

INCLUSIVE GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH SPORT STAKEHOLDERS: A CONTENT
ANALYSIS OF US SPORT NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY WEBSITES

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Sport is an inherently exclusive space, whether through the historical roots of colonization, prioritization of talented athletes' development, or homophobia. Research emphasizes the organizational responsibilities to foster inclusion in sport. American Sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs) are non-profit, non-governmental organizations. In sport, NGBs often hold authority over their sports through governance such as setting participation policies, competition rules, as well as monitoring adherence to policies and performance standards. The relevance of NGBs within the sport system make these governing bodies a vital group to explore and understand what information is being shared to other sport stakeholders. Therefore, this study addressed three research questions (a) what does inclusion mean to US Sport NGBs?, (b) how do US Sport NGBs share information about inclusion?, and (c) what guidelines do US Sport NGBs suggest for stakeholders to promote inclusion?. Data was collected via 52 US Sport NGB websites, where a content analysis highlighted consistent and inconsistent patterns. Two main takeaways of this study suggest (a) building community and showing representation of diverse identities is integral to fostering a sense of belonging, and (b) inconsistent guidelines for stakeholders limit the effectiveness for organizations to support equitable opportunities and social justice. Therefore, sport organizations need to focus on how to walk the walk, and not just talk the talk when it comes to equitable opportunities and social justice.

ABSTRACT

Research emphasizes the organizational responsibilities to foster inclusion in sport (Jeanes et al., 2018; Spaaij et al., 2018). American Sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs) are non-profit, non-governmental organizations that govern activities by setting participation policies, competition rules, as well as monitoring adherence to policies and performance standards. The authoritative relevance of NGBs within the sport system make these governing bodies a vital sample to survey and understand what information is being shared to other stakeholders. The overarching purpose of the current study was to explore the definition and guidelines for fostering inclusion based on information found on US Sport NGB websites. Specifically, this study will answer three research questions: (a) what does inclusion mean to NGBs?, (b) how do NGBs share information about inclusion on their websites?, and (c) what guidelines do NGBs suggest for youth sport stakeholders to promote inclusion?. A content analysis was conducted, where conventional and summative methods were used to analyze content found on NGB websites. Findings suggested statements of inclusion presented on NGB websites define inclusion as a sense of belonging and equitable opportunities, yet rarely indicated social justice in their definition. Additionally, NGB websites were sharing observable information about inclusion, although the consistency of those signals is vastly different. Finally, guidelines were primarily suggested for the administrator stakeholder for fostering inclusion. Overall, inconsistent and vague guidelines for stakeholders limit the effectiveness for organizations to foster inclusion. Therefore, future research should support sport organizations ability to build equitable opportunities and acknowledge systems of oppression and privilege.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Content Analysis
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
KTA	Knowledge-to-Action
NGB	National Governing Body
POC	People of Colour
SI	Social Inclusion

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Sport is an inherently exclusive space, whether structurally (e.g., relative age effects, inaccessible equipment; Darcy et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2019), historically (e.g., colonization, slavery; Clevenger, 2017; Hawkins, 2013), or attitudinally presented (e.g., ableism, racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia; Brittain et al., 2020; Fair, 2011; Glover, 2007; Goldman & Gervais, 2021; Osborne & Wagner III, 2007). These experiences of exclusion are present across differing sport contexts. Akim Aliu, a retired ice hockey player who serves as the chair of the Hockey Diversity Alliance, has shared his experience with the pervasive racism that is systemically and culturally present within ice hockey (Aliu, 2020). In collegiate athletics, Lia Thomas is a trans woman participating in women's swimming. She has been harassed by protestors at swim meets and on social media (Ennis, 2022). With these real-life events and researchers highlighting the exclusive nature of sport, inclusion initiatives (e.g., Innovation Initiative – Sport Support Program, 2022) have become more present in sport research to overcome these challenges and move toward a more inclusive system.

It is especially important to make youth sport an inclusive space as this context has the potential to foster positive youth development when intentionally structured (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Within the context of youth sport (ages 2-25), extant evidence has shown many participants drop out of sport just after the age of 12 (Balish et al., 2014). Given the benefits of physical activity and sport participation (e.g., life and motor skills; Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2006), it would be fruitful to retain participants by ensuring youth sport is an inclusive space. Youth sport is a complex system involving various adult stakeholders (e.g., coaches, parents, administrators) and youth participants within three systems (i.e., team, family, and

environmental; Dorsch et al., 2023). Thus, examination of research and implementation of findings is required across multiple levels (e.g., organizational, community, coach, athlete).

Studies focusing on inclusion in youth sport settings have increased since 2015, with the majority of research having used qualitative methodology (e.g., case study, participatory action research, phenomenology; Vertonghen et al., 2017; Kabetu et al., 2021; Luguetti et al., 2022). However, these studies have focused on one stakeholder or one sport program rather than examining how the system applies the concept of inclusion. There is a further need to develop evidence-based strategies and understand how inclusion is being practiced within this distinct sport context. Currently, research has explored inclusion among multiple stakeholders. With athletes, research has examined perceptions of inclusion as well as the meaning of sport with diverse populations. Specifically, Säfvenbom and colleagues (2014) assessed adolescents' perceptions of inclusiveness of their local 'Sport for All' clubs and found that they were perceived to be exclusive by participants. Additionally, an ethnography conducted with young refugee girls highlighted the need for intentional creation of a culturally safe sport environment for all participants (Harwood et al., 2021). With coaches, research has explored perceptions of inclusive coaching practices (Crisp, 2020b) and relevant trainings (Buelens et al., 2015). A study by Spencer-Cavaliere and colleagues (2017) highlighted three key factors for coaches to foster inclusion: building authentic connections with athletes, adapting to the diversity of the athletes, and providing equitable performance expectations. These findings of studies on athletes and coaches suggest a need for intentional practices and reflection of strategies that support inclusion of all athletes.

Notably, there is a larger contingency of studies emphasizing the organizational responsibilities to foster inclusion in sport. Recently, Spurdens and Bloyce (2022) examined

National Governing Bodies (NGBs) LGBT+ equality policies and found policies suggested change but failed to implement any. Additionally, through a critical examination of approaches to inclusion in sport clubs, Jeanes et al. (2018) suggest policies are not easily translating to practice, which limits inclusion. Moreover, youth sport organizations may require support when addressing and implementing inclusive practices (Spaaij et al., 2018). Thus, it is essential to examine the policies that are being suggested to foster inclusion in sport. Additional training or educational programming developed by sport entities, that do not coordinate games or leagues, may support the development of inclusive practices. For example, RISE (2023) is an independent non-profit organization that provides evidence-based programming to increase athlete and coach attitude and comprehension of race and racial disparities in sport (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018). Thus, outsourcing training may support the issues with translating inclusion policies to practice. Of interest to the current study, looking toward organizations that are currently dictating policies within the sport context would provide an initial description of essential information. More specifically, what policies are being outlined and what strategies are being suggested by governing bodies.

American Sport National Governing Bodies (hereafter referred to as US Sport NGBs) are non-profit, non-governmental organizations. In 1978, the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act designated NGBs for Olympic sports by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). These designations require NGBs to conduct similar policies and practices, for example DEI Scorecards are used to report on demographics of employees and participants. They are independent and govern activities but are not responsible for daily operation (Gaston et al., 2020). However, the governance of NGBs differ across the level of sport organizations. Depending on the level of competition, grassroots and performance sport

organizations are held to different standards (e.g., coach training requirements, funding). Therefore, NGBs may have a larger influence on performance sport organizations over grassroots, especially when producing talent for the USOPC. In general, NGBs hold several critical roles tied to the success of sport such as, developing talent, growing participation, safeguarding athletes, educating coaches, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders of various local and international organizations (Harris et al., 2021). Specifically, a dominant role governing bodies hold is knowledge production and ensuring messages are sent across diverse stakeholders (Griffiths et al., 2018). In sport, NGBs often hold authority over their sports through governance such as setting participation policies, competition rules, as well as monitoring adherence to policies and performance standards.

Another key role is that of a knowledge provider, where Sport NGBs act as resources for regional and local organizations as well as nested stakeholders. The relevance of sport NGBs within the sport system make these governing bodies a vital sample to survey and understand what information is being shared to other stakeholders. However, with the numerous responsibilities and disconnect from interactions with athletes, NGBs may scrape the surface of their responsibility to support inclusion or offer “lip service” (Spurdens & Bloyce, 2022). Previously mentioned Aliu, who is continuously advocating for athletes of colour, has called out the National Hockey League in their attempts to support diversity and inclusion (Aliu, 2022). Therefore, the information provided by US Sport NGBs should be critically examined and the messaging assessed for relevance and depth.

Critical Inclusion

Inclusion, as a lay term, is often used alongside of diversity and equity. Within organizational literature, inclusion has evolved from the problem of diversity being missing from

these spaces (Oswick & Noon, 2014). To fix the lack of diversity, organizations started “doing diversity” by simply documenting when, where, and how much diversity was occurring within the space (Ahmed, 2012). In sport, the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee developed DEI Scorecards that reflect this idea to increase diversity. However, this solution did not ameliorate the problem or provide actions that organizations could take to increase diversity. Even when organizations engage in policy making to increase the recruitment of minorities, the outcomes are seldom long-term change. The policies that are most effective at a short-term increase of minority representation are the strategic policies surrounding managing diversity that contributes to the success of the organization (Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012). Therefore, inclusion was leveraged as a way to promote unity and increase productivity of organizations (Sabharwal, 2014).

Across various fields, inclusion is defined in numerous ways – as a sense of belonging, in a social justice capacity, or to assimilate out group individuals into the dominant group (Fitzgerald & Jobling, 2009; cf. Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2017). In organizational psychology, inclusion is generally concerned with involvement of employees and eliminating barriers for diverse employees to be integrated into the present systems (Roberson, 2006). Inclusion has been labelled as something good that can shift the practices of organizations to be more inviting and accepting (Le et al., 2020). However, the definition of inclusion is inconsistent across literature, such as being used to oppose exclusion, as a strategic goal, a practice to benefit from diversity, or a way to advance all individuals (Adamson et al., 2021). The overarching ethos of inclusion is to bring people into, or make them feel welcome in, a space. However, critical inclusion suggests that it is conflicting to bring people into a space that is not designed for them simply in the name of inclusion (Adamson et al., 2021).

Inclusion can be problematic, depending on the system and who is being included. Practices conducted in the name of inclusion can be based on cultural norms (Shore et al., 2011) or bolstered by power dynamics (Adamson et al., 2021). Inclusion can also not be removed entirely from exclusion, where inclusive strategies may be undertaken by organizations at the surface-level, but the deeper unconscious hierarchies may still be evident (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2014). Additionally, efforts to practice and build inclusion are occurring in systems and spaces that are ableist and support neurotypical individuals (Dobusch, 2020). Another problem with inclusion is the idea of inclusion paradoxes (Ferdman, 2017), where someone may want to be included but still want to hold their identity which may be impossible. Moreover, simply stating the need for inclusion of a different group implies a divergence from the norm (Adamson et al., 2021). Adamson and colleagues (2021) suggest that work on and practice of inclusion may not “alter any of the dominant structures that created the need for inclusion (pp. 219).” Thus, for the sport context, it is fitting to explore how the system is defining and practicing inclusion to further critique the use and alter the system of sport which is inherently exclusive to any minority.

Signaling Theory

Signaling theory is a framework that emerged from economics and has been applied within sport marketing and management literature (Connelly et al., 2011; Spence, 1973). This theory holds four different elements: (a) signaler, the individual that holds the information and is sending the signal; (b) signal, the information that is being sent from the signaler; (c) receiver, the person that is engaging with the information sent by the signaler; and (d) feedback, information sent back to the signaler about the reception of the signal from the receiver. To contextualize this information for the current study, US Sport NGBs would be the signaler and adult youth sport leaders (i.e., administrators, coaches, parents) would be the receiver with

knowledge sharing being the signal. The goal of signaling theory is to limit asymmetry of information between sender and receiver via effective signals. Characteristics of efficacious signals include observability and cost (i.e., whether receivers can access the signal and the signaler will accrue a cost when sending the signal). Celani and Singh's (2011) findings suggest signaling theory occurs on multiple levels, such as the organizational and individual. At the organizational level, providing more information that is available to the individual is critical (Rynes & Cable, 2003; cf. Celani & Singh, 2011). It would be critical for US Sport NGBs to present clear and concise information that informs stakeholders' practices, especially multiple signals surrounding the same information.

There are also key constructs used throughout signaling theory research to describe the relationships between the four elements (see Donnelly et al., 2011 for a review). Pertinent to the scope of this study, constructs related to the signal element – rather than the other three elements (i.e., signaler, receiver, feedback) – will be explored. Specifically, observability, and consistency will be used within this study. Observability refers to the strength, clarity, visibility, and intensity of the signal. Whereas consistency is defined as the agreement between different signals from one source. Within sport research, signaling theory has been used to examine inclusive marketing strategies and international country reputations (Melton & MacCharles, 2021; Preuss & Alfs, 2011). A study by Cunningham and Melton (2014) using signaling theory examined whether inclusive advertising led to intentions to join a fitness club. Results suggested using inclusive cues made the fitness club more welcoming and further recommended the creation of inclusive policies. Consequently, the current study will complete an initial exploration of US Sport NGBs knowledge of inclusion and inclusion policies with signaling theory informing the interpretation of findings.

Signals can be sent by US Sport NGBs through various platforms, such as planning documents, mission statements, press releases, and social media statements, just to name a few. This study will focus on signals sent via websites. As NGBs serve various stakeholders and govern multiple organizations, the US Sport NGB websites are vital sources of information for stakeholders. For example, if a sport administrator were to look to the NGB for guidance, would they be able to find what they are looking for? In this case, information about what inclusion is and how can stakeholders foster inclusion. Data on websites has been used to demonstrate gender inequities in sport (Burroughs et al., 2022; Coche, 2015). Another study examined the representation of marginalized groups on university program websites (Sullivan & Ali, 2023). Thus, examining signals provided by US Sport NGB websites would provide an initial understanding of inclusion within the sport system.

Knowledge-to-Action Framework

Across research pertaining to inclusion within youth sport, limited efforts, if at all, have emphasized knowledge translation and mobilization efforts. The Knowledge-to-Action (KTA) framework guides scholars through the knowledge to action process (see Figure 1; Graham et al., 2006). This process progresses through a three-phase funnel of knowledge creation that is then applied to a problem through an eight-step action cycle. The three phases for creating knowledge include knowledge inquiry, synthesis, and tools/products. As modelled in youth sport research, knowledge inquiry refers to primary study findings, knowledge synthesis suggests compilations of grouped data, and knowledge tools/products are modes of dissemination (e.g., infographics, conferences, media, reports; Holt et al., 2018). This study is situated within the third phase, knowledge tools and products, which requires the concise presentation of information that meets stakeholder needs and provides clear recommendations (Graham et al., 2006). To support the

application of knowledge, it is critical to understand the perspectives of key stakeholders and end users. Thus, the data collected will be products created by US Sport NGBs disseminated to stakeholders.

