeing that these needs are met.

Provide parents' education in addition to coaches' education. These parents suggested that parents' education is an important complimentary component of coaches' education. For example, the attitude that children must learn the idea of commitment by continuing in a negative experience might suggest that these parents

could benefit from education relating to readiness issues. Possible topic areas for parents' education programs might be how to: examine the parent's role in the experience, encourage but not push the child, initiate positive communication with the coach, set realistic goals and expectations of the child in sport, assist in improving the child's skill without "pushing", and provide appropriate feedback to the child. The ACEP Parenting Program (ACEP, 1994) is a step toward parents being better informed in these and other areas.

The Role of the Parent

The guidelines presented below relate specifically to the parent in youth sport and how coaches' education can impact an attitude of collaboration between parent and coach. Teaching coaches that parents *should* be included can lead to more of an invitational than confrontational relationship between these two groups.

Conduct a pre-season meeting between coach and parents. Although coaches' education programs typically include a section devoted to the parent orientation session, it is usually suggested that the coach use this time to inform parents of the coach's philosophy, team rules, practice and game schedule, and role of the parents. This could easily be restructured to provide a genuine opportunity for discussion between members rather than a lecture conducted by the coach.

Emphasize team social events. Team social events would allow more opportunities for the coach and parents to (a) get to know each other, and (b) communicate about issues relating to the athlete in a less formal atmosphere. Aside from the potential social benefits for the children, the formal roles of coach and parent become much less rigid in a purely social context allowing for increased opportunities to understand and appreciate others' points of view.

Encourage parent involvement through a pre-season survey. The pre-season survey allows parents to express their views regarding such issues as winning and

fairness to the coach. This could give the coach a better understanding of parental expectations and hopefully avoid potential conflicts.

Solicit some form of post season evaluation from both parents and athletes.

Formal evaluation of the coach at season's end provides feedback to the coach on his/her perceived effectiveness during the season. It gives coaches a chance to find out for themselves how parents and athletes feel about their decisions regarding such issues as winning, playing time, team rules, practice organization, and willingness to participate on that team again. An easy way to accomplish this again is the survey format.

Encourage parents to be members of decision making groups. The parent voice in making youth sport decisions that affect their children goes a long way to develop a collaborative working relationship between coach and parent. A parent advisory group is one way this could be accomplished. Parents also can be effective as team assistants (similar to teachers' aides in education). The goal of any kind of parent involvement initiative should be to see the parent as a resource.

Some might argue that involving parents to this degree will exacerbate the common problem faced by many sport programs of getting people to serve as volunteer coaches. The argument would be that fewer people would be willing to coach now that parents are "telling them what to do and how to do it." Although the transition from the traditional "coach-centered" approach to a more collaborative model might discourage some coach's involvement, it is equally possible that more adults would be willing to volunteer as the likelihood of adult conflicts would diminish.

Recommendations for Future Research

Like so many research studies, this one has been effective in leading the reader toward more questions to be asked than directly answering the original research questions. As a result, this investigation takes only the first step in a line of research toward better understanding the role of the parent in the youth sport setting. It does not provide the research community with new knowledge in its own right.

How, then, does this study serve as a stepping stone for further investigation that could in fact lead to greater knowledge? What might be a sequence of research approaches that logically would lead to a greater understanding of parents' perceptions in the youth sport setting? What were the limitations of this inquiry that require supporting evidence to develop assertions with confidence? These questions are addressed below as the discussion focuses on three issues : (a) an analysis of the limitations of this study, (b) further research efforts to examine the concept of the parent's role in sport, (c) a re-examination of the existing data from different perspectives, and (d) alternative research that might be used to compliment these findings.

Limitations of the Study

It is recognized that this particular study had its limitations. Its intent was to provide a better understanding of parents' perceptions regarding youth sport in depth. In many ways, it accomplished this goal. There were, however, certain factors that affect the efficacy of these findings.

First, the 38 individuals involved in the study were a relatively small number from which to gather data. Even though themes became redundant using the focus group interviewing technique, there is still concern that some parent issues might not have been recognized.

Secondly, over 70% of the parents were mothers. One has to question if the mother's perception might differ from the father's. Data analysis did not recognize this difference, but it is important to point out the possibility of its existence.

Thirdly, all parents were volunteers for the study. Parents had no motive to participate other than perhaps curiosity or an interest in sharing their impressions so that youth sport might be improved. As they related their experiences, it was evident to the researcher that they were actively involved in their child's life. It could be suggested that not all parents share this level of commitment to their children. Data from parents who did not choose to participate might have been quite different.

As a result of these factors, further investigation is needed to place these findings in their proper perspective. The section below addresses possible extensions of this line of research.

The Need for Replication

In order to determine if these findings are unique to this group of parents or representative of other parents, this investigation needs to be replicated in other settings. The following guidelines might be suggested for replication of this study:

1. **Maintain the focus group format.** It allows for checks and balances of opinions in a non-threatening environment. More importantly, it allows the parents rather than researchers to define the issues. In addition, the researcher felt parents who participated in single interviews acted as though they were "on the spot" to come up with an answer. The group interview format allowed parents to share opinions and attitudes when they were comfortable as opposed to immediately after the question was asked.
2. **Start interviews early in the sport season so that data collection can be completed by season's end.** Once the season is over, parents are reluctant to participate.

3. Investigate ways in which parents can participate with little interruption of their schedules. One of the major problems in getting participants was the commitment parents had to other activities. They were simply too busy to take on another scheduled activity. If facilities allow, perhaps interviews could be conducted at the game site prior to games. This requires parents coming early to the game, but does not force them to schedule a separate evening to participate. Another alternative might be to schedule group interviews in conjunction with existing parent organizations (e.g., PTA). Getting these kinds of organizations to validate and promote the research may encourage parent involvement.
4. Find a way to encourage fathers to participate. Perhaps father-only focus groups might encourage their participation. Perhaps incentives would be necessary, which represents an interesting research question in itself as to the impact of incentives on the attitudes expressed by parents.
5. Replicate with other parents, but frame the research and interview questions around the systems approach. Further research needs to be done to determine if systems theory is a viable paradigm for the study of youth sport.

Replicate in other settings (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) to get an understanding of various value structures that might impact the results.
6. Replicate in other sports. Do parents of ice hockey players or gymnasts view the experience differently? Are there issues for parents that are inherent to particular sports?
7. Replicate in other age groups. Parents in this study suggested that winning becomes more important as children get older. How much older? And to whom (parent or child) is it more important?

From a series of replications, a better understanding of parents' issues and concerns can be generated. These issues and concerns could be developed into a survey, which with formalized sampling techniques, could provide the research community with generalizable findings.

Further Examination of the Data

Because of the magnitude of the data collected during this study, it could have been analyzed in a number of ways. The primary focus of this report was to address the research questions. Further investigation of this data set might reveal additional avenues to pursue in future studies.

Specifically, it was noted earlier that the gender of the sport participant was not analyzed regarding its impact on parent attitudes. Themes were developed irrespective of league and/or gender. A more thorough analysis is justified to determine if parents of older and more talented children share similar attitudes to parents of the younger athlete. Similarly, an investigation into differences in attitudes of parents of boys compared to parents of girls is warranted.

Secondly, the concern for the high ratio of mothers to fathers has already been noted. Data analysis did not reveal a noticeable difference in attitudes and concerns between mothers and fathers. However, because data analysis focused more on what was said as opposed to who said it, further examination of attitude ownership might be advisable.

Research with Existing Programs

This recommendation for future research refers to the implications section of this chapter where an argument was made that parents should be more involved in the organization of youth sport programming. The contention was that the more parents are a part of the design of these programs, the more parents and coaches are "on the

same page" in terms of expectations for its implementation. This, in turn, should lead to less conflict between parent and coach.

Future research should identify those youth sport programs which have extensive parent involvement to test this assertion. If parent leadership makes youth sport programs more effective, these programs could serve as a model for others. Do these programs provide for greater satisfaction on the part of the child? Do they improve the parent-coach relationship? Are there benefits from empowering parents in the administration of youth sports?

Summary

The results of this study suggest that these parents were in agreement with parents from previous studies in regard to coaches (a) placing too much emphasis on winning, (b) needing better communication skills with athletes, and (c) unfairly distributing playing time among the athletes. Unique to this investigation were the parents' concern for more emphasis in coaches' education on (a) interpersonal and managerial aspects of the game (communication, fairness) compared to the technical components (rules, strategy, skill development), (b) the uniqueness of children in their response to adult leadership, and (c) the avoidance of negative communication patterns of coaches (e.g., berating or belittling children).

Leaders in the area of youth sport were challenged to discontinue using an adapted adult model to structure sporting opportunities for children 8-12-years old. The major component of that model (winning) was argued to be counterproductive to the potential benefits derived from sport by children.

Similarly, the researcher argued that the educational model of involving parents in administrative decision making could provide a better youth sport experience for athletes, coaches, and parents. The ultimate goal would be to get coaches (the adults with power over both athletes and parents) to invite parents into

the administrative structure so that both of these adults could work in harmony for the betterment of the child's experience.

Finally, directions for future research were highlighted emphasizing a need to continue with the focus group interview approach in further investigations of parental attitudes. An argument was made that studies similar to this one needed to be completed with athletes of different ages, sports, and geographical settings. A need was also recognized for identifying and evaluating youth sport programs that encourage significant involvement from parents.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Coaches' Code of Ethics

I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as a NYSCA Coach by following the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics:

- **I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of any personal desire to win.**
- **I will remember to treat each player as an individual, remembering the large spread of emotional and physical development for the same age group.**
- **I will do my very best to provide a safe play situation for my players.**
- **I promise to review and practice the necessary first-aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.**
- **I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.**
- **I will lead, by example, in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.**
- **I will insure that I am knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and that I will teach these rules to my players.**
- **I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.**
- **I will remember that I am a youth coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.**

APPENDIX B

National Standards for Youth Sports

The following standards are endorsed and supported by 82 national agencies and organizations:

1. Proper Sports Environment

Parents must consider and carefully choose the proper sports environment for their child, including the appropriate age and development for participation, the type of sport, the rules of the sport, the age range of the participants, and the proper level of physical and emotional stress.

2. Programs Based on the Well-being of Children

Parents must select youth sports programs that are developed and organized to enhance the emotional, physical, social, and educational well-being of children.

3. Drug- and Alcohol-Free Environment

Parents must encourage a drug- and alcohol-free environment for their children.

4. Part of a Child's Life

Parents must recognize that youth sports are only a part of a child's life.

5. Training

Parents must insist that coaches are trained and certified.

6. Parents' Active Role

Parents must make a serious effort to take an active role in the youth sports experience of their child, providing positive support as a spectator, coach, league administrator, and/or caring parent.

7. Positive Role Models

Parents must be positive role models, exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices, and home, while also giving positive reinforcement to their child and support their child's coach.

8. Parental Commitment

Parents must demonstrate their commitment to their child's youth sports experience by annually signing a parental code of ethics.

9. Safe-Playing Situations

Parents must insist on safe playing facilities, healthful playing situations, and proper first-aid application, should the need arise.

10. Equal Play Opportunity

Parents, coaches, and league administrators must provide equal sports play opportunity for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status, or ability.

11. Drug- and Alcohol-Free Adults

Parents must be drug- and alcohol-free at youth league sport events.

APPENDIX C

Objectives of Children's Sports Programs

1. To develop motoric competencies.
2. To develop physical fitness.
3. To teach children how to cooperate.
4. To develop a sense of achievement, leading to positive self-concepts.
5. To develop interest in and a desire to continue participation in sports in later years.
6. To develop healthy, strong identities.
7. to help develop independence through interdependent activities.
8. To promote and convey the values of society.
9. To contribute to moral development.
10. To have fun.
11. To develop social competencies.
12. To help bring the family together.
13. To provide opportunities for physical-affective learning, including learning to understand and express emotion, imagination and appreciation for what the body can do.
14. To develop speed, strength, endurance, coordination, flexibility and agility.
15. To develop leadership skills.
16. To develop self-reliance and emotional stability by learning to make decisions and accept responsibilities.
17. To teach sportsmanship.
18. To develop initiative.
19. To teach children how to compete.
20. To help children learn about their capabilities through comparisons with others.

APPENDIX D

Bill of Rights for Young Athletes

1. Right to participate in sports
2. Right to participate at a level commensurate with each child's maturity and ability
3. Right to have qualified adult leadership
4. Right to play as a child and not as an adult
5. Right of children to share in the leadership and decision-making of their sport participation
6. Right to participate in safe and healthy environments
7. Right to proper preparation for participation in sports
8. Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success
9. Right to be treated with dignity
10. Right to have fun in sports

APPENDIX E

Coach Letter

Dear Coach,

As a part of my doctoral work at Michigan State University, I am conducting a research study this summer within the baseball and softball programs in Dickerson. The research will investigate parents/guardians' attitudes toward their child's sport experience. It will be conducted by inviting parents to participate in one of many group interviews.

It is important that you understand that this study is not designed to evaluate the Dickerson leagues or your effectiveness as a coach. Questions posed to these parents will deal with their attitudes in general about sports for children and not issues that are specific to your team.

In order to conduct this study, I need to inform parents/guardians of the research and encourage them to participate. I am hoping that I can count on you to distribute the enclosed Parent/Guardian Information Form to each of your players to take home and have signed. Please have the players return the form to you **within one week**, and call me when the majority of forms are returned at the number below. I will then make arrangements to pick up the forms from you.

I understand that you are extremely busy and this could become one more administrative "chore" involved in coaching, but this project would be impossible without your support. If you are a parent/guardian, you are certainly invited to complete one of the enclosed forms. Your input as both parent and coach would be most valuable.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Dickerson College () or at home (). I certainly appreciate your taking time to distribute these to your players. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Marty Litherland, Associate Professor
Sport Science

APPENDIX F

Parent Information Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a part of my doctoral work at Michigan State University, I am conducting a research study this summer within the baseball and softball programs in Dickerson. The research will investigate parents' attitudes toward their child's sport experience. It will be conducted by inviting parents/guardians to participate in one of many group interviews.

The group interviews will be conducted at Dickerson College in the () Lounge at the (). Approximately six to nine parents will be invited for each interview where questions will revolve around their perceptions of their child's involvement in sport. This is not a evaluation of the league in which your child participates, nor of his/her coach. The discussion will involve the topic of youth sport in general.

Anything shared by members of the group will be held in strictest confidence and will not be used for any purposes other than those of the study. Participants in the study may receive a summary of the research at their request.

The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes and will be informal. I hope that you can find the time to participate as your input is critical to the success of the study. Complete the information on the next page and return it in the envelope provided as soon as possible. Upon receiving your form, I will contact you to confirm your interview time.

If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me at the college () or at home (). Thank you for your assistance. This would be impossible without your help.

Sincerely,

Marty Litherland, Associate Professor
Sport Science
The Defiance College

APPENDIX G

Script

My name is Marty Litherland and I am an Associate Professor in Sport Science here at the college. I am in the process of completing my doctoral program in physical education with emphasis in coaches' education at the youth sport level. A requirement for completion of the degree is a research project which is why I have asked you here today.

Across the country there are coaches' education programs designed for the youth sport coach like the coaches in your child's league. The curriculum for these programs is very good in teaching coaches what they need to know to direct recreational programs for kids. This curriculum has been developed, however, without much input from parents in terms of what they think their child's coach needs to know. This project, then, is designed to get parents' opinions and attitudes about their child's involvement in sport in an effort to determine if the current curriculum is complete.

I will be asking you a series of questions about your experience as a parent whose child is involved in sport. It is important that you understand that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The intent is to find out what your opinions are based on your experience so that we can better understand sport for children from the parent's perspective.

Your answers will be compiled with answers from other groups like this to get a sense of what parents think are important aspects of the youth sport experience. Your specific answers and your personal identity will be known only to myself and the person who will transcribe the audio tapes. You will each be given a pseudonym so that your responses will not be identified with you personally. Similarly, your responses will not be reported to your child's coach, league officials, or the committee directing my research in any way that might identify you.

You will notice some audio visual equipment here. I will be recording what we say here so that I can document what is said and I don't run the risk of misunderstanding the discussion. The tape will be transcribed and your pseudonym will be assigned to your responses at that time. The video camera will also record the session, but only for the purpose of making sure we assign the response to the questions to the correct person when transcribing the audio tape. It too will not be shared with anyone other than myself and the person transcribing the tape.

When a question is presented, we will move around the table to each of you initially for your response. Please answer openly and honestly. You are encouraged to add to other people's responses, but I ask that you not interrupt them since the tape can only record one voice at a time. You will be given a chance for further comments after we have gone around the table with each question. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions and may discontinue your participation in this interview at any time.

Before we go any further, are there any questions at this point?

APPENDIX H

Consent Form

1. I understand the explanation of the study that has been given to me and what my participation will involve.
2. I understand that the interview will take one to two hours.
3. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary.
4. I understand that I am free to discontinue my participation at any time without penalty.
5. I understand that with my permission the interview will be tape recorded. I also understand that the researcher and the transcriber of the tapes are the only ones who will have access to the tape.
6. I understand that the results of this study will be treated in strict confidence and that my name will not be revealed.
7. I understand that I am not to share with anyone the comments of others that are made during the interview.
8. I understand that, at my request, I can receive additional explanation of the study after my participation is completed.
9. I understand that the results of this study may be published in some form and I give my consent for my contributions to the interview to be included under the parameters outlined above.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX I

**Youth Sport Interview
Follow-up Response**

Thank you for your participation in the group interview. This research would not be possible without your assistance.

Please provide any information that might be helpful to the study that was not shared during the interview. Return the form in the return envelope provided.

Name _____

Date of Group Interview _____

League (please circle): Girls' Softball Boys' League Little League

APPENDIX J

Composite Sort by Themes

Parents' Expectations of the Coach: Technical

Rules

21-11 5-542-550...When I think about the coach, I don't think about the rules and stuff, because most of them do know that. I'm more concerned with the fairness they're gonna treat my child with...That they're gonna treat each child as an equal. You know, that one is not better than the other. Granted, there are gonna be kids who are better than others, but don't show that. Good sportsmanship is very important. When I think about a good coach, I don't think as much about the playing part. I know that's important, practices and such...But I see a good coach as tell the kids, "good job" and not putting the kids down. Focusing more on the kids as individuals and team players. To me, the boys are the most important thing out there, not the game.

25-g11-623-637-01...The rules of the game.

25-g11-623-637-02-ml...Those kinds of things, sure.

25-g11-623-637-03...And how to relay those rules to those kids.

25-g11-623-637-04...You get an eight-year old whose parents weren't athletic and you have to start from the beginning. Which hand do I put the glove on? Which way do I run if I hit the ball? We've had little girls that ran to third base. I think you need someone who knows the game and has patience, with a capital "P".

25-g11-662-691-01...Nine out of ten times if it's a force-out, the girl still tags them. I think they would need to be knowledgeable so that the girls know what's going on, but yet they need to be positive, a lot.

25-g11-662-691-02...I think they know the fundamentals of the game. Other than that, as far as the rules or anything like that, I think they know the rules and the fundamentals. Like on my little girls team I thought their coach was excellent this year. He was real easy going.

25-g11-662-691-03...Is he the one with the pony tail?

25-g11-662-691-04...Yeah.

25-g11-662-691-05...He is such a nice guy.

25-g11-662-691-06...Yeah. He's a great coach. And he played ball when he was in high school and he knows the fundamentals and he can see it where the girls are much better as far as they don't throw behind the runner so much. Even something little like that you see all the time, throwing behind the runner. Those girls normally try to throw it to the base ahead of the runners. Just little things like that. The rules, the fundamentals and I think that's all a coach at that level really needs.

31-g13-264-270...Rules of the game. Be sure they have the basic knowledge of how to throw a ball. Now that's not the rules of the game how somebody holds the bat, but fundamentals as well as the rules. At least a basic ability to communicate...To be able to make themselves clear in very basic situations. If they can't get across their knowledge, then they can't be very successful. They should have all kinds of social

skills training. Teamwork and all that, but maybe that's out of the realm of little girls softball.

31-gl2-464-494...That's an interesting question. I think they have to have a basic understanding as far as the rules and that part of the game. I think that they need to psychologically find out where they're at as far as discipline, what the game means to them, and I think you have to have, if you're talking a community, I think there needs to be a community focus. Where the community puts forth this is what we want to portray. You know like the y and mission statement. I think there are certain behaviors that if you're going to be teaching this to children that you have to be a role model. And I would say probably most important, and this is one that might be lacking in a lot of coaches in this area, and this again comes from my nursing background, developmental stages of children at this age. There's not a great understanding of that, especially if you haven't dealt with it. Just because you are a parent of a child doesn't mean that you are excellent at it and maybe that needs to be something that is gone over, the developmental of this age group that you're dealing with. Because some things are impossible for kids at that age and some things are just unhealthy for kids at that age, and you have to be careful of that and I think that's important for along this aspect for these kids to go on if they want to be involved in sports later on they can really do damage if you're not knowledgeable about those aspects and that comes from my nursing. But I do believe that there's a development there that is different from the development of a high school versus a college and I think you have to deal with that and I think they have to be knowledgeable about that.

36-gl3-264-270-...Rules of the game. Be sure they have the basic knowledge of how to throw a ball. Now that's not the rules of the game how somebody holds the bat, but fundamentals as well as the rules. At least a basic ability to communicate. To be able to make themselves clear in very basic situations. If they can't get across their knowledge, then they can't be very successful. They should have all kinds of social skills training. Teamwork and all that, but maybe that's out of the realm of little girls softball.

Skill Development

07-gl1-280-288...Self-esteem, I think, too. Last night, we played last night. We had a little girl I don't think she's had a hit all year and she's new, she's eight. Last night she got a base hit. I tell you she was so excited she was jumping up and down on first base all excited. We didn't care if we won or lost. She got a base hit and it was a legit. She was so excited the rest of the game. You could see her smiling from center field. That made her whole season for her. I kinda think that's what it ought to be about.

25-gl1-623-637-01...The rules of the game.

25-gl1-623-637-02-ml...Those kinds of things, sure.

25-gl1-623-637-03...And how to relay those rules to those kids.

25-gl1-623-637-04...You get an eight-year old whose parents weren't athletic and you have to start from the beginning. Which hand do I put the glove on? Which way do I run if I hit the ball? We've had little girls that ran to third base. I think you need someone who knows the game and has patience, with a capital "P."

25-gl1-662-691-01...Nine out of ten times if it's a force-out, the girl still tags them. I think they would need to be knowledgeable so that the girls know what's going on, but

yet they need to be positive, a lot.

25-gl1-662-691-02...I think they know the fundamentals of the game. Other than that, as far as the rules or anything like that, I think they know the rules and the fundamentals. Like on my little girls team I thought their coach was excellent this year. He was real easy going.

25-gl1-662-691-03...Is he the one with the pony tail?

25-gl1-662-691-04...Yeah.

25-gl1-662-691-05...He is such a nice guy.

25-gl1-662-691-06...Yeah. He's a great coach. And he played ball when he was in high school and he knows the fundamentals and he can see it where the girls are much better as far as they don't throw behind the runner so much. Even something little like that you see all the time, throwing behind the runner. Those girls normally try to throw it to be base ahead of the runners. Just little things like that. The rules, the fundamentals and I think that's all a coach at that level really needs.

25-gl3-239-248...I think it's very important that the coach knows something about the game. Now some might disagree, but I think at the younger age, it's less important to know the basics inside and out. You have to have a basic knowledge, you have to be patient and kind and all that. But as they grow, and they're still in it a age 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 then they're more serious about it. Then they gotta start getting the skills. It's terrible for a coach of 13 or 14 year olds to be out there and not know the rules of the game. You see some excellent athletes get stymied because they didn't have the proper coaching. They've got the ability, but don't know what to do. It's very important, even at the younger age, that they be taught the basic skills.

25-bl3-366-380...They'd have to be able to teach. I think that's a given. They have to be able to teach the basic skills at least. Which really isn't that hard. I didn't know anything about teaching kids how to play baseball. I've just picked it up here and there...Trying to help him, I pick up things from coaches, coaches on other teams, baseball on tv. He's a pitcher. Obviously, during a ball game they're always talking about the pitcher. They talk alot about his mechanics. Really, it's pretty simple. So really it's not that difficult to teach the basic skills at least. Anybody who took their time and tried to learn those things could do it. And you can always have assistants. Sometimes being able to teach the skills is not so much having the skills or knowing a great deal about them at this this level. You just need the basics.

25-gl2-301-314...I think it has a lot to do with it. I think people in the stands sometimes have a rough time. I think coaches on the side have a tough job because knowing the game, and most of us are out for the positive, we're out for the win, and I think you have to be. That's the whole idea of any type of competition or any type of team work. You pull together and win. And so that's not so bad. It's how you deal with the wins and how you deal with the losses. I think it's real important to have knowledge of the game because they have to be teachers. Some of these kids are actually not grown up into the whole game itself and so coaches become teachers besides and so that knowledge is important because of that. They're teaching the game and other things besides that. I think their job is a big one.

25-gl3-239-248...I think it's very important that the coach knows something about the game. Now some might disagree, but I think at the younger age, it's less important to know the basics inside and out. You have to have a basic knowledge, you have to be patient and kind and all that. But as they grow, and they're still in it a age 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 then they're more serious about it. Then they gotta start getting the skills. It's

terrible for a coach of 13 or 14 year olds to be out there and not know the rules of the game. You see some excellent athletes get stymied because they didn't have the proper coaching. They've got the ability, but don't know what to do. It's very important, even at the younger age, that they be taught the basic skills.

25-11 1-1249-1260...The ideal coach would take each individual kid and take them from where they're at, individually, and improve on whatever they're working with. If they could do that, because you have a very broad range of ability and physical development in those kids, and you can take each one exactly where they're at and work with them to improve that or to encourage that kid at that ability to improve, that to me is what an ideal coach would do. I think that would be probably my number one emphasis. And again, with the goal being that I want this kid back, I want him to feel like he wants to come back next year and do it again. That's from a parent. That's what I'd like to see every coach down at Veteran's Park do with the kids. I know that you're gonna lose some, but I'd like to see as many kids get excited about coming back and getting excited about playing their favorite sport. I want to do that...All the way through.

25-11 1-703-709...I was just going to say that from a parent and a coach's standpoint, and I'm a big time amateur, but the best coach I ever had was one that taught me something when I left the squad and went on to the next class or went on to the next level. You don't realize it until after you're older and then you begin to maybe apply some of that or reply to responsibility what you've learned.

25-11 1-817-818-...The coaches should have the knowledge, the working knowledge of all the rules.

