

SPORT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTIONS OF MOTIVATIONAL  
CLIMATE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES IN AN UNDERSERVED  
YOUTH SPORT SETTING

by

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Development Experiences in an Underserved Youth Sport Setting

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Science at George Mason University

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the many wonderful adults who commit a portion, or all, of their lives to mentoring and coaching youth – and also those youth throughout the world who may benefit from better programming, improved coaching, and enhanced youth sport opportunities. May our work enrich all of their lives so theirs are better than those who came before them.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **SPORT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTIONS OF MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES IN AN UNDERSERVED YOUTH SPORT SETTING**

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George Mason University, 2015

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This study was designed to explore the motivational climate created in a youth sport setting by coaches trained to carry out an intentional curriculum and the positive and negative experiences reported by youth in the youth sport program. The program took place in an underserved community in a large, urban city. The study took the form of an evaluative assessment of a youth sport program, using the Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS) to assess motivational climate perception and the Youth Experiences Scale 2.0 (YES 2.0) to assess positive and negative experiences in the program. The study consisted of a convenience sample of 41 participants between the ages of 10 and 13 who completed a demographic survey, a MCSYS survey, and a YES 2.0 survey. Results indicated that participants perceived a mastery motivational climate more strongly than a competitive motivational climate. Furthermore, positive experiences were associated with participation in the program more strongly than negative experiences. Statistical analysis revealed some differences in perceptions and

experiences between age, gender, and race of participants. Findings, though not statistically significant, provide insights into realities of youth sport programs that can enrich the sport for youth development sphere and suggest new topics and areas of study.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### *History*

Sport has long been a part of human existence with the first physically oriented games played by humans likely to have emerged from a dual need to cope with physical challenges and display and/or perform religious rituals (Coakley, 2009). We will examine a European-centric sport history as a precursor to what we now know in the United States. This is not to say that other civilizations of non-European location did not contribute to sport in how we know it or that those contributions are not worthwhile areas of study. We will give attention to European histories because those are the source from which we derive much our sport tradition and culture in the United States. However, American demographics have shifted dramatically to non-European origin during the twentieth century, thus it will be important for researchers to broaden this background in the coming decades to include sport history from a non-European centric point (U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>, Retrieved: November 10, 2013). For our purposes here a European research focus is most appropriate.

Ancient Greece marked a time when the forerunner to modern sport began to emerge, continuing through the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Ancient Greek education was focused on two types of educational training: *gymnastike*, consisting of variations of physical activity focused on the body such as wrestling, running, throwing,

and jumping, and *mousike*, which focused on the mind and soul consisting of variations on the arts and sciences of the times (Bryant, 1996).

The evolution of ancient Greek thought on gymnastike, or physical training, can be seen in following the writings of the prominent philosophers of antiquity. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Homer represented his heroes as those who are only truly happy when they realize their superiority to others and that as long as their aims are noble, they should seek to dominate others and win in all aspects of life, including in their physical training education (Zuchora, 1983). In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Plato wrote extensively about gymnastike (physical training), portraying a belief that physical training was akin to moral training because of his belief in the value that all three parts of human existence – the body, mind, and soul – were interconnected. He felt that physical training could teach virtue and character to youth who should then be encouraged to seek a life of service to their community using skills honed through gymnastike (Reid, 2007).

According to Coakley's (2009) historical account, as the practice around gymnastike matured and was popularized into competitive versions, such as the Olympic Games, physical activity, or "sport", took on a new identity. Winning at Olympia became connected with the glory of city-states who rushed to professionalize their competitive representatives. As the Olympic competition grew, many city-states forced slaves to become Olympic participants, while other city-states instituted a new professional class of "athlete", funding training and nutritional needs to ensure Olympic success. Athletic guilds were organized as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to bargain for participants' rights, gain control of conditions of participation, and enjoy material

security upon retirement. Attitudes toward physical training took on highly specialized patterns of efficiency. Success in sporting endeavors began to focus more on the ability to win specific challenges/games, which was a divorce from Plato's original connection of sport to intellectual development.

As Greece gave way to Roman influence and power, physical contests and games were increasingly used to train soldiers and to entertain the masses. By AD 300, half the days on the Roman calendar were public holidays, many Romans were employed only part time, and the majority of labor and jobs were filled by unpaid slave labor. This widespread leisure time reinforced the need for mass entertainment and led the Romans to encourage and enhance local folk games throughout the fringes of their empire well into the first millennium AD (Coakley, 2009).

As the Renaissance took hold, so did warfare across the European continent and games-playing and local pastimes were discouraged so that the large peasant populations could better be controlled and utilized for productive work. Physical games instead shifted to the upper-class where the "scholar-athlete" was equated to the "Renaissance man" among the more affluent, educated echelon of society. However, following on the heels of the Renaissance, the Reformation changed continental attitudes against the perceived negative effect of games on moral character. Throughout the 1600s, the Puritans were a major voice in challenging the worth of physical games, maintaining they merely distracted man from living a godly life. This viewpoint was exported in mass to the New World but was being challenged by ideas emanating from the Enlightenment during the 1700s in which many early versions of sport and games we know today

emerged along with a new trend toward measuring achievement and logging results. Finally, as time progressed into the 1800s the Industrial Revolution took hold in the newly formed United States and across much of Europe, increasing the size of the middle class and, later, increasing concerns for the welfare of that middle class as long term, sustainable contributors to the workforce.

In the late nineteenth century, industrialization was rapidly altering the social landscape of the United States, ushering migration from the countryside into major American cities. Migrants obtaining work in the cities began to experience two accompanying phenomenon by the mid nineteenth century: the burgeoning factory workweek and increased leisure time (Wiggins, 2013). This increased leisure time was feared to be unhealthy for urban children who were identified as “at-risk” for developing a host of unsavory developmental characteristics during this social transition period. Among those who began to act were evangelical Protestants and so-called Muscular Christians, who in response to these changes created structured play activities and recreation programs in an effort to socialize youth around principles they believed led to healthy, productive lives (Wiggins, 2013). This issue was even embraced by the highest post possible – President Theodore Roosevelt – who, in 1905, fearing his nation was in danger of succumbing to a sedentary existence due to its increasing affluence and leisure time, declared:

I believe heartily in sport. I believe in... games, and I do not mind in the least that they are rough games, or that those who take part in them are occasionally injured. I have no sympathy whatsoever with the overwrought sentimentality which would keep a young man in cotton wool, and I have a hearty contempt for him if he counts a broken arm or collarbone as of serious consequence when balanced against the chance of

showing that he possesses hardihood, physical address and courage. (The Harvard Spirit, <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/143.txt>, Retrieved: November 10, 2013)

With this increased national attention, highly organized, adult-directed youth sport programs began to emerge in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Everything from privatized youth sport programming funded by philanthropic businessmen to the emergence of open, public programming such as the YMCA developed during this time. This explosion of youth sport programming drew the attention of physical educators and political leaders directing the debate toward proposed legislation and position statements throughout the 1940s and 1950s culminating in some of the first legislation and policies guiding youth sport programs through the coming decades (Wiggins, 2013).

### ***Importance of Topic***

In the United States, youth sport participation has seen a dramatic increase since the 1970s, especially with female participation rates as a result of the passage of Title IX in 1972. As the years passed, increased demand for youth sports participation beyond the opportunities present at local community-based organizations and some public/private schools led to the growth of private for-profit and public non-profit organizations offering increased numbers of playing opportunities for youth. These organizations tended to mirror population migration during the 1970s-1990s, which meant more sports opportunities began to shift toward suburban communities, which could often wield greater financial resources along with more physical space to develop sports facilities. As a result, today many urban and/or underserved communities lack proportionate youth

sports opportunities as compared to their suburban counterparts. Continuing into the 2000s, recent research has shown that over 120 school districts across the country, many of which encompass underserved communities, proposed cuts to school athletic budgets and/or elimination of some or all sports programs for 2011-2012 school year. These school districts represent over 2,000,000 youth in danger of being exposed to fewer youth sport opportunities and the research further shows that female participation is being more significantly affected than male participation (Caccamo, et al., 2010).

The resulting social issues that a decrease in youth sport opportunities are likely to augment are threefold. First, Annandale and Ferrar (2013) released a study detailing the newly identified trend of lower levels of cardiovascular fitness among current adolescent generations as compared to current adult generations. Second, Ogden, et. al (2012) released a study in the Journal of American Medical Association showing that over one third of children (ages 6-10) and adolescents (ages 11-19) in the United States are currently obese with the rate of obesity having significantly increased during the period 1980 – 2010 (Ogden, et. al 2010, National Center for Health Statistics, 2011). Third, the American Heart Association (AHA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have identified the adolescent years (ages 10-19) as the developmental timeframe correlated to health and psychosocial issues experienced later in life (Annandale and Ferrar, 2013, World Health Organization, [http://www.who.int/topics/adolescent\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/adolescent_health/en/), Retrieved: November 10, 2013).