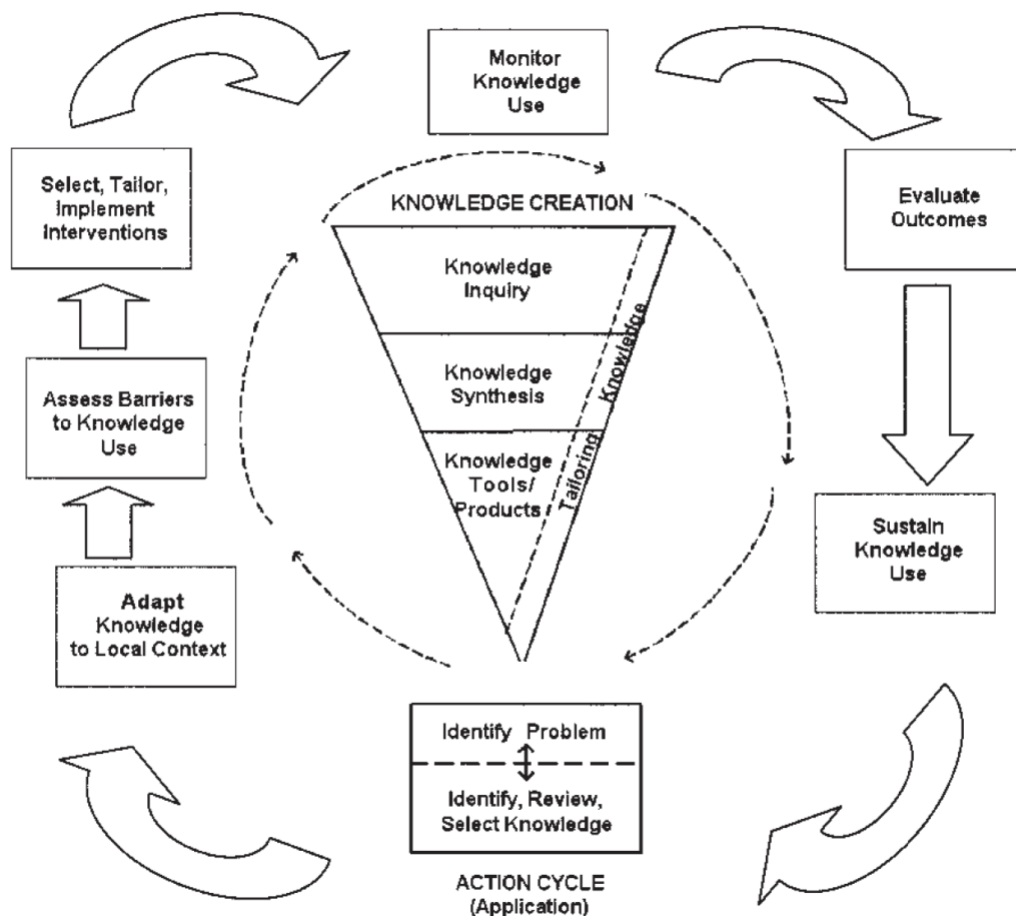


Figure 1. *Knowledge-to-Action process (Graham et al., 2006)*

This dissertation project will complete the knowledge creation funnel of the KTA framework, which will lead to future opportunities of action, dissemination of knowledge, and implementation with community partners. The knowledge products created by the US Sport NGBs will require further application using the action cycle process of the KTA framework. The action cycle aspect of the KTA framework informs the application of knowledge, which is beyond the scope of this study (see Figure 1). In conclusion, the KTA framework offers a distinct

process for compiling research and guiding action that considers the needs of stakeholders and application of knowledge in their respective spaces. Conducting research guided by the KTA framework, which specifically examines US Sport NGBs knowledge tools and products, will take a foundational step to ensuring the context of youth sport is informed on the appropriate knowledge to foster inclusion.

Purpose of Study

There is a gap in the literature when understanding how knowledge about inclusion and inclusive practices is being shared across US Sport NGBs for stakeholders as recent research has focused on policies (e.g., Jones et al., 2017; Spurdens & Bloyce, 2022). An exploration of current information shared via national websites and resources is warranted. This study will additionally highlight gaps in NGB knowledge and areas of support for future creation and dissemination avenues. Therefore, conducting a content analysis on US Sport NGB knowledge will allow for a nuanced description and critical analysis of the current understanding of inclusion and inclusive practices in youth sport. The overarching purpose of the current study is to explore the existing knowledge of inclusion from the perspective of US Sport NGBs and to synthesize practical implications for stakeholders. Specifically, this study will answer three research questions:

- (a) How is inclusion defined by US Sport NGBs as seen on their websites?
- (b) How do US Sport NGBs share information about inclusion through their websites?
- (c) What guidelines for inclusion do US Sport NGBs suggest for youth sport stakeholders?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As the broad purpose of this study is to begin to bridge the gap between practice and research by examining the current practices of US Sport NGBs, this literature review will provide a scoping review of inclusion research. A summary of the conceptualization of inclusion, pertinent theoretical frameworks, and study methodologies will be presented. Further, the sport system, sample of participants, and suggested research strategies will be addressed. This summary and study will lead to future research endeavors to connect both sides of the sport context and support inclusion in youth sport.

Conceptualization of Inclusion

A dominant concern across inclusion research being conducted within the youth sport context is an unclear use of the concept. Inclusion has been equated to social change (Wagstaff & Parker, 2020) or the basic need of belonging (Buelens et al., 2015; Haudenhuyse et al., 2014). Additionally, inclusion is used as an adjective to define a nebulous state (Dalton et al., 2015; Harwood et al., 2021; Middleton et al., 2022; Storr, 2022) or an outcome of a positive environment (Crisp, 2020a; Doidge et al., 2020; Kulick et al., 2019; Luguetti et al., 2022). Often, it is entirely unclear how the concept of inclusion is being defined within this space (Adams & Kavanaugh, 2018; Cunningham et al., 2020; Kramers et al., 2021). The unclear conceptualization of inclusion is paralleled when creating policies (Spaaij et al., 2018). Thus, it is imperative to survey the concept of inclusion within the context of sport prior to suggesting change and informing new practices and policies.

When the concept is clearly defined, inclusion can be used to represent three different notions (a) equal opportunities, (b) social justice, (c) and belonging (Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2017). Adaptive sport research focuses on the first idea of equal opportunities and integrated

programming (e.g., Klenk et al., 2019). Positive youth development research focuses on inclusive environments that are a function of basic needs being met (e.g., Pink et al., 2020). The social justice avenue for inclusion generally studies youth sport leaders and training (e.g., Kochanek & Erickson, 2021; Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018). However, this area is severely lacking in the literature or is conflated with the idea of social inclusion, meaning integration of underprivileged or refugee youth into sport development programming as inclusion.

The predominant idea of inclusion in sport research is social inclusion, which is defined as “a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live (Waring & Mason, 2010, pp. 518).” The research on social inclusion in sport reports various conceptualizations, one shares that there are two dimensions to social inclusion in sport - inclusion in sport (i.e., changing rules to support equal opportunities and participation) and inclusion through sport (i.e., building programs to include disadvantaged groups; Collins & Haudenhuyse, 2015). Another conceptualization holds four dimensions: spatial, relational, functional, power (Oxford, 2018). Another study (Block & Gibbs, 2010) adapted the conceptual framework defining core domains of integration (Ager & Strang, 2008) into their social inclusion conceptualization. It is problematic to assume integration and inclusion are conceptually synonymous when integration contradicts the area of inclusion that focuses on social justice issues and does not address issues such as white supremacy. An additional conceptualization of social inclusion reflects “the pursuit of equality through the redistribution of wealth to the redistribution of opportunity, as an attempt to reconcile social democratic values with the

neoliberal economic agenda (Kelly, 2011, pp.127).” Overall, there is inconsistency with how social inclusion within sport is being conceptualized.

Specifically for studies conducted in the United States (US), inclusion is focused on including all athletes, with all abilities. However, adaptive sport labels programs across the integration continuum, from “regular” or able-bodied sport to segregated adaptive sport (Winnick, 1987). When conducting a case study with a sport for development program, inclusion was defined as having both a social and systematic level but essentially accommodates to all skills and abilities (Cunningham & Warner, 2019). In comparison to other countries, the US focuses more on adaptive sport which may be due to the support of the USOPC. Examining the inclusion of adaptive sport programming across all US Sport NGBs may highlight an area of strength within America.

Theoretical Foundations

Relevant Sport Theories

Social inclusion (SI) is the prevailing approach to inclusion in sport settings and developed from interventions for vulnerable youth (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012). Waring and Mason (2010) define social inclusion outside of a sport context as emphasizing poverty and empowering disadvantaged individuals to take opportunities and resources to participate within society. Sport has then become a preferred vehicle for social inclusion. Studies have examined which conditions allow for development of disadvantaged youth (e.g., Block & Gibbs, 2017; Buelens et al., 2017; Johns et al., 2014; Morgan & Parker, 2017). Coach behaviours have also been examined as central to promoting SI (Doidge et al., 2020). Programming has been developed (i.e., sport for development) in the name of SI (e.g., Philip et al., 2021). However, social inclusion is rarely defined within the literature and references positive development

scholarship (i.e., Coakley, 2011). Therefore, the relevant sport theories prevalent in inclusion research may be muddying the definition of inclusion.

Positive youth development (PYD) is a strength-based approach that considers development as plastic and suggests the context must align with the individual needs (Lerner et al., 2005). Moreover, there are five positive outcomes that conceptualize PYD - the 5C's, which include competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. PYD has significantly influenced literature in sport psychology, as the role of sport is to provide youth athletes with experiences that support development (Fraser-Thomas, et al., 2005; Holt, et al., 2017). Within the studies of inclusion, PYD has informed the assessment of refugee development through sport (Pink et al., 2020), the exploration of coach pedagogy (Riffi Acharki et al., 2021), and inclusive coaching strategies (Crisp, 2020b). Additionally, research examining youth perceptions of inclusive sport clubs and sport culture has been situated within PYD (Säfvenbom et al., 2014; Strachan et al., 2018). However, researchers have pushed to reimagine PYD through a social justice lens where Camiré and colleagues (2022) suggest PYD needs to address power, privilege, and oppression to continue serving youth in the sport space.

Sport for development was established to find solutions to worldly challenges and holds four different types: peace and reconciliation, social justice, health and well-being, and corporate social responsibility (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2012). Sport for development programming can then provide conflict strategies to restore relationships, remedy social inequities, support health and well-being, and bridge corporate with community resources. As sport for development programming has been linked to SI (e.g., Sandford et al., 2022), these types of programming seem to run parallel with the goal of SI (i.e., empowering disadvantaged people). Notably, research being done in predominantly white countries use SI whereas sport for development

programming is seen across the world (e.g., Açıkgöz et al., 2022; Válková, 2021; Wagstaff & Parker, 2020). These different uses of sport relevant theories suggest an incongruence and unclear conceptualization of inclusion within sport. Moreover, if specific programming is required to build inclusion, the lack of programming within the US suggests the current structure of sport is exclusionary.

Relevant Inclusion Theories

Theories that are dominant across critical inclusion literature and studies that examine diverse perspectives are rarely employed in sport spaces. Critical theories of race were the most prevalent critical theories informing sport studies, especially those in the US. Critical social theory of race and education emphasizes the difference between Black and White student-athletes' perception of sport as a vehicle for upward mobility (Leonardo, 2009). This theory informed the explorative study of race-based perceptions of education, which shape the sport experiences of high school student-athletes (Hextrum, 2020). Cultural praxis of high school sport administrators was examined, with researchers suggesting how continued studies in this area can implement critical race theory (Kochanek & Erickson, 2021). Critical whiteness theory (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999) suggests critiquing the narrative of white being the norm. One study used this theory to conduct a case study of a cultural safety training module for instructors (Rich & Giles, 2015). A limited amount of research is being conducted on sport organizations that utilizes critical theories pertaining to race.

Queer and feminist theories are also rarely applied to research in sport psychology. Feminist theory informed a qualitative study examining inclusive communities for lesbian parents within sport (Trussell, 2020). A feminist constructivist lens examines dominant discourses and the lived experiences of unique individuals within patriarchal systems (Freysinger

et al., 2013). Feminist studies (hooks, 1994) were used to analyze a participatory action research study examining the co-creation process of a sport program for refugee girls (Lugueti et al., 2022). Findings suggested discourse informed by feminist theory identified barriers the girls faced and empowered the girls to take action to change the injustice (e.g., co-creating a coach workshop to highlight needs of girls). A decolonial feminist approach was used when examining the inclusion of female participants in a predominantly male sport for development football program (Oxford, 2018). Decolonial feminism interrogates the current status quo that is residing due to colonization, which normalizes the inconsideration of non-White women in colonized spaces (Lugones, 2010). Another study on sport for development programming draws on queer theory to examine the stories of queer participants (Válková, 2021). Queer theory criticizes and deconstructs narratives of heteronormativity and suggests alternate ways of being and knowing (Alexander, 2008). Findings suggest that inclusive sport for development programming does not mean there are not instances of normative heterosexism and homophobia. Therefore, inclusive sport programming and practices require a critical examination informed by diverse theories.

Common Methodology Across Inclusion Research

The existing research on inclusion in youth sport is predominantly qualitative, which would suggest the nascent and exploratory status of this area of study. Thus, it seems apropos to explore the dominant functional knowledge as the practical setting of sport may be developed beyond the current landscape of research. The qualitative methods employed by these studies include interviews (mostly), focus groups, field notes, observations, and some other art-based or culturally relevant strategies (e.g., talking circles). Although some were unclear, diverse methodologies were employed: participatory action research, case studies, ethnographies, phenomenology, queer and feminist research, and cultural praxis (Buelens et al., 2015; Kabetu et

al., 2021; Kochanek & Erickson, 2021; Oxford, 2018; Strachan et al., 2018; Trussell, 2020; Váľková, 2021). Of the few American qualitative studies, one specifically addressed factors that influenced participation. Cunningham & Warner (2019) examined individuals with disabilities participating in community programming and found organizational failures in retention and sustainability of participation. This finding indicates sport organizations may have a surface-level understanding of inclusion, yet an infrastructure of programming may be lacking. Of interest to this study, examining what inclusion means to US Sport NGBs and what suggestions are being offered to stakeholders would allow for an interpretation of the depth to which inclusion is considered across the NGB practices.

There are a few mixed methods studies as well as solely quantitative research that specifically examined inclusion. The mixed methods studies utilized case studies, program evaluations, and participatory action research projects (Doidge et al., 2020; Johns et al., 2014; Sandford et al., 2022). Mixed methods studies generally took place outside of the US, one American study was cross-sectional and examined whether recreational sport programs were providing inclusive recreational sport opportunities for children with disabilities (MacGregor et al., 2020). Findings indicated the critical role of a director position within the organization to fulfill the standards of providing an inclusive space for all children. Of interest to this study, the results highlight an important aspect (i.e., director position) that is helpful in supporting inclusion within a sport organization. Therefore, this information, whether US Sport NGBs have a distinct inclusion position, will be collected and inform the results of this study.

The quantitative studies again were primarily conducted outside of the US (e.g., Norway, Netherlands). Surveys were the most used method for collecting data (e.g., Säfvenbom et al., 2014; Van Yperen et al., 2021). An American quantitative study (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018)

involved evaluating a program created to discuss difficult topics in the sport environment (e.g., racial conflict, gender disparity). This program would develop into the RISE Program that has recently developed a coalition of sport leagues, educators, experts, athletes, and other prominent sport stakeholders (RISE, 2023). RISE has become a program that US Sport NGBs (e.g., USA Hockey) outsource for training and education around inclusion and inclusive strategies. To that effect, results of this study will indicate whether and to which companies US Sport NGBs are outsourcing their information.

Sport System

Within the system of youth sport, there are three subsystems that work together alongside the athlete to facilitate development across their experiences (Dorsch et al., 2023; see Appendix A). These three subsystems include the team system (i.e., coaches and peers), the family system (i.e., parents and siblings), and the environmental system (i.e., organizations, communities, and societies). Research on inclusion has primarily focused on the environmental system, followed by the team system. The studies on coaches in the team system surrounded pedagogical approaches, training, and other inclusive/cultural practices (Buelens et al., 2015; Riffi Acharki et al., 2021; Storm & Svedsen, 2022). Research involving athletes examined motivation and safety in sport spaces (Harwood et al., 2021; Kulick et al., 2019; Wynnyk & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2013). However, the focus of this study will be surrounding the environmental system, although the US Sport NGBs may offer suggestions to other stakeholders within the family and team systems.

At the environmental system level, research is focused on programming and access to resources (e.g., Kramers et al., 2021; Maher et al., 2022). There has also been an initial push toward examining policy enactment within sport organizations (Jeanes et al., 2018). Jeanes and colleagues (2018) found that translating policy into practice is difficult and may not always lead

to inclusion. Moreover, Waring and Mason (2010) found that developing policies to create opportunities does not automatically translate to inclusion. Thus, for the current study, policies of US Sport NGBs will be included within the data and critically analyzed.

Specific to the US, studies have examined recreational organizations providing accessible sporting opportunities for children with disabilities (MacGregor et al., 2020) and organizational factors that lead to retention of participants in disability programming (Cunningham & Warner, 2019). The cross-sectional study by MacGregor and colleagues (2020) found that a director position is critical to supporting inclusion within a sport organization. Another study in the US system of youth sport explored high school athletic directors' cultural praxis and found that they can identify issues but are not always comfortable addressing them (Kochanek & Erickson, 2021). These findings emphasize the need for a governing body and organizational support, financial or otherwise, to create a position that will focus solely on inclusion within their organizations. A specific solution provided by Cunningham & Warner (2019) to sustain participants with disabilities in their programming was to partner with more established entities. Currently, there are entities such as RISE, Athlete Ally, and the Inclusion Playbook that partner with sport organizations. Thus, this study will keep track of what entities US Sport NGBs outsource for training and development needs.