25-11 3-247-257...Someone who wants to teach them team sports, you know, you go by the rules no matter what; teaches them fundamentals; teaches them to care about his teammates. That's one thing this year that's really great, if someone strikes out or something, everyone in the dugout is there saying "so what, we've all done it too." Or "get 'em next time." It's just really nice cause you see other ones throwing helmets or crying or coming through the line at the end of the game in tears. It's not worth it. If it's that horrible for them, maybe they shouldn't play. Someone who cares about the kids, who wants to teach them that baseball isn't everything, it's just something you can have fun for a couple months in the summer, learn how to play correctly and have a good time and still be friends with these kids when the season's over. That's what I look for. We're lucky we have that.

36-gl2-617-627...Top three. That they're positive in everything that they do. Positive of themselves and to each player individually as well as a team would probably be number one for me. With this age group that they knew developmentally where these kids were at. And I think that they have to have a knowledge of the game. And a discipline. Those would probably be the top. I think anything and why it has to be a discipline, cause I think they're, you know sports teaches a lot more then just what's before, I think it teaches lifestyle. And I would say that that's a big one.

36-gl3-264-270...Rules of the game. Be sure they have the basic knowledge of how to throw a ball. Now that's not the rules of the game how somebody holds the bat, but fundamentals as well as the rules. At least a basic ability to communicate..To be able to make themselves clear in very basic situations. If they can't get across their knowledge, then they can't be very successful. They should have all kinds of social

skills training. Teamwork and all that, but maybe that's out of the realm of little girls softball.

36-11 2-461-468-01...Well, I have another aspect of it I would like to see... You know, at this level, teaching the basics of the game. The basic rules, the basic of the ball's hit here and you're playing here and this is where you throw it. There seems to be so much finesse, rather than the basic learning of the game, the rules, like they're all Barry Bonds at age 10. What ever happened to "okay shortstop, you get the ball and there's a guy on first and a guy on third, where does that ball go?"

36-11 2-461-468-02...You've never been to a Hawks game, have you? We're at basics.

36-11 2-461-468-03...To me, at this level, that's exactly what they should be learning.

Strategy

25-g11-662-691-01...Nine out of ten times if it's a force-out, the girl still tags them. I think they would need to be knowledgeable so that the girls know what's going on, but yet they need to be positive, a lot.

25-g11-662-691-02...I think they know the fundamentals of the game. Other than that, as far as the rules or anything like that, I think they know the rules and the fundamentals. Like on my little girls team I thought their coach was excellent this year. He was real easy going.

25-g11-662-691-03...Is he the one with the pony tail?

25-g11-662-691-04...Yeah.

25-g11-662-691-05...He is such a nice guy.

25-g11-662-691-06...Yeah. He's a great coach. And he played ball when he was in high school and he knows the fundamentals and he can see it where the girls are much better as far as they don't throw behind the runner so much. Even something little like that you see all the time, throwing behind the runner. Those girls normally try to throw it to be base ahead of the runners. Just little things like that. The rules, the fundamentals and I think that's all a coach at that level really needs.

26-bl3-558-573...I think sometimes the coaches don't respect the kids and on the other hand I think some kids just don't have respect for the coaches either. I think there's gotta be mutual respect. Respect on both sides. I still think at this point it's not whether they win or lose. They should be out there to have fun. Winning can be important later on. I've noticed on alot of the teams, they teach the kids to steal the bases like crazy, so they win the game with alot of runs in by steals rather than working on hitting. There's two teams in particular like that. Our coach didn't like our kids to steal like crazy. A couple of times after being up against these teams our kids were like 'if we're gonna win, I guess we're gonna have to do this too' which we didn't like to see our kids do. Especially when we were up against a team that wasn't playing that way..

27-bl4-375-404...I would say one that would listen to the kids if you can get them to talk. I mean they had to kinda pry it out of me what positions Matthew wanted to play, because they said, 'he will never tell us'...Give them a chance to play the different positions at practice, it doesn't have to be in a game, and say maybe you're not right here. You know, try them an inning...Just let them try...Don't just stick them all in the outfield. He had a hard time too. I know alot of coaches, you know, they have their sons on their team of course. And so their sons are usually the pitcher and they can only pitch maybe 6 innings a week. But anyway, I just think somebody who will listen to the kids. Teach them the basics, don't try and stretch the rulebook. There's

alot of walks in the league and alot of basestealing. That's basically how they get their runs in. I mean there aren't very many hits (laughs). And some of these coaches. They would get walked to first and then they'd steal second right away. You know, they just kinda take advantage and their not really teaching their kids anything, because once they get up to little league, they're not going to be able to do that. They're just doing it to try to get the runs in. And I would say as far as the coach getting along with the parents, I know alot of times Doug would say, 'why weren't you at practice or why were you late, you're old enough to know where you're supposed to be and when you're supposed to be there. Don't just rely on your parents'. But he would let the parent know when the next game was and when the practices were. He was very good as far as communicating with the parents

36-11 2-461-468-01...Well, I have another aspect of it I would like to see. You know, at this level, teaching the basics of the game. The basic rules, the basic of the ball's hit here and you're playing here and this is where you throw it. There seems to be so much finesse, rather than the basic learning of the game, the rules, like they're all Barry Bonds at age 10. What ever happened to "okay shortstop, you get the ball and there's a guy on first and a guy on third, where does that ball go?"

36-11 2-461-468-02...You've never been to a Hawks game, have you? We're at basics.

36-11 2-461-468-03...To me, at this level, that's exactly what they should be learning.

Parents' Expectations of the Coach: Interpersonal Skills

Communicative Style

Positive vs. negative.

07-bl4-335-340...Every game somebody was awarded the game ball. Somebody that had an outstanding catch or somebody he couldn't believe that stepped in and played catcher or something. So that was kinda neat. Both years and Matthew has his sitting up on his dresser with the year on it.

07-bl1-703-712...They need the praise. They need to hear that they did something good instead of always hearing the negative side to everything. I mean, there's enough negative things going on in this world, they don't need to hear it out there as something they have the heart, they have the will and the love for the game, that's why they're out there, to have the fun and to learn.

11-bl2-67-74...For alot of the coaches, this is like the world series. There are coaches that swear at kids and really tend to rip their ass, and I really don't think that's right. I think if a kid messes up, he's not doing what he's suppose to do, it's ok to scold him, but you're not playing the world series. You know these are kids that are 10-12 years old and it's really hard for a parent to sit there and let them scream at your kid.

11-gl1-157-162...I can visualize that happening so many times. Coaches are screaming because they know they know what they're supposed to do, but they're confused. Especially the younger girls who have never had the fundamentals. You can't expect them to learn them in one year. So all the coaches can do is stand on the sidelines and scream.

11-gl1-252-261...I think that it depends on the coach, especially in little girls. I don't have any boys so I don't know. I think that some of the coaches yell too much. I'm not a yeller. My husband is not a yeller. He's coached for almost 20 years. If you can't get it done at practice, then there's no sense in making a fool of yourself at the game and screaming at them. I hate to see it. You know the worst thing you can do is make an eight year old cry. Is it worth it? Now come on. What can an eight year old do so bad that she's gonna cry?

11-ll 1-1054-1071...I think it's real difficult. Parents see that because what parents see is game situations with the coach. They see the coach's game. They don't see the practice coach. I think the real important piece of the coach is the practice, in every sport, no matter what level you're at. That's where things get learned as far as the athlete and coach's interaction, etc. During the game I've seen guys that are maniacs. In basketball we had a guy that was just a screamer, but during practice he taught you, you learned from this guy. But during the game he was just a raving, he'd go crazy. The fans would sit there and say well the head's going off again. But that was the way he did it and the players knew that and in the game that was ok. Because they knew they needed to do something different and that's just the way he worked it. We don't see it so much from a parent's perspective, you don't see what happens during practice and I think that's where it is real important. As far as the coach goes.

26-ll 5-768-778...I think it's important to try to make a relation between, I mean you can have fun, but I think you can be competitive also, not just make it a 'we're not out here to have fun guys, this is happy time for two hours now' but I think if you could find the combination to make it a pleasant experience as well as being competitive and learn to. Rather than if the kid makes a mistake - throw in your hat. I had a very close friend from high school that's coached many, many years up in the Burgsville area and he was loved by kids, he was a loving person, very strong, and he, unfortunately died this past year but at his memorial service they read a eulogy where he would, rather than stomp and be negative if somebody struck out would be standing there really depressed or crying or something, he would run out and pick them up and tell them they'd get it next time.

26-bll-113-121-and it teaches them self-discipline, like if there's a big game or something, we don't want you swimming all afternoon and then show up for the game, and it teaches them the self-discipline; or the 8 o'clock saturday morning practices...I'm not too thrilled sometimes, but...It teaches them that, hey, to do your best this is what needs to be done, and whether they go up and get a hit or whether they strike out and miss the ball, he says "that's okay, lets just do it next time." You can improve yourself, and instead of screaming at him and yelling at him and putting them down, he influences them with positive reactions instead of the other way around.

26-bll-668-674....And on a coach, I don't expect it to be all praise. If they are screwin' up, if they're just standing there looking at the stars or just daydreaming or something, that coach needs to get on their cases, no questions about it. I don't believe that it should be completely, 100 percent praise; if they need to get after them, then they should have that liberty to get after them and scold them and get their heads screwed on straight and remind them why they're out there, they want to go out as a team and do their best.

26-bl2-280-286...The ideal coach in my book is a guy or a woman that earns the kids respect. Not out of fear. He has the patience to sit down and talk with the kids and to admit he's made a mistake. And all the kids on that team know they're all human. And even though the coach is an older guy and he's been around, he's not afraid to admit he's made a mistake. They'll listen to him and they'll respect him.

26-gl1-0375-386...I agree, plus I think that they have to be as positive as they possibly can in as many situations as they can. I mean like even if they lose, you've gotta find something good about what they did in losing. You know. You have to want to make them come out the next day and play again. Because if they don't want to come and play, you don't have anybody to coach. So, you know, they have to want to be there and know that hey he did notice that I didn't strike out but I didn't get called out, but I swung, it was a good pitch. You know, because man, that's the name of the game over there. There are some little girls that they're not gonna hit the ball right away, but you know learning to judge where it's at is a big step to them, so. Positive. Positive. I think they have to be positive all the time.

26-gl1-512-521-...I think always try to find something positive in the attempt. If the player makes the attempt and the old cliché "nice try." The coach also has to keep them awake. They tend to stand around and forget the 7 is going on. And you've got to sometimes be awake out there, shout something out at them. But you always try to find something positive to say to them. Unless they aren't trying at all and then you have to yell a little bit. In the right way of course.

26-gl1-523-548...I think one of the most important things would be they have to be positive. I definitely agree with that and caring, being compassionate. Kids can pick up on that. They know if you care for them. Kids pick up right away whether you know what you're doing, too. They need to be knowledgeable. The kids have to have confidence in them that when they tell them something, it's probably the right thing. A kid will bust his butt for you for just a little bit of encouragement or praise. I think a coach has to know how to give constructive criticism. You can correct someone without reaming them. Fortunately, as I said before, the one lady we had is so excellent my two older daughters had, she was the head coach of our team and then she quit for a while and now her youngest daughter is playing so she is back and she is so, well she's a teacher so she is around kids a lot. She is very, very good at what she does because she always finds something positive. She is always encouraging and she wouldn't think of making somebody so upset that they would cry. I think that's important. You have to care about your, because they're not winning for you. You want them to win for themselves. Are you gonna get a head coaching job someplace if you go 14-0 in a little girls softball league? Give me a break. The best thing you want your coach to do is instill a positive attitude in your little girl for themselves. I think that's vital.

26-gl1-565-567...You know a coach has got to show enthusiasm in the game. Get excited once in a while without having to get mad. I think that generates excitement for the team.

26-gl2-223-243...No, I would not necessarily say that. I think that there are certain qualities that you're looking for. The quality that I see in the coach that we have now I think is just wonderful is it's a positive quality. He has a tendency to focus on the positive of the girls, and maybe when he isn't up to par he will say you could have done better, I know you can do better than that. And most of the times the girls will

agree with him when it comes to that. He works at problem solving. A coach is a positive problem solver. He or she realizes that the emotions of a player can enter into the game and therefore he treats it with kid gloves. I think that they're hard workers, they do expect a certain discipline from the players, and I think a team concept that we're promoting the whole, we're not promoting the one. Individual recognition is good but be recognized by the whole team versus just someone coming out there being recognized themselves and then being put in the position of favoritism all the time without developing what qualities. Recognize the whole team versus the one. I would say that's a really important concept too.

26-11 1-442-470...My son took me coaching better than I did coaching him as a player. Simply because he was able to draw the line - coach and dad - simpler than I was. Because there was a gray area in there for me and that's tough for me because I love my children and that was one thing that I had to contend with. But I justified it with knowing that there is going to be rejection in their life and you can't paint the picture that everything is always going to turn out the way that they want it to, no matter how much mom and dad want to shape it that way. We're building an illusion for them. So I think what you do is you make yourself a better parent by just encouraging them and saying that's ok. What you do is important to me but this is not important, what's important is that I love you and you love me and from what goes on from there all I want for you to do is be happy with what you're doing. If you have fun doing it and it happens to be a sport, I say then that is great. I said we doing this together as a team because we want to. From that point on it was kinda something that we kinda both learned something from it but I've seen great athletes come from parents who never lifted a baseball bat or shot a basketball or ran a football. Why, because they, well that was a great play, they had no idea but everything they did was positive. I've noticed this and I've read an article about it where it was great athletes always clung to their mother because they, in their mother's eyes, well that's ok. Clean up your room, yeah, they just hit you right where you live and that was alright. That was over. Dad couldn't let it go. Dad sometimes might have had a problem with it.

26-11 1-619-635...Plus how the coach handles a loss. When he's ranting and raving about how they lost. Or when he yells at a kid from clear across the field. It bothers me when I see it. I mean, our coaches don't do that. We had wonderful coaches this year,, but some coaches yell clear across to the kid and it. When Craig was playing in boys league, we had one coach. This coach called the kid from out to in and took his glove away from him, threw it and gave him another one. And it was like, why did he do that? I mean if the coach is going to blame the kid, or I guess in this case, it was the glove's fault. How they hand it. The coaches on our team were just so good. Everything was positive. I guess we're spoiled. When someone doesn't treat their kids that way. Well, its hard to see another coach yelling at his kids. It's better to learn to lose now, then to always win and never know how to lose, because someday, you're going to lose.

26-11 1-640-652-01...I would say being positive. We have that with our team. They're positive and they're all really good role models.

26-11 1-640-652-02-ml...Is that important?

26-11 1-640-652-03....As much time as my child spends with coach, you bet it is. They do point out their mistakes, but it's a helpful criticism, it's not jumping on them with both feet. We've also been involved with that situation too and the difference is just amazing.

26-11 2-246-253-02...He could let them have it, but nothing degrading. I'm always reminded of Charles who always yells but for every yell there's a hug. But the kids all know this. I agree with Heather completely and her husband was wonderful, too, lots of support, lots of...Sure when they miss a ball it's like, darn it, don't do that, use your head, but most of the criticism is real positive.

35-gl2-617-627...Top three. That they're positive in everything that they do. Positive of themselves and to each player individually as well as a team would probably be number one for me. With this age group that they knew developmentally where these kids were at. And I think that they have to have a knowledge of the game. And a discipline. Those would probably be the top. I think anything and why it has to be a discipline, cause I think they're, you know sports teaches a lot more than just what's before, I think it teaches lifestyle. And I would say that that's a big one.

35-gl3-295-309-01-ml...You've talked about this relationship between the coach and the player. Things like self-image and such. Are these teachable things for coaches?
35-gl3-295-309-02...I think you can make somebody aware of that. I think it's instructable and understandable by 90% of the people. 10% wouldn't understand the importance of it. It would take a desire, but I think some things are innate. Some people have a desire to win at all costs, and you can talk to them about how it's not the right thing for the kid, and they can mask it for awhile, but in the end, they'll revert right back to their basic nature in the "heat of battle." I'm obviously a very laid back coach with the kids, I'm sure you can tell it. But when I get up against another coach who's going after it, or going after my kids, I have to catch myself. That's when I want to take him out on the court and say, "let's take the kids out of here. You want this so bad, let's you and I settle it on the court and we'll see." I feel very comfortable with that. But I have a bad drive and I see that sometimes. It bothers me to no end, because I can see how it affects the kids.

35-11 5-576-579...Stress the positive. If you can't say something positive, don't say anything at all. Kids should play equal time. It may not be fair to the good players, but if everybody does it, they're all being treated the same. I just think positive comments. I don't want to see coaches doing negative comments.

Supportive vs. berative.

11-b11-139-148-01...The degrading; the coaches making them feel so belittled, like they are nothing. I've seen coaches get right out there in front of everybody, I mean the crowd, the other players, their teammates, and point out exactly all the things they did wrong, instead of what they could have done differently to change the situation and make it better. The name calling or...

11-b11-139-148-02...The spitting

11-b11-139-148-03...Yes

11-b11-139-148-04-ml...The spitting?

11-b11-139-148-05..The spitting

11-b11-139-148-06...Tracy learned how to spit this summer.

11-b11-234-251-01...At the beginning of the ball year, my son, my oldest son, was drafted and put up a league, and thank goodness, his last year's coach, he had ball players quit and he needed kids, and he requested Jack to come back down to play. I am very, very glad he did. I talked to our coach now, because this coach did nothing for three-hour practice on a Saturday, he did nothing but scream and yell at these kids

and belittled them, and he lost all self-confidence and himself playing ball, he felt that he wasn't worth anything, and he was one of the better ones, I'm not saying that as a parent.

11-bl1-234-251-02...No, he was..

11-bl1-234-251-03...And you know, it really wore on him. I never had problems with his asthma during the summer. He has asthma and it acts up during the fall and the winter. He, on saturday practices, especially after he'd scream and stuff, I'd always have to give him his medication because he'd go into an asthma attack. When he gets upset, that's one of the triggers, right there he told me, he's the type of child, he's all sports, he's the type that says "mom, you don't say nothing, you don't butt in, you let me handle it", and he says mom will you please talk to the coach and right there I knew that something had to be done. He said mom, "it's just not fun", and I said. "honey that's why you're in ball, it's first of all for fun. If it's not fun, what's the use of going through it." I talked to the coach and it didn't do any good.

1-bl1-262-274-01-ml...Is it just personality and the approach of coaches?

11-bl1-262-274-02...It was the personality because it was solid screaming and yelling and he would not give the positive reinforcement, he would always do the negative, in fact, he belittled the boys, the ones that came up from boys' league and went up to little league, he belittled them. Just really put them down. You know, even at practices and stuff, he'd say "he's gonna be my home-run kid." Well, he was a home run hitter this year, no questions asked, but he expected this and he played in a couple of the games and he blamed, he got up there was two outs and he struck out and the coach stood there and yelled and screamed and told him he was the cause of them losing that game; no one was to blame but him. He was in tears and he's never walked away in tears in any sort of a sport like that. And he refused their treat and everything, then the coach calmed him down. That shouldn't happen. We talked about it before, and I said that one person does not lose; it takes the whole team to lose, and it takes the whole team to win. It doesn't take just one person.

11-bl2-239-246-01-ml...Some would argue that kids have to get used to disappointments, having someone yell at them....

11-bl2-239-246-02...Yeah, but I believe there's a proper discipline and an improper discipline. If I have a 9 year old and I tell him he's a dirty little asshole for missing it and you see that happen alot. And nothing upsets me more. Even if it's not my child..No way does a coach talk to a child that way. Absolutely not.

11-bl3-136-147..I think sometimes that coaches put too much pressure on the kids..

11-bl3-136-147-2-ml...In what way?

11-bl3-136-147-3..There's alot of coaches who I hear screaming and hollering at the kids. The last two years that Jerry was in the boys league, the coaches he had were really pretty good. Mom (my mother) thought that maybe the head coach was a little too laid back. He didn't want to yell at the kids too much. But I think it's better than on the other way too. I know lots of times the coaches make it more their game than for the kids..

11-bl3-247-252...I know that there are coaches who yell at kids. I've heard them. We've been pretty lucky. With the problems we had this year with the difference of opinion that we had maybe, they didn't put any kids down or anything or put pressure on them. About the most they would say would be. Just tell them what they did wrong, but not berating them or anything

11-bl4-197-203...because he is moving up to be the little league coach. So that's a plus for Matthew too. Because he really is a nice guy. He's not one of those screamers. If the kids make a mistake, he makes fun of them instead of really yelling at them and stuff. I think he'll end of playing because I said, 'what are you gonna do all summer if you don't? You're gonna be totally bored'. Like he is right now (laughs)

11-ll 1-879-894...When I coached basketball there was a kid that wouldn't play, in J.V., I mean he wouldn't play. I was livid and I screamed at him. Couldn't hear him and I had to yell a couple of times and when I got his attention and I thought why am I yelling at this kid? Embarrassing him in front of everybody. You're calling him out and I think anytime you do that, in my experience any time that happens I lose that kid. I've embarrassed him and what I am going to say to him next, he's not going to hear me because I've already cut that, alienated him from me. That gets to be an ego thing, it can be. When you want that to come off, you want him to learn this, you blew that play. It can also go the other way then. The kids who mean business they just seem to respond to it, you're not doing anything different or terrific, you're not teaching them a whole lot and go on and be excited about it.

11-ll 2-268-271...You never hear him say a swear word, you never hear him berate a child in front of parents or other people. He's the type, if he wants to talk to you individually, he takes you away from it and does not make a big deal in front of anybody. I really can't give a negative about him, so I think we have found.

11-ll 2-281-337-01...What would I rather have had for him? I would rather have had him have this experience. I would rather have him **not** sworn at in front of the crowd. I would rather that he was **not** humiliated and berated; which not only he. He was not the only one, but he was the only one that was mine. And I tried talking to the coach and that resulted in him taking it out on my son.

11-ll 2-281-337-02-ml...How did you see that? In what way, what did he do?

11-ll 2-281-337-03...We'd be watching the game and Tim might have made an error and the coach would scream, literally scream and yell at him and the next kid might have made a similar error and not gotten anything. Tim never was allowed to start a game, where the year before in boys' league he was their starting pitcher. He's not a highly skilled ball player, but he's not a bench warmer. He has the skills to be out there and play ball and when he was on the field he played first base most of the time and made some really good plays. One of the plays, at the end of one game, he caught a fly that was the last out of the game and our team won, and all the other players came over and congratulated him and his coach just walked by and didn't say anything. This coach humiliated kids, he would scream at them, he would swear at them. One time, early in the season before we caught on to all that was going on, Tim made an error on the field, or he struck out, that's what he did, struck out, and he was on his way back to the dugout and the coach came out and put his arm around him, and I thought that was nice until Tim asked me, "are coaches were allowed to swear at you?" I asked why and he said the coach asked him, "why did you swing at that (blank)..."

11-ll 2-281-337-04...Was it s-h-i-t?

11-ll 2-281-337-05...Yea!

11-ll 2-281-337-06...Well, could be worse.

11-ll 2-281-337-07...It got worse. He would say things to the team as a whole after they had lost a game; he'd tell them he knew they couldn't do it, that they'd lose.

11-ll 2-281-337-08...What team is this?

11-ll 2-281-337-09...Deers.

11-11 2-281-337-10...Was this the team where some of the kids were pulled off the team?

11-11 2-281-337-11...Yes, one mother did get up in the middle of a game and took her kids off the field and they never did return. He threw a temper tantrum and threw his clipboard down and started screaming and yelling at our catcher.

11-11 2-281-337-12...Who pulled them off?

11-11 2-281-337-13...The mother.

11-11 2-281-337-14...Who was it, do you know?

11-11 2-281-337-15...I know who it is, I can tell you later. The kid is the sweetest kid; he was part of our field trip to Cluesville.

11-11 2-281-337-16...Her one son was catching and her other son was in left field. At this game, it happened that the grandparents were there, two of his aunts were there, several cousins. It was a Sunday game, so the whole family came to watch. And this kid missed a catch and he fumbled around looking for the ball and in the meantime, two runners came in and our coach got furious and threw his clipboard down and started screaming and pointing across the field at the catcher. The mother just got up out of the stands and walked down and said "Scott, take your gear off, we're leaving", and she pulled her other son out of left field and they never returned. After that game, the coach said to my son, "well, Tim, if they don't show up..." Making it sound to the team like it was that mother's fault; did you see what she did? Now we lost two players because of what she did. That means if they don't come back, Tim, you'll get to play more.

11-11 2-281-337-17-ml...Oh, kinda soliciting some support, huh?

11-11 2-281-337-18...I can't think of his name right now.

11-11 2-281-337-19...The coach? One of your competitors.

11-11 2-281-337-20...Oh, Doug? Here's a nice guy who, put him on the field, its like some people who get behind the wheel, give him this job, i've heard nothing but horror stories. Yanking people off the field, screaming, berating, everything wrong. Why he is allowed to continue coaching is a mystery to me.

11-11 3-473-499-01..Another negative, I think the first time we ever experienced little league, it was two years ago, our son was playing bunny league and they played down at Veteran's Park - that small field right next to the little league field - and after a game we had walked over to a little league field and sat on the far bleachers and we were behind a dugout and one of the boys had struck out or made an error in the field or something, and the coach called time out and immediately called him off the field. I think he made an error at second base - immediately called him off the field. I thought it was degrading. Just wait until the end of the inning or whatever. The boy just came off absolutely sobbing and we thought the coach was being so nice - he was out there and had his arm around him and he was talking to him all the way in until he came to the dugout and we could hear that he (the coach) was swearing at him terribly and we heard this it just really turned us off. I guess that goes back to the draft where we were thinking of what we would do if that man picked our child. I would probably tell him we are sorry but he can't play. If this is how you really are, and this coach is still there, and he's had a lot of people quit from his team. Someone even pulled their child right off the field and drove back and threw the uniform over the fence, right during the game. I don't think it's worth it. He doesn't need this. He's trying the best he can, I'm sorry he made a mistake but you humiliated him and that was not the first time apparently. That was our introduction to little league and we thought - oh, my goodness. We were really lucky who he was picked by and the very first practice a note came home and told anybody who would like to help, we encourage people to come to our practices and watch what we do - if you'd like to help out or just sit and

watch our practice, feel free, any time, just to sit here. And a lot of people do. This is our second year and i'll sit and watch...It's fun. They have a good time with them and maybe they'll end up with a water balloon fight. They'll give them two throws to get them it's just real.