### ***Participation***

Currently, millions of youth participate in various forms of sport each year. The 2010 U.S. Census reported there are approximately 52.7 million young people in the United States between the ages of five to 18 (U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>, Retrieved: November 10, 2013). The percentage of these children participating in youth sports is a source of disagreement as many national youth sport organizations rely on local and regional sport associations to report participation levels in terms of number of registrants. Recently, Smoll and Smith (2010) placed the number of children between the ages of six and 18 participating in agency-directed youth sports at approximately 41 million with an additional seven million 14-18 year olds participating in school-oriented programs. In a 2008 report, the National Council for Youth Sports (NCYS) placed the estimated number of registered youth sport participants at 60.3 million, noting, however, that an estimated 27% of reported youth sport registrants are actually duplicates of the same child participating across multiple sports. After accounting for estimated duplicates, the NCYS placed the number of youth sport participants at approximately 44 million (75% of which are adolescents ages 10-19) and reports that each youth spends an average of five years in their respective sport programming (National Council for Youth Sports, <http://www.ncys.org/pdfs/2008/2008-ncys-market-research-report.pdf>, Retrieved: November 10, 2013).

These statistics are of interest to the researcher because they illustrate that a majority of youth (approximately 41-44 million out of 52.7 million, or between 78-83%) participate in some form of youth sports and that a majority (approximately 33 million, or

63%) belong to the sensitive developmental timeframe referenced above by AHA and WHO (adolescence, ages 10-19) (World Health Organization, [http://www.who.int/topics/adolescent\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/adolescent_health/en/), Retrieved: November 10, 2013). With the NCYS report revealing that the average young person spends approximately five years – or roughly half of their adolescent years – engaged in youth sport programming, it is clear that programming affecting youth during adolescence is important and that more research should be conducted in this area. This additional research should be conducted in adult-directed youth sport programming to further understand the dynamics at play between youth and adult and how it may shape positive youth development outcomes.

### ***Trends in Youth Sports***

Many aspects of a young person's life such as school, church, or extracurricular activities are centered on adult direction and/or supervision. Due to a variety of modern day cultural shifts youth sports are no different. Coakley (2009) summarizes the shift towards adult-centered recreation activities by illustrating several cultural shifts and changing parental attitudes since the 1970s including: 1) the growth of dual working parent homes, 2) a preference for child-controlling parental behaviors such as child scheduling and access to their whereabouts, and 3) the high visibility of elite performance professional sports in modern society. Coakley (2009) also submits that the perception of what it means to be a good parent today has shifted toward the idea that a child must be highly scheduled, involved in several extracurricular activities, and achieve success at those activities. He postulates that a strong adult presence will continue to exist in youth sports for the foreseeable future along with these cultural influences acting on today's

parents. Coupled with the high participation levels as reported by the 2008 NCYS report, there is a need for more research into how youth sports participants and adult coaches interact and how this interaction may affect positive youth development.

### ***Evaluative Models for Sport for Youth Development***

Sport for youth development is a growing field of endeavor for many nonprofits, corporate social responsibility departments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the globe. Depending on the geographic location, the implementation side of sport for youth development programming may seek different outcomes, however, there are common umbrella themes and models that pervade most, if not all, sport for youth development programs.

The United Nations (UN) Office on Sport and Development for Peace (UNOSDP) seeks to promote play, physical activity, and sport as a tool for achieving global peace ambitions. It advocates for using sport for youth development as well as furthering its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by forming thematic working groups around the major issues it sees for youth development: child development, gender issues, peace initiatives, persons with disabilities, and public health issues (United Nations Office on Sport and Development for Peace, <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/unplayers/memberstates/pid/18407>).

The International Platform for Sport and Development (Platform) is an organization funded and governed by a steering committee comprised of sport, corporate, and NGO organizations from several nations. The Platform seeks to use “all forms of

physical activity ... [including] play recreation, organized, casual or competitive sport, indigenous sports or games” to achieve:

1. Individual development
2. Health promotion and disease prevention
3. Promotion of gender equality
4. Social integration and the development of social capital
5. Peace building and conflict prevention/resolution
6. Post-disaster/trauma relief and normalization of life
7. Economic development
8. Communication and social mobilization

In addition, through research and case studies, the Platform promotes sport for youth development as a way to instill social and emotional development, inclusion and community building/safety, character building, and reduce delinquency. The Platform presents some structured best practices by illustrating that sport programming must be implemented in the context of the desired social outcomes for the youth participants. It goes into detail about programming initiatives being diversion based (i.e. away from delinquent behaviors and social groups), rehabilitative, and introductory of new social groups including authority figures, social services, and members of other marginalized groups. The Platform continues by specifically addressing necessary programming characteristics such as adult and peer supportive approaches, individual and intentional activities, and deemphasizing regulations and winning (The International Platform for Sport and Development, <http://www.sportanddev.org/>).

More recently, others have conducted evaluative assessments of program models in sport for youth development contexts. In a longitudinal study of *The First Tee* program, Weiss (2013) emphasized a similar need for the Platform’s theoretical

framework as it relates to intentionality. Noting that participation in a youth sport program does not guarantee positive youth development outcomes, and may in fact lead to negative behaviors (Shields, et al, 2007, Weiss, et al, 2008), Weiss (2013) emphasized the need for planned, purposeful teaching within youth sports programs toward the desired outcomes of context (motivational climate), external assets (coach relationships and perceptions), and internal assets (intrinsic motivation).

Discussing how *The First Tee* program achieves positive youth development outcomes, Weiss (2013) illustrates the program “synergy among context, program delivery and intentional curriculum.” Weiss’s (2013) description of the positive youth development theoretical framework (Roth et al. 1998, Eccles and Gootman 2002, Petitpas et al. 2005) that *The First Tee* was built upon, argues that effective youth development programming must provide a mastery-oriented learning environment accompanied by compassionate and competent adult leaders (coaches) who intentionally foster the personal and social skill development desired by the program.

In discussing a similar evaluative assessment of an afterschool youth sports program in an underserved community setting, Gould, et al (2012) suggest that youth development (here, life skills) is most likely to occur through youth sport programming when coaches create environments low in ego orientation, high in mastery orientation, and high in coach caring. The study asked youth sport participants to self-report on a range of positive and negative experiences associated with their youth sport participation as well as their perceptions of the coaching environment (mastery versus ego oriented).

The findings also showed that participants' perception of an ego oriented environment was the single biggest predictor of lower levels of reported positive youth experiences in the program. As a result, Gould et al (2012) concludes that programs seeking positive youth development outcomes as a primary goal should seek to foster a mastery oriented environment through the strategies implemented by their adult mentors and coaches.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Sport for Youth Development*

The idea that youth sports impart more than just a set of sport-specific technique, motor skills, and physical fitness is not a new concept. As mentioned previously, Plato was a proponent of *gymnastike* and *mousike* coexisting to the improvement of the entire individual. Wiggins (2013) showed how the Muscular Christians of the turn of the twentieth century hoped to socialize youth through sports and how this adage was picked up by the President of the United States of America. Whether going by the name of character development (McCloy, 1930), sportsmanship (Haskins, 1960), moral development (Gibbons, et al, 1995), psychosocial development (Petitpas, 2005), life skills development (Brunelle, et. al 2007), positive youth development (Weiss, 2008), or prosocial development (Boardley, 2009), researchers have discussed and studied the concept that youth sport activities provide a unique social context, and thus, fertile ground, for the teaching of prosocial attitudes (Larson, 2000). To eliminate confusion going forward, I will limit my terminology to the parlance of our times – sport for youth development – to refer to the existence of teaching and learning that occurs through the youth sports context exclusive of sport-specific technique, motor skills, and physical fitness. Sport for youth development outcomes are skills that may be readily transferrable to other domains such as school, family, or work (Weiss, 2011).

Using applied developmental science research, Lerner (2000) presented a theoretical framework encouraging more public policies and programming that would engage families and provide opportunities to allow their children to experience sport for youth development outcomes. Lerner defined these outcomes as the “five Cs”: of Competence, Connection, Character, Compassion, and Caring (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) and advocated for more outreach research to be conducted in real world settings in order to help address programmatic needs and policy making requirements to achieve these desired outcomes. Lerner presented his framework for sport for youth development encompassing the need for a civil society to perpetuate itself via public policies aimed at socializing each successive generation into competent, contributing, and committed societal members. He argued that youth must be able to engage in challenging, skill building activities that are autonomy supporting while experiencing a caring adult/coach climate.