Sample

Inclusion research is being conducted across the globe, including within the US. There are some studies being completed in Brazil, India, Turkey, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Açikgöz et al., 2022; Philip et al., 2021; Válková, 2021; Wagstaff & Parker, 2020). However, the dominant body of literature is occurring within Europe, Scandinavia, and predominantly English-speaking countries (i.e., Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and US). Although the US is relatively

comparable with the number of studies being conducted by predominantly English-speaking countries, it is the content of these studies that separates America. US studies primarily focus on race or disability (e.g., Hextrum, 2020; MacGregor et al., 2020). Whereas Australia, Canada, and the UK focus on those aspects as well as gender, sexual orientation, underserved youth, and refugee or immigrant populations (e.g., Harwood et al., 2021; Middleton et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2019; Trussell, 2020). As the US may be requiring a better understanding of diversity within their own youth sport system, it seems a basic next step to explore who US Sport NGBs are including within their suggestions for stakeholders to promote inclusion.

A dominant aspect neglected by most of the literature spanning the globe was intersectionality. For example, studies examining underserved youth or disabilities held a sample of boys and rarely recruited solely girls or individuals who identify as non-binary. The only area explicitly examining intersectionality was research coming out of Australia surrounding the perceptions of racially diverse refugee girls participating in sport (Harwood et al., 2021; Luguetti et al., 2022). Of interest, this study will note the presence of, and information presented about intersectionality by US Sport NGBs. Moreover, there was rarely demographics reported to suggest diversity across race or sexual orientation within the inclusion research. However, there was an emphasis to include all children (Côté & Hancock, 2016; Riffi Acharki et al., 2021), where findings suggest policy creation plays a role in developing inclusive programming. Therefore, it would be critical to include how NGBs are showing representation of and including people, especially those that pertain to diverse demographic identities.

Inclusion Strategies

Practical implications have been suggested across research of inclusion in youth sport. These strategies range from the individual-, environmental-, community-, and organizational-

level across various stakeholders. At the individual-level, it is key to have individual champions and culture setters that are working throughout the sport context (Pink et al., 2020; Storr, 2022). Individuals should also be personally involved and affectively committed to building inclusion (Vertonghen et al., 2017), while the organization should be offering recognition and encouragement (Morgan & Parker, 2017; Storr, 2022). Empowerment, described as supporting an individual's ability to learn from their own experiences, was suggested as critical to developing all young people, especially those who may be marginalized (Buelens et al., 2015). It is also critical to become more understanding of others and their needs (Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2017). Broadly, there is limited suggestions for inclusive practices at the individual-level. However, there is more information on dyadic interactions that would support an inclusive environment.

There were several suggestions for inclusion at the environmental-level. A few studies suggested cultivating relationships across athletes as well as stakeholders across cultural groups or individuals (Crisp, 2020b; Haudenhuyse et al., 2014; Johns et al., 2014). Specifically, one study suggested mentoring as a way to connect athletes, which would support inclusion within the group (Wagstaff & Parker, 2020). Another suggestion for building relationships was to offer opportunities to share culture where youth may feel secure about their identities (Middleton et al., 2021) as well as feel cared for and respected by their peers and leaders (Strachan et al., 2018). Moreover, creating opportunities for intergroup contact through facilitating interactions and having the tough discussions would support cultivating relationships (Ekholm, 2019; Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018; Phillip et al., 2021).

Another suggested strategy within the environmental-level was to create an inclusive culture. Basic needs (Gjesdal & Hedenborg, 2021; Middleton et al., 2021) and a mastery climate

(Pink et al., 2020; Van Yperen et al., 2021) were suggested to be important for fostering an inclusive environment. More specific to inclusion of diverse athletes and stakeholders is to challenge the exclusionary norms of the culture (Kelly, 2012; Jeanes et al., 2019; Maher et al., 2022; Trussell, 2020; Válková, 2021) as well as address privileges and stereotypes of those participating in the sport space (Hextrum, 2020; Kingsley & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2015; Piedra, 2017). Findings also suggested changes to the activities provided within the youth sport context. Specifically, adapting activities, whether with local restrictions or rule modifications, based on the needs of the participants to support inclusivity (Açıkgöz et al., 2022; Côté & Hancock, 2016; Crisp, 2020a; Fox & Paradies, 2020; Sharpe et al., 2022). The idea of informing activities with diverse pedagogies was also discussed across multiple studies (Açıkgöz et al., 2022; Morgan & Parker, 2022; Riffi Acharki et al., 2021; Sandford et al., 2022; Wheaton & O'Loughlin, 2017). Overall, these findings suggest the importance of leaders, either coaches or administrators, when creating an inclusive environment within the youth sport context.

The community-level held a few suggestions for strategies, mainly building collaborations and bridging social capital. Collaborations were suggested to be made with more established entities when engaging with a targeted population or diverse participants (Cunningham & Warner, 2019). It is especially important to develop a collaboration with a member of any community to ensure the culture is respected, an accurate knowledge is shared (Storm & Svedsen, 2022; Thomson et al., 2010), and the program is of quality for the population (Kramers et al., 2021). Organizations can develop an inclusive culture by establishing a position within a community, particularly one that fits the needs and supports the community (Hassan et al., 2012). Creating and sustaining social capital led to relationships across diverse communities and supported long-term commitments to sport programming (Cunningham et al., 2020).

Another way to bridge social capital is through bridging individuals within a community as well as institutions, which is especially important with marginalized communities' participation in sport programming (Block & Gibbs, 2017). Additionally, one study suggested developing an infrastructure where youth can find funding through employment within sport organizations (Hermens et al., 2015). Although under researched compared to other levels, communities are an essential piece to the inclusion puzzle that organizations may oft overlook.

At the organizational-level, governance is essential but may be difficult as it requires an individualized approach (Thomson et al., 2010). Inclusive governance starts at hiring champions of inclusion and continues into training all employees (Doidge et al., 2020; MacGregor et al., 2020). Training should include interpersonal and community skills (e.g., building relationship, managing behaviors, teaching; Doidge et al., 2020). Guiding the development of critical skills in administrators and other stakeholders can further empower them to be agents of change while alleviating the burden on marginalized youth to teach their own leaders (Kochanek & Erickson, 2021). Training materials should be accessible to the entire organization (McConkey et al., 2012). Moreover, training resources and other initiatives should be evaluated to ensure accurate information is being shared (Luguetti et al., 2022; McConkey et al., 2021). In recognizing the importance of staff and resources that support organizational stakeholders' knowledge of relevant skills, the current study will record the specific employee roles and analyze the resources shared by US Sport NGBs.

A significant barrier to inclusion in youth sport pertains to the structure of the programming. Organizations need to examine the external processes outside of the programming itself (e.g., travel), to meet the target population where they are and truly create an inclusive program (Kelly, 2011). A systematic review examining inclusive settings of organized

community sport suggested a need for organizational capacity building (e.g., educated coaches, human resources, finances), which would afford the ability to develop an inclusive club structure (Klenk et al., 2019). Although structure is a critical barrier, further identifying constraints of the participants is essential to ensuring inclusion (Kabetu et al., 2021). This identification process would allow for actions to be put into place to remove constraints, for example decolonizing activities (Gurgis et al., 2022). Generally, policies can be implemented by organizations to ensure barriers are removed and effective inclusion practices can be prioritized. Policies, specifically at grassroot levels, can address barriers and target gaps in participation (Dalton et al., 2015). Participation or access to programming is one avenue for enhancing inclusion, another would be to provide safety for marginalized groups. Safeguarding and anti-discrimination policies should be developed and integrated throughout all levels of the organization (Kulick et al., 2019). It is also important to evaluate policies in practice as heteronormativity and homophobia may not be entirely removed from inclusive programming (Oxford, 2018). Therefore, the current study will ensure policy documents pertaining to anti-discrimination as well as inclusion will be critically analyzed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

A content analysis strategy was chosen as an appropriate methodology to answer the research questions. Content analysis (CA) is a research method that uses various types of data (e.g., verbal, visual, written) to systematically make inferences about and describe a specific phenomenon (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Content analyses have been conducted to understand organizations approaches to promoting diversity, improve policies, and review mission statements (Cunningham et al., 2009; Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012; Kalev et al., 2006). More specifically to this study, CA allowed for a survey of text and documents presented on US Sport NGB websites that discuss inclusion and inclusive practices.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) demonstrate three styles to conduct a CA - conventional, directed, and summative. A conventional CA is used to describe a phenomenon where limited theory exists to explain the phenomenon. The analysis process for this style uses an inductive coding process, where codes are further grouped into meaningful categories that explain the phenomenon. This style is valuable when researchers do not wish to impose a preconceived theory onto the data but instead gain information directly from the source. However, this style is not applicable when developing a theory. The second style, a directed CA, is used to validate or extend an existing theory. The analysis process for this style uses a deductive coding process, where categories are pre-identified before grouping information from the data source. This style is valuable when researchers would like to further understand the nuances of or justify a theory. However, this style does not consider the contextual relevance of the data. Finally, a summative CA is used to explore the usage of a word or specific content. The analysis process for this style uses either a manifest or latent coding process, where manifest refers to calculating the frequency of the word or content. Latent refers to interpreting the underlying meaning of a word or content.

This style can be unobtrusive but could limit researchers attending to the broader meaning of the word and content.

For this study, both the conventional and summative types of CA were used, which allowed for a balance of the conceptualization of the word inclusion and the broader expression of inclusion within the content of US Sport NGB websites. Conventional CA has been used to address communication of sport governing bodies (Manoli & Anagnostou, 2023), whereas summative CA has been used assess representations of inclusion and oppression (Sullivan & Ali, 2023). Summative CA, using both manifest and latent coding, was used to answer the first and second research question. Conventional CA was used to answer the third research question of this study. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) also highlight seven steps to conduct a CA, which guided the procedure of this study. These steps included: (a) form research questions, (b) select sample, (c) define categories, (d) outline coding process, (e) implement coding process, (f) determine trustworthiness, and (g) analyze results. The first step was addressed through the purpose of the study, while the remaining steps are further explained across the method section.

Sample

With the second step of a CA being to select a sample, US Sport NGB websites were chosen as a sample to both present the desired information and be contextually relevant. A recent study sampled English Sport NGBs and focused on their inclusive policies pertaining to LGBT+ equality (Spurdens & Bloyce, 2022). Results described the actions being taken by these governing bodies and emphasized areas of improvement within the sport system. Surveying US Sport NGB websites allowed for a description of inclusion and guidelines for inclusive practices for youth sport stakeholders. Therefore, US Sport NGB (hereafter referred to as NGB) websites were surveyed for this study, with 52 NGB websites included (e.g., USA Archery, USA

Racquetball, USA Wrestling; see Appendix A for a full list with URLs).

Data Collection

A three-step search strategy was used to find content, where the process included: (a) identifying sources of data, (b) searching for relevant information, and (c) selecting texts for analysis. Through a pilot study of two NGB websites, sources of data included were statements, policies, guidelines, plans, links, and resources. The process of searching for relevant information included three steps. First, the websites navigation bar was examined for a designated inclusion tab (diversity or equity would also be considered). If there was a designated tab, the relevant information was selected for analysis. If there was no designated tab, a second step involving a search across all tabs and the respective drop-down menus was conducted for relevant inclusion content. Moreover, if there was not a designated tab, the search bar was the third step used to find relevant information. If there was no search bar, that information was indicated in the data. Finally, texts were selected for analysis. Texts were included in the analysis when they described a NGBs statement and values of inclusion and suggested guidelines for stakeholders. Information that was not text-based (e.g., video workshops) was not included in the data for research question one and three. They were noted as links for further information. Therefore, data was collected through a search of each of the NGB websites.

Data Analysis

Steps three through five of conducting a CA reflected the data analysis process (i.e., define categories, outline coding process, and implement coding process). Six categories were defined to analyze data pertaining to the summative CA and the second research question (i.e., website location, core values, website pictures, type of content, outsourcing entity, and employee role). Website location and core values were included to represent the tenets of signaling theory,

observability and consistency respectfully (Connelly et al., 2011). Moreover, core values highlighted the depth of inclusion within the organization, whether or not NGBs held inclusion within their core values may be integral to creating change (Waring & Mason, 2010). Intersectionality was limited across sport research, where only two studies reported having a sample of girls that were not white (e.g., Luguetti et al., 2022). Thus, website pictures will be analyzed to explore representation of diversity across multiple levels. Cunningham and Warner (2019) suggested organizational factors that led to retention of athletes with disabilities was plans and policies, whereas Jeanes et al. (2018) suggest policies do not translate to increased inclusion. Thus, the type of content will record policies as well as more tangible guidelines, plans, and statements. Another resources for retention was outside partnerships (Cunningham & Warner, 2019). As sport entities can provide effective programming surrounding diversity and inclusion (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018), partnerships will be recorded. Finally, research suggests sport leaders may not feel comfortable addressing some inclusion issues (Kochanek & Erickson, 2021). Therefore, a dedicated employee role would be supportive and will be noted across NGBs (MacGregor et al., 2020).

The coding process included three phases. Phase one involved a latent coding of the summative CA and interpreting the underlying meaning of inclusion across NGBs. An abductive coding process was first deductively grouping words into one of the three tenets of inclusion (i.e., sense of belonging, equitable opportunities, and social justice). Another round of inductive analysis described these three tenets. Phase two conducted a summative CA and manifest coding which collected data across the aforementioned six categories. Each category was listed and described across each of the NGBs. After each of the categories were described a classification was awarded for the observability and consistency of each category. Tenets of signaling theory

(i.e., observability, consistency; Connelly et al., 2011) were used to deductively analyze the messaging of inclusion across NGB websites. Phase three conducted a final conventional CA and abductive coding process, where guidelines were first grouped by stakeholder (i.e., administrator, coach, peer, parent, sibling). Guidelines were then inductively coded for meaning.

The sixth step of conducting a CA is to determine trustworthiness of the data. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) seminal work suggests four criteria of trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Triangulation was used to ensure credibility, specifically data and environment triangulation (Stahl & King, 2020). Different sources of data were surveyed across one website (e.g., policies, guidelines). Different sport environments were surveyed (e.g., ice hockey, volleyball). Transferability with qualitative data requires a complete description of the phenomenon that would allow for a transfer to another context (Stahl & King, 2020). This criterion was met through searching for in addition to analyzing multiple descriptions and strategies to promote inclusion. Reflexive auditing was used to ensure dependability of the study (Stahl & King, 2020). To ensure the clarity of the codes, categories, and themes created through the coding process, a critical friend (i.e., a colleague who is a Black man) was invited to interrogate the descriptions and groupings (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Lastly, the summative CA process of manifest coding provided confirmability of results as an objective measure of inclusion across NGB websites. The final step in the CA process was to analyze results.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Research Question 1 – Definition of Inclusion (by NGBs)

Across the 52 US Sport NGB websites, 27 websites had statements of inclusion provided whereas 25 websites did not have any statement recorded. For a detailed list of each of the descriptions of inclusion on NGB websites see Appendix B. There are three specific patterns within the data that are of interest, the popularity of the sport, the affiliation with Team USA, and the individual versus team sport dynamic. Some of the most popular American sports (i.e., baseball, basketball, football, golf; Project Play, 2022) did not have any statements of inclusion. Participation rates for these popular sports may be high or diverse populations may be already present, which may put less pressure on NGBs to require fostering inclusion. Additionally, there are 22 NGB websites that are housed under the USOPC Team USA website. 15 of those NGBs did not have a statement of inclusion while only seven did. The statement of inclusion provided by the Team USA website suggests maintaining an inclusive culture and embracing differences (Team USA, 2023), which provides a limited definition for inclusion. Finally, when examining the differences between individual, coactive team, and interdependent team sports, there was a balanced split between NGB websites that did and those that did not have a statement.

Thematic Analysis

The summative latent content analysis allowed for three themes to be created based on three tenets of inclusion: (a) sense of belonging, (b) equitable opportunities, and (c) social justice (Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2017). Where sense of belonging refers to the affective component of inclusion, bringing people into a space where they feel welcome and respected. Equitable opportunities refers to the structural component, building infrastructure for participation in sport. Finally, social justice refers to the social component of acknowledging the systems of

oppression and which individuals hold power and privilege within the system. Through the deductive data analysis process, there was overlap between these themes. Thus, three additional themes were included, a combination of belonging and equitable opportunities, belonging and social justice, as well as social justice and equitable opportunities (see Table 1 for themes and categories).

Table 1 Inclusion Statement Themes

Theme	Category	Description	Excerpt from Website
Sense of Belonging	Respectful	An inclusive environment values differences, treats individuals with dignity, and is free from discrimination.	The American Canoe Association strives to be an association in which participants, members, guests, and the organizations they represent, feel a sense of belonging and are treated with dignity and respect. USA Triathlon is committed to fostering a community that is welcoming to all individuals . Triathlon is a sport for everyone and we want to ensure that every athlete feels welcome in all areas of the sport. USA Diving will cultivate and support an inclusive culture and environment, through programming and education, where all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, nationality, age, socioeconomic background, financial means, marital and family status/makeup, physical ability, health status, neurodiversity, ancestry, and citizenship are supported and able to succeed in the sport of diving.
	Welcoming	Inclusion is making all individuals feel welcome, comfortable, and safe regardless of their diverse identities.	
	Supportive	Inclusivity is celebrating diversity and supporting all individuals in their effort to participate, succeed, and advance through sport.	