26-b11-556-567-01...They have to know each player, in a sense so that they can react to each player and really build on each player to know from the beginning of the season to the end of the season, like, my son, quite frankly, is a lousy ballplayer, I mean he is, but he's out there for fun, that's the whole ball game, so I'm hoping the coach will look at him saying he's improved with his batting, he's improved, rather than degrading him and putting him down and so forth. Actually, I saw him get worse this year, rather than better, because he realized he was bad for the first time in his life, and the other kids put him down, and one of the coaches put him down, not all the coaches. It was really a hard experience for him to learn.

26-b11-556-567-02-ml...So how would the ideal coach handle your son? How would, how would?

26-b11-556-567-03...When he sees him doing something good and doing something better, then make sure he knows that he knows he's doing something better...

26-b11-610-621-01...I don't know, but they do need to be sensitive to the kids, this coach that we have now does not have a child on the team, he doesn't have any kids old enough and I've had an experience where the coach's son was on the team and his son was always the best. I don't have any gripes about having the coach and the son on the same team as long as you treat them the same, which I know could be a big conflict.

26-b11-610-621-02...Well, when that son gets cocky, you have to bring him back down to where he can't feel that I'm the coach's son; I can get away with this. And I have seen some of the coaches get away with letting their kids get away with being very cocky, and where they just feel like everyone is supposed to bow down to them. The coaches have to feel for the rest of the boys who are on that team, it's not just one, it's the whole team out there.

26-b11-622-632...It isn't just the sport; he listens to them personally. The boys listen to him personally. It's just not the sport, there's like a friendship in there that I think is really good for them. As far as training, you get your rule book, you need to know your rules, yes, you need to know what's right and what's wrong, but I think that they need to be patient, they need to help praise the kids to become the sportsmen that they can be, there's such a big difference between by two boys; the one is really good, the other, this is his first year in boys' league and he has a long ways to go, but yet he's helping him out in that and like at practices and stuff he spends extra time with the kids that were having trouble in batting or whatever it is, and as they would go to catch a fly ball and they'd miss it, but they'd stop it, he'd say, "good stop", which I think is really important instead of degrading them.

26-b12-304-307...and when the kids are doing good, let them know they're doing good. There are some coaches where the only time they even talk to a kid is when he makes a mistake. The rest of the time, you don't know they're out there.

26-b13-528-554...Of course there are obvious things. You shouldn't yell at them, you shouldn't berate them. For some people it doesn't seem obvious I know. For some coaches, it's not obvious. For those few, it should be strongly emphasized. At least that could be a starting point. 'don't do this, this and this'. Don't tear them down ever.

Look for something to compliment them. And if they're having a problem and they're not doing something right, and if they're just performing badly for some other reason, say, 'is there a problem? Yeah, what's the matter? You don't seem to have your mind on the game. Anything I can help you with?'..I had a talk with Bobby's coach this year, and that's the first thing he brought up. He said 'Bobby's got his head between his legs. He's down on himself. Everything that doesn't go right, devastates him'. So we had to talk to Bobby about that. 'you control your own destiny and if you're gonna go around and get down on yourself all the time.' it's the same thing we have to deal with. Basically, we want a coach who won't tear them down, builds them up all the time, tries to recognize what the problems are (whether it's physical or emotional), can at least try to help them. There's no way we can make everybody able to do that. Some people just naturally are that way. It has to do with their upbringing. People are so diverse. There was a pretty good size piece in the paper about different kinds of coaches.

26-11 2-268-271...You never hear him say a swear word, you never hear him berate a child in front of parents or other people. He's the type, if he wants to talk to you individually, he takes you away from it and does not make a big deal in front of anybody. I really can't give a negative about him, so I think we have found...

26-11 3-247-257...Someone who wants to teach them team sports, you know, you go by the rules no matter what; teaches them fundamentals; teaches them to care about his teammates. That's one thing this year that's really great, if someone strikes out or something, everyone in the dugout is there saying "so what, we've all done it too." Or "get 'em next time." It's just really nice cause you see other ones throwing helmets or crying or coming through the line at the end of the game in tears. It's not worth it. If it's that horrible for them, maybe they shouldn't play. Someone who cares about the kids, who wants to teach them that baseball isn't everything, it's just something you can have fun for a couple months in the summer, learn how to play correctly and have a good time and still be friends with these kids when the season's over. That's what I look for. We're lucky we have that.

Correction vs. criticism.

11-g11-157-162...I can visualize that happening so many times. Coaches are screaming because they know they know what they're supposed to do, but they're confused. Especially the younger girls who have never had the fundamentals. You can't expect them to learn them in one year. So all the coaches can do is stand on the sidelines and scream.

11-g13-120-123-01...I personally think the yelling at them, that doesn't help too much. Yelling for the children to hear you is a big difference than yelling at them that they did wrong or that they did bad. Probably cause I'm not used to that, he's coached a lot and he's not a screamer, he just doesn't do that.

11-g13-120-123-02...Except for them to hear me.

11-g13-120-123-03...Except for, yeah, except for them to be able to hear him, but I think you can get the point across, you can explain to the child without having to yell.

26-b12-472-485-01-ml...Do you have to be a good person to be a good coach?

26-b12-472-485-02...Yeah, I think so. You know, I can understand coaches' disappointment. Sometimes you get beat by one run or it's a sloppy play or because somebody wasn't paying attention. But it's kids sports. They learn from winning,

they learn from the loss. There's no big contract. There's no tv rights. Who are you gonna impress when you go out there and scream. Are you gonna impress me as a parent? No and if you celebrate.

26-g11-490-505...They had six different people telling them what to do. My daughter said sometimes I feel like I'm the only one out there in the field. It's not supposed to be that way. The girls could hear them telling them when they did something wrong, but sometimes they lacked hearing praise when they did it right. There has to be that complete cycle there of being able to correct the errors so that they know what they did wrong and how they can correct it but they also need to be praised when they get it right. I think that would help a lot this year. I never really knew which person was the coach. Everybody was working in this together. I guess that really didn't have one exact person that they said this is the coach. I don't know if that has anything to do with it or what, but they were never really together as a team. They just didn't play together as a team.

26-g11-523-548...I think one of the most important things would be they have to be positive. I definitely agree with that and caring, being compassionate. Kids can pick up on that. They know if you care for them. Kids pick up right away whether you know what you're doing, too. They need to be knowledgeable. The kids have to have confidence in them that when they tell them something, it's probably the right thing. A kid will bust his butt for you for just a little bit of encouragement or praise. I think a coach has to know how to give constructive criticism. You can correct someone without reaming them. Fortunately, as I said before, the one lady we had is so excellent my two older daughters had, she was the head coach of our team and then she quit for a while and now her youngest daughter is playing so she is back and she is so, well she's a teacher so she is around kids a lot. She is very, very good at what she does because she always finds something positive. She is always encouraging and she wouldn't think of making somebody so upset that they would cry. I think that's important. You have to care about your, because they're not winning for you. You want them to win for themselves. Are you gonna get a head coaching job someplace if you go 14-0 in a little girls softball league? Give me a break. The best thing you want your coach to do is instill a positive attitude in your little girl for themselves. I think that's vital.

26-11 1-1024-1043...First of all that person coming up I'd ask him where he wanted to coach first. But as far as giving advice, say a person came with all the tools to the game and wanted to coach, I wanna be a coach, listen to your instincts, know your kids and be there for your kids. Great coaches have always loved their teams and loved their kids. They have treated them just like their own. Sometimes they need a kick in the pants to get themselves going, not a literal kick in the pants, but I mean maybe an awakening, and other times they need the pat on the back too. And there are measures of each. And I'm a believer that you do have to use both measures once in awhile in order to get the kid to understand to where you're coming from. But it has to be on a positive side that you don't simply ball-beat the kid, but he knows he made a mistake, you tell him how he's got to improve that. Giving him the tools that you know. That's where you see coaches and professional wise, high school and college, the players they've taught go onto be coaches. They have the knowledge, they are good teachers. They are educators.

26-11 1-655-665...You notice the boys expectation is different when he's met with a positive criticism. He responds to that like, "well, ok I'm gonna go do it" and attempts

to make the change. Whereas when it comes across to him that that wasn't good enough, he doesn't deal with that well. It becomes a self-fulfilling thing. If the coach doesn't expect the kid to get a hit, he won't. Where if I expect you to hit, he will. It's real subtle. You don't see a big difference in tone and how he's done it. It does have to do with tone. It has to do with "well, you didn't do this good or maybe he wasn't complimented on what he did do.

26-ll 1-851-868...No, the kids respond to that coach. If that coach can go out there and he may know that this player goes here and this player goes here and this player goes here and he has no idea why, but that's how it works, and this is how you're supposed to go, and he can get those kids excited about being in that spot and doing that job, chances are they are going to have a good time with it, they'll probably win some games. And it comes off the coach I'm sure feels that wow, I pulled that off, that was pretty neat versus the guy that gets frustrated because it didn't work the way it was supposed to have worked. You're gonna have to do better, you didn't do your job. You let down here. I think that's where, if I were doing that, the emphasis would be on me to succeed, this team is going to succeed because I'm the coach and I'm all knowledgeable and I'm teaching you everything you need to know. We didn't succeed, you didn't do what I tried to teach you.

26-ll 2-246-253-02...He could let them have it, but nothing degrading. I'm always reminded of Charles who always yells but for every yell there's a hug. But the kids all know this. I agree with Heather completely and her husband was wonderful, too, lots of support, lots of. Sure when they miss a ball it's like, darn it, don't do that, use your head, but most of the criticism is real positive.

27-bl3-381-402...as it is the ability to communicate that to kids. To get it across to them and to know when they're understanding and know when they're not. Because sometimes kids will go 'yeah, yeah, yeah', just let me hit. You've got to know whether they're getting it or not. You can say something to a kid 100 times and if it doesn't click with that particular kid, it doesn't Mikeer how many times to tell him. If you're saying it in a way that doesn't communicate to him, his mind isn't set up to pick that up, it doesn't Mikeer how many times you tell him. But sometimes somebody else can come along and say one simple thing or show him one little thing, and the light comes on. That's probably more important than having a great deal of ability or skill. I've seen it in the major leagues. The best players are not necessarily the best coaches. Time and time again, mediocre players become great coaches or great managers not because they have the great skill or knowledge, but because they watch and listen well and they can communicate it in a way that others can understand without making them feel that they're putting them down because people will turn off right off the bat too

Understanding the Child

Patience and compassion.

26-bl2-280-286...The ideal coach in my book is a guy or a woman that earns the kids respect. Not out of fear. He has the patience to sit down and talk with the kids and to admit he's made a mistake. And all the kids on that team know they're all human. And even though the coach is an older guy and he's been around, he's not afraid to admit he's made a mistake. They'll listen to him and they'll respect him.

26-gl1-451-467...I'd want them to be a little compassionate. There's nothing worse

then some girl, I mean every kid, boy or girl or whatever, they go out there and they try their hardest. They give 100%. Sometimes they fail and sometimes they succeed. If they fail, that coach should have a little compassion for them. And a lot of time you see coaches just blow up. I think they should be honest with kids, straight forward. I think honesty and compassion are two that I would like to see. As far as winning and losing, you like to win, but you're still, it's out there it's a sport, if you win you win if you lose you lose. I don't really think as far as getting a coach who is hell and brimstone you know who wants to go out there and win, win, win. I don't really care for that. I want to see a coach who wants his kids, who does his best in how he's training the kids, take them out there and put them on the fields and encourage them and do everything he can, but be understanding too.

26-gl3-211-215...I guess just to be patient with the kids. Encourage them, like you were saying earlier. I know with Michelle's team last year, they never won a game. They got a new coach this year, and it's amazing, like a total turnaround. I don't know what he did like in the huddle and stuff, but I guess just patient and encouragement. Her coach this year was the ideal coach to me.

Developmental range.

11-gl3-133-149...There's definitely a maturity in 5 and 6 year olds. One out of a hundred you might be able to scream at or be aggressive and actually get the results which is improved concentration, improved utilization of the skills they displayed previously which is what the coach is after. They're after them to perform like they know they can perform. As they grow older and kids mature and become tougher mentally, sometimes they need a little more push to kick in that gear that this is serious, I don't know if serious is the right word, whatever I am doing to the best of my ability and all that, but I need to try and that's the thing. Sometimes a kid needs a sterner word, but it varies from child to child and the older they get, the higher percentage of children that can accept further direction to the point that when you get into high school and college, the vast majority can take the sterner direction without having some kind of an emotional problem, but still there's different coaching. Different strokes for different folds and that's all the way up through college. In the ague group we are talking about, we feel the kids are in it to enjoy the sport and they're not going to enjoy the sport, typically, if they're being belittled or...The coach could dhave the best intentions in the world but that's not the way to handle kids at that age.

23-bl1-724-739...Like, my son is going to be 13. He'd kill me if he ever heard me say this, but his body is being over-run by hormones and as the hormones come in the brain cells are leaving. And I'm watching it before my very eyes, you can see them drifting out of his earlobe. The coaches need to realize what level these kids are at from 9 to 12 years old. So he's 'gonna have some of these 12-year-olds that are going through puberty and are sometimes a little bit more awkward, that have had a huge growing spurt, like I said before, they almost have got to be teachers. They have to learn what's going on up here as well as the rules of the game. They need to know that some of these 12-year-olds and 11-year-olds have got a little problem that may seem menial at 9 years old is just a huge proportion at 12, and that maybe they can't come and talk to mom and dad about it because it's too embarrassing, only because that's the way their mind is at that point. These coaches may be confronted with some of these things. But I think they need to dig down in, more or less, what I learned in ed psych,

and stuff, as to what the different levels of their thinking. Maybe that's getting too extreme and we're getting, you know, maybe that's getting too intricate, but...

23-bl3-455-478-01...I think I would want the person who coaches to look at each child as an individual. He might show him to do something this way, but it might work in a different way and it might work better. I think the coach should look at that. He shouldn't say, 'well, you're not doing it my way. Do it my way or don't do it at all'. No, I don't agree with that. I think he should look at each child as an individual and how they do something whether it works or not.

23-bl3-455-478-02ml...A little like we would expect a teacher to?

23-bl3-455-478-03...Yeah. I think everybody is an individual and should be looked upon that way and not just a group. Like here's my group of pitchers, you all do it this way. No. It doesn't work for everybody the same way. What made me think of that was Bobby's pitching. He pitched his way and the coach didn't like it. And he went back and he said 'Bobby, pitch this way, you can do it'. Well Bobby couldn't pitch for squat like that. He pitched perfect his way and the coach just didn't like it. And he was afraid to tell the coach it wasn't working. Like 'why, what's he gonna do?' 'well, he won't let me play if I tell him' and it's like, 'Bobby, just tell him'

23-bl4-155-159...For one thing, when Mikehew went to the first practice (after the draft), there he is 8 years old practicing with these kids that could have been close to 13. That's a big difference. Going from bunny league having the coach pitch to you to having these fast balls thrown at you by a 13 year old.

23-bl4-454-461...One thing, and I don't know how you teach it, is just to remember that they are kids. These are not professional athletes that are earning a salary. I mean they're kids..They're just learning. Try and teach them. Don't get mad at them if they do something wrong. They're just learning. I don't know how you teach somebody to be like that. But I think that's real important, because I think there have been.

23-gl3-133-149...There's definitely a maturity in 5 and 6 year olds. One out of a hundred you might be able to scream at or be aggressive and actually get the results which is improved concentration, improved utilization of the skills they displayed previously which is what the coach is after. They're after them to perform like they know they can perform. As they grow older and kids mature and become tougher mentally, sometimes they need a little more push to kick in that gear that this is serious, I don't know if serious is the right word, whatever I am doing to the best of my ability and all that, but I need to try and that's the thing. Sometimes a kid needs a sterner word, but it varies from child to child and the older they get, the higher percentage of children that can accept further direction to the point that when you get into high school and college, the vast majority can take the sterner direction without having some kind of an emotional problem, but still there's different coaching...Different strokes for different folks and that's all the way up through college. In the age group we are talking about, we feel the kids are in it to enjoy the sport and they're not going to enjoy the sport, typically, if they're being belittled or. The coach could have the best intentions in the world but that's not the way to handle kids at that age.

23-ll 1-1127-140...back to your question, I want my kid to be coached by someone who looks at the kids individually and not by what I say or by some other parent says about my kid whether it be good or bad because parents are always the worse judge of a kid's ability anyway and I'm speaking from a coaching and a parent's side. I will

always elevate my kids position, you wouldn't be a good parent if you didn't think the best of your kid, but as far as looking at it from a perspective of how is he going to manage the other eight kids that are taking the field or the other ten kids on the football field, or the other four guys on the starting line-up or how is that going to work in the mix of the whole team.

23-11 1-1249-1260...The ideal coach would take each individual kid and take them from where they're at, individually, and improve on whatever they're working with. If they could do that, because you have a very broad range of ability and physical development in those kids, and you can take each one exactly where they're at and work with them to improve that or to encourage that kid at that ability to improve, that to me is what an ideal coach would do. I think that would be probably my number one emphasis. And again, with the goal being that I want this kid back, I want him to feel like he wants to come back next year and do it again. That's from a parent...That's what I'd like to see every coach down at Veteran's Park do with the kids. I know that you're gonna lose some, but I'd like to see as many kids get excited about coming back and getting excited about playing their favorite sport. I want to do that. All the way through.

23-11 1-693-700...With the younger kids, I think it's almost a nurturing that you're doing with them rather than the drill sergeant kind of approach although that can work if the guy is consistent. I think it really has to do with consistency and how seriously that person takes it. If they can also look it over and compliment and have a good time with that I think a kid can come out of that and thrive on it too. But usually you don't see that or I haven't seen that.

23-11 1-725-759...Your better coaches are usually the ones that have been there longer, they've observed the game. I think great coaches are tremendous observers. They know the scheme of the game, they know what to look for in situations because they've seen those situations come up before. Here's what we can do, here's what might happen. You might not look, the same play could happen, whether it's in any sport, could happen to an older, experienced player the same as it could with a younger, less experienced player. But on one side of it you give the kid an "atta boy" because he tried for it, but the other kid might not have come up with but you knew he didn't give you 100% on that effort. The same result but the means were different. That's what I found to be sometimes the most challenging thing is to separate those two incidences with those two separate individuals and handle them individually, not as a group, because if you lean on the nine-year old the same way you're leaning on the twelve-year old, the nine-year old is going to be the worser for it, because they're going to be afraid to make the mistake. You don't want those kids to be afraid to make a mistake, mistakes are going to happen. I told my kids, because it was a young team this year I want you playing 100% all the time. I said if you think you can get to the ball, you go get it. And I said if you think that ball is a strike and it looks good to you, I've taught you your strike zone. You go after it because you're not going to accomplish anything if you don't try it and I want you trying, I want you out there giving it your best effort and not to be afraid to make a mistake. The twelve year olds, those older players I expect good judgement from. Not perfect, but good judgement. That's a fine line, that's a difficult line and as coaches and as teachers we cross the line back and forth once in a while. They're not perfect and the whole thing of it is that through time you'll gain that.

23-11 3-440-454-01...Oh, yeah, you've always got the ones sitting out in the outfield throwing grass and it's hilarious. They're running from first across the pitchers mound to third and they're so proud. That's no problem. That's what it should be like. There are others that it's real. Everything has to be real serious from age four on. Just let them learn, maybe they won't even like it but let them play it. There are some that you say "my gosh, they're gonna let their kid play?" "what's he playing for?" And that could be the kid someday that's really good. He's just not developed yet mentally.

23-11 3-440-454-02-ml... A lot of them are emotionally slower and socially slower and all those kinds of things.

23-11 3-440-454-03...Right, but that doesn't mean that someday they won't be ready or even have an interest later. Some of the kids playing right now may quit thinking it's not worth it.

26-bl3-506-511...How to communicate to children at their level. How to build up their self-esteem. To be educated enough to know whether there's a problem with that or not. To be able to tell if this child gets down on himself and he needs built up...And this child thinks he's the world. You know, how to bring them to the same level.

26-11 1-693-700...With the younger kids, I think it's almost a nurturing that you're doing with them rather than the drill sergeant kind of approach although that can work if the guy is consistent. I think it really has to do with consistency and how seriously that person takes it. If they can also look it over and compliment and have a good time with that I think a kid can come out of that and thrive on it too. But usually you don't see that or I haven't seen that.

33-bl4-155-159...For one thing, when Mikehew went to the first practice (after the draft), there he is 8 years old practicing with these kids that could have been close to 13. That's a big difference. Going from bunny league having the coach pitch to you to having these fast balls thrown at you by a 13 year old.

33-bl4-454-461...One thing, and I don't know how you teach it, is just to remember that they are kids...These are not professional athletes that are earning a salary...I mean they're kids..They're just learning...Try and teach them...Don't get mad at them if they do something wrong...They're just learning...I don't know how you teach somebody to be like that...But I think that's real important, because I think there have been...

33-gl2-464-494..That's an interesting question. I think they have to have a basic understanding as far as the rules and that part of the game. I think that they need to psychologically find out where they're at as far as discipline, what the game means to them, and I think you have to have, if you're talking a community, I think there needs to be a community focus. Where the community puts forth this is what we want to portray. You know like the y and mission statement. I think there are certain behaviors that if you're going to be teaching this to children that you have to be a role model. And I would say probably most important, and this is one that might be lacking in a lot of coaches in this area, and this again comes from my nursing background, developmental stages of children at this age. There's not a great understanding of that, especially if you haven't dealt with it. Just because you are a parent of a child doesn't mean that you are excellent at it and maybe that needs to be something that is going over, the developmental of this age group that you're dealing with. Because some things are impossible for kids at that age and some things are just unhealthy for kids at that age and you have to be careful of that and I think that's important for along this aspect for these kids to go on if they want to be involved in

sports later on they can really do damage if you're not knowledgeable about those aspects and that comes from my nursing. But I do believe that there's a development there that is different from the development of a high school versus a college and I think you have to deal with that and I think they have to be knowledgeable about that.

33-gl2-617-627..Top three. That they're positive in everything that they do. Positive of themselves and to each player individually as well as a team would probably be number one for me. With this age group that they knew developmentally where these kids were at. And I think that they have to have a knowledge of the game. And a discipline. Those would probably be the top. I think anything and why it has to be a discipline, cause I think they're, you know sports teaches a lot more then just what's before, I think it teaches lifestyle. And I would say that that's a big one.

33-gl3-342-348...Just that they're kids. They really are kids. It's different like in high school, like mark said. They older they get, up in college, because they're grown, they're adults. This age group from 5,6 up to, I don't know, even some of the younger teenagers, like 13. They're kids. Coaches should just remember that they are. And they're gonna mess up. And they're gonna forget. Or they're gonna not do what they're told. To me, that's part of being a coach and part of being a parent. And it's hard sometimes because they want them to do good.

33-ll 2-680-689-01. Maybe a little psychological lesson as to what 9, 10, and 11 and 12 year old children are feeling and thinking.

33-ll 2-680-689-02...And what they're capable of as a child.

33-ll 2-680-689-03...Right. First of all, I don't agree with the way the system is set up. I don't agree with 9 being with 12. I think you have a totally different set of expectations and physical makeup that a coach could understand. At 10 years old...These are the things that bother 10-year-old kids. They're worried if they have to wear glasses, they're worried if they don't have the same kind of glove that the other kids on the team have. To know a little about the makeup of the child at that age would be helpful.

33-ll 2-704-707...And it didn't bother Tim that his friend pitched a no-hitter against him. He was happy for that kid and there was no animosity between the teams or with the kids; not the coaches, but the kids. I think the coaches have to look at the kids and realize, these are kids.

33-ll 5-670-673...I wish in this camp that we would send the coaches to that they would learn some compassion and some understanding that they're working with 8 and 9 and 10 and 11 year old children and not with grown men who have gone through how many years of playing the game. This is the kids beginning with baseball.

Individual approach.

03-ll 3-327-344...It's hard to say. My husband coaches soccer and things and he did not play soccer, but he loves the game, he has read a lot about it, he's been around it. He doesn't know how to do all the things, but he can communicate it to the kids. "here's what I'd like you to do.. Let's see if it will work." And then he has good crowd control and makes it fun for them and he'll get out there with them too and they see that he can't do everything but he can it across and it works out great and they have a good time. So you have to be a friend to them but you also have to keep them under control because there's a lot of the teams this year, not just in soccer, but in baseball

that, I think, the coaches are trying to be the kids best friends and then its like, our coaches, you always call them "Mr.", "Mr." So-and-so. A lot of the teams call the coaches by their first names. I think, at this age, they need to have respect for authority and let them know you're in control but they can still have fun. But you're not going to let them run around and be little crazy rug rats and so it's nice that you also have the assistants. Someone to teach them these things and you have the other that we say is our crowd control person and then we have someone else who's the 'gofer' for everything - so he kind of helps teach things and he helps keep them under control or does this or that. We've got three that are that way.

07-b11-703-712...Because everyone is different. Thank god none of us are alike, it would be a very boring world, and every child has the right to have that self-confidence built up in him, whether he's good or bad. If you make growth, then that's 'gonna build your self-confidence and there is no child on this earth that does not deserve the chance to build his self-confidence.

07-b14-335-340...Every game somebody was awarded the game ball. Somebody that had an outstanding catch or somebody he couldn't believe that stepped in and played catcher or something. So that was kinda neat. Both years and Mikehew has his sitting up on his dresser with the year on it.

07-b14-528-552-01ml...Do you think that really impacts kids self-esteem?

07-b14-528-552-02..I don't know. It probably depends on how closely they're listening. Some of the games, all Mikehew and his buddies cared about was getting the treat afterwards. And they wouldn't always sit tight and listen to everyting the coach had to say. Yeah, I think it would. After awhile. After every game that they didn't play well and were degraded like that...I think it would.

07-b14-528-552-03ml...I'm curious how much control this coach figure has in really making a difference, either positively or negatively, with a kid.

07-b14-528-552-04...I think between the coach and the kids on the team. Alot of that would depend on the player too. How outgoing they are in making friends and getting along with other kids. I think that probably has alot to do with that. Now some kids are naturals and I don't that would probably affect them as much. The ones that are just naturally good at the sport. But someone like Mikehew who is basically fairly shy, I mean he can make friends and that, but I think a coach would definitely make a difference to him. I know from just hearing him talk.