At the same time, Larson (2000) argues that sport for youth development has evolved apart from developmental psychology and thus ignores two key ingredients needed by youth who will come of age in a new cultural economy. Focusing on the related concepts of initiative and agency, Larson’s theoretical framework defined initiative as the ability to be motivated from within and to direct attention and effort toward a challenging goal over time, and agency as the ability and willingness to act from this intrinsic motivation. For Larson, sport for youth development should support youth’s autonomy and intrinsic motivation while simultaneously being structured and challenging. He concluded, arguing sport for youth development programming should be

delivered by competent adults who provide a compassionate environment while maintaining a mastery focus. Larson concluded these concepts are essential skills for youth to acquire because of the research by Schlegel and Barry (1991), which showed that American and European adolescents are granted less responsibility and opportunities to engage in planned, meaningful actions as compared to most other societies in the world. Larson also referenced the work of Heath (1999), which concluded that American children are exposed to little experience in which preparation, planning, implementation, or evaluation are necessary. Larson (2000) summarizes the need clearly by stating:

“In the emerging heterogeneous global society where job demands and basic life course and lifestyle decisions are not preconfigured, adolescents will need to acquire the motivation and skills to create order, meaning, and action out of a field of ill-structured choices. Individuals will need the capacity to exert cumulative effort over time to reinvent themselves, reshape their environments, and engage in other planful undertakings. A generation of bored and challenge-avoidant young adults is not going to be prepared to deal with the mounting complexity of life and take on the emerging challenges of the 21st century.” (Larson, 2000)

Finally, Petitpas (2005) supports Lerner and Larson by outlining the differences among developmental programs, intervention programs, and prevention programs arguing that developmental activities and programs should focus on personal growth and skill-building activities. Petitpas (2005) noted that developmental programs must strive to always take into account four components: 1) an appropriately challenging activity in a skill-building environment (youth’s context), 2) a supportive, caring, and compassionate peer group, community, and adult mentor/coach (youth’s external assets), 3) a set of skills that are learned to handle life situations (youth’s internal assets), and 4) a systematic evaluation procedure.

In a longitudinal study of *The First Tee* program, Weiss (2013), emphasized the above-mentioned theoretical framework's intentionality. Noting that participation in a youth sport program does not guarantee sport for youth development outcomes, and may in fact lead to negative behaviors (Shields, et al, 2007, Weiss, et al, 2008), Weiss (2013) emphasized the need for planned, purposeful teaching within youth sports programs toward the desired outcomes of context (motivational climate), external assets (coach relationships and perceptions), and internal assets (intrinsic motivation).

### ***Youth Sports Psychology***

There are a few major tenants of sport for youth development that are captured by Larson (2000) in his discussion of *initiative*. In this article, Larson defined initiative as the ability to be motivated from within (intrinsic motivation), direct attention and effort toward a challenging goal (engage with intense effort), and display both these abilities over time (maintain engagement more than sporadically). He focused on initiative because of his belief it is a prerequisite for the occurrence of other developmental traits such as creativity, leadership, altruism, and civic engagement, all of which, Larson argues, are necessary acquisitions for youth in today's emerging, global society of the twenty-first century. In summary, Larson (2000) proposed that initiative consists of three elements: 1) intrinsic motivation, 2) intense effort, and 3) the application of the first two over time.

Vallerand and Losier (1999)'s integrated theory of sport motivation uses Deci and Ryan's (1985, 1991) self-determination theory to show that athletes who engage in sport for self-determined reasons (intrinsically motivated reasons) and experience a task

mastery environment, experience higher positive affect and exhibit greater persistence and greater sportspersonship. In order for an athlete to experience intrinsic motivation for a sport, he or she must perceive the sport as enjoyable via development of positive perceptions of his or her own competence via a task mastery (self-referenced) environment (Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1986). According to Vallerand and Losier (1999), the type of motivation (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) is a mediator between higher or lower self-determination behaviors; thus, sport for youth development outcomes such as persistence, sportspersonship, and initiative are mediated by the type of motivation exhibited and the social factors of the environment created in the youth sport program.

#### *Cognitive Evaluation Theory*

Within self-determination theory lies a sub-theory that is useful in identifying reasons for different levels of intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) argues the importance of Vallerand and Losier's (1999) psychological needs of competence and autonomy in intrinsic motivation; however, CET shows that it is the presence of both needs that truly increases intrinsic motivation (Ryan, 1982). The theory illustrates that actions helping an individual to gain competence in an activity increases overall intrinsic motivation in that activity. At this juncture, the work of Fisher (1978) and Ryan (1982) is important to note as competence alone does not guarantee feelings of intrinsic motivation; however, it must be supported by a sense of autonomy to be able to increase levels of intrinsic motivation. With this in mind it follows that athletes with knowledge to perform a skill well will not necessarily experience intrinsic motivation unless they feel they can accomplish the skill

autonomously. With their origins in the youth sports learning environment (motivational climate), feelings of competence and autonomy can be fostered by a coach intentionally creating a task oriented youth sport environment (mastery climate) and allowing the athlete to experience skill building autonomously. As previously stated, the acquisition of feelings of competence and autonomy lead to intrinsic motivation, which is one of Larson's (2000) components of initiative.

Research has been conducted which shows connections between initiative and its three components Larson (2000) proposed. In a study of 510 adolescent athletes, MacDonald (2010) illustrated that the concepts of affiliation with peers, effort expenditure, self-referenced competency, and task mastery environment are important predictors of sport for youth development experiences. Furthermore, the study showed that effort expenditure, task mastery, and self-referenced competency are positively related to initiative, as posited by Larson (2000). MacDonald (2010) found that the strongest predictor of initiative was competitive excitement – a construct with close ties to intrinsic motivation as argued by Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986).

#### *Motivational Climate*

The root of motivational climate lies within goal perspective theory, which is concerned with the different ways athletes approach and think about achievement situations. The theory describes two goal orientations that athletes adopt: task goal orientation and ego goal orientation. With task goal orientation the athlete perceives his or her own ability as a function of their own perceived improvement over time (self-referenced). With ego goal orientation the athlete perceives his or her own ability as a

function of self-comparisons made with peers (other-referenced) (Cox, 2012). Research has shown that athletes who report high levels of task goal orientation generally exhibit a more positive psychological and behavioral profile for characteristics such as high self-esteem, perceived competence, enjoyment, and satisfaction than those athletes who report high levels of ego goal orientations (Cumming, Smith, Smoll, Standage, & Grossbard, 2008).

As with individuals the overall environment in which an individual experiences youth sport programming can also be task or ego oriented. Like individual goal orientation, researchers have identified two motivational climates, that of mastery climate (task orientation associated) and competitive climate (ego orientation associated). In a mastery climate an athlete receives positive reinforcement from a coach upon exhibiting 1) hard work, 2) improvement, 3) cooperation, and 4) a belief that every player's contribution is important. In a competitive climate an athlete perceives that a coach 1) punishes poor performance, 2) recognizes and praises high-ability athletes, and 3) encourages competition among teammates (Cox, 2012). Research in self-determination theory with Deci et al. (1991) has shown that environmental factors such as the motivational climate established by coaches can influence athlete motivation while Roberts (2001) argued that a mastery climate encourages sport for youth development outcomes. Also, when exposed to a mastery climate for an extended period of time, an athlete can assume a greater task goal orientation (Gano-Overway and Ewing, 2004).

Studies have shown that an athlete's perceived motivational climate is an indicator of likely goal orientation in youth sport athletes over time. Results of one such

longitudinal study by Boyce, Gano-Overway, and Campbell (2009) showed that when an athlete's perceived motivational climate did not align with goal orientation, there was a significant shift in that athlete's goal orientation over time to match the perceived motivational climate. Similarly, investigations have established that athletes experiencing a mastery motivational climate exhibit significant increases in both measures of perception of mastery motivational climate as well as measures of task goal orientation (Smoll, Smith, and Cumming, 2007). Furthermore, Smoll, Smith, and Cumming (2007) continued their work in a separate, large population study surveying 9-13 year old youth basketball players across 47 teams in a community youth sport program. Over the course of a season, the study found that survey scores for perceived mastery motivational climate were associated with significant increases in task goal orientation and decreases in ego goal orientation survey scores. Additionally, the researchers found that competitive motivational climate scores were significantly related to increases in ego goal orientation scores.

The type of motivation exhibited by an athlete can also be affected by motivational climate. In a year long, longitudinal study of youth athletes ages 11-16, perceived mastery motivational climate was relatively stable over the course of a training year and was a predictor of the athletes' intrinsic motivation toward activity at the end of that year (Joesaar, Hein, and Hagger, 2011).

### ***Positive Outcomes of Sport for Youth Development***

In sport for youth development, it is increasingly common for claims of sport for youth development outcomes to be substantiated by evidence-based research. Although

the literature is not flush with outcome-based research, there is evidence to support that sport for youth development outcomes can be associated with sport for youth development programming. The existing literature suggests that there is an operable conceptual framework that sport for youth development may use to be successful in promoting sport for youth development outcomes.

In a study of a high school soccer team, Holt et al (2008) noted that even in the absence of notable, direct life skill teaching that team players functioned as producers of their own experiences, which supported learning and developing life skills. The study illustrated that the climate the coach created allowed players to learn and demonstrate initiative, which was recognized by the players as a skill that transferred to other domains.