Table 1 (cont'd)

Theme	Category	Description	Excerpt from Website
Equitable Opportunities	Access	Inclusivity is providing access to programming for all individuals regardless of their identity at both organizational and participant levels. Intentional opportunities for growth and access are required (e.g., accessibility of websites).	Diversity and inclusion are fundamental to US Equestrian's vision: To bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible. We recognize the need to achieve increased diversity and that our growth and success depends on the inclusion of all people. We are committed to providing access and opportunity for people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, veterans and active military personnel, people with disabilities, and those of all ages, religions, ancestries, genders and gender identities, and economic status to harness the synergy of diverse talents.
	Resources	An inclusive environment creates partnerships with relevant organizations and communities to support outreach efforts that individualize resources and engagement.	USA Swimming is committed to a culture of inclusion and opportunity. We strive to create equity by providing resources specific to the needs of our members
	Removal of Barriers	Inclusion is removing barriers to allow for participation (e.g., lowering programming costs).	USA Ultimate is lowering financial barriers to participation in ultimate. Why is it important? We believe financial constraints should not impede participation in the sport of ultimate at any level. How We're Doing It: Offering membership and event scholarships; Raising money and awareness through fundraising campaigns..

Table 1 (cont'd)

Theme	Category	Description	Excerpt from Website
Social Justice	Partnerships	Inclusion requires partnering with groups outside of the sport system that represent diverse identities (e.g., Native American Advisory Council, RISE).	Lacrosse is a sport with deep spiritual roots, grounded in Native American culture. Natives believe that lacrosse was gifted to them by the Creator, with purposes that extend beyond just fun and recreation. To more fully understand, embrace, and honor that tradition, USA Lacrosse draws on the expertise provided by its Native American Advisory Council.
	Bias	An inclusive environment requires members of the organization to decrease personal or systemic bias (e.g., implicit bias training, checking assumptions of programs/standards).	USA Archery provides diversity training to its directors, committees, staff and membership to help recognize implicit bias based on personal characteristics and/or perceptions to develop a deeper understanding of our individual differences to create a more inclusive organization.
Social Justice & Sense of Belonging	Representation	Inclusion means showing representation of the diverse identities that are welcome across all levels of the sport system (e.g., participants, leadership).	US Figure Skating will develop measures to increase BIPOC representation within the organization's leadership and enhance BIPOC visibility across US figure skating media and marketing channels. An additional focus will be placed on the recruitment and training of BIPOC judges/officials.
Sense of Belonging & Equitable Opportunities	Community	An inclusive environment requires the fostering and strengthening of community that is representative of US diversity through education and connection (e.g., sharing stories) which leads to change.	USA Curling is committed to fostering a community that embodies the spirit of curling in every way.

Sense of Belonging. The first theme, sense of belonging, described three separate categories: (a) welcoming, (b) respectful, and (c) supportive. Welcoming meant that inclusion is defined as making all individuals feel welcome, comfortable, and safe regardless of their diverse identities. Respectful meant an inclusive environment values differences, treats individuals with dignity, and is free from discrimination. Whereas supportive meant inclusivity is celebrating diversity and supporting all individuals in their effort to participate, succeed, and advance through sport.

Equitable Opportunities. Equitable opportunities also held three separate categories (i.e., access, resources, barriers). The first was access, which defined inclusivity as providing access to programming for all individuals regardless of their identity at both organizational and participant levels. Moreover, intentional opportunities for growth and access are required (e.g., accessibility of websites). The second category of equitable opportunities was resources, which meant that an inclusive environment creates partnerships with relevant organizations and communities to support outreach efforts and individualize resources and engagement. Finally, barriers was suggested as the third category of equitable opportunities stating that inclusion means removing barriers to allow for participation (e.g., lowering programming costs).

Social Justice. The third theme of social justice defined two separate categories (i.e., partners and bias). The first category, partners, described inclusion as requiring partnerships with groups outside of the sport system that represent diverse identities (e.g., Native American Advisory Council, RISE). Bias, the second category of the social justice theme, suggests an inclusive environment requires members of the organization to decrease personal and systemic bias (e.g., implicit bias training, checking assumptions of program standards).

Connections Between Themes. At the intersection of the two themes sense of belonging and equitable opportunities, lands the idea of community. Community was suggested to be integral to the definition of inclusion as an inclusive environment requires the fostering and strengthening of community, that is representative of US diversity. Building community can be done through education and connection (e.g., sharing stories), and lead to change. At the intersection of sense of belonging and social justice, there is one category - representation. Inclusion means showing representation of the diverse identities that are welcome across all levels of the sport system (e.g., participants and organizational leadership). However, there was no distinct information provided by the inclusion statements that described the intersection of equitable opportunities and social justice. As this is exploratory work, it is interesting to note that there might not be anything US Sport NGBs are currently doing to increase equitable opportunities through social justice actions in sport. This lack of information will be further addressed in the discussion section.

Research Question 2 – Website Information on Inclusion

Six categories of information were surveyed across the 52 US Sport NGB websites (i.e., website location, core values, employee roles, outsourcing entities, representation of identities, website content). An in-depth look at this data can be found in Appendix C.

Website Location

For the website location where users could find information about inclusion, 10 NGB websites had a link on the main page whether within the upper or lower navigation bar. 13 NGB websites had their inclusion page in a drop-down menu. Inclusion content for nine NGB websites was only searchable through the search bar, whereas 19 NGB websites did not have a designated space for inclusion content. When addressing the observability tenant of signaling theory

(Connelly et al., 2011), 10 NGB websites had an observable signal (via the accessibility of an inclusion page) that inclusion is addressed by the NGB. However, the signals of 19 NGB websites were unobservable to the user. Additionally, 22 NGB websites were only observable if a user was intentionally searching for the signal. As this category was discrete, the tenet of consistency was not assessed.

Core Values

For the category of core values, seven NGBs had inclusion listed as a core value on their website (i.e., American Canoe, USA Fencing, USA Hockey, USA Rugby, USA Squash, USA Swimming, USA Triathlon). Five NGBs used the word inclusion to describe another value (e.g., respect), which were USA Archery, USA Gymnastics, USA Ultimate, USA Volleyball, and USA Wrestling. One NGB (USA Baseball) had diversity listed as a value and four NGBs described DEI within their mission and vision, not as a value (i.e., USA Badminton, USA Boxing, US Sailing, and USA Weightlifting). 26 NGBs did not list inclusion as a core value, whereas eight NGBs did not have a dedicated mission, vision, and values page. In regard to observability, there were 17 instances where DEI was observable in the mission, vision, and values presented on NGB websites. However, only 12 included the word inclusion. 34 NGB websites did not offer signals to the emphasis of inclusion (via intentional core values) within their organization. As this was another discrete variable, consistency was not addressed.

Employee Roles

Whether or not an NGB had an intentional employee role for inclusion was noted (e.g., diversity officer or a director of DEI). Seven NGBs have a director position (e.g., American Canoe, US Figure Skating, USA Hockey, USA Lacrosse, USA Swimming, USA Synchro, and USA Ultimate). 22 NGBs had a DEI committee listed on their website. Whereas 27 NGBs were

unclear whether they had this position or a committee, although nothing was listed on the board of directors page on their websites. To address observability, 29 NGBs had clear observable signals that they were prioritizing inclusion within their own organizational. Whereas 27 NGBs did not send any observable signals that this prioritization was occurring at the organizational-level. For consistency, American Canoe, USA Swimming, USA Synchro, and USA Ultimate had both a director as well as a committee for inclusion. Therefore, these four NGBs would be showing a consistent emphasis on fostering inclusion within their organization.

Outsourcing Entities

Whether or not NGBs had partnerships with an outsourcing entity that may provide any inclusion training, information, or resources was recorded (as accessible on the website). Six NGBs had some affiliation with RISE (i.e., USA Cycling, US Diving, USA Hockey, US Sailing, USA Volleyball, and USA Weightlifting). Three NGBs were connected to Athlete Ally (i.e., USA Rugby, US Sailing, and USA Wrestling). Three NGBs were connected to the Inclusion Playbook (e.g., USA Archery, US Sailing, and USA Volleyball). Three NGBs were connected to True Sport (i.e., USA Judo, USA Karate, and USA Softball). Only one NGB was connected to Move United (USA Archery). Seven NGBs had no partnerships demonstrated and 44 of the NGBs had Safe Sport partnerships clearly identifiable on their website. When assessing the observability of this category, Safe Sport is an emphasized and mandated partnership that is clearly observable across NGBs. However, the inclusion-based entities are unobservable by many NGBs. Based on this lack of transparency, it is possible that NGBs are creating their own information about inclusion or may not be clearly identifying their partnerships with other entities. Three NGBs showed consistency within this category by showing partnerships with multiple entities. USA Archery had connected with Move United and the Inclusion Playbook.

USA Volleyball had connected with RISE and the Inclusion Playbook. US Sailing had connected with RISE, Athlete Ally, and the Inclusion Playbook.

Representation of Identities

Representation of identities was recorded based on the pictures of people on the NGB website. Three specific website locations were examined, all were outside of the DEI page to ensure diverse identities were being included across the website. The main page of the website, the team pictures, and the board of director headshots were all recorded to assess which identities would feel included when looking at the NGB website. Identities of women, diverse races, and disability were collected. Women were considered as any feminine presenting individuals, however there was no explicit representation of transgender or gender nonconforming individuals across the NGB websites. Races were grouped as Asian, Black, or more generally people of colour (POC) when race was hard to distinguish.

On the main page, women were represented on every NGB website except for USA Baseball, USA Bobsled and Skeleton, USA Diving, and USA Ski and Snowboarding. However, some of these sports require a lot of equipment, which may impact the visual representation of diverse athletes. People of diverse races were represented on 43 main pages the NGB websites; USA Biathlon, US Congress of Bowling, USA Curling, USA Luge, USA Pentathlon, USA Ski and Snowboarding, USA Shooting, USA Swimming, and US Water Skiing did not have racial diversity represented. Only two main pages of NGB websites included visual representations of athletes with disabilities (i.e., USA Badminton and USA Triathlon).

For team pictures, 18 NGB websites did not have any pictures representing the diverse identities of their teams. Four NGB websites showed women but not diverse racial identities (i.e., USA Biathlon, USA Luge, US Sailing, and USA Shooting). 25 NGB websites showed both

women and racially diverse athletes. USA Hockey and USA Synchro websites had pictures of women, racial diversity, and athletes with disabilities.

For board of director headshots, 28 NGB websites did not post any pictures of the employees. Three NGB websites had women represented on their board of directors (i.e., USA Biathlon, USA Sailing, and USA Ultimate). 19 NGB websites had both gender and racial diversity represented. Additionally, it was unclear if any of the board of directors represented any identities of disability.

Women are represented on every NGB website and racial diversity is represented on more than half of the NGB websites. There were 32 websites with Black representation, 30 websites with POC representation, on 26 websites with Asian representation. However, only five NGB websites had representation of athletes with disabilities. To address observability, the main page was the most observable location for representation. All but four NGB websites had a main page where at least one typically marginalized identity in sport could see themselves represented. The least observable was the board of directors' headshots; whether the board of directors held diverse identities was unobservable on 28 NGB websites. Pictures of teams was more observable than board of directors but less than the main page, where 18 NGB websites were unobservable. Across these three locations, women were the most observably included group, race was the second most observably included group, and disability had minimal representation. There was no explicit identification of queer individuals across these three locations.

Consistency was analyzed for this category to see whether representation of gender, race, and disability were consistent across all three locations. Four groupings were created to indicate the level of consistency. The first group had gender and race represented across all three locations on the website. The second group had consistent gender and race represented across

two of the website locations. The third group had gender consistent across three locations of the website. For the last group, only the main page showed representation of typically marginalized identities in sport. Of note, disability was inconsistent across every NGB website.

Website Content

The types of content that inclusion was used to share information on the NGB websites was noted. Statements of inclusion, resources created by the NGB, links to more information, specific guidelines for stakeholders, policies about participation, and strategic plans were surveyed across each NGB website. 11 NGB websites had no content related to inclusion (i.e., USA Badminton, USA Baseball, USA Bobsled & Skeleton, USA Football, USA Golf, USA Judo, USA Luge, US Pentathlon, and USA Soccer). Five NGBs only had statements on their website (i.e., USA Pickleball, USA Skateboarding, USA Softball, USA Squash, and USA Water Polo). Six NGBs only had policies, primarily transgender eligibility policies (i.e., USA Basketball, USA Biathlon, USA Boxing, USA Fencing, USA Shooting, and USA Track & Field). Three NGBs only had a strategic DEI plan (i.e., USA Table Tennis, USA Taekwondo, and USA Team Handball).

Across all the NGB websites, 27 websites had statements. The information about statements was analyzed in the results of research question one. Only six NGB websites provided resources that were created and branded for that specific NGB (i.e., USA Archery, US Congress of Bowling, USA Gymnastics, USA Lacrosse, USA Hockey, and USA Synchro). However, 16 NGB websites did provide numerous links to external resources. Only 13 NGBs provided specific guidelines for stakeholders to foster inclusion. More information on these guidelines will be analyzed in the results of research question three. 21 NGB websites had accessible policies

related to transgender eligibility inclusion and anti-discrimination. Finally, 12 NGBs have developed and shared strategic plans on their website.

Observability & Consistency

When assessing observability within categories, 41 NGB websites had observable signals of inclusion content whereas 11 NGBs did not send signals to the user that there was any content about inclusion on their websites. To address consistency within categories, we looked across the NGB websites for how often content or how consistent content about inclusion was present. 14 NGB websites only provided one form of content, primarily statements. 10 NGB websites provided two types of content. Three NGB websites shared three types of content. Four NGBs had four types of content (i.e., USA Curling, USA Cycling, US Sailing, and USA Synchro). Three NGBs had five types of content (i.e., USA Hockey, USA Ultimate, and USA Weightlifting) and USA Lacrosse had all six types of content shared. Thus, websites that shared at least four types of content were considered the most consistent.

Observability and consistency were also addressed for data within each of the NGB websites by classifying how observable or consistent the website was (see Table 2 for a classification of each category). Each NGB was classified based on observability and further consistency across all the six categories. There were seven items, with information on representation of identities being separated into two items; representation of groups addressed observability and location of images addressed consistency.

Two items specifically address observability, the website location and representation of groups. These items were more discrete and either were present or not in the websites. The first item, website location, NGBs were *extremely observable* if the DEI page was present on the navigation bar, *very observable* if present on lower navigation bar, *moderately observable* if

present on the main page, *slightly observable* if present in a drop down menu, *low observability* if a search bar was used to locate the page, and *unobservable* if there was no designated page for inclusion on the website. Representation of groups was classified based on how many diverse identities would see themselves represented (*extremely observable* – racial diversity, gender diversity, disability; *very observable* – racial & gender diversity, *moderately* – limited racial diversity & gender diversity, *slightly observable* – one race outside of white & gender diversity, *low observability* – gender diversity, and *unobservable*).

The remaining five items were classified based on consistency as these items suggested multiple instances where signals could be sent in various forms. However, if there was no data for an item it was categorized as unobservable. Location of images was classified as *extremely consistent* when multiple identities were present across three areas of the websites (i.e., main page, team photos, board of directors headshots), *very consistent* meant multiple locations with multiple identities, *moderately consistent* meant multiple locations with limited identities, *slightly consistent* meant all locations but only one identity, and *low consistency* meant multiple identities in one location. Type of content was classified based on how many different types were present (*extremely consistent* – five or six types, *very consistent* – four types, *moderately consistent* – three types, *slightly consistent* – two types, *low consistency* – one type). Outsourcing entities was also classified based on how many partnerships were highlighted on the website (*extremely consistent* – five or six partners, *very consistent* – four partners, *moderately consistent* – three partners, *slightly consistent* – two partners, *low consistency* – one partner). For employee roles, NGBs were classified based on the various positions focused on inclusion (*extremely consistent* – both director and committee, *low consistency* – only director or committee). Finally core values classified NGBs by how their values addressed inclusion (*extremely consistent* –

inclusion was a core value, *very consistent* – inclusion was used to describe another value, *slightly consistent* – diversity or equity was a value, *low consistency* – described in mission but not a value).