11-gl3-133-149...There's definitely a maturity in 5 and 6 year olds. One out of a hundred you might be able to scream at or be aggressive and actually get the results which is improved concedntration, improved utilization of the skills they displayed previously which is what the coach is after. They're after them to perform like they know they can perform. As they grow older and kids mature and become tougher mentally, sometimes they need a little more push to kick in that gear that this is serious, I don't know if serious is the right word, whatever I am doing to the best of my ability and all that, but I need to try and that's the thing. Sometimes a kid needs a sterner word, but it varies from child to child and the older they get, the higher percentage of children that can accept further direction to the point that when you get into high school and college, the vast majority can take the sterner direction without having some kind of an emotional problem, but still there's different coaching. Different strokes for different folks and that's all the way up through college. In the age group we are talking about, we feel the kids are in it to enjoy the sport and they're

not going to enjoy the sport, typically, if they're being belittled or...The coach could have the best intentions in the world but that's not the way to handle kids at that age.

23-bl3-455-478-01...I think I would want the person who coaches to look at each child as an individual. He might show him to do something this way, but it might work in a different way and it might work better. I think the coach should look at that. He shouldn't say, 'well, you're not doing it my way. Do it my way or don't do it at all'. No, I don't agree with that. I think he should look at each child as an individual and how they do something whether it works or not.

23-bl3-455-478-02ml...A little like we would expect a teacher to?

23-bl3-455-478-03...Yeah...I think everybody is an individual and should be look upon that way and not just a group. Like here's my group of pitchers, you all do it this way. No...It doesn't work for everybody the same way. What made me think of that was Bobby's pitching. He pitched his way and the coach didn't like it. And he went back and he said 'Bobby, pitch this way, you can do it'. Well Bobby couldn't pitch for squat like that. He pitched perfect his way and the coach just didn't like it. And he was afraid to tell the coach it wasn't working. Like 'why, what's he gonna do?' 'well, he won't let me play if I tell him' and it's like, 'Bobby, just tell him'

23-ll 1-725-759...your better coaches are usually the ones that have been there longer, they've observed the game. I think great coaches are tremendous observers. They know the scheme of the game, they know what to look for in situations because they've seen those situations come up before. Here's what we can do, here's what might happen. You might not look, the same play could happen, whether it's in any sport, could happen to an older, experienced player the same as it could with a younger, less experienced player. But on one side of it you give the kid an "atta boy" because he tried for it, but the other kid might not have come up with but you knew he didn't give you 100% on that effort. The same result but the means were different. That's what I found to be sometimes the most challenging thing is to separate those two incidences with those two separate individuals and handle them individually, not as a group, because if you lean on the nine-year old the same way you're leaning on the twelve-year old, the nine-year old is going to be the worse for it, because they're going to be afraid to make the mistake. You don't want those kids to be afraid to make a mistake, mistakes are going to happen. I told my kids, because it was a young team this year I want you playing 100% all the time. I said if you think you can get to the ball, you go get it. And I said if you think that ball is a strike and it looks good to you, i've taught you your strike zone. You go after it because you're not going to accomplish anything if you don't try it and I want you trying, I want you out there giving it your best effort and not to be afraid to make a mistake. The twelve year olds, those older players I expect good judgement from. Not perfect, but good judgement. That's a fine line, that's a difficult line and as coaches and as teachers we cross the line back and forth once in a while. They're not perfect and the whole thing of it is is that through time you'll gain that.

26-bl2-472-485...They take an interest in the kids. They make sure the kid's got a ride home. They make sure if they can't make it, they'll stop by and pick him up. Those are good coaches. Those are good people.

26-bl3-357-362...Like a father or a grandfather figure. Somebody that if he was having a problem pitching, he'd take the extra time to work with him one on one. Not just to set and scream at him, but if he has a problem, maybe take the time to work with him on that problem. I don't think that's asking too much.

26-11 1-1024-1043...First of all that person coming up I'd ask him where he wanted to coach first. But as far as giving advice, say a person came with all the tools to the game and wanted to coach, I wanna be a coach, listen to your instincts, know your kids and be there for your kids. Great coaches have always loved their teams and loved their kids. They have treated them just like their own. Sometimes they need a kick in the pants to get themselves going, not a literal kick in the pants, but I mean maybe an awakening, and other times they need the pat on the back too. And there are measures of each. And I'm a believer that you do have to use both measures once in awhile in order to get the kid to understand to where you're coming from. But it has to be on a positive side that you don't simply ball-beat the kid, but he knows he made a mistake, you tell him how he's got to improve that. Giving him the tools that you know. That's where you see coaches and professional wise, high school and college, the players they've taught go onto be coaches. They have the knowledge, they are good teachers. They are educators.

26-11 2-246-253-01...I think bottom line.. He cares about kids. He wants to win, but he seems to have a mixture of love and paternal instinct for the kids but he also has a way of bringing out the best in them by positive criticism.

26-11 5-542-550...When I think about the coach, I don't think about the rules and stuff, because most of them do know that. I'm more concerned with the fairness they're gonna treat my child with. That they're gonna treat each child as an equal. You know, that one is not better than the other. Granted, there are gonna be kids who are better than others, but don't show that. Good sportsmanship is very important. When I think about a good coach, I don't think as much about the playing part...I know that's important, practices and such...But I see a good coach as tell the kids, "good job" and not putting the kids down. Focusing more on the kids as individuals and team players. To me, the boys are the most important thing out there, not the game.

27-11 1-1214-1217..Communication. Like John says, talking with the kids, finding out a bit about them, it's just not there for practice and doing this and this and this; but conversing with the kids and I think when you do that they are probably more open to talking to you. Anybody is...Show them a little interest.

27-11 1-929-942...I think from the other side of it, when you begin to become friends with the kids, when you put you hand on their shoulders and you can joke around with them. I'll always ask all kids what their favorite major league team, you try to involve them in association with the kids so you understand, when they have a problem they're coming to you. The last thing you want is for that kid to feel that they can't talk to you. I want my kids to talk to me. Even if I am wrong if I point something out to them and knows the situation but he wasn't there and I want him to tell me that. I think it is a give and take situation where you have to communicate with your players as well. I don't want a bunch of robots I want players who are able to think for themselves. You've got to give them some latitude.

34-gl2-501-506...Development and I think self-esteem and motivation have to be huge, too, because each child is motivated by different things and so coaches pretty much have to have the psychology too so that's part of it too. The team effort and how to get the most out of the people that you've got is part of it too.

Role Model

11-11 2-202-210-01...The guys who coach in the boys' league, Smith Stereo who was our team, had a lot of problems with them yelling and screaming. I don't know if that's competitiveness or behavior; they're two different lines - yelling at the umps and behavior that's not really suitable behavior for kids to see. I'd change a lot of things about how they select coaches and who gets to coach and starting off, they shouldn't be able to sit out there and smoke and coach. That drives me nuts.

11-11 2-202-210-02...They do have to leave the dugout this year; you must have made some progress.

11-11 2-202-210-03...Before, they could stand out there on the field and puff away.

11-11 2-624-641-01...After we made the decision that Tim would not finish the season and that was a hard decision because we've always told our kids that once you start something you finish. None of this, "I don't like it, I don't want to go to practice, I'm gonna quit." So it was a real hard decision and we went back and forth with it for several weeks before we just decided that it was no longer fun, it was no longer worth our time, it got to the point where Tim came off the field crying. After we made that decision, then I wrote a letter to the dba saying that we did make this decision and why we made this decision, cited dates and incidents that had happened and things, and my final remark was that I questioned the motivation for this person to be coaching; why does he coach when he has to resort to humiliation tactics to get kids to do what he wants them to do. Now I can't remember what point I'm trying to make.

11-11 2-624-641-02ml...We're talking about role models.

11-11 2-624-641-03...Yea, and his own son was on the team and of course he played every inning that season. He played every single inning that whole entire game. He's a good ball player and I don't begrudge that boy, but there were times when he walked off the field and you could tell that he was totally embarrassed by his father's behavior. That's his father. That's his role model all the time.

15-bl1-81-113-01...Yes, yea, and getting out there and working for something that they want. For my son, our coach at Express Burger has done wonders in getting my son to handle his temper. My kid has got a terrible temper, doesn't he Beth? And Mitch will just flat out turn around and bench his little butt and I will go over and say "Mike, what's wrong?" And he'll just start screaming. Mitch will give him a look like "you'd better knock it off right now." Their coach does not handle temper tantrums, he does not handle bad sportsmanship, he does not take another team member bad-mouthing another team member. The values that he carries through with the team are what we try to carry through at home. And in order for him to be able to play, he has to keep his temper in line. He's learning to check it at home too. Not as quickly as I'd like, but it's helping. I think I like the idea of him seeing how some of the coaches handle themselves when they lose. When they see their coach, after losing a game, go up and shake the other coach's hand and laugh about something, I think that's embedded into their heads.

15-bl1-81-113-02...They learn from their coaches. They see them and if they're a positive role model, then they're 'gonna follow and do what they see. But if they see another coach who's off stormin' around and yelling at his boys, they notice that and its like...I've noticed our boys, when they have to go and shake hands after the game, they're leery to shake his hand, they've seen how he's acted throughout the game and it's like "I don't know if I want to do that or not." Mitch will point that out, after the game when they all get in their huddle, or whatever, and he'll say, "we talked about bad sportsmanship." Right there is a good example of the team and the coaches, and

then he more-or-less lets it known that, okay, it's been pointed out, that's an example of bad sportsmanship, but that's it. It's done, it's over with, the game is over with, that example is finished. He doesn't encourage, I don't think he does, I mean am I looking through rose-colored glasses with him?

15-bl1-81-113-03...No 'cause I'm really impressed and one thing I would like to say is that as a single parent my boys need that positive role model because they are not around a male. They don't have a "so-called" father and they need that positive male influence and they get that from martyr, or from their coach. And like you said, he does stress, we will not tolerate poor sportsmanship, you know, you will be benched or you will not start the game whether you're the star player or not. You will not start it if you cannot follow the rules.

15-ll 2-202-210-01...The guys who coach in the boys' league, Smith Stereo who was our team, had a lot of problems with them yelling and screaming. I don't know if that's competitiveness or behavior; they're two different lines - yelling at the umps and behavior that's not really suitable behavior for kids to see. I'd change a lot of things about how they select coaches and who gets to coach and starting off, they shouldn't be able to sit out there and smoke and coach. That drives me nuts.

15-ll 2-202-210-02...They do have to leave the dugout this year; you must have made some progress.

15-ll 2-202-210-03...Before, they could stand out there on the field and puff away.

21-ll 2-658-672...When you're an instructor, whether it's a Sunday school teacher or an English teacher. There's a certain code of behavior, certainly you know as an educator, that you have to maintain. It doesn't mean that you're that way all the time, but you don't swear in your private home or that you don't smoke or drink. That's not the issue. But as that role, as you take on that garb as a coach or a Sunday school teacher or whatever, you must maintain a certain kind of decorum because that's what you owe them; a certain kind of responsibility. Some coaches have not grasped the meaning of that. I'm not saying that they don't slip off the saddle and don't occasionally lapse, but they regard that as a lapse, and hop back on. I teach Sunday school and I swore every kid. But that was not my normal behavior and I told myself that and told them, "I shouldn't have said that, you creep." We all do that, but I recognize that as a mistake. We don't expect them to be saints, but certainly I don't think that he thinks, the coach that we've been discussing so much, that he's done anything wrong. As a matter of fact, I think he thinks he's the one that's doing it right. That's the way children should be taught.

22-bl1-601-604...Right, so the rest of the team worked with him and the coach worked with him which was really great to see, the team come together and the coach, our coach, I have to say is excellent with the boys. He's got the love for the game, but he's also a football coach and he's really into the sport.

22-bl1-634-637-01...They need to set the example of the good sportsmanship. I think it's very important for the coaches to set the example, not do as I say; do as I do.

22-bl1-634-637-02... 'cause they can say one thing and do the complete opposite and the boys are getting mixed signals. Well, do we do that? Is this the way it's supposed to be?

22-bl1-743-757...And there's a lot of boys that don't have a father. My son didn't have a father for about five years. I was fortunate enough to have brothers-in-law and brothers and a father that spent a lot of time with him, but they didn't really play ball

with him. So a lot of these kids are comin' right out of a, how do you say? A women-run home, which is not bad by far, sometimes I think it's better, but they don't have someone roughin' and toughin' them up and sayin' oh, come on, this and that, and lets go out and pitch some balls and stuff, they don't have that at home, so for a lot of these kids, these coaches are the first males to rough and tough 'um and throw a ball 90 miles an hour at their face and say, "catch it", and call it fun. They have to be aware of this; they can't just jump into coaching as a macho type deal because a lot of these kids, this is their first year of any kind of competition, any kind of competitive sports. Because like you said before, t-ball and all that, there is no competition. With Jeremy, you'll ask him who won, he'll say, it was a tie game again, because they don't keep score. Boys' league is their first competitive sport and they're having a tough time dealing with this.

22-bl1-780-789-01...I'm not, like, not coming drunk to the ball games and things like that. And they need to have good morals. I'm trying to think of the word that I want, but and even head.

22-bl1-780-789-02ml...Temperament.

22-bl1-780-789-03...Yea, an even temperament, their head on their shoulders, straight, or how do I want to say it?

22-bl1-780-789-04...Their head screwed on tight.

22-bl1-780-789-05ml...A little common sense.

22-bl1-780-789-06...Yea, lots of common sense. The need that and you can't get that from any kind of education, you've got to have good common sense and a love for children.

22-bl2-150-160...You want to teach the kids sportsmanship. Not quite like Vince Lombardi where winning is the only thing. They gotta have fun. They're still young, they're still developing mentally and physically and if you don't give them that chance to mature...Because kids at that age are very impressionable and if they see a coach stand around stomping and cussing at one of their players and belittles, they think how can that be wrong? The biggest thing I would do if I was coaching is that the kids have fun and that everybody plays.

22-bl2-287-291...He's gotta be firm, but at the same time he can't expect any more from those kids than they can expect out of him. You can't lead if you can't follow. You can't expect somebody to do something you wouldn't do yourself.

22-bl3-427-443-01...I know if the coach swore alot I would not want my child on that team at all. I'd even go as far as pulling him off the team and getting him a different team. I think the guy's personality and character are important. You know, if he goes out and drinks or is a woman beater or whatever, I don't care how good he coaches, I don't want him around my son.

22-bl3-427-443-02...What I expect from the coach is about like what I would expect from a pastor. I would want his character to be above reproach.

22-bl3-427-443-03ml...But the difference is that all you have to do to be a coach is to sign up.

22-bl3-427-443-04...Yeah (laughs)

22-bl3-427-443-05...But still the boys do follow them. My husband pointed this out before the baseball season got over. He was watching Bobby one day and he said 'do you know who Bobby reminds me of' and I said 'no I don't'. He said he's acting just like the coach' Bobby was picking up his mannerisms just being around him. Now if

his mannerisms weren't what I considered to be reasonable, I don't think I'd want Bobby picking them up. I mean, the kids do look up to them.

22-g11-0358-362...I like what Grace said about the coaches behavior being the very important for all the coaches to realize they are a role model and kids are looking up to them. Whatever they do kids are going to copy. So act like civilized human beings. Old rule and all that good stuff.

22-g11-372-385...I think the worst thing they learn is that they can act like the coach. Like, ok, we're gonna throw the bats and throw the helmets. We're gonna argue every call with the umpire. We're gonna make an idiot out of ourself. These kids are supposed to look up to their coach. They're a person in authority so if they can do it why can't I act like that. So I think if your coach is maintaining a little control your team maintains a little control. To me, that would be a real negative if you had a coach who was a little over zealous. You can see their team act the same way. If they act like idiots, they don't know how to control themselves then the team thinks why can't I do that? So I think they need to learn and realize that your kids are learning from you. You're setting an example.

22-g11-570-592...Plus if you ask kids who was your best teacher, or what is one of the people that you idealize or learned a lot from. I know my husband would probably say it's one of his coaches because he respected him. It doesn't even have to be coaches, it could be a band director or choir teacher or your drama or whatever. Any one in authority needs to be aware of the impression they are making on everyone because these people are at a young age.

22-g11-570-592...I didn't realize how important that is because in my situation I'm allowing someone else to give something to my daughter that I can't. That's really quite important that that be a person that gives her the right attitude about competition and how to go about competing in this world today. You're right, that's a very good aspect there because you are a single parent did you say? And there are a lot of single parents these days trying to fill both roles and if you're a single mom you're hoping that, or even a single dad, we have a girl on our team whose mom is deceased. You're looking for someone to fill a hole that you can't fill. It's a shame that you can't be a little bit more selective and who is filling that hole?

22-g11-824-847-01...I think they should know that they're a role model. They're an example. Everything they do they have fourteen little pair of eyes looking at them. Maybe not all at once, but I can guarantee you, most of the time there is somebody looking at what they're doing. So, I think they need to be aware that what they do is scrutinized all the time. So you have to be an example.

22-g11-824-847-02ml...Well, what if I never had to be an example?

22-g11-824-847-03...Then you have a problem.

22-g11-824-847-04ml...Maybe with my own children, but I never had to be an example to another group.

22-g11-824-847-05...Then it's going to be a learning experience for you too.

22-g11-824-847-06...Yeah, as long as you know you're gonna be one. Whether you like it or not. If you're gonna coach, you're gonna be an example.

22-g12-658-676...When you see adults acting like that, how do are kids supposed to act? That's what I mean by a good role model. Self-control. Not one that you should hide your emotion but I don't think that you have to go out of control. That's

something that a lot of times is learned at home. That can't be a coaches total responsibility for someone. Some of that comes from the home and from the people they're around. Kids look up to adults. That's where you're at with development. When you look at these kids developmentally, they're not the same as college kids who think that they're on the same level. They're still looking for a lot of guidance and positive role models. I think it could be an excellent thing also for kids who don't have fathers or a mother, if there was a woman coach there, that's positive aspects if they portray a positive aspect. It's like a hero-type worship for a lot of kids that age. I think it's detrimental to have coaches that do that. It's saying something and if they don't have an experience of another coach, that's their impression.

22-11 1-785-802...With the coach we had this year, and not to make him out to be an ogre, I guess anybody can be good and bad and he did working with the kids at practice he would rig up these things with batting with the kids. He would go that extra step and do that extra work. The kids would always have a problem with turning their head away when the ball would come in and turn your head, well he worked up these gadgets where wrapped? To their arms and a mouthpiece so they could not turn their heads. They noticed in their games, oh so and so you did turn your head. They just kept practicing that and he would do different things and think of things on his own to help better the child's performance at bat. That's pretty decent that he took the time to sit down and rig this thing and make it and work with the kids and the kids themselves saw the improvement too. Even holding the bat a certain way and doing things with the bat. Simple things.

22-11 5-785-803-01...I think there's something we need to remember, too, is the adults that these kids work with are setting. How do I want to say it. The kids are forming their opinions about adults and what it is to be an adult and what they want to be like by the adults that they deal with so if these kids come up against a coach that throws his hat and kicks the ball and that kind of stuff, that's setting a picture in their minds of adults. I would like to have my kids deal with more positive adults and get positive.

22-11 5-785-803-02...If we could get to learn from your mistakes rather than....A mistake can be a positive thing rather than a negative thing.

22-11 5-785-803-03...They're learning from the adults that they watch and have dealings with and I don't want my boys to learn that if you make a mistake you throw your hat.

22-11 5-785-803-04...You are so right. Last spring before ball season started, my daughter was gonna play t-ball, hadn't played for a couple years, her brother was out there trying to teach her what to do - he was getting nasty. Finally I opened up the door and asked what he was doing, she's just a little girl, she's not going to play like you do. He said, "I'm just talking the way my coach talks." And it's that one coach.

26-11 1-640-652-01...I would say being positive. We have that with our team. They're positive and they're all really good role models.

26-11 1-640-652-02-ml...Is that important?

26-11 1-640-652-03...As much time as my child spends with coach, you bet it is. They do point out their mistakes, but it's a helpful criticism, it's not jumping on them with both feet. We've also been involved with that situation too and the difference is just amazing.

32-gl2-464-494...That's an interesting question. I think they have to have a basic understanding as far as the rules and that part of the game. I think that they need to psychologically find out where they're at as far as discipline, what the game means to

them, and I think you have to have, if you're talking a community, I think there needs to be a community focus. Where the community puts forth this is what we want to portray. You know like the y and mission statement. I think there are certain behaviors that if you're going to be teaching this to children that you have to be a role model. And I would say probably most important, and this is one that might be lacking in a lot of coaches in this area, and this again comes from my nursing background, developmental stages of children at this age. There's not a great understanding of that, especially if you haven't dealt with it. Just because you are a parent of a child doesn't mean that you are excellent at it and maybe that needs to be something that is going over, the developmental of this age group that you're dealing with. Because some things are impossible for kids at that age and some things are just unhealthy for kids at that age and you have to be careful of that and I think that's important for along this aspect for these kids to go on if they want to be involved in sports later on they can really do damage if you're not knowledgeable about those aspects and that comes from my nursing. But I do believe that there's a development there that is different from the development of a high school versus a college, and I think you have to deal with that and I think they have to be knowledgeable about that.

32-11 2-741-751...I would have a list of forbidden things that they should not say and note that this is something that would remove you from that position. None of the coaches would ever say the word "nigger" or "spick" or that kind of thing, but they're a long way away from thinking. Although I did hear a coach tell one of the kids he played like a girl. I find that real offensive having daughters who are athletes, and that is an acceptable thing to say. It's not considered a "nigger" phrase and it should be. No, it's unacceptable for you to say that but we have high school coaches that frequently call the boys "pussies" and I hate that kind of thing...That's the same thing. You don't see that, but it is. I would have a list of "no-no's." If it doesn't come to you naturally, memorize it. If you do not have the logic behind it...You cannot say certain things and that would be included.

**Parents' Expectations of the Coach:
Managerial Skills**

Fairness

07-gl1-362-369-...I think there's a lack, they lose confidence. That's the major thing. You'll see kids that work hard in practice and they don't get to play and I had my boys sometimes upset and they were upset because they didn't get to play. The coach didn't put them in for one reason or another and it's not fair. They don't understand it, it's not fair to them not to play. I think that they lose interest in sports and I think they lose confidence too.

21-bl1-1081-1092...I don't expect them to be perfect, if you could have the perfect coach, yes that would be fantastic, but I would say a coach that is a decent person and has a little bit of humor and a little bit up here and wants to take the time to spend with these boys; there's not enough people in today's society that want to spend time with kids, and I'm talking parents that want to spend time with their own kids. Society has gotten, I was talking to another woman the other day, and I said you know, it used to be you had your extended family and you were there and that extended family was like a nice, little wall around you; now that extended family is in , and , and god only knows where are society is seeping into our families so much and you got people who are work, work, work, leaving the kids at home, at the sitters, that if you've got someone who is going to take some time with your child, I think that's fantastic.

21-bl1-684-696-01...Play them all, whether they're good or bad. You don't learn anything if you already have it.

21-bl1-684-696-02...You learn it by experience, not by sitting on the bench.

21-bl1-684-696-03...That's right. And if your sittin' on the bench, you're not 'gonna learn a thing and you're not 'gonna come back. You're 'gonna lose the kids.

21-bl1-684-696-04...I can't remember exactly, but the only thing about that, I agree, I really feel that the kids should get equal amount of play even if they're poor, because they are still in their growing years, they're still learning. I see this even happen in schools. The coaches will bench them; they're not very good so I'll just bench them. And my son on the bunny league last year, the coach would have practices for the good players, and wouldn't even call the other kids for practice because he thought they weren't even worth working with. Ha! Guess whose son didn't get called for practice?

21-bl2-308-313...and like I mentioned, none of the nepotism...I mean if I'm coaching and my boy's good, he'll play, but there will be other times when he won't play...And I'm fair...And that one thing the coach has to do is be fair. That's one of the first things the kids notice 'how come he's out there 6 innings, and I didn't play at all?'

21-bl3-153-160...When Bobby was in boys league it wasn't too bad. The first year we kinda felt like he didn't get to play very much. And the coach was kinda wrong for that. The next year he (the coach) came back and said he made a mistake not playing him more than he did. But he was real fair most of the time I thought. Even though he has his own son on the team. He didn't play him all the time or anything.

21-bl3-164-206-01...At the same token, it's not fair to the kids. Say he [pointing to her husband] used to work second shift. He would've loved to have been the coach. Now that's not fair to our son. He's out there practicing. He plays ball the whole season

.All year long. Out in the snow. He's very dedicated. Now, he sets his time out on the bench every game. Their kids may not have been as good, but yet Bobby was setting out and their kids were out there playing.

21-bl3-164-206-012ml...So he's being penalized because his dad works second and can't coach?

21-bl3-164-206-013...That's right. and that's not fair. But that's one thing we kinda used as a teaching tool that life's not fair. We as parents didn't think it was fair and it's kinda hard to tell your son that it's not fair when we are feeling that too.

21-bl3-164-206-1-4...Yeah, and that's not right. I think if you want to coach a team, fine, but you should not coach your own son's team. That's not fair to all the other boys on that team at all.

21-bl3-164-206-1...But in little league, it was a totally different story. The coach's kid played every inning. Every game.

21-bl3-164-206-2...There were 4 kids on the team that were the coaches' kids. They played every game, every inning, never sat out.

21-bl3-164-206-3...And had the best positions.

21-bl3-164-206-5...Unless you can be unbiased about it.

21-bl3-164-206-6...It's hard to be unbiased.

21-bl3-164-206-7...Yeah, but it makes it really, really hard not to.

21-bl3-164-206-8..You find very few coaches that can do it.

21-bl3-164-206-9...Because most of them, their motivation is there. The principle motivation to coach sometimes is to coach your own kid.

21-bl3-225-252-01...With Bobby, I don't really think there could be. He puts more pressure on himself than any coach could put on him. And the coaches don't really verbally pressure him or anything. I think sometimes it comes through that if you don't perform or don't get the hits, then you don't get to play as much. And that's they're goal. They want to play. They want to be out there. It'd be really nice, I think...I know that the older they get and the higher they move up that it moves toward being more of a competitive atmosphere where you're gonna play the kids who perform. The ones that are better are gonna rise to the top and they're gonna be the ones that are starters and play the whole game and like that, but I'm not too sure that at the little league level that that's really a good thing. It seems to me that at this age it would be better if everybody just played the same amount of time...Regardless. You know, then the pressure's off. Then they can just go out there and concentrate on playing and having fun. Some kids will still put pressure on themselves. Try too hard...But still, they're still gonna want to win, but that would eliminate pressure from that way. I know that there are coaches who yell at kids...I've heard them. We've been pretty lucky. With the problems we had this year with the difference of opinion that we had maybe, they didn't put any kids down or anything or put pressure on them. About the most they would say would be....Just tell them what they did wrong, but not berating them or anything

21-bl3-485-498...I'd say that that's probably more important than the skills, because lots of people out there can teach skills. If you're really worried about your kid learning the skills, you can find somebody. There's videotapes and everything out there to teach you how to teach kids to play baseball. You can find that. But the other things are probably more important. Being fair, everybody getting to play pretty much equal time, no favorites. If there was an outstanding player on the team and the team won when he was in there, they would probably all want him to be in there. They want to win. They don't want their best player sitting on the bench either. By the same token, they don't want to be sitting on the bench 5 out of 6 innings.