Using an intentional programming curriculum, Brunelle et al (2007) evaluated 100 participants in a sport-based life skills and community service program based around a national golf program, *The First Tee*. The research used several measurement instruments to draw conclusions about the ability of the intervention program to impact participants' reported prosocial values. The results of the study showed that the majority of significant, positive impact on prosocial values occurred around the life skills that were specifically taught and practiced during the program.

In a longitudinal study of *The First Tee* program, Weiss (2013) notes that participation in a youth sport program does not guarantee sport for youth development outcomes, and may in fact lead to negative behaviors (Shields, et al, 2007, Weiss, et al, 2008). This first year study of *The First Tee* program illustrates the need for planned,

purposeful teaching within youth sports programs toward the desired outcomes of context (motivational climate), external assets (coach relationships and perceptions), and internal assets (intrinsic motivation). The study concluded that a majority of participants were able to recall core concepts and strategies from the program and illustrated transference to other domains through real-life examples of generalizing their learning to situations in school, at home, with peers, and in the workplace (Weiss, 2013).

In creating a new measurement instrument, the Youth Experiences Survey (YES), Hansen, Larson and Dworkin (2003), conducted a study of 450 high school students with participation experience in youth activities, which the study defined as community programs and extracurricular activities. The study hypothesized sport for youth development outcomes bridging two overarching categories based on the existing literature: personal development, consisting of identity work, initiative, and basic emotional/cognitive and physical skills; and interpersonal development, consisting of teamwork and social skills, interpersonal relationships and peer networks, and social capital stemming from connections to adults in the local community. The study concluded that students reported youth activities as a learning context in which they gained developmental skills from the two above mentioned categories at higher rates than two other major contexts in their lives (participation in an academic class and socializing with peers in an unstructured, unregulated environment). Also, the students reported negative experiences at lower rates than the two other major contexts in their daily lives.

In a similar self-report study, Gould, Flett, and Lauer (2012) conducted a study of 239 youth sport participants in an urban, underserved community using a combination of

self-report measurements including the Youth Experiences Survey 2.0 (YES-2), the Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS), the Caring Climate Scale (CSS) and the Sport Motivational Climate Scale (SMCS). Their findings show that youth in this youth sports setting most often reported recognizing and acquiring the skills of teamwork, physical skill development, and initiative through participation in the program. Additionally, youth reported most often a perception of a mastery versus ego motivational climate, supporting research that sport for youth development must feature a mastery-oriented motivational climate (The International Platform for Sport and Development, <http://www.sportanddev.org/>; Weiss, 2013).

### ***Negative Outcomes of Sport for Youth Development***

Just as the work mentioned above reveals the ability for youth to learn positive development traits through sport, other studies have shown the opposite to be true as well – that youth may acquire and exhibit socially unacceptable behaviors. In a study of 656 middle school students (grades 5-8) in three different geographic regions in the United States, Shields, et al (2007) revealed through self-report analysis that negative outcomes do occur through sports participation. The study identified perceived coach spectator behaviors as key predictors of poor sport behaviors by participants. The study supports that notion prevalent in the sport for youth development literature that coaches, teammates, parents, and spectators are important influences on the perceived and exhibited social outcomes of youth sport participation.

Guivernau and Duda (2002) conducted a study that supports the literature on motivational climate, illustrating the influence that coaches have on youth sport

participants. The study examined 194 soccer players' (ages 13-19) likelihood to display aggression (i.e. to play unfairly) and whether gender played a mediating role. The results of the study indicated that, regardless of gender, the players reported a higher likelihood to engage in aggression if they believed their coach support the aggression. In addition, players indicated a higher likelihood to display aggression when they perceived a high likelihood that their teammates would do the same.

In a study of male soccer players between the ages of 12-17, Kavussanu et al (2006) observed 24 teams comprised of 313 players. According to the study, antisocial behaviors were observed more frequently than prosocial behaviors and corresponded with a higher perception of a competitive motivational climate along with the perception of a weaker mastery climate within the players' teams. The study concludes by illustrating that an important contributing factor to the occurrence of either type of behavior is the motivational climate that players perceive to exist and that antisocial behaviors may be diminished by creating a motivational climate focused on skill building and participation as opposed to competition, competitive edge attainment, and winning.

Negative outcomes are a realistic possibility in youth sport settings. It is of great value to researchers to acknowledge these outcomes and understand why they occur. The research presented in this section is a brief synopsis of a larger pool of literature that delves into the connection between negative outcomes and motivational climate. This argues for future youth sport programming to feature highly competent, caring adult coaches committed to using intentional curricula presented earlier ((The International Platform for Sport and Development, <http://www.sportanddev.org/>; Weiss, 2013) in order

to achieve sport for youth development outcomes, skill building mastery, and the even the ability to compete to win.

### ***Measurement Instruments***

The Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS) was developed and validated through a study by Smith, Cumming, and Smoll (2008) proving to have acceptable levels of reliability in both white middle class and low income minority sample populations. The instrument distinguished between participant perceptions of mastery- and ego-involving coach behaviors while also illustrating its validity by proving sensitive to a coach intervention design aimed at promoting a mastery climate while reducing ego climate perceptions and behaviors. The MCSYS was developed with a readability level of grade 4.0 or below and is a 12-question measurement instrument based on a 5-point Likert scale. The participant is asked to read each question and circle the answer that is most correct for his/her experience with one corresponding to “Not true at all” and five corresponding to “Very true” (see Appendix A). Six of the 12 questions (Q2, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q11) provide the measurement of mastery motivational climate while the other six questions (Q1, Q3, Q5, Q8, Q10, Q12) provide the measurement of competitive motivational climate. Once completed, the survey is scored by summing each set of six questions. There is a possible score range of six (lowest) – 30 (highest). The MCSYS was found to be valid and reliable and contributed to the body of research that the YESports program currently draws upon for its *Mastery Approach to Coaching* program (<http://www.y-e-sports.com/CoachEducation.html>).

The Youth Experiences Scale (YES) was established through the work of Hansen and Larsen (2005) for use in assessing youth experiences in different structured activities including performing and fine arts, academic clubs, community organizations, sports and service organizations, and faith-based groups. The YES was not developed exclusively for use in youth sport settings, which lead to the shorter version of the YES featuring stronger psychometric properties (Hansen and Larson, 2005)

The YES-2 contains 70 items and 11 subscales (six positive scales and five negative scales). The YES-2 contains 70 items with 11 subscales – six positive outcome scales and five negative outcome scales. The six positive outcome scales within the instrument are 1) identity work, 2) initiative, 3) emotional regulation, 4) teamwork five negative outcome scales are 1) stress, 2) inappropriate adult behavior, 3) negative influence, 4) social exclusion, and 5) negative group dynamics. Each item four (“Yes Definitely”).

### ***Purpose***

Sports have a history of being promoted as a vehicle of character development and other positive social outcomes, with many modern sports enthusiasts from current practitioners to mere casual sports fans supporting that notion today. In analyzing the available literature there are a number of factors that affect the ability of sport to act as a vehicle of youth’s social development. Factors relate to the nature of the programming, the existence (or lack thereof) of intentional curricular programming, the physical environment, the characteristics of the peer network engaged in the programming, and the

coaching behaviors surrounding the implementation of the programming. This final factor is part of the focus of this study, as coaches play a critical role on the ground as authority figure, teacher of sport skill, and mentor. As supported by the literature, coaches may significantly impact the perceived motivational climate and thus the social value (or, again, lack thereof) gained by youth participating in the sport setting.

This research is interested in understanding how youth perceive their coaches, the environment those coaches create, and what young people feel they get out of sport participation. More specifically, this research will identify player perceptions of the motivational climate created by their coach and ask youth to report on perceived positive and negative youth development outcomes. This research will take the form of an evaluative assessment of an afterschool youth soccer program in an urban, underserved community in a large city on the east coast of the United States. It will seek to analyze relationships between player perceptions of the coach-created motivational climate and their self-reporting on positive and negative experiences in the program. It is the hypothesis of this research that, due to the nature of the afterschool program's intentional curriculum, players will report higher levels of mastery motivational climate, which will be correlated to higher reporting of positive experiences from program participation.

This research should be useful for youth sport administrators, coaches, program directors, directors of coaching, and others in the youth sport domain. Also, this research should contribute to a growing knowledge of how coaching behaviors may affect sport for youth development outcomes in youth sports and help future practitioners avoid negative experiences for the youth in engaged in their programs. This

understanding can lead to recommendations and best practices by which youth sport administrators and coaches may work together to implement intentional curricula designed to achieve positive sport for youth development outcomes along with the other goals of their organization.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### *Research Questions*

The research questions developed for this study will be centered on perceptions and self-reports of program participants taking part in an intentional afterschool sport-based youth development program. The purpose of this approach will be three-fold: 1) to analyze participants' perceptions of the motivational climate in their program, 2) to analyze participants' experiences they report having undergone in the program and 3) to analyze relationships, discover correlations, and determine whether predictors of program success exist therein. The central question guiding this assessment will be "What are participant perceptions and attitudes toward the motivational climate and their experiences resulting from regular participation in this afterschool program?" From this central question, several sub-questions will be derived and are listed below:

1. What motivational climate and experiences do participants most frequently perceive within the program?
2. Do demographic factors such as gender, race, and age account for differing perceptions of the motivational climate?
3. What experiences – positive and negative – are reported by participants of the program?