Across the items, some NGB websites seem to be more observable and consistent than others. At the top, nine NGB websites are moderately to extremely observable and only show one item that is unobservable (i.e., USA Cycling, USA Hockey, USA Lacrosse, USA Rugby, USA Swimming, USA Triathlon, USA Ultimate, USA Volleyball, USA Wrestling). These nine NGBs show more observability than consistency, where extremely consistent is rarely classified across all the items. However, there is a range of low consistency to very consistent classifications.

On the other side of the spectrum, 13 NGB websites were the least observable and consistent (i.e., USA Baseball, USA Biathlon, USA Bobsled & Skeleton, US Congress of Bowling, USA Boxing, US Equestrian, USA Football, USA Golf, USA Luge, US Modern Pentathlon, US Roller Sports, USA Speedskating, and USA Water Skiing). These 13 NGBs were primarily unobservable to slightly observable (four instances of very/moderately observable). Yet, this group still held more observable items than consistent. The majority of items were classified as unobservable all together or slightly consistent (four instances of very/moderately consistent). Therefore, there are some NGBs that have more observable signals and provide more consistent information to youth sport stakeholder user. However, there seems to be a general inconsistency with the signals of inclusion across the NGB websites. Thus, examining the signals of inclusion across each of the NGB websites suggests an inconsistency on a surface-level and requires a deeper evaluation of the internal practices for each NGB to ensure the promotion of inclusion is consistent rather than performative.

Table 2 Observability & Consistency of Inclusion within US Sport National Governing Body (NGB) Websites

NGB	Website Location*	Representation of Groups*	Location of Images**	Website Content**	Outsourcing Entities**	Employee Roles*	Core Values*
Archery	Slightly	Slightly	Low	Slightly	Slightly	Low	Very
Badminton	Unobservable	Very	Extremely	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Low
Baseball	Unobservable	Low	Moderately	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Slightly
Basketball	Low	Slightly	Extremely	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Biathlon	Low	Low	Slightly	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Bobsled and Skeleton	Low	Moderately	Moderately	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Bowling Congress	Low	Low	Unobservable	Slightly	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Boxing	Unobservable	Moderately	Low	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Slightly
Canoe	Slightly	Moderately	Low	Slightly	Unobservable	Extremely	Extremely
Curling	Slightly	Low	Unobservable	Moderately	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Cycling	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Moderately	Low	Low	Unobservable
Diving	Slightly	Moderately	Moderately	Slightly	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable
Equestrian	Slightly	Slightly	Low	Slightly	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Fencing	Low	Slightly	Low	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Extremely
Field Hockey	Low	Moderately	Extremely	Slightly	Unobservable	Low	Extremely
Figure Skating	Slightly	Very	Extremely	Slightly	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Football	Unobservable	Slightly	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Golf	Unobservable	Moderately	Very	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Gymnastics	Unobservable	Very	Extremely	Slightly	Unobservable	Unobservable	Very

Table 2 (cont'd)

NGB	Website Location*	Representation of Groups*	Location of Images**	Website Content**	Outsourcing Entities**	Employee Roles*	Core Values*
Hockey	Extremely	Moderately	Very	Very	Low	Low	Unobservable
Judo	Unobservable	Moderately	Very	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable
Karate	Slightly	Very	Very	Slightly	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable
Lacrosse	Moderately	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Luge	Unobservable	Low	Slightly	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Pentathlon	Unobservable	Very	Moderately	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Pickleball	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Racquetball	Unobservable	Moderately	Extremely	Slightly	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Roller Sports (Pan American)	Low	Slightly	Low	Slightly	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Rowing	Slightly	Moderately	Very Consistent	Moderately	Unobservable	Low Consistency	Unobservable
Rugby (Rugby Sevens)	Slightly	Very	Very	Moderately	Low	Low	Extremely
Sailing	Slightly	Moderately	Moderately	Very	Moderately	Low	Low
Shooting	Unobservable	Moderately	Moderately	Moderately	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Skateboarding	Unobservable	Slightly	Very	Low	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Ski and Snowboard	Moderately	Slightly	Low	Slightly	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Soccer	Unobservable	Moderately	Extremely	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Softball	Unobservable	Very	Very	Low	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable

Table 2 (cont'd)

NGB	Website Location*	Representation of Groups*	Location of Images**	Website Content**	Outsourcing Entities**	Employee Roles*	Core Values*
Speedskating	Unobservable	Slightly	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Squash	Unobservable	Very	Extremely	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Extremely
Swimming	Moderately	Very	Very	Slightly	Unobservable	Extremely	Extremely
Synchro	Very	Moderately	Very	Moderately	Unobservable	Extremely	Unobservable
Table Tennis	Low	Very	Extremely	Extremely	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Taekwondo	Unobservable	Very	Very	Extremely	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Team Handball	Low	Very	Very	Extremely	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Tennis	Very	Slightly	Low	Slightly	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Track & Field	Unobservable	Moderately	Very	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable
Triathlon	Slightly	Very	Very	Moderately	Unobservable	Low	Extremely
Ultimate	Very	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Unobservable	Extremely	Very
Volleyball	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Moderately	Slightly	Low	Very
Water Polo	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely	Low	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Water Ski	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable	Unobservable	Unobservable	Low	Unobservable
Weightlifting	Slightly	Slightly	Low	Very	Low	Low	Low
Wrestling	Very	Moderately	Extremely	Moderately	Low	Low	Very

* indicates classification of observability

**indicates classification of consistency

Research Question 3 – Inclusion Guidelines Suggested by NGBs

Across the 52 US Sport NGBs, 13 had provided any guidelines on their websites. Only 25 percent of NGBs provided at least one instance of suggested guidelines (see Table 3 for themes and categories). More specifically, nine NGBs had guidelines for stakeholders (i.e., USA Curling, USA Gymnastics, USA Hockey, USA Lacrosse, USA Synchro, USA Triathlon, USA Ultimate, USA Volleyball, and USA Weightlifting). Four NGBs shared DEI committee responsibilities (i.e., USA Archery, American Canoe, USA Cycling, and USA Diving). However, the majority of NGBs who offered guidelines did not go into details or provide nuanced guidelines. Except for USA Hockey and Lacrosse, where professionally branded reports were developed, and guidelines were tailored to specific stakeholder actions. For example, USA Hockey provided a clear guideline for how organisations can begin to build an emphasis of DEI within their organization. Whereas USA Lacrosse clearly identified strategies for developing urban programs, for coaching, as well as tips for parents when engaging in conversations about diversity and inclusion. One specific resource that was the same although rebranded for both USA Hockey and Lacrosse was how to develop a DEI statement. Of interest, these two NGBs provide a considerable amount of information and guidance despite (or in spite) of the problematic cultures around these two sports (MacDonald, 2014; White, 2018). Moreover, USA Lacrosse had every subsystem of the Dorsch et al. (2023) model accounted for. Whereas USA Hockey presented primarily strategies for administrators, although the strategies were detailed and scaffolded organizations development of inclusion. Of note, USA Ultimate was vague in their guidelines and was the least organization centred. Therefore, NGB websites were focused substantially on the administrator stakeholder and the organization-level when suggesting guidelines over any other stakeholder or subsystem seen in the Dorsch et al. (2023) model.

Table 3 Stakeholder Inclusion Guidelines Within Subsystems of Youth Sport

Subsystem	Stakeholder	Category	Description
Environmental	Administrator	Build a Sense of Community	Administrators should build a community creating intentional programs and opportunities for gaining input from community members.
		Show Representation	Administrators should survey demographics, recruit diverse candidates, and celebrate the diverse cultures of members.
		Tailor Practices, Policies, and Initiatives	Administrators should review their organizational practices to ensure policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive.
		Provide Opportunities for Inclusion	Administrators should prepare educational opportunities for staff and create explicit committee to support accommodations for athletes.
		Create Effective Messaging and Communication	Administrators should ensure messaging is inclusive and communication is accessible regardless of disability or language.
Team	Coaches	Support Autonomy	Coaches can support autonomy by keeping athletes involved, asking how the athlete needs support, providing choice, checking in, and modifying goals.
		Support Competence	Coaches can support competence by increasing opportunities for engagement, accommodations and accountability, outlining expectations, and providing constructive and positive instruction that is understood by the athlete.
		Support Relatedness	Coaches can support relatedness by matching athletes with people they feel comfortable around and facilitating social opportunities.

Table 3 (cont'd)

Subsystem	Stakeholder	Category	Description
		Show Unity with Athletes	Coaches can be united with their diverse players by understanding and discussing personal biases, managing the complicated organizational requirements of participation, elevating voices of marginalized identities, recruiting and coaching diverse identities, and supporting individual needs (e.g., triggers, sensory, cues for regulation).
	Peer/Teammate	Lead By Example	Peers can be a spirit captain.
Family	Parent	Perceive Own Bias	Parents can be perceptive of their own shortcomings and keep competition in perspective.
		Reinforce Inclusive Behaviour	Parents can reinforce inclusive behaviour through leading by example, acknowledging teachable moments, and select respectable climates.
	Sibling	None	None

Athlete Guidelines

Only one NGB, USA Ultimate, suggested a guideline for athletes. Where athletes are encouraged to share their stories with their community.

Team Subsystem Guidelines

There are two stakeholders within the team subsystem (i.e., coaches and peers; Dorsch et al., 2023). USA Ultimate was again the only NGB to provide a guideline for the peer or teammates stakeholder. The guideline was to lead by being a spirit captain, which is reference to the spirit guide and assessment tool USA Ultimate has devised.

Coaches were provided guidelines by four NGBs (i.e., USA Gymnastics, USA Lacrosse, USA Synchro, and USA Ultimate). There were four categories suggested by the guidelines presented on the NGB websites: autonomy, competence, relatedness, and unity. Although these

categories resemble basic needs (Ryan & Deci, 2008), unity may be the key to inclusive coaching. Coaches can support autonomy by keeping athletes involved and asking how the athlete needs support. Coaches can also continue providing opportunities for choice to their athletes. Moreover, coaches can check in with athletes and modify goals to the needs of the athletes. Coaches can support competence by increasing opportunities for engagement, accommodations, and accountability. Clearly outlining expectations will support competence as well. Additionally, competence can be supported by providing instruction that is constructive and positive that is clearly understood by the athletes. Coaches can support relatedness by matching athletes with people they feel comfortable around and facilitating social opportunities. Coaches can be united with their diverse players by understanding and discussing their own personal biases. By managing the complicated organizational requirements of participation for diverse athletes, coaches can show they are united with their athletes' needs. It is also important to recruit diverse athletes and elevate voices of marginalized identities. Finally, coaches can learn about and support individual needs (e.g., emotional triggers, sensory overload, cues for regulation).

Family Subsystem Guidelines

There are two stakeholders within the family subsystem, the parent and the sibling of the athlete (Dorsch et al., 2023). There were no guidelines provided by any NGBs to address the stakeholder of siblings. Only USA Lacrosse suggested guidelines for parents. USA Lacrosse suggested that parents can be perceptive of their own shortcomings and keep competition in perspective. Parents can also reinforce inclusive behavior through leading by example, acknowledging teachable moments, and selecting respectable climates for athletes' participation.

These guidelines suggest that parents need to be able to perceive and reinforce what inclusion is and what it should look like.

Environmental Subsystem Guidelines

NGBs suggested the majority of guidelines for the stakeholder of administrator, who is situated within the organizational level of the environmental subsystem (Dorsch et al., 2023). There were five categories for administrator guidelines: vague statements for developing practices, policies, and initiatives, sense of community, representation, opportunities for inclusion, and messaging and communication. The first category reflected guidelines suggested by NGBs for administrators that were vague in nature but pertained to internal systems. Such as, to create and implement practices, to recommend best practices, to review practices and policies for harassment, to implement policies that promote inclusive culture, to create change by prioritizing effective policies and programs, to monitor progress of efforts and initiatives, to align plans and initiatives. A few vague suggestions were to increase resources such as availability of training and resources, training for staff, and strategic partnerships. These were all suggested guidelines to consider the practices, policies, programs, and plans of a specific organization.

The second category, a sense of community, offered suggestions such as gain input from community members whether internal to the organization, external to the community of members, or generally external community members. NGBs also suggested designing and delivering programs for specific communities to increase the long-term engagement of that community. Another suggestion was to build a sense of community by sharing symbols that invite diverse identities into a space (e.g., pride flags). It was also noted to be important to share resources with the community.

The third category was representation, which were guidelines for increasing representation of diverse identities within an organization. NGBs suggested conducting a demographics survey of membership, whether athlete participants or organizational leadership. There was a host of guidelines stating the importance of increasing representation in leadership roles. For example, USA Hockey stated “The hiring process should be consistent and clearly defined to all involved.” Another guideline was to identify needs that would differ across identities. Moreover, to recognize diverse staff and cultures by celebrating them.

Opportunities for inclusion, the fourth category, discusses key actions to ensure inclusion is effectively being fostered within the organization. It is important to prepare presentations and discussions for board meetings. Creating a committee or task force is a key first step. Supporting social opportunities for organizations and teams to bond was also important. Finally, making sure accommodations are offered to all athletes based on their identities and needs.

The final category was messaging and communication, where NGBs suggested offering multi language documents. Other strategies included: ensuring messaging is inclusive on websites and social media, using inclusive language, and creating a code of conduct.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This study addressed three research questions: (a) how is inclusion defined by US Sport NGBs, (b) how do US Sport NGBs demonstrate they are currently working on inclusion through their websites, and (c) what guidelines do US Sport NGBs suggest for youth sport stakeholders. For research question one, the main finding highlighted that statements of inclusion presented on NGB websites define inclusion as a sense of belonging and equitable opportunities. However, NGB websites rarely indicated social justice in their statements of inclusion. Therefore, acknowledging social justice when prioritizing inclusion is an area that needs support across US Sport NGBs.

The main finding for research question two suggests that NGB websites are sending signals about inclusion, as the majority have some form of observable signal (e.g., statement). However, the consistency of those signals is vastly different across NGB websites. This difference guided an assessment of criteria and a creation of a cumulative score of inclusion for NGB websites. The criteria generated in this study served as an initial understanding of inclusion across NGB websites. Future directions would be to examine additional categories (e.g., social justice initiatives, training modules) that could further develop into standards of inclusion for each NGB website that move beyond performative gestures.

For research question three, US Sport NGB websites provided guidelines primarily for the administrator stakeholder. Limited suggestions were found for other stakeholders, such as coaches, parents, siblings, and peers/teammates. Across these guidelines, there were instances of consistency with the themes assessed for the statements of inclusion (i.e., belonging, opportunities, social justice). However, some of the guidelines were also vague and unclear as to how to implement specific actions. Table 4 provides a comparison of findings from this study

and past research regarding inclusive guidelines for stakeholders. Current findings suggest NGBs have a handle on fostering belonging and providing equitable opportunities (e.g., support basic needs, create policies to increase access to participation). However, comparisons to past research suggests guidelines to promote social justice were absent from the current study (e.g., decolonize activities, address privilege, monitor homophobic cultures). Future research would be to create guides for addressing social justice in sport organizations and develop step-by-step manuals to disseminate information with DEI committees and directors of sport organizations.