21-bl3-621-628...Well, if I was gonna do it, that would be my approach. I'd just tell them up front from the beginning that you're all gonna play equal time, so nobody's under any pressure. Just go out there and do your best. If you want to win, play hard. But you're not gonna have to perform up to any standard just to play. I think that would take a lot of pressure off. Just go out there and have fun. That's what it's all about.

21-bl4-160-174...I don't know, I think the teams would be fairer too. Some of these boys league teams could have all 11 and 12 year olds, some could have all 9 and 10 year olds and be playing against each other. I think the competition would be closer matched if they were more in the same age group. I don't know about how little league is once you get up there. But what I've heard is that most of the younger ones that are on little league just sit the bench. In fact, 3 of Matthew's friends last year said there was no way they were moving up to little league, but they got forced into it almost because the little league team had lost so many players and in the draft, they had gotten 9 year olds, well they knew these 9 year olds weren't ready to play, so they had to take some 10 year olds and bump them up.

21-gl1-362-369...I think there's a lack, they lose confidence. That's the major thing. You'll see kids that work hard in practice and they don't get to play and I had my boys sometimes upset and they were upset because they didn't get to play. The coach didn't put them in for one reason or another and it's not fair. They don't understand it, it's not fair to them not to play. I think that they lose interest in sports and I think they lose confidence too.

21-gl1-912-932...I just think they need to realize that. Maybe they didn't realize they were hurting. Like what they did offended one girl, but it didn't another girl. They need more individual treatment. They treat them all one way and that doesn't work sometimes. You don't get the same out of each kid with the same process. Sometimes I think they need to be, well all the time, you have to individualize things and know what you can do to one and not to the other. I know that's the way it was for my one that's a senior this year. She plays basketball and she plays softball. They appreciate being treated on an individual basis as opposed to across the board. Maybe girls are worse that way than boys. I don't know.

21-gl1-912-932...I think boys, even the high school level, think the same thing. Some kids you can yell at and scream at and call them every name in the book and that just makes them mad and makes them try harder. Another kid is just going to crawl into a shell and he's not going to do anything. You just shot him right there. Kids handle it differently.

21-ll 1-1150-1159...I think the fairness is really important in a coach. You know, if all the kids are there at practice and they're giving their 100% and then they come to the game, and there may be 3 kids that start the game and play the entire game but all these other kids who have paid their dues only get to play half the game. I wonder sometime why some men coach: a) do they want to make their child the best player? Or b) do they want to teach something or is it for their own self-worth?..You know, "I'm really this great coach"...I've been questioning.

21-ll 1-486-508...Dealing with disappointment. Our son was told at the beginning of the season, oh I'm gonna work with you on pitching and you're going to be one of our

pitchers for the season and he never got to pitch a game. He never got to be worked with and to this day he still won't talk about it. He was going to work with me and I was going to pitch. I'm like, well I'm sorry. I don't know what happened. I felt like the coach could have come up to him and said hey, we have two other pitchers or whatever the case may be, but he could have come back and said something to him, but he was hanging on and waiting for that moment because he had pitched in little league his first year. He got to do one or two games. And one game he pitched to was like the winning pitcher and it was like one of the one wins last year, we probably had two wins. So he was pretty excited. And then this year, nothing. And it was not followed through. And as a parent, too, we need to follow through what we tell our kids. It's not just the coaches. In that case though I think that the coach didn't follow through with what he had told him, noah, to begin with. Where he was going to play him at playing ball this year. My kid didn't want to play on the traveling; he played his season with his team.

21-11 1-601-616...An overemphasis on winning. The focus is gonna be on winning, the kids are gonna force that. You can say, "well it's not whether you win or lost." Kid's are going "you're nuts, we're gonna go out there and kick some butt." Because that's what they watch on tv. That's what they see their dad doing when he plays (or mom). To tell them it's not important to win or lose, they say "oh yeah it is, because that kid on second base, I go to school with him, and I want to be able to say to him, "we beat you." But I think an over-emphasis from the parent or the coach can really mess that up. Where they say, "you can't play this game because we really want to win it, and I'm going to go with my best guys all the time" That' I think is a real problem for the kid who is on the team and has heavy expectation to play and doesn't. I think that's a real negative for that group.

21-11 1-990-1008...Don't prejudge the kid. That really grinds me. There was some history, the coach knew this boy and his experience with this boy was after he had a successful outing he would, according to the coach, be lazy. He would, to quote him, "he's gonna be lazy, he's got a fat head on him cause he went out and pitched a nice game" and from the next game he wasn't going to play that boy and he didn't because that was his preconception whether that boy was going to meet that or not, he didn't play. Because that was what he thought. The next time he went out he played the best game i've ever seen a ten year old play. I don't know that that would have happen that game that he sat out but I don't think that was called for as a fair coach. And I don't even think the guy realized what he had said. I don't see him as that kind of coach but on this particular boy he had a preconception of how he was going to be and he and he just went with that rather than letting him show him that's what he was going to do. He sagged. And a coach shouldn't do that.

21-11 2-341-361-01...I tried talking to this coach as an adult, on an even level and without raising my voice and losing my temper, I was just curious because there is a rule that each kid has to play a certain number of innings and if they don't play one game they have to start the next and that stuff. After our team had played, maybe 30 innings, Tim had maybe 9 or 10 innings. I'm not sure of the numbers, but it wasn't what it should be. I asked the coach if he realized he was labeling Tim as a bench warmer because he wasn't given the opportunity, and how will he learn if not given the opportunity of playing in the game? He said it was because Tim came up to little league as a twelve-year-old...Well, that wasn't his fault. That was one reason and another reason was that he had coached this team for ten years and he was here to win. He had seven players who would win the games for him and they were the ones that

were going to play. And that's the way it's gonna' be. I thought it was really sad that that's why you're here and then it progressed to him yelling and saying that if I thought I could do better I could get out there and do it. Then he stormed away. I told him that Tim did not want me to talk to him because he (Tim) was afraid he would take it out on him. I told him I'd better never hear of that happening, but of course it did.
 21-11 2-341-361-02...We have some (inaudible) psychopaths that can use this for a lot of things and if they aren't removed then we should. I can't think of any other situation where we would allow our children...
 21-11 2-341-361-03...In the classroom.

21-11 2-473-478...Another thing, and this is something that I'm not terribly critical with our team, but I think it happens on most teams, is they bring a certain number of nine-year-olds into little league, but they are a very select group, and I think our nine-year-olds sit too much. I would like to see them play more equally with the others because we missed some of the last games and I didn't keep track or anything, but I know our three little guys didn't play as much as the older ones.

21-11 2-499-505...In our case, they asked and we said "no" because we felt the same way you did. If you're gonna sit on the bench, how are you gonna learn; if you're playing you have a better chance of learning it. And then John , who we didn't know from adam at that point, kept calling us and talking and saying, "look, really, you don't know me, but I'll play him, I'll try and work with him, and I think you'll find he'll be okay." And maybe like stupid idiots we just took his word for it, but as it turned out, it was fine. A very positive situation.

21-11 2-624-641-01...After we made the decision that Tim would not finish the decision; and that was a hard decision because we've always told our kids that once you start something you finish. None of this, "I don't like it, I don't want to go to practice, I'm gonna quit." So it was a real hard decision and we went back and forth with it for several weeks before we just decided that it was no longer fun, it was no longer worth our time, it got to the point where Tim came off the field crying. After we made that decision, then I wrote a letter to the dba saying that we did make this decision and why we made this decision, cited dates and incidents that had happened and things, and my final remark was that I questioned the motivation for this person to be coaching; why does he coach when he has to resort to humiliation tactics to get kids to do what he wants them to do. Now I can't remember what point I'm trying to make.
 21-11 2-624-641-02ml...We're talking about role models.

21-11 2-624-641-03...Yea, and his own son was on the team and of course he played every inning that season. He played every single inning that whole entire game. He's a good ball player and I don't begrudge that boy, but there were times when he walked off the field and you could tell that he was totally embarrassed by his father's behavior. That's his father. That's his role model all the time.

21-11 2-642-651...I think Sharon brings up a good point too. We can't expect out of these men what we can't even do ourselves. I mean, we all make mistakes and make wrong decisions or hurt our children, maybe unconsciously, by what we say to them. There are going to be times...My own son is dealing with his father and my husband is dealing with young children, impressionable kids. I worry about what might flip out of his mouth when he's used to dealing with 20-year-olds. I do. And he has to be real conscious of that. You gonna treat a 21-year-old kid a lot different than you are a nine-year-old, so I worry about...But yet you can't expect something from a coach, you can't expect perfection, when you, as a parent, aren't that way either.

21-11 2-658-672...When you're an instructor, whether it's a Sunday school teacher or an english teacher. There's a certain code of behavior, certainly you know as an educator, that you have to maintain. It doesn't mean that you're that way all the time, but you don't swear in your private home or that you don't smoke or drink. That's not the issue. But as that role, as you take on that garb as a coach or a Sunday school teacher or whatever, you must maintain a certain kind of decorum because that's what you owe them; a certain kind of responsibility. Some coaches have not grasped the meaning of that. I'm not saying that they don't slip off the saddle and don't occasionally lapse, but they regard that as a lapse, and hop back on. I teach Sunday school and I swore every kid. But that was not my normal behavior and I told myself that and told them, "I shouldn't have said that, you creep." We all do that, but I recognize that as a mistake. We don't expect them to be saints, but certainly I don't think that he thinks, the coach that we've been discussing so much, that he's done anything wrong. As a matter of fact, I think he thinks he's the one that's doing it right. That's the way children should be taught.

21-11 3-175-200-01...Our coaching staff is great, like I said. They are always positive, winning is not their goal if that's an extra, that's really great, but I would say our worst negative are the parents, some of them. We've got...Like if a younger child plays, say there's a 12 year old sitting on the bench and a 9 year old is playing, then you've got the 12 year old parents all upset. "Well, he's put in his time and why did you pull him out and put in this 9 year old in?" Then the coaches are trying to explain that everyone has to play and sometimes the parents get the kids involved and it usually is done off to the side, but I guess that would be the worst problem. Some of the parents concerned about why their child isn't pitching and the other kids see that and then they feel bad. Some parents cheer against their child's teammates because their child isn't playing. The kids notice that.

21-11 3-175-200-02-ml... So it doesn't bother me if that child strikes out, and that sort of thing.

21-11 3-175-200-03...It makes their child look better. "See, you shouldn't have pulled my child out because he struck out and mine didn't." That is a big negative on some of the teams. And then there have been some outbursts. One of the assistant coaches this year on one of the teams was swearing at an umpire and this year the umpires are pretty young, they're probably 14 or something, and they are trying really hard, but of course they won't get every call right, no one does, so one of the coaches ran ranting and raving onto the field and spit on the umpire and was swearing at him and his batter that was up was cheering, jumping up and down, egging him on. And we felt everyone should be pulled off the field. This guy did get thrown out but it wasn't handled correctly. All the kids were cheering and thought it was really great and this wasn't when we were playing, it was before we were playing, and we were the next team and we were watching and not believing it was happening.

21-11 3-276-282...Gosh. I guess fairness and not to argue. When they're out in the real world someday they can think back and realize that things are not always going to go my way; I had someone counting on me and I let them down, they're not going to forget that. If they just learn that they can't do it all themselves and work as a team, I think that would be great on down the road somewhere, if they're working in a job somewhere, knowing that they're not just an individual, that other people count on them.

21-11 3-79-87....I've talked to a lot of people who have had bad experiences, but we have never had a bad experience with a coach and number one, they always come to the first meeting and always tell us that winning is not their goal. We have been so fortunate because a lot of people base everything on winning and our coaches have always said that everyone gets to play and no one is better than anyone else and so we have been very, very lucky and they all just want everyone to play and learn. They always say that they are going to teach the fundamentals. They don't care if they win a game this year, the kids are going to learn to do it correctly. We've been very, very lucky.

21-11 4-12-19...Well, no, he just, he wanted to quit and we finally just said if you feel like...We really didn't want him to but the way they treated um and some of the other kids on the team we were just to the point where, if they're not going to play him...He comes to the practices, and it was like if you weren't the coach's son or the coach's son's friend, they had you sitting out a lot. They just weren't fair to the kids..How are they gonna learn how to play ball and be a good ball player if they're not gonna play them and have them sittin' on the bench all the time?

21-11 4-38-50...She's 11, but they seem to play her a lot. To me, I don't know, and to other people I've talked to it seems like its...The other parents that I've talked to they've said that they've noticed it's in the boys' more than the girls' league where they've noticed their children have sat out too, and they don't think the coach is playing them fairly. Brad got discouraged and it's like, you know, we can understand if he wasn't coming to the practices or had a good excuse for this or that, and if they don't call the coach and let him know ahead of time that they're not gonna be showing up. But if you call and let them know ahead of time something came up where they can't get to the practice or the game. What we found out is the kids that, the kids, a lot of times the rules are that if you don't make it to practice then you're not gonna play in the game. Well, there's been a lot of other kids who have missed practice but still have gotten to play the game. They don't treat those kids fairly.

21-11 5-306-316...Sometimes. They should know. It varies, too, from year to year. This year, well, I'm sure every year, but this year it seemed like there was an overabundance of 12-year-olds on every team and they're not gonna pull 12-year-olds, at least I've seen that on our team. They're not gonna pull them, they're gonna play them the whole game through no matter if they make 15 errors, they're not gonna pull them. A lot of them, I have a real problem with this, were coaches sons. I have a real problem with, I think when they're younger and you have a coach and that coach wants to go out and help with their daughter or son's team, I think that's great, but the older they get, I just, if you can't be fair about it then you have no business being out there with your own child on the team. I know that parents have to get involved in everything, but I just, I don't agree with that at all.

21-11 5-456-460...Fairness. We've had one coach for a long time and I think he's quite fair. He does some things I don't agree with all the time. All the kids on our team pretty much get to play every game even in close games going down to the wire. Most of the kids (if not all of them) almost always got in the game. Sometimes it backfired and sometimes it didn't.

21-11 5-471-487...In all of our years in baseball, that's where our youngsters were. We never knew when they were going to get to play for sure, how long they were going to get to play. But we know they were gonna get in the game, especially with this one

particular coach. But time made a comment this year, "I wish he'd let me bat more than once. I'm never gonna get any better, I'm only gonna get worse." They would have batting practice before the game, and he would kill the ball. He'd get in one time and not do well and he would feel terrible about it. He did say, "boy, the pressure in a real game is so much different. At batting practice there's no pressure." Especially when you have dads pitching to you. They don't throw you junk. And they don't have an umpire calling strikes or whatever. Of course, Tony was a good one for waiting for just the exact pitch that he liked. And these strikes would keep going by. This was one of the things we ran into this year was "how am I gonna get better if I don't get more time?" And I don't know how as a coach you would do that with the number of boys on your team. You're bound to have kids who play the whole game. They are excellent players and they deserve to play the whole game. But if they're a little bit further down on the scale, they just sit there and wonder. I sit there and wonder.

21-11 5-503-537-01...They were a lot more fair about it, because even the coaches' kids didn't play the whole game. I remember one season my son's team did really really great. The coach was so fair. Everybody would start, but he would constantly be mixing kids up in positions. He wanted to give kids experience at positions they wouldn't normally play. And he would get flack from parents, but why not let these kids play different positions if you're 10 runs ahead? It just wasn't as cut throat there. That coach was just great.

21-11 5-503-537-02-ml...Which brings me back to this picture perfect coach we've been trying to describe.

21-11 5-503-537-03...I think our son's soccer coach is just about perfect actually. I'd like to transfer some of his qualities to the baseball coach. He stresses sportsmanship. Yes, he likes to win, but if they lose, "ok, so we lost. Everybody has an off day. I've seen the kids walk off the field after a game and say, "so and so did this and that's why that happened" and he'd come back with, "I don't want to hear it. You guys played a good game. You did your best and that's all that counts." I think that attitude is finally starting to get through to some of the kids. It's nice to win, but sometimes you're gonna lose too. Not everybody's gonna win all the time. The very first soccer team my son was on, they won every single game. I was a little worried he'd think that would be [like that] his entire life. Well, obviously, that didn't last very long! That's really such a good attitude to have. He's the same guy who says, "if you have baseball practice and soccer practice at the same time, go to baseball." He doesn't penalize them for not being there. I just think that's wonderful. I think he's pretty fair.

21-11 5-503-537-04...The quality that I can think of is for a coach to be able to instill in those kids who aren't playing to be supportive of those who are. So many times the kids are on the field, but the ones in the dugout are having an absolutely fun time. I've seen a team score and the kids in the dugout were so busy they didn't even notice. That really good player who gets replaced to be supportive of his replacement. The coach controls that.

21-11 5-542-550...When I think about the coach, I don't think about the rules and stuff, because most of them do know that. I'm more concerned with the fairness they're gonna treat my child with...That they're gonna treat each child as an equal...You know, that one is not better than the other. Granted, there are gonna be kids who are better than others, but don't show that. Good sportsmanship is very important. When I think about a good coach, I don't think as much about the playing part...I know that's important, practices and such...But I see a good coach as tell the kids, "good job" and not putting the kids down. Focusing more on the kids as individuals and team players. To me, the boys are the most important thing out there, not the game.

21-11 5-700-726-01...His confidence level was going down, you could see it going down.

21-11 5-700-726-012...He would say "why practice, I'm no good." I called the coach and told him if he didn't want to play him, I have no problem with a trade, I know there's a lot of teams he could play for. The coach said they didn't want to trade him and I said "then you're gonna hafta come up with something." He was one of the boys who would get to bat once and they would take him out. He wasn't used to that. He was used to playing, maybe not the whole game, but at least bat a couple of times a game. Now he's thinking he's not good enough to play. So then it just so happened that an opening came up on the all-star and I didn't want to call the guy so that my son could play all the time, that wasn't it at all. I just wanted... Let the kids have a fair shake. He got on the all-star team. Then in his last game he got his first hit.

21-11 5-700-726-03...That was in the championship tournament which he was on the team that won.

21-11 5-700-726-04....It was like night and day for him. His whole attitude changed around and I explained to the coach that I'm not calling to tell him to play my kid or get rid of him, what I'm doing is asking to let him bat a couple times a game. You take him out and he bats once and he's one of these if he can't do it a lot of times, right off, "well, I'm no good at it, why practice."

21-11 5-700-726-05...And you had a request for him not to....

21-11 5-700-726-06...Yeah, I asked him not to say anything to my son about me calling. That wouldn't have done any good either. It would be like dad did this for me and I didn't want that. It just turned right around. It was unbelievable.

21-11 5-819-822...I think for the most part what we've seen, I think the coaches have been fairly...I mean quite fair but we have seen some and you wonder why they allow these, in our case guys, to be out there treating the kids this way, but I think for the most part it's been a pleasant experience.

Emphasis on Winning

11-bl3-136-147...I think sometimes that coaches put too much pressure on the kids.

11-bl3-136-147-2-ml...In what way?

11-bl3-136-147-3...There's a lot of coaches who I hear screaming and hollering at the kids. The last two years that Jerry was in the boys league, the coaches he had were really pretty good. Mom (my mother) thought that maybe the head coach was a little too laid back. He didn't want to yell at the kids too much...But I think it's better than on the other way too. I know lots of times the coaches make it more their game than for the kids.

11-bl4-508-526...Yeah, I never heard them, but I guess some of the other...Mostly in little league...You hear more complaints from parents up there...They'd say, 'we're not going to put you in because we know you'll get up there and strike out. We can't afford an out right now'. Pull the kid out and put a substitute in...Just stuff like like...More cussing at them and stuff like that. I asked one of Matthew's friends when he was drafted...He got drafted onto the little league...I just saw his mom and I said, 'oh, by the way, how was little league?' and she said it was horrible...Said he hardly ever played and she said the last tournament game they lost...Instead of the coach saying, 'oh, you guys really played well...You had a good year...Too bad things didn't work out'...Instead, he just ripped them up and down and said there were only 3 kids that carried that whole team and blah, blah, blah....So that's a great confidence booster

right at the end of the season. They're moving out of town, so she doesn't have to deal with that anymore.

11-11 1-619-635...Plus how the coach handles a loss...When he's ranting and raving about how they lost...Or when he yells at a kid from clear across the field...It bothers me when I see it...I mean, our coaches don't do that. We had wonderful coaches this year,, but some coaches yell clear across to the kid and it...When Craig was playing in boys league, we had one coach...This coach called the kid from out to in and took his glove away from him, threw it and gave him another one...And it was like, why did he do that? I mean if the coach is going to blame the kid, or I guess in this case, it was the glove's fault...How they handle it. The coaches on our team were just so good. Everything was positive. I guess we're spoiled. When someone doesn't treat their kids that way...Well, its hard to see another coach yelling at his kids...It's better to learn to lose now, then to always win and never know how to lose, because someday, you're going to lose.

12-bl1-279-287-01...I think that coaches have to have the love for the game and if they don't, if they're bored with it, if they've been in it too long, it's time for them to get out, move on, and get new people in there, I think that, they need the love of the game, not the love of winning.

12-bl1-279-287-02...Right

12-bl1-279-287-03...I think that's a lot...

12-bl1-279-287-04...They see that from the coaches. If the coaches are out there and the only thing they see is that word "win", they don't want to hear the word "lose." You know, you're not losers, you'd better be winners.

12-bl1-337-344...To a lot of coaches, I can't say to a lot, I know our coach, they go out there, they give it their best shot. If they don't do it, there's the next game or the game after that, or like our first tournament game, we lost it, and he goes, "well, guys, we played. We didn't play as a team tonight, but we played. You gave it your best; I guess our best wasn't good enough, we lost." He goes, "but there's next season." So he gave the boys..That...He told them what the did wrong, they did not play as a full team, they were playing "I'm for me, this is my territory, this is your territory," they didn't have it together.

12-bl2-190-193...Coaches want to win. Alot of the coaches want to win. And don't get me wrong, winning is a good thing...But it's howyou go about winning...I think in kids in those years it should be more or less a learning experience.

12-bl2-472-485-01ml...Do you have to be a good person to be a good coach?

12-bl2-472-485-02...Yeah, I think so. You know, I can understand coaches' disappointment...Sometimes you get beat by one run or it's a sloppy play or because somebody wasn't paying attention...But it's kids sports...They learn from winning, they learn from the loss...There's no big contract..There's no tv rights...Who are you gonna impress when you go out there and scream...Are you gonna impress me as a parent? No and if you celebrate...

12-bl3-136-147...I think sometimes that coaches put too much pressure on the kids.

12-bl3-136-147-2ml...In what way?

12-bl3-136-147-3...There's alot of coaches who I hear screaming and hollering at the kids. The last two years that Jerry was in the boys league, the coaches he had were really pretty good...Mom (my mother) thought that maybe the head coach was a little

too laid back...He didn't want to yell at the kids too much...But I think it's better than on the other way too...I know lots of times the coaches make it more their game than for the kids..

12-bl3-215-223...Well, when they go up to, say bat, and they're not watching the ball come because they are so determined they're gonna hit a home run and make the coaches and everybody else proud of them..They get up there and they're swinging at balls... You know, they're not even in there...They're just swinging away...They're out...They've swung at three balls straight...And they come running off the field crying...Then you know there's alot of pressure.

12-bl3-232-246...I know that the older they get and the higher they move up that it moves toward being more of a competitive atmosphere where you're gonna play the kids who perform. The ones that are better are gonna rise to the top and they're gonna be the ones that are starters and play the whole game and like that, but I'm not too sure that at the little league level that that's really a good thing...It seems to me that at this age it would be better if everybody just played the same amount of time...Regardless...You know, then the pressure's off...Then they can just go out there and concentrate on playing and having fun...Some kids will still put pressure on themselves...Try too hard...But still, they're still gonna want to win, but that would eliminate pressure from that way...

12-bl3-276-287...I think it would be nice for them to win, but I think alot of them are out there just to play ball...I think if the coaches are making a big deal about it and the kids are out there trying to please the coaches and therefore they want to win...And they get upset if they don't win because they know that upsets the coaches, but if the coaches aren't making them feel that they're not important if they don't win the game, then I don't think it's as much of a big deal to the kids...I still think alot of them are out there just to play...They want to play...And yeah, winning can be important, but it may not be as important to them as it is some of the coaches...Nobody likes to lose.

12-bl4-255-274-01...I would say one of them, and I don't know how you get around it, is (I don't know if they think they have to win), but they put big pressure on themselves that they think they have to win...And Matthew's team the first year won one game and this year won 2 games. That was kinda upsetting for him to be on these losing teams year after year...His basketball this year was bad too...It doesn't boost the self-confidence too much...But we would try to show Matthew the positive...Like, 'you did really good...You struck out 12 year olds, or you got a good hit or whatever'

12-bl4-255-274-02...Some of the other problems in the boys league, not with Matthew's team, but I think some of the kids drop out because of the coaches. The coaches are that gung ho about we have to win, we have to win...Matthew's coach in boys league, he felt it was more of a learning league... You learn the basics and you learn how to play all the different positions, rather than we have to win every game and I'm gonna throw my best players in the best spots.

12-bl4-493-501...and not everything being win, win, win...I know there are alot of coaches around here like that. They have to have winning teams and they're gonna make those kids win no matter what they do to them. In some ways, they're good...Matthew had a coach like that, and he did teach him alot, but then Matthew got discouraged when he got on teams that didn't win every single game...So I think if they go into it thinking that they're gonna teach the kids and not necessarily win...

12-gl1-302-304-ml...Well let's look at some of the negatives, the not so goods that kids get out of it. How would you characterize making an eight year old cry? What would you call that?

12-gl1-307-313...Well, I would call that lack of character on the coach's part. I think sometimes the coaches, some of them and not all of them by any means, because these people are all volunteering their time. These aren't paid jobs. It is a lot of time that they put in, but some of the coaches want to win. If you ask some of the girls some nights, they don't whether they won or lost.