4. Do demographic factors such as gender, race, and age account for differing experiences reported from participation in the program?

### ***Research Design and Instrumentation***

The research design for this study will take the form of an evaluative assessment of an intentional, afterschool sport-based youth development program. A quantitative approach will be used by administering three separate surveys to program participants during one program practice. First, a short demographic survey will be completed by each participant, including age, race, gender, length of participation in the program, and school attended.

Next, participants will complete the Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS), which was developed and validated through a study by Smith, Cumming, and Smoll (2008). The instrument will distinguish between participants' perceptions of mastery- and ego-involving motivational climate. The MCSYS was developed with a readability level of grade 4.0 or below and is a 12-question measurement instrument based on a five-point Likert scale. The participant will be asked to read each question and circle the answer that is most correct for his/her experience with one corresponding to "Not true at all" and five corresponding to "Very true" (see Appendix A). Six of the 12 questions (Q2, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q11) will provide the measurement of mastery motivational climate while the other six questions (Q1, Q3, Q5, Q8, Q10, Q12) will provide the measurement of competitive motivational climate. Once completed, the

survey will be scored by summing each set of six questions. There will be a possible score range of six (lowest) – 30 (highest).

Finally, participants will complete the Youth Experiences Scale 2.0 (YES-2), which was established through the work of Hansen and Larsen (2005) for use in assessing youth experiences in different structured activities including performing and fine arts, academic clubs, community organizations, sports and service organizations, and faith-based groups.

The YES-2 contains 70 items with 11 subscales – six positive outcome scales and five negative outcome scales. The six positive outcome scales within the instrument are 1) identity work, 2) initiative, 3) emotional regulation, 4) teamwork and social skills, 5) positive relationships, and 6) adult networks and social capital. The five negative outcome scales are 1) stress, 2) inappropriate adult behavior, 3) negative influence, 4) social exclusion, and 5) negative group dynamics. Each item in the YES-2 will be tallied via a Likert-style scale ranging from one (“Not at All”) to four (“Yes Definitely”) – for ease of analysis, scoring was reversed from the original YES-2 so that strong positive answers equated to the larger numerical Likert score (“Yes Definitely” = four).

Two items (#51 and #52) were removed from the YES-2 because they refer to incongruent life experiences for the study’s age range (jobs/careers and college preparation respectively). Additionally, the pronoun “I” will be added to multiple items in order to improve the readability and participant identification with each statement. Finally, the word “activity” will be replaced in multiple items by the local program name (*Soccer for Success*) to improve participant comprehension of each statement.

### ***Research Setting***

The participants for this study were current, registered participants in a structured, intentional afterschool soccer program. The program is administered nationwide by a national non-profit through local non-profit partners in various cities. This study utilized convenience sampling available at program sites in Washington, D.C. operated the local non-profit program partner.

The afterschool program is a free, soccer-based program that uses soccer as a tool to combat childhood obesity, promote healthy lifestyles, deliver positive adult mentorship, and engage families in under resourced, urban communities. The program consists of four components: Physical Activity, Nutrition Education, Mentorship, and Family Engagement. The program features three-day-per-week programming for twelve weeks twice per year (fall and spring) for a total of 24 weeks of programming. The program uses an intentional curriculum to teach soccer and nutrition education while delivering levels of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity commiserate with recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The program had an established coach to player ratio of 15:1 during the time of this study and supports smaller ratios when possible. Each day of the program has a corresponding 8-step Practice or Game Day plan, which a coach follows by introducing a soccer and nutrition topic, teaching those topics during the flow of soccer-specific activities, and then reviewing those topics at the end of that day's programming.

### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 45 (n= 45) registrants of the program at three sites in Washington, D.C. Participants included 36 boys and nine girls ranging from 10 – 13 years old. All participants were part of a convenience sample taking part in this study in the same cohort with which they normally participate in the program so as to disrupt the program as little as possible. The racial makeup of the participants was self-reported as either Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino. No other racial categories were reported by participants (other racial category options available on demographic survey corresponded to the categories on program registration paperwork and were Asian, Caucasian, Native American/Alaskan, Pacific Islander). According to program-provided data, 75% of the participants at the three program sites qualified for the free lunch program at their school.

### ***Data Collection***

Participants were maintained in the individual cohorts by which they normally completed their soccer practice (groups of approximately 15 participants with an assigned coach at each site). For data collection, during one practice, each group was rotated with their coach from the field to a designated side area of the field and was given pencils, surveys, and a space in which to complete the surveys. In the event of inclement weather, indoor facilities were made available and reserved at each site. Coaches were asked to be present for behavior management purposes during data collection, but asked not to intervene in the survey administration or explanation of the measurement instruments to minimize participant answer bias. This study's author and the program site coordinator administered the surveys to participants by reading the directions printed

on the page and providing clarification of the items and Likert scales when needed. Each survey was coded so as to allow for proper data analysis in the future. All surveys were anonymous and no personal identifiers were collected as a part of this study.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data from the surveys were treated using SPSS software. Some surveys were discarded due to being incomplete or having long, repeated answer strings, such as reporting the same answer repeatedly to multiple questions. This analysis was used to evaluate the central question and subquestions of the study mentioned previously. Descriptives such as data frequencies and means were calculated using SPSS, while statistical significance of survey responses were found by running independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA tests.

### ***Limitations***

The nature of youth programming and its intended outcomes differ from program to program. There were external variables affecting outcomes that are beyond the reach of this study. The relatively small sample size of the study ( $n = 45$ ) was a reflection of the difficulty penetrating the population's household to gain parental consent. Parental consent participant assent forms were provided in English and Spanish language translations – the two most widely used languages in the population's communities. However, the communities are diverse and a multitude of languages and dialects are present that may have contributed to low consent/assent response. In addition, the

research setting is illustrative of many challenges working in urban, underserved communities, which have greater instances of dual-working parent households, single-parent households, and non-traditional household consisting of older siblings or extended family members acting as guardians. Due to all these challenges, response rate was much lower than hoped for, with a sample population equating to approximately only 10% - 15% of the potential population cross the three program sites.

Other limitations to include involve the data collection procedure, which contained was some coach-participant interaction whether in the form of language translation needs, general explanatory needs, or behavior management aid. This interaction could have introduced bias in participant responses. Finally, the program sites used in this study are located in economically challenged and culturally diverse neighborhoods of a large, urban city along the eastern seaboard. As a result of these limitations the results herein are not generalizable to other populations of youth sport participants.

### ***IRB Statement***

This study sought and received permission to work with human subjects from the Internal Review Board (IRB) for academic research. This study sought to abide by and be reviewed by all protocols, safeguards, and guidelines set forth by the IRB and did not conduct research prior to IRB approval. IRB approval notifications are included in the Appendix of this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The participants were children participating in an afterschool youth soccer program operated at school sites by a city-approved afterschool youth sport programmer. The researcher approached 156 children to take the study, and 45 of them agreed to participate. During data analysis, four participants' surveys from the MCSYS were disregarded due to incomplete surveys, resulting in a total population of 41 ( $n = 41$ ) for the MCSYS and seven participants' surveys from the YES 2.0 were eliminated due to incomplete surveys, resulting in a population of 38 ( $n = 38$ ) for the YES 2.0. This resulted in a response rate of 28.84% for the MCSYS and 24.36% for the YES 2.0.

### *Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS)*

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the demographic survey (see Appendix A). The majority of participants were either 11 years old (26.8%) or 12 years old (39.0%) with most being male (78.0%). Of the six racial categories listed on the demographic survey, all participants reported as either Black/African-American (36.6%) or Hispanic/Latino (63.4%). More participants reported this season being their first in the program (39.0%) with others reporting one to two seasons (31.7%), three to four seasons (14.6%), and five or more seasons (14.6%).

*Table 1 - Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

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<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
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Age	10	9	22.0%
	11	11	26.8%
	12	16	39.0%
	13	5	12.2%
Racial/Ethnic Background	Black or African-American	15	36.6%
	Hispanic or Latino	26	63.4%
Number of Seasons Participated	First Season	16	39.0%
	1 – 2 Seasons	13	31.7%
	3 – 4 Seasons	6	14.6%
	5 or More Seasons	6	14.6%
Gender	Male	32	78.0%
	Female	9	22.0%

Table 2 below illustrates the descriptive statistics for the responses to the MCSYS (see Appendix A). The Likert scale for the MCSYS was on a range of one – five (one = Not true at all and five = Very true). A mean of 23.54 (M = 23.54) out of a possible 30.00 was reported for mastery climate scores and a mean of 14.29 (M = 14.29) out of a possible 30.00 was reported for competitive climate scores.