Table 4 Comparison between Guideline Findings and Past Research

Category of Practice	Past Research	Current Guideline Finding
Individual	Be a culture setter (Pink et al., 2020; Storr, 2022)	Peer/Teammate - Lead by example: Peers can be a spirit captain. Parent - reinforce inclusive behaviour through leading by example, acknowledging teachable moments, and select respectable climates
	Commit to inclusion (Vertonghen et al., 2017)	Parent - be perceptive of their own shortcomings and keep competition in perspective Coach - be united with their diverse players by understanding and discussing personal biases
	Understand the needs and accommodations (Açikgöz et al., 2022; Côté & Hancock, 2016; Crisp, 2020a; Fox & Paradies, 2020; Sharpe et al., 2022; Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2017)	Admin - ensure messaging is inclusive Coach - be united with their diverse players by managing the complicated organizational requirements of participation and supporting individual needs (e.g., triggers, sensory, cues for regulation) Admin - ensure accommodations are offered to all athletes based on their identities and needs

Table 4 (cont'd)

Category of Practice	Past Research	Current Guideline Finding
Environmental	<p>Cultivate cross cultural relationships (Crisp, 2020b; Haudenhuyse et al., 2014; Johns et al., 2014)</p> <p>Facilitate tough conversations (Ekholm, 2019; Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018; Phillip et al., 2021)</p> <p>Mentor newer participants (Wagstaff & Parker, 2020)</p> <p>Share culture (Middleton et al., 2021; Strachan et al., 2018)</p> <p>Address privileges (Hextrum, 2020; Kingsley & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2015; Piedra, 2017)</p> <p>Recruit diversity (Kelly, 2012; Jeanes et al., 2019; Maher et al., 2022; Trussell, 2020; Válková, 2021)</p> <p>Support basic needs (Gjesdal & Hedenborg, 2021; Middleton et al., 2021)</p> <p>Create a mastery-climate (Pink et al., 2020; Van Yperen et al., 2021)</p>	<p>Admin - prepare presentations and discussions for board meetings</p> <p>Admin - share symbols that invite diverse identities into a space (e.g., pride flags), support social opportunities for organizations and teams to bond</p> <p>Coach - be united with their diverse players by recruiting and coaching diverse identities</p> <p>Admin - survey demographics, recruit diverse candidates.</p> <p>Coach - support competence by increasing opportunities for engagement, accommodations and accountability, outlining expectations, and providing constructive and positive instruction that is understood by the athlete; support relatedness by matching athletes with people they feel comfortable around and facilitating social opportunities</p> <p>Coach - support autonomy by keeping athletes involved, asking how the athlete needs support, providing choice, checking in, and modifying goals</p>
Community	<p>Build partnerships (Cunningham & Warner, 2019)</p> <p>Gain input from community members (Kramers et al., 2021; Storm & Svedsen, 2022; Thomson et al., 2010)</p>	<p>Admin - increase resources such as strategic partnerships</p> <p>Admin - gain input from community members whether internal to the organization, external to the community of members, or generally external community members</p>

Table 4 (cont'd)

Category of Practice	Past Research	Current Guideline Finding
	<p>Meet community needs (Hassan et al., 2012)</p> <p>Sustain social capital (Block & Gibbs, 2017; Cunningham et al., 2020)</p> <p>Employ youth participants (Hermens et al., 2015)</p>	<p>Admin - designing and delivering programs for specific communities to increase the long-term engagement of that community</p>
Organizational	<p>Recognize effort toward inclusion and culture (Morgan & Parker, 2017; Storr, 2022)</p> <p>Hire champions of inclusion (Doidge et al., 2020; MacGregor et al., 2020)</p> <p>Develop interpersonal skills (Doidge et al., 2020)</p> <p>Make training materials accessible (McConkey et al., 2012)</p> <p>Evaluate effectiveness of training programs (Luguetti et al., 2022; McConkey et al., 2012)</p>	<p>Admin - celebrate the diverse cultures of members</p> <p>Admin – create a committee or task force is a key first step</p> <p>Admin - increase resources such as availability of training and resources, training for staff</p>
Structural	<p>Address constraints facing (Kabetu et al., 2021)</p> <p>Monitor issues that are external to program (Kelly, 2011)</p> <p>Create avenues for resources and funding (Klenk et al., 2019)</p> <p>Decolonize activities (Gurgis et al., 2022)</p> <p>Create policies to increase participation (Dalton et al., 2015)</p> <p>Outline antidiscrimination policies (Kulick et al., 2019)</p> <p>Monitor homophobic or exclusive cultures (Oxford, 2018)</p>	<p>Admin - offer multi language documents</p> <p>Admin - monitor progress of efforts and initiatives, align plans and initiatives.</p> <p>Admin - implement policies that promote inclusive culture, create change by prioritizing effective policies and programs</p> <p>Admin - review practices and policies for harassment</p>

Consistency of Findings

As consistency was addressed across the data for this study, it is appropriate to address the consistency and inconsistency of findings across all three research questions. There were three concepts that were consistently present: community, representation, and a sense of belonging.

Community

Community was addressed in research question one as a descriptor of inclusion that aligns with both a sense of belonging and equal opportunities (i.e., An inclusive environment requires the fostering and strengthening of community that is representative of US diversity through education and connection which leads to change). Focusing on community may be integral to creating sport programs that fit the needs of diverse identities. For example, Black male collegiate student-athletes highlight the importance of community in supporting their involvement in success at a predominantly white institution (Bimper Jr. et al., 2013).

Community was also discussed in research question three, where guidelines suggested that sport organizations garner feedback and partner with communities to develop programs. For example, USA Cycling suggested holding round tables with community members in order to design and deliver programs to new communities. Although the goal of the study was to increase physical activity, Rosso and McGrath (2017) highlight the importance of partnering with organizations as a capacity-building strategy. Moreover, a study on adaptive sport programs suggested community partnerships as integral (Cunningham & Warner, 2019). Another guideline for building a sense of community within the organization was providing resources and demonstrating symbols of inclusion to the community (e.g., hanging pride flags). These guidelines would show care and indicate a safe space for individuals that may feel marginalized

or unsafe across sport spaces. However, these guidelines are the bare minimum. Queer athletes suggest that community sport provides a shared purpose but is fractured by the lack of shared identities, where sport spaces need to be re-imagined to regulate marginalizing effects of sport environments (Carter & Baliko, 2016). Thus, fostering a community may require an acknowledgement of bias and oppression.

Representation

The idea of representation was also consistent across research questions. In research question one, representation fit at the intersection of sense of belonging and social justice (i.e., inclusion means showing representation of the diverse identities that are welcome across all levels of the sport system). Diverse identities are suggested to be represented at both the participant and the organizational level. Both statements and guidelines for administrators discussed the need to recruit diverse identities for participation and leadership. Previous research suggests the importance of recruiting diverse identities for leadership positions (Kelly, 2012; Jeanes et al., 2019; Maher et al., 2022; Trussell, 2020; Válková, 2021). However, there was limited guidance for how, or concrete plans to, bring this goal into effect. DEI scorecards (Team USA, 2022) are an example of an organizational practice that does not translate to an increased representation of identities. These scorecards survey diverse identities, which may be used as a consideration tool to inform practices or programs; yet this tool is not an effective measure of inclusion. Again, this is an example of “doing diversity” by simply documenting when, where, and how much diversity was occurring within the space (Ahmed, 2012); it is not a measure of or way to foster inclusion.

Representation was also addressed in research question two when examining the pictures of people on each website. Women were generally included across NGB websites, however

racial diversity was limited and disability was virtually nonexistent. Thus, feminism research in sport needs to move beyond a focus on white women and address the experiences of women of colour, queer and transwomen, and women with disabilities. Theories such as post-colonial and black feminism can be used to address issues of representation in sport (Brown, 2018).

Moreover, there is a limited understanding of neurodivergency shown on NGB websites; which is reflected in sport literature as well. Community sport coaches are rarely prepared by their organizations or training to manage the needs of athletes with hidden or learning disabilities (Sherlock-Shangraw, 2013). Intersectionality of diverse identities in sport should be further explored across sport cultures, where Dagkas (2016) stresses the use of intersectionality as a framework to examine social justice issues in youth sport. Intersectionality is also a limitation of youth sport research as the sample of most research studies is predominantly white groups and boys. Research in Australia examining a grassroots program designed by and for young refugee women highlights the importance of elevating the voices of typically silenced identities in sport (Luguetti et al., 2022). With intersectionality being unmentioned across NGB websites, there is a need to bolster research efforts that examine the sport system through an intersectional lens.

In research question three, a guideline for representation was to celebrate diversity and to truly acknowledge the representation that is within an organization (e.g., indigenous land acknowledgements). However, USA Lacrosse was the only NGB that addressed Indigeneity, which is unsurprising as the popularity of the sport is rooted in colonization. Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) addressed the need for decolonizing frameworks to inform the white logics of sport for development programming. Youth sport research has examined the perspectives of Indigenous youth (e.g., Strachan et al., 2018). However, the colonial systems in place may not serve the needs of Indigenous people. This represents a paradox of inclusion (Adamson et al.,

2021), where sport will need to address the oppression of the system in place to increase representation.

Sense of Belonging

A final consistent concept across the research questions was a sense of belonging. For research question one, a sense of belonging is one of the tenets of inclusion (Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2017) and was also described within the NGB website inclusion statements (i.e., welcoming, respectful, supportive). These definitions align similarly to the basic psychological need of relatedness (i.e, the need to feel close, connected, and cared for by important others; Ryan & Deci, 2008). Sport literature frequently emphasizes the importance of basic need satisfaction (e.g., Adie et al., 2012; Bean et al., 2021; Jowett et al., 2016). Thus, an emphasis on belonging by sport NGBs is unsurprising.

In the data for research question three, basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2008) surfaced within the coach guidelines. Suggested coach guidelines fell into four categories, autonomy, competence, relatedness, and a final theme of unity. Autonomy-supportive coaching has been found to satisfy all three basic needs (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007). However, findings from this study suggest unity may be what is required of coaches to be truly inclusive rather than simply need supportive. Unity requires coaches to understand and discuss their own personal biases, manage the complicated organizational requirements of participation, elevate voices of marginalized identities, recruit and coach diverse identities, and support individual accommodations. These guidelines demand implicit bias and cultural competence training for coaches. Even though unconscious bias is explicitly mentioned as a hindrance to gender equity in coaching (Kane & LaVoi, 2018), coach education is falling behind on this area. As of right now, RISE is a program that is targeting this area for sport stakeholders (Mac Intosh & Martin, 2018),

yet only six NGBs highlighted their partnership with RISE. Facilitating partnerships for training programs would support the ability of coaches to foster inclusion.

Inconsistency of Findings

There are also some inconsistencies across the data that are important to discuss, such as guidelines for stakeholders, equitable opportunities, and social justice.

Guidelines for Stakeholders

For guidelines, one category suggests messaging and communication as important for building an inclusive climate. NGBs suggest ensuring documents are accessible and available in multiple languages. However, none of the content on the NGB websites was available in any other language. Moreover, using inclusive language was a clear guideline for administrators. Yet across the NGB websites words such as chief, chairman, and his or her are being used. Although inclusive language was not explicitly assessed across all websites, these three words were consistently used and do not reflect inclusive language. There are arguments against using the word chief as a sport mascot as well as in describing organizational titles (e.g., Chief Diversity Officer; Bitsóí, 2022). Problematic language (e.g., chairmen, women's sport) has also been addressed as pervasive in sport organizational charters (Teetzel, 2002). Finally, the statement his or her reflects a gender binary and is not inclusive of diverse gender identities.

Another inconsistency within the suggested guidelines were those for parents. Parents are suggested to be perceptive of their biases and reinforce what inclusion is and looks like. However, for parents to be effective in this capacity, a knowledge of or education on concepts such as implicit biases and the experiences of diverse identities is required. Parent information sessions may be an important strategy for organizations to support the role of parents in fostering inclusion. Past research provides evidence for the use of parent education in sport (Burke et al.,

2021; Dorsch et al., 2017). However, parental information sessions on inclusion may be beyond the current capacity of organizations to meet this educational need. Partnering with other organizations (e.g., RISE, Athlete Ally) or hiring a director of inclusion that can develop knowledge tools and products to share with stakeholders (Doidge et al., 2020; MacGregor et al., 2020) may be helpful tools in fostering inclusion.

Equitable Opportunities

Equitable opportunities was presented consistently across inclusion statements on NGB websites. Data from research question one highlighted the importance of providing access to programming, supporting resources, and removing barriers to participation. Yet, these mechanisms of inclusion can be costly either from a social capital or financial standpoint and require innovative solutions (O'Brien et al., 2022). Local parks and recreation programs or community organizations that have limited funding may not be able to engage in these suggestions of NGBs to increase equitable opportunities, without the support of academic institutions. Community-engaged research suggests partnerships between higher education institutions and community organizations are successful (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Therefore, partnerships can be made to share resources and support the access of sport programming.

The guidelines for NGBs presented in research question three for developing plans, policies, and initiatives focus on the equitable distribution of resources. Yet the guidelines were vague in describing this process. Only 12 NGBs presented strategic plans surrounding their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, strategic planning is a challenging endeavor for sport organizations (Morrison & Misener, 2021). Policies have also been found to be difficult to translate into practice (Jeanes et al., 2019). Additionally, research on sport NGB initiatives suggest a lack of clarity and strategic thinking, with program evaluations being

suggested as a way to improve the function of these initiatives (Ricour et al., 2023). Therefore, program evaluations may support NGBs effectiveness at creating an infrastructure for equitable opportunities.

Social Justice

For the inconsistencies surrounding social justice, there was a limited description within the inclusion statements and was rarely acknowledged compared to the other two tenets (i.e., sense of belonging and equitable opportunities). Statements of inclusion described partnerships as helpful tools when working toward social justice. For example, USA Lacrosse suggested partnerships be formed to support program development, such as their partnership with the Native American Advisory Council. Partnerships have also been suggested within adaptive sport studies (e.g., Cunningham & Warner, 2019). In education literature, school and community partnerships are encouraged when addressing social justice in America (O'Connor & Daniello, 2019). This finding of partnerships contrasts previous literature addressing NGB policies, where outsourcing suggests a lack of interpassivity of responsibility by NGBs (Spurdens & Bloyce, 2022). The current study suggests outsourcing entities or partnerships with external organizations were only presented across only a few NGB websites. Moreover, there were no guidelines on how to develop partnerships just that partnerships are important. Partnerships and social justice initiative may not be a well established practice for sport organizations. Thus, outsourcing may be helpful to manage organizational capacity and streamline the process.

Although a tenet of inclusion, social justice may be an area in which sport is struggling to address. Youth sport scholars are critiquing the use of theories such as positive youth development as a framework since power, privilege, and oppression are not addressed (Camiré et al., 2022). At the professional level of sport there is a record of advocacy for social justice. For

example, Black athletes protesting the national anthem by kneeling to promote racial justice and wearing symbols of pride to promote the rights of queer people. However, these examples are individual efforts that are fighting an entire system of oppression. Through a critical race lens, Gardner and colleagues (2022) suggest professional sport organizations present themselves as committed to diversity and inclusion, yet rarely have the practices in place to address social injustice. The system of sport needs to take accountability and continue to address any oppression that is occurring in sport spaces. Kriger and colleagues (2022) suggest the operationalizing intersectionality framework to dismantle power structures in sport. Therefore, future research can continue to examine the systemic oppression and exclusionary practices that occur within sport.

Critical Analysis of Findings

Through the discussion of consistent and inconsistent findings, two main takeaways can be concluded. First, building community and showing representation of diverse identities are integral parts to fostering a sense of belonging. Based on the operationalization of inclusion, a sense of belonging is not the only piece of inclusion. Focusing on more of the equitable opportunities and social justice aspect may be important. Second, inconsistent guidelines for stakeholders limit the effectiveness of organizations and sport leaders to support equitable opportunities and social justice. Organizations are not effectively describing their practices for equitable opportunities and social justice. Therefore, program evaluations may be integral to the addressing the effectiveness of inclusion programming and further create an infrastructure that reaches the intended outcomes of inclusion efforts.

Additionally, some critiques about the operationalization of inclusion and the system of youth sport can be made. NGBs are providing singular definitions, rather than a multifaceted

definition for inclusion. These definitions rarely emphasize aspects of social justice. To address this gap in the definition, it is important for organizations to acknowledge bias and oppression that are present within the respective sport system, to support the hiring of diverse identities within their organizations, and to find partnerships that support social justice initiatives. Moreover, contradictions in messaging are present across NGB websites. Communication and information needs to be accessible and inclusive in order to foster inclusion.

A limited area addressed by NGBs was the guidelines developed for coaches, teammates, and parents to be inclusive. Allyship may be a key step to develop inclusive guidelines for sport leaders. Through partnering with organizations, guidelines can be developed for privileged members of the sport organizations and communities that can become allies for individuals with marginalized identities in sport. Individuals with marginalized identities should not feel a burden and be a sole advocate for social justice and inclusion in sport. Therefore, developing allyship of individuals with privilege in sport may be a novel area to support queer inclusion and acknowledge racial injustice that is occurring within sport.

Future Directions

Based on the consistent and inconsistent findings addressed above, there are two main takeaways from this study. First, building community and showing representation of diverse identities is integral to fostering a sense of belonging. Secondly, inconsistent guidelines for stakeholders limit the effectiveness of organizations to support equitable opportunities and social justice. Therefore, sport organizations need to focus on how to walk the walk, and not just talk the talk when it comes to equitable opportunities and social justice. Researchers can support this endeavor by exploring the influence of culture, whether American or sport-specific, on the practices of sport organizations. Case studies and program evaluations of specific NGBs or sport

organizations can highlight gaps in effective practices that claim to support equitable opportunities and social justice. External governance can ensure measures of accountability for sport organizations be put in place for the NGBs themselves and the sport organizations within their community. Additionally, ensuring representation of diverse identities is present on all board of directors is an aspect to further govern. Finally, evaluating the knowledge provided by training programs for all stakeholders, especially administrators, would suggest the depth of the organizations priority for inclusion. These suggestions are initial steps to support an infrastructure for inclusion as well as acknowledge the systemic privilege and oppression within sport.