12-gl1-984-996...Yeah I don't think parents get near as upset if their team goes 2 and 10 as they do if they see the coach out there mishandling the kid, yelling and screaming and carrying on. My boys, when they were in little league, they never really were all that successful. Their teams, I think one year they finished 500 and that was it. And that never bothered me. I mean I didn't really care whether they won or lost but the coaches up until the last couple of years I thought the coaches were terrible, but the first couple of years they were in it their coaches were good and the kids really enjoyed it. And to me that was the important thing that the kid really enjoyed playing, looked forward to playing. In the last couple of years they had a turn-over in coaches and it was just the opposite. They just got to the point where it ain't fun for them anymore.

12-gl2-155-197...This is interesting. I think this is where coaches come in and we talked a little too about this. I see as they get older that it becomes more competitive. As the years go by it becomes more competitive. The girls started out in the t-ball and that's basically not competitive, everybody gets to play or they have so many innings, everybody gets to bat. That was kind of non-competitive, which I agree with. I think that's where it needs to start. They have progressed up now through girls league and the pitch and stuff like that. Where there is a feeling of I have to be a winner, I don't think that team has a chance to grow then when they do that. It doesn't make participating any fun. I've seen that happen. I've seen where it's all or nothing in high competition where they have to win and when they don't win they get down on each other and that I just never even liked that in the boys sports. My husband used to play sports, also, and when he'd lose, it'd be like don't talk to me for awhile. It's like oh come on get over it. The world isn't gonna end just because you didn't make it. I look at stuff as how could I have made that better. How do you self-improve to add to a team effort? How could you have made it better? That's what you have to look at not so much as it's winning or you always have to win. Winning helps. It's a big confidence booster but I think you have to be real careful of that. I would have to say that the coach for the girls' team has been really wonderful. In fact I had some mothers that were saying one thing that we notice about your team is that they support each other even when something bad happens. And that is probably why I appreciate this team so much because I think it really hit a team concept and it crosses all lines too. When you're looking at social economic lines these girls can play as teams and those don't count. It's the outcome of the game and how we do that. Which I think is neat. But the most negative I would say is that you get too heavy into competition and winning is everything. But I think you lose the whole idea behind it. I can't really say that that's been for these girls' team. I'm not sure I could participate if it were like that. And now it's got rather vital in some of the other leagues this year. I've read the paper about that. And to me, you've lost it. When that's what happens, you've lost the whole idea of what healthy competition is all about.

12-11 1-601-616...An overemphasis on winning...The focus is gonna be on winning, the kids are gonna force that. You can say, "well it's not whether you win or lost"...Kid's are going "you're nuts, we're gonna go out there and kick some butt." Because that's what they watch on tv...That's what they see their dad doing when he plays (or mom)...To tell them it's not important to win or lose, they say "oh yeah it is, because that kid on second base, I go to school with him, and I want to be able to say to him, "we beat you." ..But I think an over-emphasis from the parent or the coach can really mess that up...Where they say, "you can't play this game because we really want to win it, and I'm going to go with my best guys all the time." ..That' I think is a real problem for the kid who is on the team and has heavy expectation to play and doesn't...I think that's a real negative for that group.

12-11 2-143-146...I think sometimes, not always, it gets too competitive for kids and it loses its fun and its worthwhileness and it gets down to...Especially with my older son's experience this summer it just was, "we will win and this is how we will win" and that's the whole point of being there.

12-11 2-147-168-01...In little league there are some teams that you do baseball and you do nothing else. You have practice every night that you don't have a game. My son is also in scouts and has a paper route, and it's like no, you have practice. And, fortunately, his coach is not one of them that...He had like two practices a week, but for a lot of them, that's it...Baseball is all you can do. There's no time for anything else.

12-11 2-147-168-02...Is that, do you think, from the coach being so competitive or to 'get one up on our opponent' by practicing more?

12-11 2-147-168-03...Some of them start in January practicing, and they're not supposed to do it until, is it April? They find empty warehouses and start batting practice.

12-11 2-147-168-04ml...They have an actual start date, then, when they can start?

12-11 2-147-168-05...It's not regulated. We have to regulate because that compulsion to win can push the kids and there are certain men who just, I'll blame men because I don't think women can get quite this "stupidly focused."

12-11 2-147-168-06ml...Well, I don't know...

12-11 2-147-168-07...Who'll do anything...They don't see this little league as a growing experience they see this as an opportunity to win come hell or high water, and they wanted to get their little league team...Most of these guys don't even have kids on the team. A lot of them, they've wanted to coach this little league team and there's nothing more important in their life than this and they need strict rules about just about everything or they will break them and push 'em too far...Common sense has long since gone out the window.

12-11 2-341-361-01...I tried talking to this coach as an adult, on an even level and without raising my voice and losing my temper, I was just curious because there is a rule that each kid has to play a certain number of innings and if they don't play one game they have to start the next and that stuff. After our team had played, maybe 30 innings, Tim had maybe 9 or 10 innings. I'm not sure of the numbers, but it wasn't what it should be. I asked the coach if he realized he was labeling Tim as a bench warmer because he wasn't given the opportunity, and how will he learn if not given the opportunity of playing in the game? He said it was because Tim came up to little league as a twelve-year-old...Well, that wasn't his fault. That was one reason and another reason was that he had coached this team for ten years and he was here to win. He had seven players who would win the games for him and they were the ones that

were going to play. And that's the way it's gonna' be. I thought it was really sad that that's why you're here and then it progressed to him yelling and saying that if I thought I could do better I could get out there and do it. Then he stormed away. I told him that Tim did not want me to talk to him because he (Tim) was afraid he would take it out on him. I told him I'd better never hear of that happening, but of course it did.

12-11 2-341-361-02...We have some (inaudible) psychopaths that can use this for a lot of things and if they aren't removed then we should...I can't think of any other situation where we would allow our children...

12-11 2-341-361-03...In the classroom.

12-11 2-624-641-01...After we made the decision that Tim would not finish the decision; and that was a hard decision because we've always told our kids that once you start something you finish. None of this, "I don't like it, I don't want to go to practice, I'm gonna quit." So it was a real hard decision and we went back and forth with it for several weeks before we just decided that it was no longer fun, it was no longer worth our time, it got to the point where Tim came off the field crying. After we made that decision, then I wrote a letter to the dba saying that we did make this decision and why we made this decision, cited dates and incidents that had happened and things, and my final remark was that I questioned the motivation for this person to be coaching; why does he coach when he has to resort to humiliation tactics to get kids to do what he wants them to do. Now I can't remember what point I'm trying to make.

12-11 2-624-641-02ml...We're talking about role models.

12-11 2-624-641-03...Yea, and his own son was on the team and of course he played every inning that season. He played every single inning that whole entire game. He's a good ball player and I don't begrudge that boy, but there were times when he walked off the field and you could tell that he was totally embarrassed by his father's behavior. That's his father. That's his role model all the time.

12-11 4-365-388-01...Some of the coaches are out there for blood. It's for fun and there seems to be a couple of coaches out there who have those little 5 year olds crying. It's their kids that they have crying. You know, it's hot and the games are like an hour or an hour and a half. When they're done they always get a snack or a treat...Those little ones, they look forward to that. Some of those coaches, it's like "well, you weren't paying attention or you had your hands down there in the dirt, or you were sitting down on the ground."

12-11 4-365-388-02ml...So they would keep them from getting the treats?

12-11 4-365-388-03...Yeah. Oh, I noticed that in my daughter's softball team too. One of the fathers that helped coach..He was just so nasty to his daughter that pitched. He had her bawling all the time too. To me, it's like if you're going to have your kid crying, you should'nt be out there coaching. Some of them play for blood. You know, it's supposed to be a fun sport. I know if I was that young gal and my dad was coaching, I don't think I'd even feel like I wanted to go play ball because he would be embarrassing me all the time and hurting my feelings. I feel sorry for some of these kids, I really do. Especially that 5 year old that parents expect so much out of. There just 5 years old. I know my five year old it's hard for him to be out on the field for a long period of time and pay attention. He'll be chewing on his shirt or chewing on his glove (laughs). They have more fun going there and playing in the dirt and throwing their gloves back and forth to each other and knocking off the hats. I keep thinking I've got to take my camcorder...They've got one more game. It's comical when you look at those kids. You just have to laugh.

12-11 5-227-233...Sometimes I think they treat the kids like it's the world series they're going out to win, I really do. They treat these boys like they're grown-ups and that they shouldn't make these mistakes and that this is it. They put so much pressure on them that sometimes it's not as fun as what you'd like it to be. So, that's kinda hard sitting up in the bleachers biting your tongue. I said if my kid ever got really reamed I don't know if I'd be able to sit there very long. I just think there's a lot of pressure involved with it.

12-11 5-242-256...Well, okay. We moved back...My kids were born in Dickerson but we spent three years living in South Bend and moved back here two years ago so my son had some ball seasons in south bend and it was not taken seriously. You played with the kids you lived by, there was no drafting, no farm teams, everybody just played with their friends and had a good time. If you won you won, if you lost you lost. It was wonderful. Then we moved back to Dickerson and I hit the Dickerson baseball. It's taken so seriously here, I practically begged my son to quit this year because last year was just...I'm not going to name names, but we have four coaches and one in particular I'm ready to punch the man out and I know I can't do that, but I'm getting very upset with him. They really take it seriously here and I think it's because most of them grew up here and it was taken seriously here when they were young, too, and it just keeps continuing and it's not going to change, it's just not. The same man has been running Dickerson baseball for many, many years and it's their life in the summertime. I'd almost like to go back to south bend in the summer just to play baseball.

24-b12-487-489...The whole thing I think with kids and sports is nobody wins and nobody loses, everybody plays. Some just play better than others.

24-b13-621-628...Well, if I was gonna do it, that would be my approach...I'd just tell them up front from the beginning that you're all gonna play equal time, so nobody's under any pressure...Just go out there and do your best...If you want to win, play hard...But you're not gonna have to perform up to any standard just to play...I think that would take alot of pressure off...Just go out there and have fun...That's what it's all about.

24-g11-388-392...Yeah, they're learning the wrong philosophy. They're not out there to play. You know to give it their best shot, if they win they win, if they lose, they lose. What they're learning out there is they gotta win. If you don't win, you're nothing.

24-g11-451-467...I'd want them to be a little compassionate. There's nothing worse than some girl, I mean every kid, boy or girl or whatever, they go out there and they try their hardest. They give 100%. Sometimes they fail and sometimes they succeed. If they fail, that coach should have a little compassion for them. And a lot of time you see coaches just blow up. I think they should be honest with kids, straight forward. I think honesty and compassion are two that I would like to see. As far as winning and losing, you like to win, but you're still, it's out there it's a sport, if you win you win if you lose you lose. I don't really think as far as getting a coach who is hell and brimstone you know who wants to go out there and win, win, win. I don't really care for that. I want to see a coach who wants his kids, who does his best in how he's training the kids, take them out there and put them on the fields and encourage them and do everything he can, but be understanding too.

24-gl2-201-215...I think it has a lot to do with the coaches approach. And plus individual. You can't think all coach, some of it has to do with the orientation of the players themselves. Some players have to be the hot dog. If you have the hot dog type of a person and to them winning is everything. You know they can make it real disastrous for other team members. Especially if they want to blame that person for the loss. That's a terrible responsibility for one child to hold no matter who it is or even as an adult for one person to feel that they were responsible for everything that really is a team effort and if the team loses the team loses, not just one person. You have your individual people and the coaches make a big difference. So that would have a lot to do with upbringing and rather winning is everything, the last or the bottom line.

24-ll 3-302-319...Lots of them, as I've said, this year when there's been problems against some other teams the coaches start yelling and screaming. We start to wonder if they ever played sports. With them just going crazy, sometimes they don't understand the rule and the umpire will be out there explaining it and it's like, are they trying to live this through their kids? Our coach, we know, played through college, I think he even went here, and he just is always, he starts off practice with a good pep talk, we're here to learn something today, and I'm just going to teach you fundamentals and if we don't do it right we're going to keep doing it over and over so we learn to do it right. If you knew that your child was out there at every practice and was going to learn something or take something positive away from it. Whereas some of them are just yelling "can't you get that ball," and they end up practically screaming that if they are going to play this way, then you're not going to play. If they just come in thinking that all the kids are going to try real hard and lets see what we can do to teach them something new today, or get them to play better or something. Don't always deflate them, but don't get them too pumped up where they think they are too good. Just play together and know that you're all a team and go out there and do the best you can. We're gonna love you if you lose and we're still gonna be your coaches if you win.

24-ll 3-410-418...I think it all happened when the high school won the state baseball tournament, I really do. Now they think they have to do it again and this is the group of kids that's gonna do it. I think they should let them be kids, let them play and have a good time and if they're meant to get better they gonna keep getting better, they're gonna continue to work and there will be coaches along the way who will help them. Maybe they'll want to play all the sports, maybe they'll decide that baseball isn't their sport in junior high, they're gonna play basketball or no sport. It's just hard to say. I think parents, ever since Dickerson won the state baseball championship, that's all I hear.

24-ll 5-503-537-01...They were alot more fair about it, because even the coaches' kids didn't play the whole game. I remember one season my son's team did really really great. The coach was so fair...Everybody would start, but he would constantly be mixing kids up in positions. He wanted to give kids experience at positions they wouldn't normally play. And he would get flack from parents, but why not let these kids play different positions if you're 10 runs ahead? It just wasn't as cut throat there. That coach was just great.

24-ll 5-503-537-02ml...Which brings me back to this picture perfect coach we've been trying to describe...

24-ll 5-503-537-03...I think our son't soccer coach is just about perfect actually. I'd like to transfer some of his qualities to the baseball coach. He stresses sportsmanship.

Yes, he likes to win, but if they lose, "ok, so we lost. Everybody has an off day. I've seen the kids walk off the field after a game and say, "so and so did this and that's why that happened" and he'd come back with, "I don't want to hear it. You guys played a good game. You did your best and that's all that counts." I think that attitude is finally starting to get through to some of the kids. It's nice to win, but sometimes you're gonna lose too. Not everybody's gonna win all the time. The very first soccer team my son was on, they won every single game. I was a little worried he'd think that would be [like that] his entire life. Well, obviously, that didn't last very long! That's really such a good attitude to have. He's the same guy who says, "if you have baseball practice and soccer practice at the same time, go to baseball." He doesn't penalize them for not being there. I just think that's wonderful. I think he's pretty fair. 24-11 5-503-537-04...The quality that I can think of is for a coach to be able to instill in those kids who aren't playing to be supportive of those who are. So many times the kids are on the field, but the ones in the dugout are have an absolutely fun time. I've seen a team score and the kids in the dugout were so busy they didn't even notice. That really good player who gets replaced to be supportive of his replacement. The coach controls that.

26-bl2-472-485-01ml...Do you have to be a good person to be a good coach?
26-bl2-472-485-02...Yeah, I think so. You know, I can understand coaches' disappointment...Sometimes you get beat by one run or it's a sloppy play or because somebody wasn't paying attention...But it's kids sports...They learn from winning, they learn from the loss...There's no big contract...There's no tv rights...Who are you gonna impress when you go out there and scream...Are you gonna impress me as a parent? No and if you celebrate...

26-bl3-558-573...I think sometimes the coaches don't respect the kids and on the other hand I think some kids just don't have respect for the coaches either...I think there's gotta be mutual respect...Respect on both sides...I still think at this point it's not whether they win or lose...They should be out there to have fun...Winning can be important later on...I've noticed on a lot of the teams, they teach the kids to steal the bases like crazy, so they win the game with a lot of runs in by steals rather than working on hitting...There's two teams in particular like that...Our coach didn't like our kids to steal like crazy...A couple of times after being up against these teams our kids were like 'if we're gonna win, I guess we're gonna have to do this too' which we didn't like to see our kids do...Especially when we were up against a team that wasn't playing that way.

38-bl4-493-501...and not everything being win, win, win...I know there are a lot of coaches around here like that...They have to have winning teams and they're gonna make those kids win no matter what they do to them...In some ways, they're good...Matthew had a coach like that, and he did teach him a lot, but then Matthew got discouraged when he got on teams that didn't win every single game...So I think if they go into it thinking that they're gonna teach the kids and not necessarily win...

38-11 2-690-703-01...I think the kids on the team worry much less about winning than the coaches do. Tim was never on a winning ball team. I mean every year he was on boys' league they were bottom of the heap but it didn't bother him. All he cared about was he got to pitch and he got to play and that's what he said this year. He said, "mom, I wouldn't care if I went back to boys' league." We even investigated that option. We went and we watched a practice of our boys' league team and considered

that as an option. He said that at least he'd get to play, and at least the coach would treat me decent.

38-11 2-690-703-02...They're more concerned with making the good play and how they feel when they can get that ball and get a double, and field from short to first and get the out. That's what they want to do.

38-11 2-690-703-03...They really don't care about the final score.

38-11 2-690-703-04...Yea, they want to have a good game and if it means one good play, they're happy.

38-11 3-302-319...Lots of them, as i've said, this year when there's been problems against some other teams the coaches start yelling and screaming. We start to wonder if they ever played sports. With them just going crazy, sometimes they don't understand the rule and the umpire will be out there explaining it and it's like, are they trying to live this through their kids? Our coach, we know, played through college, I think he even went here, and he just is always, he starts off practice with a good pep talk, we're here to learn something today, and I'm just going to teach you fundamentals and if we don't do it right we're going to keep doing it over and over so we learn to do it right. If you knew that your child was out there at every practice and was going to learn something or take something positive away from it. Whereas some of them are just yelling "can't you get that ball," and they end up practically screaming that if they are going to play this way, then you're not going to play. If they just come in thinking that all the kids are going to try real hard and lets see what we can do to teach them something new today, or get them to play better or something. Don't always deflate them, but don't get them too pumped up where they think they are too good. Just play together and know that you're all a team and go out there and do the best you can. We're gonna love you if you lose and we're still gonna be your coaches if you win.

Atmosphere

Fun.

01-b11-1120-1124...My boys have gotten lots of laughs, and been able to have fun and goof off a little bit during the practices, and that's very, very important.

01-b11-1120-1124...They have to make it fun. If it isn't fun for them, if it isn't fun for the coach or the boys, then they're 'gonna come in with an attitude that just doesn't belong there.

01-b11-131-132...but sportsmanship and having fun, meeting friends, positive role models, helps keep them busy through the summer, it's a nice family deal that you can go to, several times a week, and we get tacos!! The other teams don't. We have to pay for ours, but the team gets theirs free, so it gives us an excuse to be able to go out for dinner a couple of nights a week and helps us feed our family since we don't have time to cook with all the games.

01-b11-20-25...I'm and I have a son and a daughter, and this is my son's first year in boys' league; he played t-ball and he played indoor soccer. For the most part he's been in varied, non-competitive type of sports. They didn't keep track of t-ball and so forth, who was winning and who was losing, so this was the very first year he had to try out and so far, then, I had a problem with that. I just wanted him to have fun; that's my ultimate goal.

01-bl1-638-659...I think they have to be like a teacher. They have to take a role of a teacher and a role of a parent. They need to, like Beth said about, it's not just the sport, they need to learn when the kids are getting to the point of where they are about ready to break and they need to throw a little bit of fun into it. They need to be able to take jokes and give jokes. Our coach came up to me one day at practice, or before a game, and he said "does Nate have a tendency to fill your shoes?" I told him that if he had hip waders on he'd fill 'em and overflow 'em. And he started laughing and said, "so he does have a tendency to..." I said, "bs..Oh, yea. So you need to cut through that." And he understood that so then when nick would come up and start in with stories, Mitch knew how to deal with that. He treated each child as an individual, just like a parent would treat their own child as an individual, I don't treat my two boys the same, at all, but they need to learn, they need to know when they can have a screw-off practice and let the kids know, this is a screw-off practice, we'll practice, but we'll have some fun with it. Now, next tuesday night, we're going to "beat the dirt here", we're going to work and work hard. He needs to let them know when they need to get down and dirty. If nick screws up royally at a game, or if nick throws a tantrum or loses his temper or one of the other kids does, at the end of the game Mitch will point out, "hey, we had a little bit of some temper's flaring here," but he doesn't point anybody out. And they need to take a role of, they need to know the rules, they need to be like a parent, they need to know when to have fun, when to get down, they need to discipline, coaching is, I think is...

01-gl1-0492-495...All the time, but in this age kids I mean you know now ten years from now who is going to remember who won this tournament here? Or the league or who did good or you know, put it all in perspective I think. It was fun and that was the bottom line.

01-gl1-291-292...Yeah, we're there to have fun and it's just a game. It's not blood and guts or anything like that.

01-gl1-999-0006...Well that's bottom line. They have to be having a good time because there's too many things I mean they can sit at home on their butts and play video games or watch tv or whatever and we want to encourage them to be more active really. It doesn't have to be softball it could be a lot of things but you know so I think we need to make things enjoyable for them or else they are gonna say hey, I don't need all this hassle. I'll find something else to do.

01-gl2-120-136...That's funny. We quit getting the Dickerson paper for awhile and the girls were in ball this year and really got into ball this year. They both do a lot although my youngest is probably the most competitive. When you look at competitive and you look at spirit, my older daughter plays sports for the camaraderie and socialness, where my younger daughter is out to win is very obvious. We got the paper and my daughter runs to it and says I've got two singles, I should be in the paper and it was three rbi innings. She knows stats. So she checks that out. They've been watching. They got out of the leagues here not too long ago, they got the double elimination tournament and they were out. They've been following who's gonna win and who's gonna pick this whole championship up. So they still follow it and I think that's good too that they're still following it. Yeah, they look at those stats. I think that's interesting.

01-gl3-217-231...Time conscious. You know, it's a commitment on my kid's time and on the part of the parents, so the coach ought to be there on time. And if practice

is gonna be an hour, it ought to be an hour, especially for little kids. Not to keep them after and things like that. I know as a coach of little kids, I know how important it is not to leave 5 and 6 year olds by themselves. So I think that's very important. I don't know, I think being patient...Making it fun is extremely important. Make it fun, but still it has to be a serious endeavour. If there's no purpose behind it, let's stay home and play jacks. You can get the same thing there, or shoot baskets, or play softball in the front yard. There's one thing to play the game. It's another thing to participate on a team. There's a purpose behind that. So, if it gets going too far one way, it's the coach's responsibility to make it more fun. And if you're not really getting anything out of a game or practice, then the coach has to bring it back in without smacking them around or being harsh or damaging their self-esteem. Just bring them back to reality. With some kids you can't do that. Then you accept the lot you've got.

01-gl3-217-231...Time conscious. You know, it's a commitment on my kid's time and on the part of the parents, so the coach ought to be there on time. And if practice is gonna be an hour, it ought to be an hour, especially for little kids. Not to keep them after and things like that. I know as a coach of little kids, I know how important it is not to leave 5 and 6 year olds by themselves. So I think that's very important. I don't know, I think being patient...Making it fun is extremely important. Make it fun, but still it has to be a serious endeavour. If there's no purpose behind it, let's stay home and play jacks. You can get the same thing there, or shoot baskets, or play softball in the front yard. There's one thing to play the game. It's another thing to participate on a team. There's a purpose behind that. So, if it gets going too far one way, it's the coach's responsibility to make it more fun. And if you're not really getting anything out of a game or practice, then the coach has to bring it back in without smacking them around or being harsh or damaging their self-esteem. Just bring them back to reality. With some kids you can't do that. Then you accept the lot you've got.

01-gl3-44-49...Our daughter, the coach that she's been under, all through the year has said, "don't go out to win, just have fun" and I think that's what my daughter has gotten out of it, just going out there and having fun, playing hard and yet having fun, not getting worried if she loses. Just having fun. Her coach is (inaudible) about that. I think that's why it's kept her in it so long because her coach taught her to have fun.

01-ll 1-131-141...One thing I've learned, and we try to stress with our kids, is the discipline side of the game and the commitment to what you are doing, or what that child is doing and there's also a commitment to their team mates. Now, the object of it is to make it fun so the commitment does not become a burden. It's still along with commitment but they do maybe learn at a young age that there is responsibility to it. It's important to be there at practice, it's important to be on time when you go to practice, it's important that you don't disrupt the flow of practice.

01-ll 1-525-544...I think the expectation there, if it's not met, would be harmful to the kid and that if they continue doing it, it's not fun for them. That's the important thing with all these things is that the kid can come away from the season wanting to do that again. But I want to do this again, I think you've accomplished the goal of what the whole program is all about. If that is missed, then that can be a real negative. I think that the other of kinda going back to what marsha was saying we may have become too organized. When we were kids we played maybe a practice once a week and you played once a week in a game and that was it for the week. And you played unorganized with your buddies throughout the rest of the time and you had free time and you went and took what you had tallied at practice and you went and played

sandlog and I don't know, that's kinda lost now because you're practicing everyday and if it's not baseball it's soccer or it's something. We've just organized these kids to death. I don't know how positive that's gonna be. I think we've kinda developed a sportstake here.

01-11 2-437-438...To remember that these are kids, and that it should be fun and it's for the kids. It's not for the coaches to say, "my team won so many games."

01-11 2-69-75-01...I think it should be fun for the kids. I don't think it's really worthwhile if there's no fun involved. At this age, they're just kids.

01-11 2-69-75-02ml...At this age what do you think involves 'fun' to them? How would they define it?

01-11 2-69-75-03...If it's something that they enjoy doing, and if they look forward to it. If it's something they look forward to going to whether it's practice, the game, whatever. If they feel it's worth their time and if they just enjoy it.

01-11 5-757-762-01...Don't put the game above the kids.

01-11 5-757-762-02...Right. I really just want my kids to have fun when they're doing it. I don't expect my kid to end up in the major leagues. That doesn't happen to everybody, obviously. I just want them to have some fun and get them out of the house. I don't want them sitting in front of the tv all summer, I want them out doing things.

Discipline.

02-b11-113-121...and it teaches them self-discipline, like if there's a big game or something, we don't want you swimming all afternoon and then show up for the game, and it teaches them the self-discipline; or the 8 o'clock Saturday morning practices...I'm not too thrilled sometimes, but...It teaches them that, hey, to do your best this is what needs to be done, and whether they go up and get a hit or whether they strike out and miss the ball, he says "that's okay, lets just do it next time." You can improve yourself, and instead of screaming at him and yelling at him and putting them down, he influences them with positive reactions instead of the other way around.

02-b12-5355...If it's done properly, kids learn sportsmanship and they learn discipline and they learn respect and it beats hanging out at the mall and playing videos.