*Table 2 – Means with standard deviations for MCSYS responses.*

<b>MCSYS Question</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Winning games is the most important thing for the coach.	41	2.71	1.55
The coach made players feel good when they improved a skill.	41	4.22	.96
The coach spent less time with the players who weren't as good	41	2.07	1.21
The coach encouraged us to learn new skills	41	4.12	1.10
The coach told us which players on the team were the best.	41	2.41	1.18
The coach told players to help each other get better.	41	3.41	1.32
The coach told us that trying our best was the most important thing.	41	4.29	.81
The coach paid most attention to the best players.	41	2.22	.93
The coach said that teammates should help each other improved their skills.	41	3.56	1.02
Players were taken out of games if they made a mistake.	41	2.02	1.35
The coach said that all of us were important to the team's success.	41	3.93	1.01
The coach told us to try to be better than our teammates.	41	2.85	1.29
Mastery Climate Score	41	23.54	3.89
Competitive Climate Score	41	14.29	4.15

Table 3 illustrates the means for mastery and competitive climate scores by demographic data such as gender, age, and race.

*Table 3 – Mastery and Climate scores by demographic category*

<b>Gender</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Male Mastery Climate Scores	32	23.22	4.13
Male Competitive Climate Scores	32	14.47	4.55
Female Mastery Climate Scores	9	23.54	3.89
Female Competitive Climate Scores	9	14.29	4.15
<b>Age</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
10 Mastery Climate Scores	9	23.00	6.14
11 Mastery Climate Scores	11	23.55	2.87
12 Mastery Climate Scores	16	24.63	2.98
13 Mastery Climate Scores	5	21.00	3.00
10 Competitive Climate Scores	9	13.89	4.78
11 Competitive Climate Scores	11	15.09	4.63
12 Competitive Climate Scores	16	14.06	4.10
13 Competitive Climate Scores	5	14.29	4.15
<b>Race</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Black/African-American Mastery Climate Scores	15	23.13	2.69
Hispanic/Latino Mastery Climate Scores	26	23.77	4.48
Black-African-American Mastery Climate Scores	15	14.27	3.53
Hispanic/Latino Mastery Climate Scores	26	14.31	4.54

An independent samples t-test was run to compare means between MCSYS responses for gender and race. For gender, mastery climate scores,  $t(39,18.74) = -.984$ ,  $p = .331$  and for competitive climate scores,  $t(39,26.30) = .507$ ,  $p = .615$ , yielding no significance ( $p < .05$ ). For race, mastery climate scores,  $t(39,38.88) = -.498$ ,  $p = .621$  and for competitive climate scores,  $t(39,35.38) = -.300$ ,  $p = .976$ , yielding no significance ( $p < .05$ ). A one-way ANOVA test was run to compare means among demographic groups. Among groups,  $F(3,37) = 1.195$ ,  $p = .325$ , yielding no significance ( $p < .05$ ).

### ***Youth Experiences Scale 2.0 (YES 2.0)***

Table 6 illustrates the descriptive statistics for responses to the YES 2.0 survey by subgroup. There were 10 subgroups on the YES 2.0 survey (see Appendix A): Identity Experiences, Initiative Experiences, Basic Skills, Positive Relationships, Teamwork and Social Skills, Adult Networks and Social Capital, Stress, Negative Influences, Social Exclusion, and Negative Group Dynamics. Of these 10 subgroups, six were identified as positive experiences (Identity, Initiative, Basic Skills, Positive Relationships, Teamwork and Social Skills, and Adult Network and Social Capital), and four were identified as negative experiences (Stress, Negative Influences, Social Exclusion, and Negative Group Dynamics). The Likert scale ranged from individual question answers of one (not at all) and four (yes, definitely). Each subgroup had a different number of questions. Minimum and maximum possible scores are represented in Table 4. Three respondents were removed from the group ( $n=38$ ) due to a lack of survey completion.

*Table 4 – Means with standard deviations for YES 2.0 responses by subgroup.*

<b>YES 2.0 Subgroup</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b><i>Min</i></b>	<b><i>Max</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Identity	38	6	24	15.81	4.57
Initiative	38	9	48	34.02	6.79
Basic Skills	38	10	40	24.97	6.88
Positive Relationships	38	8	32	21.05	5.94
Teamwork and Social Skills	38	10	40	27.55	6.58
Adult Networks and Social Capital	38	5	20	12.86	3.84
Stress	38	3	12	5.73	2.17
Negative Influences	38	4	16	6.76	2.98
Social Exclusion	38	3	12	4.65	2.46
Negative Group Dynamics	38	3	12	5.42	2.64

Table 5 illustrates responses to the YES 2.0 scores by gender, including the mean and standard deviation.

*Table 5 – Means with standard deviations for YES 2.0 responses by gender.*

<b>YES 2.0 Subgroup</b>	<b><i>Male</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>	<b><i>Female</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
Identity	30	15.80	4.87	8	15.87	3.48
Initiative	30	34.66	7.19	8	32.75	5.20
Basic Skills	30	25.70	7.19	8	22.25	5.03
Positive Relationships	30	21.40	6.39	8	19.75	3.84
Teamwork and Social Skills	30	28.10	6.92	8	25.50	4.95
Adult Networks and Social Capital	30	12.76	4.05	8	13.25	3.10
Stress	30	5.76	2.23	8	5.62	2.06

Negative Influences	30	6.96	3.16	8	6.00	2.13
Social Exclusion	30	4.80	2.69	8	4.12	1.24
Negative Group Dynamics	30	5.50	2.88	8	5.12	1.55

Table 6 illustrates responses to the YES 2.0 survey by age (10-11), including the mean and standard deviation.

*Table 6 – Means with standard deviations for YES 2.0 responses by age (10-11).*

<b>YES 2.0 Subgroup</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Identity	7	18.85	3.18	11	14.36	4.27
Initiative	7	36.57	7.27	11	33.09	4.98
Basic Skills	7	27.28	9.34	11	24.45	7.11
Positive Relationships	7	23.57	6.75	11	21.00	4.93
Teamwork and Social Skills	7	28.28	6.07	11	29.36	6.81
Adult Networks and Social Capital	7	14.00	4.08	11	13.45	4.13
Stress	7	6.57	1.98	11	5.54	2.46
Negative Influences	7	8.85	2.47	11	6.72	3.79
Social Exclusion	7	5.28	1.79	11	5.36	3.10
Negative Group Dynamics	7	5.85	2.79	11	6.72	3.06

Table 7 illustrates responses to the YES 2.0 survey by age (12-13), including the mean and standard deviation.

*Table 7 – Means with standard deviations for YES 2.0 responses by age (12-13).*

<b>YES 2.0 Subgroup</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Identity	15	16.13	5.16	5	13.80	3.42
Initiative	15	34.13	8.43	5	32.20	4.26
Basic Skills	15	25.00	6.81	5	22.80	1.64
Positive Relationships	15	21.06	6.70	5	17.60	3.78
Teamwork and Social Skills	15	27.06	6.93	5	23.40	5.02
Adult Networks and Social Capital	15	12.53	4.08	5	11.00	1.58
Stress	15	5.80	2.21	5	4.80	1.78
Negative Influences	15	5.53	1.45	5	7.60	3.91
Social Exclusion	15	3.40	0.63	5	6.00	3.93
Negative Group Dynamics	15	4.00	1.00	5	5.42	3.56

Table 8 illustrates responses to the YES 2.0 survey by race (BAAM = Black/African-American and HILAT = Hispanic/Latino), including the mean and standard deviation.

*Table 8 – Means with standard deviations for YES 2.0 responses by race.*

<b>YES 2.0 Subgroup</b>	<b>BAAM</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>HILAT</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Identity	15	14.13	4.20	23	16.91	4.55
Initiative	15	32.80	6.10	23	34.82	7.22
Basic Skills	15	23.73	6.06	23	25.78	7.39
Positive Relationships	15	20.46	5.90	23	21.43	6.07
Teamwork and Social Skills	15	27.33	6.32	23	27.69	6.89
Adult Networks and Social Capital	15	11.66	3.33	23	13.65	4.01
Stress	15	5.00	2.03	23	6.21	2.17
Negative Influences	15	5.86	2.06	23	7.34	3.36

Social Exclusion	15	3.53	0.91	23	5.39	2.82
Negative Group Dynamics	15	4.53	1.59	23	6.00	3.04

An independent samples t-test was run to compare means between YES 2.0 responses for gender and race. For gender, no significant results ( $p < .05$ ) were found through the independent samples t-test. For race, the test yielded only one significant result in the Social Exclusion subgroup,  $t(36,28.30) = -2.41$ ;  $p = .021$ . Due the  $p$ -value ( $p = .021$ ) yielded in this test, the value's statistical significance is questionable. All other subgroup results were not significant.

A one-way ANOVA test was run to compare means between the demographic groups gender and race. Between groups, one significant result ( $p < .05$ ) was found for the subgroup Negative Group Dynamics  $F(3,34) = 2.94$ ,  $p = .047$ .