Future Research

Overall, this study has highlighted key areas for future directions as discussed above. For my own continued line of research, I will look to some of the particular aspects of this study that led to more questions. First, I will critically examine the inclusivity of policies created by NGBs, in particular transgender eligibility policies. Although these policies may provide some level of structural inclusion, policies may be inconsistent and timeworn (Teetzel, 2016). Using a PAR-approach to this research (Kidd & Kral, 2005), I will elevate the voices of transgender athletes, coaches, and administrators to push the conversation around whether the current system of sport oppresses or includes transgender athletes and create continued action steps.

Another policy that was noted across the data collection process of this study was antidiscrimination policies. An important next step to address instances of discrimination in sport is to review the antidiscrimination policies, reporting process, as well as the provision of sanctions when discrimination occurs. Safe Sport is a program in place that partners with NGBs to monitor and record instances of abuse (Johnson et al., 2020). However, having a third party

organization removes the accountability of sport organizations in monitoring and disciplining instances of discrimination. Thus, an effective reporting and disciplining process is crucial to monitoring oppressive and exclusionary instances across the sport system.

A final study on policies would examine the community sport organizations perceptions of NGB policies and suggested guidelines. Engaging in community sport development literature (e.g., Bolton et al., 2008), discussions about community needs and addressing desired change would be a beneficial area to support community inclusion. Working alongside of community sport administrators to understand what is realistic and prioritized to ensure inclusion can occur across every level of sport. Additionally, exploring the influence funding has on the ability for organizations to enact the recommended policies and practices may highlight further disparities across the youth sport system.

An additional study would employ Integrative Knowledge Translation methods (e.g., Gainforth et al., 2021) to develop criteria for inclusion where sport organizations could measure their level of inclusion across different aspects of their organization. Characteristics of integrated sport organizations have been suggested within adaptive sport literature (e.g., organizational, social, competence; Sørensen & Kahrs, 2006). Thus, a project that triangulates previous research, suggested categories from the current study, and perspectives of expert stakeholders could develop clear and realistic criteria of inclusion for sport organizations.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that data was only accessed through the NGB websites. However, a content analysis of websites have addressed issues of representation and oppression (Sullivan & Ali, 2023). Moreover, if a stakeholder were to use the NGB website for guidance, this study highlighted the information they would find. Additionally, any internal information or

practices about inclusion were not addressed in this study. Therefore, future research should examine other sources of information. For example, internal documents/practices and perspectives of NGB board of directors.

Another limitation was the reliability of criteria for inclusion assessed across each of the NGB websites. Although informed by research, the six categories found in research question two were an initial assessment of inclusion. Moreover, plans, policies, and training resources were only counted and not assessed for quality. Therefore, this data suggests a surface-level assessment for signals of inclusion rather than evaluating the quality of data. Additionally, the classification of each website was based on these six categories and should be further examined. This classification was used to address observability and consistency and interpret the data. More research should be done on identifying key indicators and standards to classify inclusion as well as evaluating the quality of inclusion efforts across NGBs.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore what information about inclusion was being shared by US Sport NGBs via their websites. Results provided a clearer understanding of what signals NGBs are providing or missing as well as how consistent these messages are. Inclusion is defined on these websites as a sense of belonging and equal opportunities, yet rarely defined as social justice. NGB websites have the capacity to send signals through the location of the inclusion page, by dedicating a director role for an employee, by creating partnerships with outside entities, by stating inclusion as a core value, by providing resources and guidelines, and through showing pictures of diverse individuals within the organization. However, these signals were not present across every NGB website. Finally, NGB websites suggested guidelines for youth sport administrators over any other stakeholder. Based on the consistent and inconsistent

signals of inclusion, there are two main takeaways from this study. First, building community and showing representation of diverse identities is integral to fostering a sense of belonging. Secondly, inconsistent guidelines for stakeholders limit the effectiveness for organizations to support equitable opportunities and social justice. Therefore, future research should support the capacity for sport organizations to build equitable opportunities and acknowledge systems of oppression and privilege.

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APPENDIX A: INCLUSION STATEMENTS FROM US SPORT NGB WEBSITES

NGB	Inclusion Statement
USA Archery	<p>USA ARCHERY IS COMMITTED TO BEING A LEADER WITHIN THE ARCHERY COMMUNITY AND BEYOND BY INCREASING DIVERSITY, ACTIVELY ADDRESSING ANY INEQUITIES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION AND THE SPORT, PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS WITHIN THE ARCHERY COMMUNITY, AND CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF INCLUSION IN WHICH ALL PEOPLE FEEL SAFE, RESPECTED AND VALUED. WE RECOGNIZE THAT OUR DIFFERENCES BRING RICHNESS TO THE SPORT OF ARCHERY AND THE USA ARCHERY COMMUNITY. To that end, USAA is committed to promoting a culture of equality in the sport, in which all people can see themselves taking a part, removing barriers of entry to the sport for underserved and underrepresented individuals and communities, and takes responsibility for empowering, exposing, educating, and engaging the archery community to drive actionable change in their respective local communities. To accomplish this work, USAA has developed a strategic plan to foster diversity, equity, inclusion and access within the sport of archery. USA Archery strives to be an organization which: Is free of prejudice based on various personal characteristics including, but not limited to gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, age, physical ability, religion or socioeconomic status. Actively promotes equal opportunities for all without regard to the above referenced characteristics. Provides diversity training to its directors, committees, staff and membership to help recognize implicit bias based on personal characteristics and/or perceptions to develop a deeper understanding of our individual differences to create a more inclusive organization. Employs a diverse team that is reflective of both the population of the United States and whose behaviors reflect USAA's culture as defined in the USA Archery High Performance Ethos</p>
USA Badminton	N/A
USA Baseball	N/A
USA Basketball	N/A
U.S. Biathlon	N/A
USA Bobsled and Skeleton	N/A
United States Bowling Congress	<p>USBC is committed to improving existing relationships and to forging new ones to remove any perceived barriers to the sport of bowling. With this dedication comes a concerted effort to protect and nurture the SPORT with mutual admiration and respect to all people of varied backgrounds. USBC believes to best serve our diverse membership we must embrace the value of the differences in insight, approach, and experience. USBC understands that all of our members, employees and communities are critical to our success. USBC is steadfast in partnering and growing with our communities of diverse backgrounds, and will conduct our business in an ethical, inclusive and sustainable manner. Our worldwide perspective and touchstone of inclusion guides our mission to promote the sport of bowling across the globe. USBC will continue to identify opportunities to expand and strengthen the relationships of bowlers and non-bowlers alike. We will be unwavering in our commitment to embrace an inclusive culture of participation and leadership that will enable us to serve the communities that participate in our sport. For more information about USBC's Affinity Partner program and initiatives, please email us at marketing@bowl.com.</p>
USA Boxing	N/A

NGB	Inclusion Statement
American Canoe	The ACA strives to be an association in which participants, members, guests, and the organizations they represent, feel a sense of belonging and are treated with dignity and respect. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is fundamental to our organization and organizational partnerships. We will continue working to decrease barriers, and increase access to paddling opportunities within communities that have been underrepresented and historically marginalized.
USA Curling	USA Curling is committed to fostering a community that embodies the spirit of curling in every way. From grassroots to podium, it is our responsibility to ensure that everyone feels welcome in our sport and is provided resources that make success possible. The USA Curling Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee works to provide new pathways to our sport, as well as strategize, educate, and implement processes that allow for equal opportunities, access, and the development of membership demographics that are reflective of our communities. The Committee, comprised of volunteers and staff members passionate about delivering long-term and sustainable change, draws on their demographic and geographic differences to work collaboratively. Currently, the Committee has Subcommittees focusing on, but not limited to, the following areas: Adaptive Sport, BIPOC, Allyship, LGBTQIA+, Gender
USA Cycling	Ensure people feel comfortable and included in the USA Cycling community, regardless of gender, gender identity, race, class, or any other perceived difference. Cycling is a global sport that benefits from diversity in all ways.
USA Diving	USA Diving is committed to supporting and fostering diversity, equity and inclusion among its athletes, coaches, judges, staff, members and fans. We recognize that diversity, equity and inclusion are multifaceted and that we need to address these subjects holistically to better engage and support all groups, particularly those who have been historically marginalized and underrepresented. We also recognize that our differences bring richness to the sport of diving and the USA Diving community. This commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion means that: USA Diving will not tolerate discrimination based on age, gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation or any other social identity category and/or defining characteristic. USA Diving will cultivate and support an inclusive culture and environment, through programming and education, where all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, nationality, age, socioeconomic background, financial means, marital and family status/makeup, physical ability, health status, neurodiversity, ancestry, and citizenship are supported and able to succeed in the sport of diving. USA Diving will allocate resources to fostering equitable and inclusive participation for all athletes as well as growth opportunities for athletes, coaches, judges and staff from diverse backgrounds. As a community, we believe that sport can be a catalyst to promote positive change in people and society. It is our responsibility as the national governing body for the sport to lead the charge in identifying and removing the barriers that prevent USA Diving from being the diverse, equitable and inclusive community that we know it can be.
US Equestrian	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion- Diversity and inclusion are fundamental to US Equestrian's vision: To bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible. We recognize the need to achieve increased diversity and that our growth and success depends on the inclusion of all people. We are committed to providing access and opportunity for people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, veterans and active military personnel, people with disabilities, and those of all ages, religions, ancestries, genders and gender identities, and economic status to harness the synergy of diverse talents.
US Fencing	N/A
USA Field Hockey	INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBILITY. Field hockey, and all sports, should be accessible and welcoming to all regardless of race, gender, economic status, sexual orientation and physical ability. USA Field Hockey works to promote and grow the game so everyone has the opportunity to play, coach, umpire, watch and enjoy. USA Field Hockey Membership and participation in USA Field Hockey events helps support sport development programs, including grants and diversity and inclusion initiatives. USA Field

NGB	Inclusion Statement
	Hockey believes all hockey is good hockey. Everyone in America should have the opportunity to play and fall in love with field hockey, starting at a young age. It can be played on many different surfaces, indoor and outdoor and in various formats. It is a sport everyone can enjoy throughout their lifetime.
U.S. Figure Skating	U.S. Figure Skating's goal is to work with the Board of Directors and committee leadership to identify, promote and implement programs, policies and practices needed to promote diversity equity and inclusion within the organization and throughout the skating community. U.S. Figure Skating has taken an intentional approach to humanize diversity, equity and inclusion. We stand firmly on the belief that people are the most important asset to our organization and that <u>our</u> differences are meaningful and strengthen our community. Our goal is to create an inclusive and diverse environment where all members have equal opportunities to pursue excellence both on and off the ice. We are working to develop equitable practices and policies that foster safety and an authentic sense of belonging for all involved in all areas of our sport. We Believe That #SkatingIsForEveryone. U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion ensures that we take seriously the need to foster an environment where all members can show up as their most authentic selves safely. We are committed in policy, principle, and practice to sustain a nondiscriminatory approach on and off the ice for all members and will not tolerate any acts of discrimination or harassment of members based on race, color, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or any other protected class considered by federal, state, or local law. Reports related to creating an unsafe mental or physical environment for members are taken seriously and fall under the responsibility of a Mandatory Report and should be reported (i-Sight Portal)
USA Football (non-Olympic)	N/A
USA Golf	N/A
USA Gymnastics	N/A
USA Hockey	USA Hockey is committed to fostering a welcoming environment for all by building a diverse, equitable and inclusive game. We celebrate every race, gender and background to unite as one community. We believe meaningful action can positively affect important change in our sport and carry over into our everyday lives. We seek to attract and build a diverse and inclusive organization and membership at every level. We are committed to creating a welcoming environment for all without discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, health, veteran status, color, beliefs, physical/cognitive ability, gender, socioeconomic background, sexual identification, social status, and age. We support intentional and ongoing engagement and education regarding issues that impact individuals and their communities with connection to sport and everyday living. Additionally, we actively support and show appreciation for people with multicultural backgrounds, gender differences, and various life experiences to embrace unification and opportunity within the hockey community while strengthening our commitment to connect with all audiences.
USA Judo	N/A
USA Karate	DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMAs the landscape of the United States continues to become more diverse, it is important for the participants and audience of USA National Karate-do Federation (USA Karate) to reflect those changes. Our organization is committed to increasing opportunities for full participation of all US citizens through the creation of a Diversity & Inclusion Plan that includes policies, best practices, and programs that position USA Karate to increase athlete participation and its fan base. Attention to Diversity and Inclusion started in 2014 for USA Karate. While we have made progress there is still work to do. The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) has published the D&I Scorecards at TeamUSA.org/diversityscorecards . The

NGB	Inclusion Statement
	scorecard reflects how effective USA Karate has been in reaching certain demographics. In addition, the scorecard can be used to review trends, track organizational impact and celebrate success related to diversity and inclusion initiatives. USA Karate strives to increase the participation of all individuals without regard gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability. We feel strongly that diversity of thought, perspective and experience will be instrumental in growing USA Karate. By tying the D&I plan to our strategic plan, USA Karate will bolster both athletic performance and business results.
USA Lacrosse (non-Olympic)	“USA Lacrosse seeks to foster a national lacrosse community that encourages understanding, appreciation and acceptance of all within its membership, volunteer base, and staff. Further, USA Lacrosse believes that broad representation and participation add significant value to the lacrosse experience of each of us, and that these valued experiences are enhanced by embracing underrepresented and underserved communities.” USA Lacrosse is committed to fostering a national lacrosse community that encourages understanding, appreciation and acceptance of all. We believe that broad representation and participation, through accessibility and availability to everyone, add significant value to the lacrosse experience of each of us. The WE STAND Initiative is a social movement. Our purpose is to create a sense of belonging for all within the sports community by shifting the culture to one that firmly opposes unjust or prejudicial treatment based on racial bias, socioeconomic and familial status, sexual orientation, physical abilities or gender identity.
USA Luge	N/A
USA Pentathlon	N/A
USA Pickleball	Inclusion - USA Pickleball Since the establishment of the USA Pickleball, a core principle is that discrimination is prohibited. Specifically, membership and all rights of participation in USA Pickleball, including all tournaments and other events conducted or sanctioned by it, are and will be open to all persons without regard to race, age, religion, creed, sexual orientation, color, national origin, disability or gender. We will continue to implement this core principle in our mission as we develop and promote the sport of pickleball in the U.S.
USA Racquetball	N/A
USA Roller Sports (Pan American)	USA Roller Sports recognizes that the landscape of culture, diversity and inclusion in today’s world is in constant change, and that what was once accepted in the past does not always represent the present and future. As a result, USA Roller Sports has initiated the following plan to include solutions and best practices that will encourage new participation from all potential member types regardless of race, gender, gender expression, ethnicity, culture, creed, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability. USA Roller Sports will through all available electronic mediums, to include website postings, email newsletters, and social media, promote and market existing, new and innovative programs available through the Diversity and Inclusion department of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). USA Roller Sports will continue to refine and enhance all collection methods in a continued effort of delivering the organizations most accurate data of the membership population, via the Diversity and Inclusion Scorecard and Benchmarks Program conducted by the USOPC. USA Roller Sports will create an exclusive webpage tied to our website as a resource for members seeking specific answers to questions related to participation and opportunities that will address the topics of race, gender, gender expression, ethnicity, culture, creed, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability. In the fall of 2018, USA Roller Sports aligned the organizations transgender participation guidelines and policy with the international governing body of World Skate to encourage additional inclusion all athletes and to establish consistent competition