02-b14-70-88...One would probably be that once you make a commitment that you're going to do something, you continue with it...I don't let my kids quit anything unless it's really bad of which I haven't had that experience, but I tell them if they want to do a sport or an activity through school or church or whatever, they're gonna start it and they're gonna finish it...And I think that's a good way to teach self-discipline with that...And the practices...Matthew would some days say, 'ah, I don't want to go to practice'...And that kinda shows him that you do need to practice to get any better...He just thinks he can go out and play the game and that's how he can get better which isn't true...We've tried to teach him that...That you do need to practice...Which I kinda think carries over to school too that you don't just go to school and do it there...That you do have to do some outside studying...Just being able to get along with other children and having some respect for adults too as far as the coaches...You know, listening to what they tell you...

02-gl1-105-107...Well I think discipline is a big thing kids learn in athletics. I think discipline is maybe the biggest thing they learn besides team work, I think discipline is big.

02-gl1-172-175...Making the commitment to be on a team is big. You're gonna be there for the games because all the other girls are counting on you to be there. I think that's a big thing and it's not I want to go swimming today, it's this game.

02-gl2-76-89...I think I can see a couple of them. Discipline is one of them. They learn that if they want to excel at something they have to work at it. I see a camaraderie or team, working with the team versus working for self-interest. I see that ability to follow through something until the end. You know you also see a group feel good and a group experience a loss, that depends a lot upon the coaching. You know how that's experienced. Whether that is a positive experience or a growing experience. That gives you a lot of growth there. Basically those are the things that I see the most. Plus, just the physical activity as in being involved in something versus uninvolved or I just see direction. And that's why I like the sports and I like what they have to offer.

02-gl3-51-73...I think besides having fun, regardless of how far the individual child takes it or the coach takes it, it varies from team to team and sport to sport and league to league. Some leagues are more competitive than others. But regardless of that, I think it gives the kids a sense of responsibility and, of course, being part of the team is very important; knowing that people depend on you for certain things, they might not understand that, but that's what they're getting and so it's a sense of responsibility. It's a development. It's being at one point in your life and having a goal and doing something to work toward and get better and again, that doesn't have to be a competitive attitude as much as it's a self-pride attitude and I think athletics extends that when you see some child or some older, even an adult, when they watch them on tv and they say, "I want to do that" and then they work hard to accomplish that ...Obviously, they don't make it all the way to the top, but yet they see improvement and then when they get a reward, whether that be a pat on the back or some physical reward like a trophy or anything, any kind of recognition, name in the paper, whatever, those types of things it brings them back...And not only the athletics but anything in life it's a matter of understanding that they're worth something and it really broadens that, so athletics can do a lot more for them. I mean, all those other things are important, it gives them physical exercise and all that, but just being part of the team and having the sense of responsibility and accomplishing something kind of reward at the end, not necessarily a large reward. I think it improves one's self-esteem and you can see that in those kids as they develop from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Self-esteem can develop greatly in most situations...Depending on...There are depending factors...

02-ll 1-131-141...One thing I've learned, and we try to stress with our kids, is the discipline side of the game and the commitment to what you are doing, or what that child is doing and there's also a commitment to their team mates. Now, the object of it is to make it fun so the commitment does not become a burden. It's still along with commitment but they do maybe learn at a young age that there is responsibility to it. It's important to be there at practice, it's important to be on time when you go to practice, it's important that you don't disrupt the flow of practice.

02-11 1-173-180...but the responsibility side, I don't think a kid can learn that too soon from basic levels. They've got to learn that baseball is not the most important thing. First of all, responsibility to what they are doing is more important than the game itself and the sooner they learn that then the more adaptive they be to learning situations wherever they might be. Whether it's in their school, other coaches, or if it's later on in life.

02-11 1-237-252...I think so because I find it hard sometimes with baseball it's real difficult to teach that to your child if they're involved in other sports at the same time. Real difficult. But you're trying to teach your child to be responsible to all sports, but sometimes they overlap and so you have to sometimes pick and choose. I know this past season we didn't quite pick and choose the right one (depending on the coach) but we hear about one thing, like the diving meet that had come up before we knew about this ballgame and so you go with that first because you knew about the diving meet and your responsibility. And that's a team, it's an individual sport but you are still part of that team and you help make points. You either win or lose. You go let's go with this one and then you can go later for the other game. You are being responsible to both but not solely to the baseball.

02-11 1-920-925...The first part of our season in getting ready we try to make, we have basic rules that when a coach talks you listen or you run. As simple as that, we want them to pay attention because everything we are going to tell them is going to be important for them to know. Because as a team they're going to have to know their responsibilities and they are going to have to work with each other. Once the game starts those positions begin to play themselves and the kids take on the responsibility of being the team leaders.

02-11 2-65-6...They learn discipline...The coach says "you gotta' do this" ...So they should be able to do that. Being a team player, it's not always "I", "me" this is what I want, you learn to be part of a group with the give and take. You learn to budget your time.

02-11 5-286-291...He's gotten very upset with how seriously it's taken, yeah. He would have enjoyed playing with his friends, too, he really would have, especially since they were the team that ended up winning the championship this year. That's life. I also told him if he didn't want to play he didn't have to, but he made the choice to play so he's playing. Once you start the season, you don't quit half-way through either, I agree with that, once you make the commitment you finish.

2b13-578-591...A thing that I think that during the season, when winning's not that important at this level, especially not when you consider the way the season is set up (the regular season doesn't really mean much...They do have divisional winners, but the big thing is the tournament)...They just draw for the tournament...There's no advantage to winning your division...Everybody gets the same chance...You've got six innings, nine players on the field...That gives you quite alot of player/innings where you really don't have to have players sit down very much...If you alternate the people who sit down a little bit...Each kid would only have to sit down like an inning per game...If you rotated those players, even the stars would only sit out an inning...

2b14-276-289-01ml...So everybody played pretty much?

2b14-276-289-02...Yeah, they have to play so many innings...They have to get up to

bat so many times and be in for so many outs...Or they get to start the next game...That's one of the league rules...But I don't think that's the way it is in little league...The coach has even told me...Little league is alot different...There it is more competitive and that's where the other kids who don't move up get weeded out...Like the older ones quit because they don't move up to little league...But there are some kids who want to stay down so they can play...Some of them that are average players would rather stay down and get their 4 years of play in instead of moving up and sitting the bench...

06-gl1-271-277...I think they feel important and I think winning is fun. When girls win a game, they enjoy it and when they lose they don't feel so good but they forget quick. Winning itself is a good time. Coming back after being behind by a few runs and scoring that winning run. Everybody is cheering and screaming and hollering, it's just a good time for them.

Teamwork.

09-bl1-70-74...Working as a team, learning to build their self-confidence, it's been a great positive experience in my own family, it just, it really teaches them respect, it makes them learn how to listen, they want to go out and learn to be better ball players or to be better people; it's been a real positive experience for us. Otherwise I wouldn't want them in it.

09-gl1-239-242...That's the team concept that I was talking about. Everybody plays together and tries to help each other. Depending on each other to perform and support each other.

09-gl2-273-295...The other thing at problem solving is one instance where one of the girls and like I said this was not usual for this team, this team was one that worked a lot together. I saw a lot of camaraderie and a lot of working together and they usually did not put each other down. One girl was just like she wanted to pitch, she had never even been asked to pitch, they tried her and she did ok that day. The next game they put her in and it didn't work out well but it was a weak game and so she was taken out and it was interesting what happened to her at that point because she just didn't want anything to do with it, she quit playing in the middle of the game and I think he handled it well. He took her aside and he talked about being part of the team and you do what's best for team. It wasn't a reflection on her but trying to pull the team together for a win. There was even talk that she wasn't going to come to the next game because of this. She ended up that she did show up and she ended up pitching the next game and did well. I can see where a coach there, if they have an attitude, that they might be likely not to play then this is risking a whole game. He played her and it worked out real well for both of them. I think she learned something from it.

09-gl2-76-89...I think I can see a couple of them. Discipline is one of them. They learn that if they want to excel at something they have to work at it. I see a camaraderie or team, working with the team versus working for self-interest. I see that ability to follow through something until the end. You know you also see a group feel good and a group experience a loss, that depends a lot upon the coaching. You know how that's experienced. Whether that is a positive experience or a growing experience. That gives you a lot of growth there. Basically those are the things that I see the most. Plus, just the physical activity as in being involved in something versus uninvolved or I just see direction. And that's why I like the sports and I like what

they have to offer.

09-11 1-112-128...I think, not necessarily geared towards baseball, but in relationships to other sports. It helps them feel like they can achieve at something and be good. My youngest son is involved with diving and that's really good for him because that's an individual sport. He can make himself better and work on himself on getting better or not. It's all up to him, where baseball, basketball or soccer is a team and you're not there to make yourself look better, but to work as a team.

09-11 1-112-128...Team sports are always good because you've got to learn to work as a group, but the individual ones are also good. Craig is learning golf, learning!, So he's getting that where it is him against the golf course. The team things are good just to help you out, because you've always have to help as a group with everything that you do.

09-11 2-65-68...They learn discipline...The coach says "you gotta' do this"...So they should be able to do that. Being a team player, it's not always "I", "me" this is what I want, you learn to be part of a group with the give and take. You learn to budget your time.

09-11 3-70-74...I think they are pretty much the same. They all know that they have to work with each other and count on each other, you can't do it yourself. In soccer you have to pass to the different people, you can't do it all yourself. The same with baseball - one person cannot play all nine positions. They've really learned that they can work with other people and count on each other.

09-11 5-98-105-01...I was gonna that the sports my children are involved in, it's all team work so it's not an individual thing that they're trying to strive for themselves, they're learning to work with other kids at the same time, which I think is good. And the other thing I'm quite happy that they're so involved with these things because it keeps them going and less time to get in trouble.

09-11 5-98-105-02...I think living in a town as small as this where there's not a lot of entertainment things, it does help keep them out of trouble, big time.

26-11 5-503-537-04...The quality that I can think of is for a coach to be able to instill in those kids who aren't playing to be supportive of those who are. So many times the kids are on the field, but the ones in the dugout are have an absolutely fun time. I've seen a team score and the kids in the dugout were so busy they didn't even notice. That really good player who gets replaced to be supportive of his replacement. The coach controls that.

PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARENT

Commitment to Program

02-bl4-70-88...One would probably be that once you make a commitment that you're going to do something, you continue with it...I don't let my kids quit anything unless it's really bad of which I haven't had that experience, but I tell them if they want to do a sport or an activity through school or church or whatever, they're gonna start it and they're gonna finish it...And I think that's a good way to teach self-discipline with that...And the practices...Matthew would some days say, 'ah, I don't want to go to practice'...And that kinda shows him that you do need to practice to get any better...He

just thinks he can go out and play the game and that's how he can get better which isn't true...We've tried to teach him that...That you do need to practice...Which I kinda think carries over to school too that you don't just go to school and do it there...That you do have to do some outside studying...Just being able to get along with other children and having some respect for adults too as far as the coaches...You know, listening to what they tell you...

02-gl1-172-175...Making the commitment to be on a team is big. You're gonna be there for the games because all the other girls are counting on you to be there. I think that's a big thing and it's not I want to go swimming today, it's this game.

02-gl1-178-188...I think commitment is a big word here because I think kids need to learn commitment. As far as we've always told Tim at home, if you start something you finish it. If you don't like it, you don't go out next year. So we've always told the girls whether it's choir or band or ball or whatever, you started it, you're not quitting in the middle of the year. And I think too many times that happens. Parents allow their kids to quit. I don't think you ought to let them quit. They ought to have to finish that season or whatever and if they don't like it then they don't go out the next year.

02-ll 1-131-141...One thing I've learned, and we try to stress with our kids, is the discipline side of the game and the commitment to what you are doing, or what that child is doing and there's also a commitment to their team mates. Now, the object of it is to make it fun so the commitment does not become a burden. It's still along with commitment but they do maybe learn at a young age that there is responsibility to it. It's important to be there at practice, it's important to be on time when you go to practice, it's important that you don't disrupt the flow of practice.

02-ll 1-173-180...but the responsibility side, I don't think a kid can learn that too soon from basic levels. They've got to learn that baseball is not the most important thing. First of all, responsibility to what they are doing is more important than the game itself and the sooner they learn that then the more adaptive they be to learning situations wherever they might be. Whether it's in their school, other coaches, or if it's later on in life.

02-ll 1-237-252...I think so because I find it hard sometimes with baseball it's real difficult to teach that to your child if they're involved in other sports at the same time. Real difficult. But you're trying to teach your child to be responsible to all sports, but sometimes they overlap and so you have to sometimes pick and choose. I know this past season we didn't quite pick and choose the right one (depending on the coach) but we hear about one thing, like the diving meet that had come up before we knew about this ballgame and so you go with that first because you knew about the diving meet and your responsibility. And that's a team, it's an individual sport but you are still part of that team and you help make points. You either win or lose. You go let's go with this one and then you can go later for the other game. You are being responsible to both but not solely to the baseball.

02-ll 5-175-188-01...If you can get that concept across, I know coaches lose jobs because they don't win, but if you can still get it across to your kids to be there...Our older boy, he started and he didn't like the two and three hour practices where you had to get in line and take your turn catching the fly ball and then you had to wait. He just didn't like it - he didn't want to go but we said "no, we're committed, we're gonna do it." I think he was testing us to see if we'd tell him he didn't have to go if he didn't

want to. It didn't work. So after we established the fact that he was going to go and if you don't play all the game, that's just the way it is. Once he understood that we weren't going to give in, once we were committed to it, and then it went on...

02-11 5-175-188-020...Once they got to the actual games he loved it, he really enjoyed it. It was the practices that he hated. But, then again, he learned that you have to go through some of the junk to get to the big stuff.

02-11 5-286-291...He's gotten very upset with how seriously it's taken, yeah. He would have enjoyed playing with his friends, too, he really would have, especially since they were the team that ended up winning the championship this year. That's life. I also told him if he didn't want to play he didn't have to, but he made the choice to play so he's playing. Once you start the season, you don't quit half-way through either, I agree with that, once you make the commitment you finish.

11-11 2-281-337-01...What would I rather have had for him? I would rather have had him have this experience. I would rather have him not sworn at in front of the crowd. I would rather that he was not humiliated and berated; which not only he...He was not the only one, but he was the only one that was mine. And I tried talking to the coach and that resulted in him taking it out on my son.

11-11 2-281-337-02ml...How did you see that? In what way, what did he do?

11-11 2-281-337-03...We'd be watching the game and Tim might have made an error and the coach would scream, literally scream and yell at him and the next kid might have made a similar error and not gotten anything. Tim never was allowed to start a game, where the year before in boys' league he was their starting pitcher. He's not a highly skilled ball player, but he's not a bench warmer. He has the skills to be out there and play ball and when he was on the field he played first base most of the time and made some really good plays. One of the plays, at the end of one game, he caught a fly that was the last out of the game and our team won, and all the other players came over and congratulated him and his coach just walked by and didn't say anything. This coach humiliated kids, he would scream at them, he would swear at them. One time, early in the season before we caught on to all that was going on, Tim made an error on the field, or he struck out, that's what he did, struck out, and he was on his way back to the dugout and the coach came out and put his arm around him, and I thought that was nice until Tim asked me, "are coaches were allowed to swear at you?" I asked why and he said the coach asked him, "why did you swing at that (blank)..."

11-11 2-281-337-04...Was it s-h-i-t?

11-11 2-281-337-05...Yea!

11-11 2-281-337-06...Well, could be worse.

11-11 2-281-337-07...It got worse. He would say things to the team as a whole after they had lost a game; he'd tell them he knew they couldn't do it, that they'd lose.

11-11 2-281-337-08...What team is this?

11-11 2-281-337-09...Moose.

11-11 2-281-337-10...Was this the team where some of the kids were pulled off the team?

11-11 2-281-337-11...Yes, one mother did get up in the middle of a game and took her kids off the field and they never did return. He threw a temper tantrum and threw his clipboard down and started screaming and yelling at our catcher.

11-11 2-281-337-12...Who pulled them off?

11-11 2-281-337-13...The mother.

11-11 2-281-337-14...Who was it, do you know?

11-11 2-281-337-15...I know who it is, I can tell you later. The kid is the sweetest kid; he was part of our field trip to Clueville.

11-11 2-281-337-16...Her one son was catching and her other son was in left field. At this game, it happened that the grandparents were there, two of his aunts were there, several cousins. It was a Sunday game, so the whole family came to watch. And this kid missed a catch and he fumbled around looking for the ball and in the meantime, two runners came in and our coach got furious and threw his clipboard down and started screaming and pointing across the field at the catcher. The mother just got up out of the stands and walked down and said "Scott, take your gear off, we're leaving", and she pulled her other son out of left field and they never returned. After that game, the coach said to my son, "well, Tim, if they don't show up..." Making it sound to the team like it was that mother's fault; did you see what she did? Now we lost two players because of what she did. That means if they don't come back, Tim, you'll get to play more.

11-11 2-281-337-17...Oh, kinda soliciting some support, huh?

11-11 2-281-337-18...I can't think of his name right now.

11-11 2-281-337-19...The coach? One of your competitors.

11-11 2-281-337-20...Oh, Doug? Here's a nice guy who, put him on the field, its like some people who get behind the wheel, give him this job, I've heard nothing but horror stories. Yanking people off the field, screaming, berating, everything wrong. Why he is allowed to continue coaching is a mystery to me.

11-11 2-624-641-01...After we made the decision that Tim would not finish the decision; and that was a hard decision because we've always told our kids that once you start something you finish. None of this, "I don't like it, I don't want to go to practice, I'm gonna quit." So it was a real hard decision and we went back and forth with it for several weeks before we just decided that it was no longer fun, it was no longer worth our time, it got to the point where Tim came off the field crying. After we made that decision, then I wrote a letter to the dba saying that we did make this decision and why we made this decision, cited dates and incidents that had happened and things, and my final remark was that I questioned the motivation for this person to be coaching; why does he coach when he has to resort to humiliation tactics to get kids to do what he wants them to do. Now I can't remember what point I'm trying to make.

11-11 2-624-641-02...We're talking about role models.

11-11 2-624-641-03...Yea, and his own son was on the team and of course he played every inning that season. He played every single inning that whole entire game. He's a good ball player and I don't begrudge that boy, but there were times when he walked off the field and you could tell that he was totally embarrassed by his father's behavior. That's his father. That's his role model all the time.

Parent Involvement

53-g11-0416-440...I think there ought to be a way, I wish there was a way, sometimes in the stands, this is what I see, I see parents that aren't supportive of their own child. You know, and I wish that and I know it's hard sometimes to not say why didn't you do this or you should have done this, but I think your big role as a parent is for you to be supportive and positive with your child when they come home because nobody feels worse than them if they dropped the ball or if they struck out or whatever and I don't see that in the stands half the time. I think parents are their own kids worse critics, sometimes. And you know I really hate that, especially if the coach is their dad. You know? It's a lot harder on them and I think that's a shame. I really do. I think that we as parents, our big role is to be as positive, there's that word again. I

wish we would think of a better word for it, for your child that you can. You know. You might not like what they do all the time, like maybe you're not a band person or a choir person or a football person or whatever, but they might like that. So, like you, you don't like girl scouts but your daughter likes it, so you know, you made the effort to be a girl scout leader. And I'm sure that she appreciates that. And it'll pay off down the road I think. Kids have got to know that they can come home and be hugged, loved, cared you know and know that at least I know when I go home they're not gonna yell at me. In case they're gettin' it some place else. You know. So I think that as parents, in the stands lots of times, I don't see that. I see really critical, you know and I think that that's a shame.

54-bl 4-106-107...As a parent, I don't know what kind of things my boy is learning if I don't take the time to be there. That's important to me and I think it is to most parents.

54-bl1-1094-1107...And so they don't need to be absolutely perfect, you know they're you-know-what is going to stink like everybody else's, and if they're 'gonna take the time to be out there, hey, more power to them. And I think it has a lot to do with these parents doing checks and balances; showing up for the games; maybe staying for fifteen or twenty minutes before practice and getting there fifteen or twenty minutes early at the end of a practice. You need to get these parents involved and it's the parents who are not involved, as you have found out, are the ones who are going to be screaming and bitching the loudest because their son is not this and their son is not that and the coach is doing this; and that's where it gets sad because these coaches are under so much scrutiny and ridiculed so much by the parents that will not take an hour and-a-half, two hours out of their precious evening to come and talk to marty about this, that are going to be up there screaming and yelling the most and then that's what's going to run the good coaches out. And that's sad, it really is.

54-ll 2-406-418...The parents are gonna be there. At least, good parents are. That's why I don't think it's that critical to teach these coaches about first aid and stuff. Whenever something bad has happened on my boy's team, the parent is there to take the kid to the hospital or whatever. But the bottom line is that the parent needs to be there for the kid. If I'm in the stands, my kid knows I care enough about him to want to be involved in what he's doing. I can't just ask him about it when he comes home and I'm sitting there watching TV. What kind of a message does that send to him?

54-ll 2-816-822...If you kid knows that if he played poorly that you would still love him, and there are parents who convey the idea that if you don't do well, I don't love you. We've seen these at games. If we were gonna bring up any discussion, it would be the parents in addition to the coaches. There should be a guidebook for parents. Most parents are pretty good, it's not like what I envisioned, people screaming. In boys' league, with the mother's smoking and yelling, "Jesus f-----ing Christ, can't you play anything..." Just that kind of thing.

Communication With Coach

12-ll 5-227-233...Sometimes I think they treat the kids like it's the world series they're going out to win, I really do. They treat these boys like they're grown-ups and that they shouldn't make these mistakes and that this is it. They put so much pressure on them that sometimes it's not as fun as what you'd like it to be. So, that's kinda hard sitting up in the bleachers biting your tongue. I said if my kid ever got really reamed I

don't know if I'd be able to sit there very long. I just think there's a lot of pressure involved with it.

27-b14-375-404...I would say one that would listen to the kids if you can get them to talk...I mean they had to kinda pry it out of me what positions Matthew wanted to play, because they said, 'he will never tell us'...Give them a chance to play the different positions at practice, it doesn't have to be in a game, and say maybe you're not right here...You know, try them an inning...Just let them try...Don't just stick them all in the outfield...He had a hard time too...I know alot of coaches, you know, they have their sons on their team of course...And so their sons are usually the pitcher and they can only pitch maybe 6 innings a week...But anyway, I just think somebody who will listen to the kids...Teach them the basics, don't try and stretch the rulebook...There's alot of walks in the league and alot of basestealing...That's basically how they get their runs in...I mean there aren't very many hits (laughs)...And some of these coaches...They would get walked to first and then they'd steal second right away...You know, they just kinda take advantage and their not really teaching their kids anything, because once they get up to little league, they're not going to be able to do that...They're just doing it to try to get the runs in...And I would say as far as the coach getting along with the parents, I know alot of times David would say, 'why weren't you at practice or why were you late, you're old enough to know where you're supposed to be and when you're supposed to be there...Don't just rely on your parents'...But he would let the parent know when the next game was and when the practices were. He was very good as far as communicating with the parents

27-11 1-1431-1445...run-ins with parents that I've had have been based upon a lot of misinformation and the fact that they didn't understand what exactly was going on at that particular time. I've had parents literally call me...Come right up to the dugout and call me practically every name in the book and they didn't know what the situation was in regards to - well, their kid wasn't actually being taken out of the game there's different rules, an extra designated hitter that we have, we were just maneuvering kids around to get them into defensive positions - well, he had expectations and his kid thought he was being pulled. He came down out of the seats and the only way I was going to confront him was to walk right up to his nose at the fence and told him if he wanted to talk to me he could see me after the game because I was busy. I turned away and walked, and it helps when you've got a couple of football guys as (illegible) coaches. I've had other ones who've asked me to explain to them why this happened. I don't have a problem with that, we can talk about it as adults, it obviously didn't make any difference as to how I did it, but he has an understanding of what goes on.

27-11 2-341-361-01...I tried talking to this coach as an adult, on an even level and without raising my voice and losing my temper, I was just curious because there is a rule that each kid has to play a certain number of innings and if they don't play one game they have to start the next and that stuff. After our team had played, maybe 30 innings, Tim had maybe 9 or 10 innings. I'm not sure of the numbers, but it wasn't what it should be. I asked the coach if he realized he was labeling Tim as a bench warmer because he wasn't given the opportunity, and how will he learn if not given the opportunity of playing in the game? He said it was because Tim came up to little league as a twelve-year-old...Well, that wasn't his fault. That was one reason and another reason was that he had coached this team for ten years and he was here to win. He had seven players who would win the games for him and they were the ones that were going to play. And that's the way it's gonna' be. I thought it was really sad that that's why you're here and then it progressed to him yelling and saying that if I thought

I could do better I could get out there and do it. Then he stormed away. I told him that Tim did not want me to talk to him because he (Tim) was afraid he would take it out on him. I told him I'd better never hear of that happening, but of course it did.
 27-11 2-341-361-02...We have some (inaudible) psychopaths that can use this for a lot of things and if they aren't removed then we should...I can't think of any other situation where we would allow our children...
 27-11 2-341-361-03...In the classroom.

27-11 2-362-369-01...I don't even know if we would allow that kind of abuse from a teacher, I mean it happens. But it wouldn't happen if we were all sitting in the classroom watching. I wish we would care as passionately about our kids English teachers and biology teachers and chemistry teachers as we do our coaches. Our big debate, that you have from now on until they graduate from high school, is coaches. You care passionately because you are watching the whole thing in front of you.

27-11 2-362-369-02...It's such a public display...

27-11 3-79-87...I've talked to a lot of people who have had bad experiences, but we have never had a bad experience with a coach and number one, they always come to the first meeting and always tell us that winning is not their goal. We have been so fortunate because a lot of people base everything on winning and our coaches have always said that everyone gets to play and no one is better than anyone else and so we have been very, very lucky and they all just want everyone to play and learn. They always say that they are going to teach the fundamentals. They don't care if they win a game this year, the kids are going to learn to do it correctly. We've been very, very lucky.

27-11 5-581-589...I strongly suggest that they make time to intermingle with the parents. To get to know them. If you're on the side of the parent and they're on your side, you're gonna have the kid too. Many times we've had parents get just irate. When we first started into baseball, people told us, "hey, it's more fun in the stands". But we've not noticed is so much but every once in awhile, you'll have somebody who you'd just kinda wish they'd leave. Not so much at the kids, but at the umpires. But if the coach could somehow maybe have a parent meeting (without the kids) and explain what their policies are, the parents would know a little bit what's going on. Sometimes the parents don't care.