A Tukey HSD test was run to compare means among the age groups 10-14. One significant result ( $p < .05$ ) was found for the subgroup Negative Group Dynamics between the ages of 11 and 12 ( $p = .041$ ). Table 14 illustrates the Tukey HSD test results.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This research was interested in understanding how youth perceive their coaches, the environment those coaches create, and what young people feel they get out of sport participation. More specifically, this research worked to identify player perceptions of the motivational climate created by their program coach and also asked youth to report on perceived positive and negative youth development outcomes.

In examining responses to the MCSYS survey, participants responded most frequently in favor of perceiving a mastery climate ( $M = 23.54$ ) as compared to a perception of a competitive climate ( $M = 14.29$ ). This same existence of a stronger mastery climate perception was apparent across demographic factors of age, gender, and race. For age, ages 11 and 13 showed the narrowest perception gap between mastery climate and competitive climate scores. For age 13, this outcome aligns with sports psychology literature that describes this age as the beginning of investment years by many youth. This is a time when many youth begin to gravitate toward an interest, and possibly specialization, in a particular sport. Therefore, a shift toward an attitude of competition and peer comparison would be a logical potential outcome for this age. However, it must be noted that in our frequencies reporting, age 13 was the lowest represented category for the age demographic with only five respondents of a total of 41 reporting this as their age. As a result of this low sample, no major results may be

concluded from this observation. For gender, from a global perspective, males and females both reported a higher score for a mastery climate perception than a competitive climate. Males reported a slightly lower score for their perception of mastery climate than females ( $M = 23.22$  compared to  $M = 24.67$  respectively), while also reporting a slightly higher score for their perception of a competitive climate than females ( $M = 14.47$  compared to  $M = 13.67$  respectively). This is an interesting occurrence, although potential statistical bias must be acknowledged due to the convenience sampling and low percentage of females in the sample overall. Of the 41 respondents to the MCSYS, only nine reported their gender as female. For race, which consisted of only two reported categories (Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino), both categories reported nearly equal perceptions of a mastery climate ( $M = 23.13$  and  $M = 23.77$  respectively) as opposed to a competitive climate ( $M = 14.27$  and  $14.31$  respectively). According to this data, the program environment is perceived by participants to be encouraging of a mastery climate more so than a competitive environment. Among the demographic categories used in this study, age seems to be the factor that may affect perception of motivational climate the most, as means for age groups shifted most from the overall demographic category comparisons. Despite these observations of the data and the anecdotal observations of age group responses, when running t-tests to evaluate for relationships between the demographic categories' MCSYS responses, no significant results were found. Similarly, when comparing means across all demographic categories with a one-way ANOVA test, no significant results were found. These results suggest that the program's coaches and administrators are creating a positive, mastery focused

climate, which as the above-mentioned literature has shown, is beneficial for both necessary sport-specific skill development, as well as the other deliverables associated with the intentional curriculum around life skills and healthy lifestyles.

In examining responses to the YES 2.0 survey, it must be noted that three additional surveys of participants who completed the MCSYS were discarded due to incomplete surveys. Therefore, 38 total participants comprise the sample population YES 2.0 responses. Respondents gave feedback on their perceptions of their experiences in the program spanning 10 subgroups, six of which were positive experiences and four which were negative experiences. It is inappropriate to compare minimum and maximum or ranges of scores as each subgroup differs in the number of questions on the YES 2.0 that constitute it subgroup. Therefore we must compare their means. Overall, the six positive experience subgroups received higher respondent perception scores than did the negative subgroups. For the YES 2.0, the higher the score, the most the respondent agreed with the subgroup experience. All six of the positive subgroups reported means over 50% of the maximum score for each subgroup, while all four negative subgroups reported means below 50% of the maximum score for each subgroup. Of the positive subgroups, Initiative experiences reported a mean of 34.02 out of a maximum score of 48 and Identity reported a mean of 15.81 out of a maximum score of 24. This means respondents reported strong agreement with experience statements relating to exploration of and reflection on their identity during the program and also for statements relating to goal-setting, effort, problem solving, and time management. The highest scoring negative subgroup was that of Stress, which reported a mean of 5.73 out of a maximum

score of 12. This subgroup also featured the lowest standard deviation ( $SD = 2.17$ ) suggesting population agreement on this experience in the program.

When analyzing YES 2.0 responses by gender, it is clear that each gender followed the overall responses to the survey just discussed. However, four subgroups are of interest: Initiative, Basic Skills, Positive Relationships, and Teamwork and Social Skills. Interestingly, all four subgroups are in the positive experience category and each exhibited noteworthy differences between gender with females responding in less agreement with the positive experience statements on the survey than males (Initiative:  $m=34.36$ ,  $f=32.75$ ; Basic Skills:  $m=25.70$ ,  $f=22.25$ ; Positive Relationships:  $m=21.40$ ,  $f=25.50$ ; Teamwork and Social Skills:  $m=28.10$ ,  $f=25.50$ ). This suggests that female experiences in the program were different than males, perhaps slightly less strongly positive than reported by males. Finally, it must be noted that of the 38 YES 2.0 respondents, only eight were female, thus introducing the possibility of population size bias to analysis.

Examining responses to the YES 2.0 by age yield results at either end of the mean clustered by age range. Ages 11 and 12 featured responses spread about the mean by subgroup, but ages 10 and 13 featured responses more extreme. For age 10, respondents reported experiences more intensely positive for the six positive subgroups and more intensely negative for the negative subgroups than did the overall population (each subgroup mean for age 10 exceeded the mean for each subgroup of the overall population). Additionally, age 13 was the same, but opposite for each subgroup except for the negative subgroups Social Exclusion and Negative Group Dynamics, which both

exceed overall population means slightly. This suggests that youngest (age 10) and oldest (age 13) of the program both expressed opposing experiences strengths resulting from participation in the program while the two ages in between (ages 11 and 12) reported a more random distribution of experience responses to the survey. However, it must be noted that ages 10 and 13 featured the smallest population totals for the four age groups. Age 10 and 13 accounted for seven and five of the 38 total respondents respectively, which could eliminate the ability to draw strong conclusions from the data.

In analyzing responses to the YES 2.0, responses illustrate different strengths of experience for each race category. For those self-identifying as Black/African-American, responses across all 10 subgroups were slightly lower than the overall population mean, while the opposite was true across all 10 subgroups for responses from Hispanic/Latino respondents. More so than age and gender, this is of interest due to the more equal representation of race in the overall population. Of the 38 respondents, 15 self-identified as Black/African-American and 23 self-identified as Hispanic/Latino. This feedback illustrates a milder positive and negative experience reporting by Black/African-American respondents when compared to Hispanic/Latino respondents.

When conducting t-tests and ANOVAs to compare means of YES 2.0 responses between the three demographic categories of age, gender, and race, only two significant results were found. When comparing responses between races, the results for responses to the negative subgroup Social Exclusion were found to be significant ( $p = .02$ ). Also, when comparing responses between ages, significant results were found ( $p = .04$ ) for the negative subgroup Negative Group Dynamics between the ages 11 and 12.

From this analysis we know that our results are not generalizable to a larger population due to the constraints on sampling, size of population and lack of significant results from data treatment. However, the findings are of interest to program managers, coaches, and others operating youth sport programs in similar environments or looking for similar outcomes. This research took the form of an evaluative assessment of a long term, afterschool youth sport program occurring in an urban, underserved setting. From the data, we can propose several general possibilities for future youth sport programs to consider. First, this evaluative summary yields results showing that youth reported experiencing a mastery motivational climate. As many similar afterschool programs may have a similar desire, it is important to note this achievement and understand how this program, featuring an intentional curriculum aimed at producing a mastery climate, was capable of doing this. Additionally, there was strong reporting of positive experiences relating to Identity exploration and reflection as well as Initiative experiences encompassing goal setting, effort, problem solving, and time management. Program coaches and administrators receive extensive training on how to deliver the intentional curriculum and according to the evidence available from this study, it appears this outcome was achieved.

Without taking the statistically insignificant research of this study too far, it is clear that the data support that males and females experience this program slightly differently as do different aged participants. Males and females differed on their responses to MCSYS and YES 2.0. Participants of different ages reported differing levels of agreement to the strength of perception and experience. And race, according to

the available data, did not play a differentiating role in perception of motivational climate, however it did illustrate a difference in positive and negative experiences related to program participation. Of particular note to this particular program is the relationship among the high initiative scores on the YES 2.0, lower than expected reporting of YES 2.0 scores for the Adult Networks and Social Capital subgroup, and the very low consent form response rate (approximately 10%-15%). This pattern suggests a disconnect between the transfer of program components across domains, in particular from field to home. This presents an opportunity for coaches and program administrators to engage youth beyond the field and take the program further, finding a way for messaging to penetrate the household with the outcome of better youth-parent relations, which may also translate to higher future return rate on consent forms. This research as a whole is important for future programs to consider – taking into account how differing demographic categories such as gender, age, and race can lead to higher achieving programs and more positive outcomes for youth.