NGB	Inclusion Statement
	standards. USA Roller Sports will, with marketing images from our current membership, create and develop imagery that will reflect a much clearer and accurate picture of overall membership pool of athletes, coaches, and officials to reflect a broader vision of how diverse and inclusive the organization truly is. USA Roller Sports will continue to promote and share our various stories of diversity and inclusion, by requesting from members experiences and their own stories of how skating has positively impacted them and led to their participation in the various sport disciplines. All stories after receipt will be reviewed for accuracy and shared via social media and the organizations weekly newsletter. USA Roller Sports will adopt and promote the hashtag #USARS4ALL when delivering messages, marketing and stories related to the organization's members, diversity and inclusion.
US Rowing	US Rowing is committed to making diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority, and we are dedicated to continue to grow and evolve as we invest more in these efforts. We pledge to devote time and resources to make a lasting impact and be an agent of positive change in our rowing community and broader society. We invite our membership to join us in this commitment and continue to hold us accountable.
USA Rugby (Rugby Sevens)	The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee considers and makes policy recommendations to the Board and CEO on issues of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. These recommendations and reviews may address issues of representation, and under-representation in race, ethnicity, sex, gender, age, disability status, and any other protected class, as well as reviews of existing practices that may be impacting equitable access and participation. The makeup of the committee, as well as its full remit and powers are detailed in the Committee Terms of Reference, which are prepared by the committee and presented by the CEO to the Board for approval.
US Sailing	Purpose. A core tenet of US Sailing's mission is encouraging participation and engagement in the sport of sailing. Central to this goal is inviting sailors of all backgrounds to join, flourish, and grow within the sailing community. The purpose of US Sailing's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives is to create, support, and promote access to the sport of sailing and to provide an inviting and inclusive environment in which to thrive. We are committed to achieving greater DEI throughout the sport and fostering an environment that is welcoming to all. As the national governing body of sailing, we strive to be an example, building a map for others to follow.
USA Shooting	N/A
USA Skateboarding	USA Skateboarding provides an equal opportunity for athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators and officials to participate in the sport without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, veteran status or other status protected by law.
U.S. Ski and Snowboard	U.S. Ski & Snowboard, the National Governing Body (NGB) for skiing and snowboarding in the United States, is committed to cultivating an inclusive culture, establishing equitable systems, and valuing diversity. We have a responsibility to our sport and our community to advance DEI through honest, ongoing self-assessments and by taking meaningful actions to drive real change. U.S. Ski & Snowboard ascribes to the following definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion in alignment with definitions adopted by the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) where available, with the understanding that DEI language will continue to evolve and be updated: Diversity - Developing a team of stakeholders/people from differing perspectives and backgrounds to drive innovation and increase cultural awareness. Equity - Creating paces and removing barriers so all people are treated fairly and have the same access to opportunities. Inclusion - Enabling a welcoming and respectful environment that fosters belonging for all stakeholders/people and groups. U.S. Ski & Snowboard's prioritization of DEI is inherent in its vision to make the United States of America the Best In The World in Olympic skiing and snowboarding. DEI is also integral to our mission to lead, encourage, and support athletes in achieving excellence by empowering national teams, clubs, coaches, parents, officials, volunteers, and fans. We

NGB	Inclusion Statement
	are dedicated to organizational excellence. To that end, U.S. Ski & Snowboard adopts the following guiding principles: ● Nurture an inclusive and diverse community rooted in mutual understanding and respect ● Educate constituents about the importance of an inclusive and diverse community ● Support innovation in equitable approaches to enhance access, retention, and advancement of underrepresented groups By formulating specific action plans based on these guiding principles, U.S. Ski & Snowboard will strive to lead nationally in our home country, the United States, and globally in all aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the snow sports world.
US Soccer	N/A
USA Softball	N/A
US Speedskating	N/A
US Squash	N/A
USA Swimming	We are committed to growing and celebrating diversity, increasing fairness throughout our organization, and intentionally creating environments where differences are embraced and everyone feels welcome, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. USA Swimming is committed to a culture of inclusion and opportunity. We strive to create equity by providing resources specific to the needs of our members. In the context of swimming, diversity is the invitation to our sport, inclusion is making sure our sport is welcoming, and equity is ensuring all members have what they need to be successful. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is critical to achieving the mission of USA Swimming and is an important and necessary step to achieving our four end goals, the “Ends:” Achievement of sustained competitive success at the Olympic Games Members have resources to sustain successful athletes, coaches, and clubs Support public engagement for growth in swimming participation and interest USA Swimming recognized as Best in Class As the National Governing Body of the sport of swimming, we are steadfast in our commitment to identify and lead in reducing barriers, to create and creating opportunities for inclusion, and to increase fairness throughout our sport. We strive to have the demographics of our country be reflected in our membership. COMMITMENT TO DISABILITY USA Swimming encourages people with disabilities to participate in the sport of swimming and facilitates their inclusion in USA Swimming programs through education and collaboration. We seek to involve people with disabilities in existing competitions and programs for all swimmers, rather than provide unique disability-only opportunities.
USA Synchro	Participate: Artistic swimming is an inclusive sport. An athlete’s right to participate is realized regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation or pregnancy), age, family status, socio-economic status, geographical location, nationality, body shape, beliefs, mental or physical ability or any other defining characteristics. Treated with Equity and Respect: Athletes are not to be discriminated against due to any of the characteristics listed above and are to be respected by all members of our community including, but not limited to, other athletes, parents, coaches, judges, spectators, officials, organization staff & volunteers.
USA Table Tennis	N/A
USA Taekwondo	N/A
USA Team Handball	N/A
US Tennis	Accessibility Assistance. If you have difficulty using or accessing any element of this website or on any USTA mobile app or tool, please feel free to call us at 1-800-990-8782 or email us at customercare.usta.com and we will work with you to provide the

NGB	Inclusion Statement
	information, item, or transaction you seek through a communication method that is accessible for you consistent with applicable law (for example, through telephone support). Goal of being better for All. USTA desires to provide a positive customer experience to all our customers, and we aim to promote accessibility and inclusion. Our goal is to permit our customers to successfully gather information and transact business through our website. Whether you are using assistive technologies like a screen reader, a magnifier, voice recognition software, or captions for videos, our goal is to make your use of USTA's website a successful and enjoyable experience. Actions. We are taking a variety of steps and devoting resources to further enhance the accessibility of our website. Ongoing Effort. Although we are proud of the efforts that we have completed and that are in-progress, we at USTA view accessibility as an ongoing effort. Feedback. Please contact us if you have any feedback or suggestions as to how we could improve the accessibility of this website.
USA Track & Field	N/A
USA Triathlon	USA Triathlon and the USA Triathlon Foundation are dedicated to combating discrimination, challenging inequalities and championing social justice in the multisport community and throughout the endurance sports industry. Both organizations are committed to taking immediate and long-term action to encourage a culture of equality in the sport, build a future for the sport that all people can see themselves being a part of, break through barriers of entry to the sport for underserved and underrepresented individuals and communities, and take responsibility for empowering, exposing, educating and engaging the multisport community to drive actionable change in their respective local communities.
USA Ultimate	USA Ultimate values the contributions and perspectives that a truly diverse community provides our sport and its culture. Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are critical to the integrity of our sport, and USA Ultimate is committed to increasing access to and participation in the sport, particularly amongst youth in underrepresented communities.
USA Volleyball	USA Volleyball is committed to being a leader within the volleyball world and beyond by increasing and celebrating diversity, actively addressing any inequities within the organization and the sport, and creating an environment of inclusion in which all people feel safe, respected and valued. USA Volleyball is devoted to: Prioritizing diversity by understanding USA Volleyball's current demographics, setting target goals in key areas, and establishing a plan to increase representation and voice of underrepresented groups at all levels of play and leadership. Increasing equity by finding new strategies around lowering the barriers to entry, offering resources and creating opportunities for members of historically marginalized communities to get involved in and/or advance in the sport. Creating a culture of inclusion by establishing culturally competent training and educational resources across the organization and membership, as well as implementing proactive policies and operations within USA Volleyball and its regions.
USA Water Polo	At USA Water Polo, the diversity and involvement of our people is the foundation of our strength. We are committed to fair and effective selection, development, motivation, and recognition of all employees, athletes, and fans. We continually seek improvement and innovation in every element of our organization. We strive to ensure that Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, actions and results are transparent to all employees, athletes, board directors and the public at large. A vision for Diversity and Inclusion We strive to leverage a diverse and inclusive workforce. Our goal is to develop and retain the best from all backgrounds and cultures. Our organization is one of cultural inclusion where all individuals feel respected, are treated fairly, provided work-life balance and the opportunity for advancement. "Diversity is so much more than one gender or ethnicity. It is representative of all people and all perspectives". Definition of Diversity and Inclusion Diversity has many different definitions. USA Water Polo believes the concept

NGB	Inclusion Statement
	<p>of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These differences may be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, (gender identity and expression) sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, and political beliefs. USA Water Polo believes in exploring these differences in a safe and positive environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond “tolerance” to truly embrace and celebrate the dimensions of diversity contained in each and every individual. USA Water Polo believes Inclusion is about valuing all individuals, providing equal opportunity to all and removing any real or perceived barriers to involvement. Inclusion is creating and maintaining an environment in which people are not excluded or marginalized because of their difference. It means promoting an environment in which contributions and strengths are recognized, optimized and valued in a way that generates opportunities for adaptability, problem-solving, growth and ultimately increased success.</p>
USA Water Ski	N/A
USA Weightlifting	<p>THE MISSION OF USA WEIGHTLIFTING SHALL BE TO SUPPORT UNITED STATES ATHLETES IN ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN OLYMPIC AND WORLD COMPETITION AND TO SUPPORT, PROMOTE, AND EDUCATE A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY OF WEIGHTLIFTING AND THE USE OF THE BARBELL IN THE UNITED STATES. USA Weightlifting has made it a priority to make our sport available to “Anyone, Anywhere”, to us this means ensuring that our sport truly can be practiced by anyone regardless of their socio economic status, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or any other matter. Putting together a clear action plan speaks to that commitment, and we encourage our community to embrace everyone who has a love of the Barbell. We also encourage those who see how we can further include more people in that shared passion for the barbell to reach out to us with your thoughts and ideas.</p>
USA Wrestling	N/A

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION ON US SPORT NGB WEBSITES

NGB (with Hyperlink)	Website Associated with US Olympic Committee	Location of Information on Website	Content on Website	Outsourcing Entities	Employee Roles	Present in Core Values	Core Value Text
USA Archery	No	Nowhere	Statement; Resource	Safe Sport; Move United; The Inclusion Playbook	Committee	Yes	Respect – Foster an inclusive culture on and off the field of play by honoring the rights, views, and inherent value of others, treating all with dignity and courtesy. We believe respect to be a performance advantage and set expectations with teammates and ourselves to hold it in the highest regard.
USA Badminton	No	Nowhere	N/A	Safe Sport	No	Diversity is	We are dedicated to serving our community while practicing our core values of integrity, diversity, equality, respect, and commitment to athletes.
USA Baseball	No	Search bar	N/A	Safe Sport	No	Diversity is	Diversity We understand that we, and the business in which we are engaged, are part of one world of many parts. We will seek out diverse experiences, backgrounds and perspectives so that all voices are heard.
USA Basketball	Yes	Search bar	Policies (2)	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
U.S. Biathlon	Yes	Search bar	Policy	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
USA Bobsled and Skeleton	No	Drop down menu	N/A	N/A	No	No	N/A
United States Bowling Congress	Yes	Nowhere	Statement; Plan; Resource	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
USA Boxing	No	Drop down menu	Policy	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
American Canoe	No	Drop down menu	Statement; Links	N/A	Committee & Director	Yes	Inclusion: We promote a culture and atmosphere of honesty, camaraderie, and sportsmanship to enrich lives and unleash the full potential of all participants. We maintain an environment of respect, fairness, and

NGB (with Hyperlink)	Website Associated with US Olympic Committee	Location of Information on Website	Content on Website	Outsourcing Entities	Employee Roles	Present in Core Values	Core Value Text
							kindness and embrace the value of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Everyone is welcome in the paddling family.
<u>USA Curling</u>	No	Lower navigation bar	Statement; Policy; Links	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
<u>USA Cycling</u>	Yes	Drop down menu	Statement; Policy; Guidelines; Links	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
<u>USA Diving</u>	No	Drop down menu	Statements (2); Links	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>US Equestrian</u>	No	Search bar	Statement; Links	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>US Fencing</u>	Yes	Search bar	Policy	Safe Sport	No	Yes	4. Inclusion
<u>USA Field Hockey</u>	No	Drop down menu	Statements (2)	Safe Sport	Committee	Yes	INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY Field hockey is a sport everyone can enjoy. It can be played on multiple surfaces, indoor and outdoor.
<u>U.S. Figure Skating</u>	No	Nowhere	Statements (3); Plan	Safe Sport	Director	No	N/A
<u>USA Football (non-Olympic)</u>	Yes	Nowhere	N/A	N/A	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Golf</u>	No	Nowhere	N/A	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Gymnastics</u>	No	Navigation Bar	Policy (2); Resources (2);	Safe Sport	No	Yes	Safety: We promote a safe and inclusive environment for our athletes and our community.
<u>USA Hockey</u>	No	Nowhere	Statement; Guidelines (3); Policy (3); Links	Safe Sport; RISE	Director	No	N/A
<u>USA Judo</u>	Yes	Drop down menu	N/A	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A

NGB (with Hyperlink)	Website Associated with US Olympic Committee	Location of Information on Website	Content on Website	Outsourcing Entities	Employee Roles	Present in Core Values	Core Value Text
<u>USA Karate</u>	No	Lower navigation bar	Statement; Plan	Safe Sport; True Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Lacrosse (non-Olympic)</u>	No	Nowhere	Statement (6); Guideline (6); Resource; Policies (4); Links	Safe Sport	Committee & Director	No	N/A
<u>USA Luge</u>	Yes	Nowhere	N/A	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Pentathlon</u>	No	Drop down menu	Policy	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Pickleball</u>	Yes	Nowhere	Statements (2)	N/A	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Racquetball</u>	Yes	Drop down menu	Statement; Policies (2)	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Roller Sports (Pan American)</u>	No	Drop down menu	Statements (2); Plan; Policy	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>US Rowing</u>	No	Drop down menu	Statement; Policy	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
<u>USA Rugby (Rugby Sevens)</u>	No	Nowhere	Statement; Guidelines; Policy	Safe Sport; Athlete Ally	Committee	Yes	Inclusivity
<u>US Sailing</u>	No	Nowhere	Statements (2); Plan; Policy	The Inclusion Playbook; RISE	Committee	Yes	Vision and Purpose statement includes - A future where . . . Inclusion and diversity is the standard Newcomers enjoy access to affordable and inclusive local sailing communities
<u>USA Shooting</u>	No	Nowhere	Policy	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Skateboarding</u>	No	Lower Navigation Bar	Statements (3)	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A

NGB (with Hyperlink)	Website Associated with US Olympic Committee	Location of Information on Website	Content on Website	Outsourcing Entities	Employee Roles	Present in Core Values	Core Value Text
<u>U.S. Ski and Snowboard</u>	No	Lower Navigation Bar	Statements (4); Plan	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
<u>US Soccer</u>	Yes	Drop down menu	N/A	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Softball</u>	Yes	Nowhere	Statement	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>US Speedskating</u>	No	Nowhere	N/A	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>US Squash</u>	No	Nowhere	Statement	Safe Sport	No	Yes	Inclusion
<u>USA Swimming</u>	Yes	Lower Navigation Bar	Statement; Links	Safe Sport	Committee & Director	Yes	Inclusion
<u>USA Synchro</u>	Yes	Search Bar	Statement; Plan; Guideline; Policy	Safe Sport	Committee & Director	Yes	Pursue Diversity ,Equity and Inclusion We value the dignity of every person and embrace a culture were everyone can participate be themselves and feel welcome.
<u>USA Table Tennis</u>	Yes	Nowhere	Plan	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
<u>USA Taekwondo</u>	Yes	Search Bar	N/A	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Team Handball</u>	No	Main Page	Plan	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
<u>US Tennis</u>	No	Search Bar	Policies (2); Plan	N/A	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Track & Field</u>	Yes	Drop down menu	Policies (2)	Safe Sport	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Triathlon</u>	No	Main Page	Statements; Guidelines (2); Plan	N/A	No	Yes	OUR guiding principles Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access We aspire to ensure the sport is reflective of the country we represent, and value and embrace diverse backgrounds, experiences and prespectives.
<u>USA Ultimate</u>	No	Lower Navigation Bar	Plan; Links	Safe Sport	Committee & Director	Yes	TEAMWORK – We encourage a diverse and inclusive ultimate community and work cooperatively with members and partners to achieve our mission.

NGB (with Hyperlink)	Website Associated with US Olympic Committee	Location of Information on Website	Content on Website	Outsourcing Entities	Employee Roles	Present in Core Values	Core Value Text
<u>USA Volleyball</u>	No	Drop down menu	Statement; Links; Guideline	RISE; Inclusion Playbook; Safe Sport	No	Yes	Our Vision Build, create and support a safe, inclusive and positive volleyball experience and a lifetime of opportunity for all. AND core values -Together we are better -one core value is -Home court advantage We create and work in a respectful and supportive environment that values and empowers every team member.
<u>USA Water Polo</u>	Yes	Nowhere	Statement	Safe Sport	Committee	No	N/A
<u>USA Water Ski</u>	Yes	Drop down menu	N/A	N/A	No	No	N/A
<u>USA Weightlifting</u>	Yes	Lower Navigation Bar	Statement; Policy; Links; Plan	Safe Sport	Committee	Yes	The mission of USA Weightlifting is to support United States athletes in achieving excellence in Olympic and world competition, and to support, promote and educate a diverse and inclusive community of weightlifting and the use of the barbell in the United States.
<u>USA Wrestling</u>	No	Nowhere	Statement; Policy; Links	Safe Sport; Athlete Ally	Committee	Diversity is	- Diversity - Creating a culture that welcomes members of all races, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicities; embracing equity, inclusion, and multicultural awareness that helps to effect lasting, meaningful change.