27-11 5-600-611...I don't know if you could do some kind of seminar and get much accomplished. I think most of it would go in one ear and out the other, and they'd go back to doing what they wanted to do. But I really think one of the neatest things possible would be, maybe like you said, before they start playing ball, the coaches and the parents have a meeting. Just a friendly meeting...Like an orientation kind of thing. Let them know what it's gonna be like. Go over the rules for the parents. Explain how you plan to substitute. Then maybe meet back every once in awhile. Maybe discuss some ideas that maybe the parents might have for the coaches and go back and forth that way to where you don't have parents up in the stands blowing steam out of their ears. And they don't take that home with them. They take it right down there on the field where the boys have to see this blowup. That does absolutely no good for anybody.

27-11 5-635-642...I think the coaches feel a certain expectation....What they feel the parents expect of them. Maybe I don't expect that from him. I don't expect it from the kids. Here's another time where getting the coaches and parents together would be a good idea to dialogue instead of the coach saying, "this is what I'm gonna do. This is

what I expect." Have a chance to dialogue. That's easier said than done, I know, but if a coach understands that my expectation is not a 10-0 season, then maybe he can let up a little bit. Maybe sometimes they set their own expectations partly on what they think we as parents want.

27-11 5-646-662-01...I think we have the responsibility to do that. Whether I have the right or not. I have the responsibility to let my kid's coach know what I expect. It makes it seem awfully black and white, but I think it's my responsibility...If I see something that is unpleasant, it's my responsibility to go to the coach and say, "can you explain why this is?" Not go in and say, "I demand you change policy" or whatever.

27-11 5-646-662-02ml...Some parents may be concerned about doing that because they're afraid the child will suffer.

27-11 5-646-662-03...That's right.

27-11 5-646-662-04...One of the most important things as a parent is to try to teach concepts to your children and in those two hours of practice, you're kinda putting the coach as a contact person. You hope that they might be the same and not contradict each other. I mean, if we're out there saying that winning's not everything...Just play and have fun. And the coach is down there saying winning is everything, that's contradictory. The poor child's going in circles.

27-11 5-854-860...It's so easy for us to just sit here and say because it's just another thing we gotta do, but you wonder what one little thing you could do...If you had this parent meeting at the beginning with the coaches, I would guess that the parents that really should be there probably won't be there...But usually food is a pretty magic thing...You offer a picnic or something and you'll get a much better turnout. Entice them to get them there and you can learn an awful lot that way...Maybe a preseason picnic would be the ticket.

28-b13-485-498...I'd say that that's probably more important than the skills, because lots of people out there can teach skills...If you're really worried about your kid learning the skills, you can find somebody...There's videotapes and everything out there to teach you how to teach kids to play baseball...You can find that...But the other things are probably more important...Being fair, everybody getting to play pretty much equal time, no favorites...If there was an outstanding player on the team and the team won when he was in there, they would probably all want him to be in there...They want to win...They don't want their best player sitting on the bench either...By the same token, they don't want to be sitting on the bench 5 out of 6 innings.

51-b11-252-258...That's when Mitch put in the phone call, I talked to Marty about it. Mitch was upset about it, he said Jack was too good of a ballplayer to go through that; it really upset him. Mitch went ahead and requested him and he was so happy to come down and he just thoroughly enjoys playing ball and this year he's kind of worried because it was the assistant coach that was given, doing all the screaming and yelling, and he just made head coach of this team, and he's so scared that he has to go up this year, and, so, we're really working with that.

51-b13-616-620...Well Steve went to talk with him, very nicely...And the coach come at him like a ton of bricks...Like, 'how dare you question me, I'm the coach' and that's like, 'wait a minute, that's our child'...But it was like that was his time, and we didn't matter...I didn't agree with him...I'm a parent all the time whether he's playing this game or not

51-gl1-888-899...I've seen it happen a lot. I think a lot of parents don't like it but they hesitate to interfere. In my experience I never did interfere. There were times I felt things weren't handled properly and I had a notion to say something but I didn't want to interfere and be labeled as somebody as interfering with the team or something like that so I didn't. But looking back on it there are several times I wish I would have said something because I think the coaches were out of line and I think when they are out of line they are teaching your kids. They are responsible for your kids. I think if there is something that you're unhappy about I think you should approach them about it.

51-gl1-935-944...That's why I think as a parent maybe you should, if you feel a little hesitant about something that occurred, maybe you should go say, hey, I know from experience at home that running him into the ground doesn't solve any problem. If I want to get something out of him, i've got to encourage him a little bit. He'll bust his butt for you. Whereas, like you say, it might be the opposite for someone else. But you as a parent are the ones that know them better than the coach. If you, in a decent way, would go to them and say, no, I'm not (ran out of tape.)

51-ll 5-421-428...I know the soccer coach she's talking about, he is wonderful. We ran into one of our baseball coaches who had, this summer, made derogatory statements to my son about how much better baseball was than soccer and he knew my son played soccer and that really irritated me. I told my son I'd talk to him if he wanted me to but my son said "no, he'll just take it out on me." So I thought, fine, I won't say anything now, but when he's not playing with this guy anymore, I may just say something - there's just no reason for that. I thought it was just awful that he was like that.

51-ll 5-700-726-01...His confidence level was going down, you could see it going down...

51-ll 5-700-726-012...He would say "why practice, I'm no good." I called the coach and told him if he didn't want to play him, I have no problem with a trade, I know there's a lot of teams he could play for. The coach said they didn't want to trade him and I said "then you're gonna hafta come up with something." He was one of the boys who would get to bat once and they would take him out. He wasn't used to that. He was used to playing, maybe not the whole game, but at least bat a couple of times a game. Now he's thinking he's not good enough to play. So then it just so happened that an opening came up on the all-star and I didn't want to call the guy so that my son could play all the time, that wasn't it at all. I just wanted... Let the kids have a fair shake. He got on the all-star team. Then in his last game he got his first hit.

51-ll 5-700-726-03...That was in the championship tournament which he was on the team that won.

51-ll 5-700-726-04...It was like night and day for him. His whole attitude changed around and I explained to the coach that I'm not calling to tell him to play my kid or get rid of him, what I'm doing is asking to let him bat a couple times a game. You take him out and he bats once and he's one of these if he can't do it a lot of times, right off, "well, I'm no good at it, why practice."

51-ll 5-700-726-05...And you had a request for him not to....

51-ll 5-700-726-06...Yeah, I asked him not to say anything to my son about me calling. That wouldn't have done any good either. It would be like dad did this for me and I didn't want that. It just turned right around. It was unbelievable.

52-gl1-953-961...Well I'll tell ya some'um. In my opinion it wouldn't be a bad idea for parents as a group, I really believe this, you know get together and talk about you

know what they like to see and I don't think it's bad for the parents as a group to approach the coach and say you know we feel that all the girls should play you know and just sit down a whole list of things and say these are just things that we'd like to see don't put any demands on him just say that you know as a group we'd like to see this and he can either rip it up or throw it in the trash or maybe it might help.

52-g11-964-970...Or maybe the end of the season a questionnaire...Distribute a questionnaire for all leagues that parents or the coach can get. You can lay it out on the line for the coach. If you're upset with some of the things he's said or did or on the other, conversely, you know pat him on the back and say you did a real good job. You didn't win a game, but I was happy about the way that you handled the kids, treated the girls.

52-11 2-341-361-01...I tried talking to this coach as an adult, on an even level and without raising my voice and losing my temper, I was just curious because there is a rule that each kid has to play a certain number of innings and if they don't play one game they have to start the next and that stuff. After our team had played, maybe 30 innings, Tim had maybe 9 or 10 innings. I'm not sure of the numbers, but it wasn't what it should be. I asked the coach if he realized he was labeling Tim as a bench warmer because he wasn't given the opportunity, and how will he learn if not given the opportunity of playing in the game? He said it was because Tim came up to little league as a twelve-year-old...Well, that wasn't his fault. That was one reason and another reason was that he had coached this team for ten years and he was here to win. He had seven players who would win the games for him and they were the ones that were going to play. And that's the way it's gonna' be. I thought it was really sad that that's why you're here and then it progressed to him yelling and saying that if I thought I could do better I could get out there and do it. Then he stormed away. I told him that Tim did not want me to talk to him because he (Tim) was afraid he would take it out on him. I told him I'd better never hear of that happening, but of course it did.

52-11 2-341-361-02...We have some (inaudible) psychopaths that can use this for a lot of things and if they aren't removed then we should...I can't think of any other situation where we would allow our children...

52-11 2-341-361-03...In the classroom.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- American Coaching Effectiveness Program (1991a). Rookie Coaches Soccer Guide. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- American Coaching Effectiveness Program (1991b). Rookie Coaches Basketball Guide. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- American Coaching Effectiveness Program (1994). SportParent. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Ambrosie, F. & Haley, P. W. (1991). The role of the curriculum specialist in site-based management. National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, *75*, 73-81.
- Austin, D. A. & Willeke, M. (1986). A curriculum development study: School/community collaboration. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, *57*, 50-53.
- Bailey, D. A. & Martin, A. D. (1988). The growing child and sport: Physiological considerations. In F. L. Smoll, R. A. Magill, & H. J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 103-118). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Berryman, J. W. (1988). The rise of highly organized sports for preadolescent boys. In F. L. Smoll, R. A. Magill, & H. J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 3-16). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Borich, G. D. & Tombari, M. L. (1995). Educational psychology: A contemporary approach. New York: Harper-Collins.
- Bredemeier, B. J. (1988). The moral of the youth sport story. In E. W. Brown & C. F. Branta, (Eds.). Competitive sports for children and youth (pp. 285-296). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, E. W. (1985). Recruiting youth sports personnel. Parks and Recreation, *20* (3), 65.

- Brown, E. W. (1988). Study of injury mechanisms in youth sports. In E. W. Brown & C. F. Branta, (Eds.). Competitive sports for children and youth (pp. 107-114). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Brown, E. W. & Branta, C. F. (Eds.). (1988). Competitive sports for children and youth. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Buckanavage, R. J. (1992). ACEP/NFICEP: Improving the quality of coaching in Pennsylvania. Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 63 (7), 60-62.
- Burton, D. & Tannehill, D. (1988). Developing better youth sport coaches: An evaluation of the Level 1 American Coaching Effectiveness Program (ACEP). Unpublished manuscript.
- Castle, A. (1952). What Oakland parents say about Little League Baseball. Industrial Sports Journal, 18-19.
- Coaching Association of Canada (1991). Coaching Theory Level 1: National Coaching Certification Program. Gloucester, Ontario, Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.
- Comer, J. P. (1988). Educating poor minority children. Scientific American, 259 (5), 42-48.
- Cratty, B. J. (1974). Children and youth in competitive sport: Guidelines for teachers and parents (pp. 91-115). Freeport, NY: Educational Activities, Inc.
- David, J. L. (1989). Synthesis of research on school-based management. Educational Leadership, 46, 45-47.
- Engh, F. (1992). National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA): More than just a certification program. Journal of Health Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 63 (7), 43-45.
- Epstein, J. L. (1984). School policy and parent involvement: Research results. Educational Horizons, 62, 70-72.
- Epstein, J. L. & Becker, H. J. (1982). Teachers' reported practices of parent involvement: Problems and possibilities. The Elementary School Journal, 83 (2), 103-113.
- Ewing, M. E. & Seefeldt, V. (1989). Participation and attrition patterns in American agency-sponsored and interscholastic sports: An executive summary. Final Report. Sporting Goods Manufacturer's Association, North Palm Beach, FL.
- Feltz, D. (1987). Orienting parents to your youth sports program. Soccer Journal, 32, pp. 49-50, 54.
- Feltz, D., Lirgg, C. & Albrecht, R. (1992). Psychological implications of competitive running in elite young distance runners: A longitudinal analysis. Sport Psychologist, 6, 128-138.

- Gill, D. L., Gross, J. B. & Huddleston, S. (1981). Participation motivation in youth sports. In G.C. Roberts and D. M. Landers (Eds.), Psychology of motor behavior and sport-1980. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Gould, D. (1982). The A-B-C's of successful educational programs for volunteer coaches. In R.H. Cox (Ed.), Educating youth sport coaches: Solutions to a national dilemma. Reston, VA: American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.
- Gould, D. (1988). Sport psychology: Future direction in youth sport research. In Smoll, F.L., Magill, R.A., & Ash, M.J. (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 317-334). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Gould, D. & Martens, R. (1979). Attitudes of volunteer coaches toward significant youth sport issues. Research Quarterly, 50 (3), 369-380.
- Gould, D. & Petlichkoff, L. (1988a). Psychological stress and the age-group wrestler. In E. W. Brown & C. F. Branta, (Eds.), Competitive sports for children and youth (pp. 63-74). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Gould, D. & Petlichkoff, L. (1988b). Participant motivation and attrition in young athletes. In F. L. Smoll, R.A. Magill, & H. J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 161-178). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Gowan, G. R. (1992). Canada's National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP): Past, present and future. Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 63 (7), 50-54.
- Gowan, G. R., Botterill, C. B., & Blimkie, C. (1979). Bridging the gap between sport science and sport practice. The Sport Psychologist. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 3-9.
- Grand Rapids Public Recreation Department (1989). Rocket Coach Manual. (Available from Grand Rapids Recreation Department, 201 Market Ave., SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503)
- Greendorfer, S. L. & Lewko, J. H. (1978). Role of family member in sport socialization of children. Research Quarterly, 49 (2), 146-152.
- Griffith, L. L. (1982). Pointers for parents. Women's Sports, 4 (6), 10.
- Gross, R. H. (1982). Training programs for volunteer coaches: More time, more money. Physician and Sportsmedicine, 10, 183-185.
- Harris, A. & Ewing, M. E. (1992). Defining the concept of fun: A developmental view of youth tennis players. Paper presented at the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Harvey, J. S. (1986). Overuse syndromes in young athletes. In M. R. Weiss and D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 151-164). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Hellstedt, J. C. (1990). Early adolescent perceptions of parental pressure in the sport environment. Journal of Sport Behavior, 13, 135-144.
- Hopper, C. (1988). The sports-confident child. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Hopper, C. & Jeffries, S. (1990). Coach-parent relations in youth sport. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 61 (4), 18-22.
- Horn, T. S. & Hasbrook, C. (1986). Informational components influencing children's perceptions of their physical competence. In M. R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 81-88). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hutslar, J. (1985). Beyond X's and O's. Kernersville, NC: Jack Hutslar.
- Jowett, S. & Baginsky, M. (1991). Building bridges: Parental involvement in schools. Windsor, Berkshire, England: Nfer-Nelson.
- Kaufman, R. (1989). Means and ends. Educational Technology, 29, 32-33.
- Kimiecik, J. C. (1988). Who needs coaches' education? U.S. coaches do. The Physician and Sportsmedicine, 16 (11), 124-136.
- Kociolek, R. J. (1991). Summer safety and sports. PTA Today, 16 (6), 21.
- Kozar, B. & Lord, R. H. (1988). Overuse injuries in young athletes: A "growing" problem. In F. L. Smoll, R. A. Magill, & H. J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 119-130). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Krueger, R. A. (1988). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Laurie, D. R. & Corbin, C. B. (1981). Parental attitudes concerning modifications in baseball for young children. Physical Educator, 38 (2), 105-109.
- LeUnes, A. D. & Nation, J. R. (1989). Sport psychology: An introduction (p. 356). Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc.
- Lewko, J. H. & Greendorfer, S. L. (1988). Family influences in sport socialization of children and adolescents. In F. L. Smoll, R. A. Magill, & H. J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 287-300). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Lightfoot, S. L. (1978). Worlds apart: Relationships between families and schools. New York: Basic Books.
- Lincoln, S. M. (1992). Sports injury risk management and the keys to safety: Coalition of American to Protect Sports (CAPS). Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 63 (7), 40-42, 63.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (1987). Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Magill, R. A. (1988). Critical periods as optimal readiness for learning sport skills. In F. L. Smoll, R. A. Magill, & H. J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 53-66). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Malina, R. M. (Ed.). (1985). Young athletes: Biological, psychological and educational perspectives. Proceedings from the Child and Sport Conference, Urbino, Italy (1984). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Malina, R. M. (1986). When should children begin competing? Readiness for competitive sport. In M.R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youth (pp. 45-50). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Malina, R. M. (1988). Competitive youth sports and biological maturation. In E.W. Brown & C. F. Branta (Eds.). Competitive sports for children and youth (pp. 227-246). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martin, G. & Lumsden, J. (1987). Coaching: An effective behavioral approach. St. Louis: Times Mirror Mosby.
- Martens, R. & Gould, D. (1979). Why do adults volunteer to coach children's sports? In G.C. Roberts & K.M. Newell (Eds.) Psychology of motor behavior and sport-1978. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martens, R., & Seefeldt, V. (1979). Guidelines for children's sports. Reston, VA: National Association for Sport and Physical Education.
- McGuire, R. T. & Cook, D. L. (1983). The influence of others and the decision to participate in youth sports. Journal of Sport Behavior, 6 (1), 9-16.
- McPherson, B. D. & Brown, B. A. (1988). The structure, processes, and consequences of sport for children. In F. L. Smoll, R. A. Magill, & H. J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 265-286). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martens, R. (1986). Youth Sport in the USA. In M.R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youth (pp. 27-34). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martens, R. (1988). Helping children become independent, responsible adults through sports. In E. W. Brown & C. F. Branta (Eds.). Competitive sports for children and youth (pp. 297-308). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martens, R. (1990). Successful coaching. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martens, R. & Gould, D. (1979). Why do adults volunteer to coach children's sports? In G. C. Roberts and K. M. Newell (Eds.), Psychology of motor behavior and sport-1978. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Micheli, L.J. (1988). The incidence of injuries in children's sports: A medical perspective. In E.W. Brown & C. F. Branta (Eds.), Competitive sports for children and youth (pp. 279-284). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978. State of Michigan, Lansing, MI.
- Murphy, P. (1985). Youth sports coaches: Using hunches to fill a blank page. The Physician and Sportsmedicine, 13 (4), 136-142.
- NYSCA: What we're all about. West Palm Beach, FL: National Youth Sports Coaches Association.
- Orlick, T. (1974, November/December). The athletic dropout--A high price of inefficiency. Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Journal (pp. 21-27)
- Orlick, T. (1986). Evolution in children's sport. In M. R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 169-178). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Orlick, T. & Botterill, C. (1975). Every kid can win. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Partlow, K. (1992). American Coaching Effectiveness Program (ACEP): Educating America's coaches. Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 63 (7), 36-39.
- Passer, M. W. (1986). When should children begin competing? A psychological perspective. In M. R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 55-58). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Passer, M. W. (1988a). Determinants and consequences of children's competitive stress. In F.L. Smoll, R. A. Magill & M.J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 203-228). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Passer, M. W. (1988b). Psychological issues in determining children's age-readiness for competition. In F.L. Smoll, R. A. Magill & M.J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 67-78). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pfahl, M. (Executive Director) (1991a). National Youth Sports Coaches Association: What we are all about (Videotape). West Palm Beach, FL: National Youth Sports Coaches Association.
- Pfahl, M. (Executive Director) (1991b). Parents' guide to better sports for kids (Videotape). West Palm Beach, FL: National Youth Sports Coaches Association.
- Pooley, J. C. (1986). A level above competition: An inclusive model for youth sport. In M. R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youth (pp. 187-194). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Roberts, G. C. (1986). The perception of stress: A potential source and its development. In M. R. Weiss and D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 119-126). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Roberts, T. W. (1994). A systems perspective of parenting. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.
- Rotella, R. J. & Bunker, L. K. (1987). Parenting your superstar. Champaign, IL: Leisure Press.
- Sapp, M. & Haubenstricker, J. (1978). Motivation for joining and reasons for not continuing in youth sport programs in Michigan. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, Kansas City, MO.
- Scanlan, T. K. (1986). Competitive stress in children. In M. R. Weiss and D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 113-118). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Scanlan, T. K., Ravizza, K. & Stein, G. L. (1989a). An in-depth study of former elite figure skaters: I. Introduction to the project. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, *11*, 54-64.
- Scanlan, T. K., Stein, G. L. & Ravizza, K. (1989b). An in-depth study of former elite figure skaters: II. Sources of enjoyment. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, *11*, 65-83.
- Scanlan, T. K., Stein, G. L. & Ravizza, K. (1991). An in-depth study of former elite figure skaters: II. Sources of stress. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, *13*, 103-120.
- Scanlan, T. K. & Lewthwaite, R. (1988). From stress to enjoyment: Parental and coach influences on young participants. In E.W. Brown & C.F. Branta (Eds.), Competitive sports for children and youth: An overview of research and issues (pp. 41-48). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Seefeldt, V. (1988). The concept of readiness applied to motor skill acquisition. In F.L. Smoll, R. A. Magill & M.J. Ash (Eds.), Children in sport (pp. 45-52). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Seefeldt, V. (Ed.). (1988). Educational program for instructors' certification (EPIC). East Lansing, MI: Institute for the Study of Youth Sports.
- Seefeldt, V. & Brown, E. W. (1992). Program for athletic coaches' education (PACE). Dubuque, IA: Brown and Benchmark.
- Seefeldt, V., Ewing, M., & Walk, S. (1992). Overview of youth sports programs in the United States. East Lansing, MI: Youth Sports Institute.

- Seefeldt, V. & Milligan, M. J. (1992). Program for athletic coaches education (PACE): Educating American's public and private school coaches. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 63 (7), 46-49.
- Sharkey, B. J. (1986). When should children begin competing? A physiological perspective. In M. R. Weiss and D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 51-54). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Singer, K. (1986). Injuries and disorder of the epiphyses in young athletes. In M. R. Weiss and D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 141-150). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Skubic, E. (1956). Studies of Little League and Middle League baseball. Research Quarterly, 27, 97-110.
- Smith, N. J., Smith, R. E., & Smoll, F.L. (1983). Kidsports: A survival guide for parents. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Smith, R. E. (1986). A component analysis of athletic stress. In M. R. Weiss and D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 107-112). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Smith, R. E., Smoll, F. L., & Curtis, B. (1979). Coach effectiveness training: A cognitive-behavioral approach to enhancing relationship skills in you sport coaches. Journal of Sport Psychology, 1, 59-75.
- Smith, R. E., Smoll, F. L., & Hunt, E. (1977). A system for the behavioral assessment of athletic coaches. Research Quarterly, 48, 401-407.
- Smith, R. E., Smoll, F. L., & Smith, N. J. (1989). Parents complete guide to youth sports (pp. 3-5). Costa Mesa, CA: HDL Publishing.
- Smoll, F. L. (1986a). Stress reduction strategies in youth sport. In M.R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youth (pp. 127-136). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Smoll, F. L. (1986b). Coach-parent relationships: Enhancing the quality of the athlete's sport experience. In J. M. Williams, (Ed.), Applied sport psychology (pp. 47-58). Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing.
- Smoll, F. L. & Smith, F. L. (1980). Psychologically-oriented coach training programs: Design, implementation, and assessment. In C. Nadeau, et al (Eds.), Psychology of motor behavior and sport: Proceedings of the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity 1979. (pp. 12-27). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Smoll, F. L. & Smith, R. E. (1981). Preparation of youth sport coaches: An educational application of sport psychology. Physical Educator, 38 (2), 85-94.
- Smoll, F. L., Magill, R. A., & Ash, M. J. (Eds.). (1988). Children in sport. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

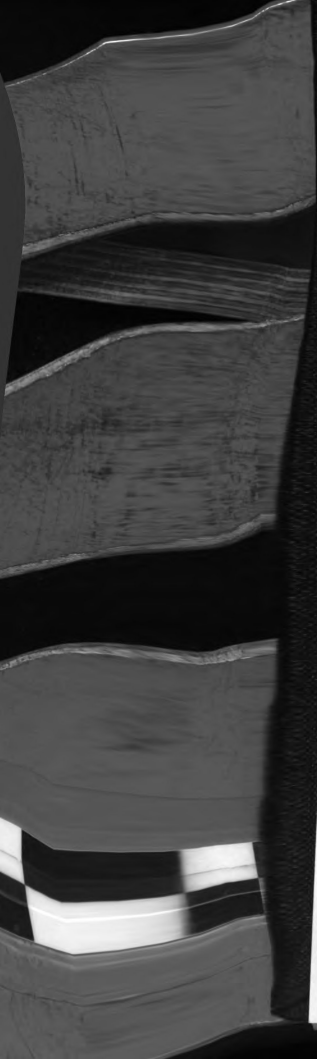
- Snyder, D. (1992, March). Parents: Be good sports and act your age. USA Today Baseball Weekly, p. 31.
- Stolovitch, H. D. (1978). The intermediate technology of learner verification and revision. Educational Technology, 18, 13-17.
- Sutton, J. T. (1987). Do parents and educators agree? Teaching K-8, 17, 64-66.
- Sutton, W. (1984). Family involvement in youth sports: An examination of the YMCA Y-Winners philosophy. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 55, 59-60.
- Thomas, G. (1991). Defining role in the new classroom team. Educational Research, 33 (3), 186-198.
- Thomas, M. (1992, March). Batter up! Florida Magazine, pp. 8-12.
- Thompson, J. (1993). Positive coaching. Dubuque, IA: Brown and Benchmark.
- Utterback, P. H. & Kalin, M. (1989). A community-based model of curriculum evaluation. Educational Leadership, 47, 49-50.
- Vogel, P. (1982). Evaluation of educational programs for volunteer coaches. In R.H. Cox (Ed.) Educating youth sport coaches: Solutions to a national dilemma. Reston, VA: American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.
- Vogel, P. & Blase, K. (1985). Fundamental of Coaching Youth Ice Hockey. Denver, CO: Youth Sports Institute.
- Wankel, L. M. & Sefton, J. M. (1989). A season-long investigation of fun in youth sports. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 11, 355-366.
- Weber, M. (1968). Economy and society. New York, NY: Bedminster Press.
- Weinberg, R. S. (1981). Why kids play or do not play organized sports. Physical Educator, 38 (2), 72.
- Weiss, M. R. (1986). A theoretical overview of competence motivation. In M. R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 75-80). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Weiss, M. R. (1989). Youth sport: Is winning everything? Childhood Education, 65 (4), 195.
- Weiss, M. R., Bredemeier, B. J., & Shewchuk, R. M. (1986). The dynamics of perceived competence, perceived control, and motivational orientation in youth sport. In M. R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), Sport for children and youths (pp. 89-102). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Weiss, M. R. & Gould, D. (Eds.). (1986). Sport for children and youths. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Weiss, M. R. & Sisley, B. L. (1984). Where have all the coaches gone? Sociology of Sport Journal, 1 (4), 332-347.

Wolff, R. (1993). Good sports. New York, NY: Dell Publishing.

Wrong, D. (1988). Power: Its forms, bases, and uses. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Youth Sports Coalition of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (1986). Guidelines for coaching education: Youth sports. Reston VA: National Association for Sport and Physical Activity.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293014098648