### ***Conclusions***

This study encounters some of the challenges that exist in conducting research in underserved communities. Struggles included gaining consent and assent, language barriers with participants and parents/guardians, coordination with program staff, and completion of surveys. However, these types of studies are important to help improve sport coaching, youth development, and program planning in the future. As more funding sources for similar afterschool programs require increasingly evidence-based programming, it is important for individual program operators to conduct this research

and find ways to allow access to the youth they serve in a responsible, yet comprehensive manner. The results of this study, though not significant, do support the literature previously mentioned in that an intentional curriculum can create intended outcomes.

Recommendations for future research that builds upon lessons learned here include robust program evaluations which seek to determine whether purported youth development outcomes are being achieved, social research on gender interactions among participants and in the participant/coach dynamic, and sports psychology research into how sport-based youth development approaches may be used to engage youth entering the specialization years of 12-14 when the dropout rates increase dramatically. No matter the exact research, it is paramount that work in this space continues in order to further the achievements being made in communities everywhere and, most importantly, to positively impact the lives of youth through sport.

## APPENDIX A: MEASUREMENT SCALES

Thank you for participating in this survey so we can help make *Soccer for Success* even better. Please complete the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. **How old are you?**

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Are you male or female?**

Circle One: MALE / FEMALE

3. **What school do you attend?**

\_\_\_\_\_

4. **Is this your first season in the *Soccer for Success* program?**

Circle One: YES / NO

5. **If it is not your first season, how many seasons have you been in *Soccer for Success*?**

\_\_\_\_\_

6. **What is your racial background?**

Circle One:

Black or African-American

Hispanic/Latino (not White)

Asian

Caucasian

Native American/Alaskan

Pacific Islander

**APPENDIX B – MEASUREMENT SCALES**

**Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS)**

(Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2008)

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Not true at all</b>		<b>Somewhat true</b>		<b>Very true</b>
1. Winning games was the most important thing for the coach.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The coach made players feel good when they improved a skill.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The coach spent less time with the players who weren't as good.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The coach encouraged us to learn new skills.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The coach told us which players on the team were the best.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The coach told players to help each other get better.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The coach told us that trying our best was the most important thing.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The coach paid most attention to the best players.	1	2	3	4	5

9. The coach said that teammates should help each other improve their skills.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Players were taken out of games if they made a mistake.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The coach said that all of us were important to the team's success.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The coach told us to try to be better than our teammates.	1	2	3	4	5

Here are some statements about your current soccer team. Please read each one and circle the number that corresponds with your opinion of the statement. Since you have more than one coach, the questions are about the coach you spent the most time with. There are no right or wrong answers.

#### Scoring Key

Mastery Climate: Sum of items 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11  
Competitive Climate: Sum of items 1,3,5,8, 10, 12

**APPENDIX C – MEASUREMENT SCALES**

**The Youth Experiences Survey (YES) 2.0**

**Instructions:** Based on your *current* or *recent* involvement please rate whether you have had the following experiences in [name of activity]

Your Experiences In.....			
<i>Soccer for Success</i>			
Not at All	A Little	Quite a Bit	Yes, Definitely

**IDENTITY EXPERIENCES**

<b>Identity Exploration</b>				
1. I tried doing new things during <i>Soccer for Success</i>	1	2	3	4
2. I tried a new way of acting around people	1	2	3	4
3. I do things here I don't get to do anywhere else	1	2	3	4

<b>Identity Reflection</b>				
4. I started thinking more about my future because of <i>Soccer for Success</i>	1	2	3	4
5. <i>Soccer for Success</i> got me thinking about who I am	1	2	3	4
6. <i>Soccer for Success</i> has been a positive turning point in my life	1	2	3	4

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**INITIATIVE EXPERIENCES**

<b>Goal Setting</b>					
7. I set goals for myself in <i>Soccer for Success</i>		1	2	3	4
8. I learned to find ways to achieve my goals		1	2	3	4
9. I learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans		1	2	3	4

<b>Effort</b>					
10. I put all my energy into <i>Soccer for Success</i>		1	2	3	4
11. I learned to push myself		1	2	3	4
12. I learned to focus my attention		1	2	3	4

<b>Problem Solving</b>					
13. I observed how others solved problems and learned from them		1	2	3	4
14. I learned about developing plans for solving a problem		1	2	3	4
15. I used my imagination to solve a problem		1	2	3	4

<b>Time Management</b>					
16. I learned about organizing time and not procrastinating (not putting things off)		1	2	3	4
17. I learned about setting priorities		1	2	3	4
18. I practiced self-discipline		1	2	3	4

**BASIC SKILL**

<b>Emotional Regulation</b>					
19. I learned about controlling my temper		1	2	3	4
20. I became better at dealing with fear and anxiety		1	2	3	4
21. I became better at handling stress		1	2	3	4
22. I learned that my emotions affect how I perform		1	2	3	4

**COGNITIVE SKILLS**

<b>During soccer, I have improved:</b>		1	2	3	4
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23.	Academic skills (reading, writing, math, etc.)	1	2	3	4
24.	Skills for finding information	1	2	3	4
25.	Computer/internet skills	1	2	3	4
26.	Artistic/creative skills	1	2	3	4
27.	Communication skills	1	2	3	4

<b>Physical Skills</b>					
28.	Athletic or physical skills	1	2	3	4

### POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

<b>Diverse Peer Relationships</b>					
29.	I made friends with someone of the opposite gender	1	2	3	4
30.	I learned I had a lot in common with people from different backgrounds	1	2	3	4
31.	I got to know someone from a different ethnic group	1	2	3	4
32.	I made friends with someone from a different social class (someone richer or poorer)	1	2	3	4

<b>Prosocial Norms</b>					
33.	I learned about helping others	1	2	3	4
34.	I was able to change my school or community for the better	1	2	3	4
35.	I learned to stand up for something I believed was morally right	1	2	3	4
36.	We discussed morals and values during <i>Soccer for Success</i>	1	2	3	4

### TEAM WORK AND SOCIAL SKILLS

<b>Group Process Skills</b>					
37.	I learned that working together requires some compromising	1	2	3	4
38.	I became better at sharing responsibility	1	2	3	4
39.	I learned to be patient with other group members	1	2	3	4
40.	I learned how my emotions and attitude affect others in the group	1	2	3	4

41. I learned that it is not necessary to like people in order to work with them		1	2	3	4
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<b>Feedback</b>					
42. I became better at giving feedback		1	2	3	4
43. I became better at taking feedback		1	2	3	4

<b>Leadership and Responsibility</b>					
44. I learned about the challenges of being a leader		1	2	3	4
45. Others in this activity counted on me		1	2	3	4
46. I had an opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers		1	2	3	4

#### ADULT NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

<b>Integration with Family</b>					
47. <i>Soccer for Success</i> improved my relationship with my parents/guardians		1	2	3	4
48. I had good conversations with my parents/guardians because of <i>Soccer for Success</i>		1	2	3	4

<b>Linkages to Community</b>					
49. I got to know people in the community		1	2	3	4
50. I came to feel more supported by the community		1	2	3	4

<b>Linkages to Work and College</b>					
51. <i>Soccer for Success</i> increased my desire to stay in school		1	2	3	4

#### NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

<b>Stress</b>					
52. Demands were so great that I didn't get homework done		1	2	3	4
53. <i>Soccer for Success</i> interfered with doing things with family		1	2	3	4
54. <i>Soccer for Success</i> has stressed me out		1	2	3	4

<b>Negative Influences</b>					
55.	I felt pressured by peers to do something I didn't want to do	1	2	3	4
56.	I did something in soccer that was morally wrong	1	2	3	4
57.	I was made fun of by peers for something I did during <i>Soccer for Success</i>	1	2	3	4
58.	Teammates in soccer got me into drinking alcohol or using drugs	1	2	3	4

<b>Social Exclusion</b>					
59.	I felt like I didn't belong during <i>Soccer for Success</i>	1	2	3	4
60.	I felt left out during <i>Soccer for Success</i>	1	2	3	4
61.	There were cliques in <i>Soccer for Success</i>	1	2	3	4

<b>Negative Group Dynamics</b>					
62.	I get stuck doing more than my fair share	1	2	3	4
63.	Other teammates in soccer made inappropriate sexual comments, jokes, or gestures	1	2	3	4
64.	I was discriminated against because of my gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation	1	2	3	4

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

Jim Hanneschlager graduated from South Garland High School in Garland, Texas, in 1997. He received his Bachelor of Science in Communications with a concentration in Spanish from the University of Texas in 2003 and has been employed in various ways at all levels of the game of soccer from coaching to sales and marketing to program management over the last decade. Currently, he is a certified trainer with the Positive Coaching Alliance and a full time staff member with the United States Soccer Foundation in Washington, D.C. There he oversees the Foundation's grants program in support of soccer programming and field building in order to fulfill the organization's mission to enhance, assist, and grow the game of soccer, with a special emphasis on underserved communities across the country.