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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE 1969 LITTLE GRIZZLY
FOOTBALL PROGRAM IN MISSOULA, MONTANA

by

Dennis J. Williams

B.S. University of Montana, 1966

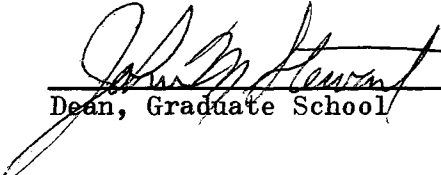
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for the degree of Master of Science for
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Few issues in recent years have precipitated as much controversy among educators, physicians, youth leaders, parents and coaches as the desirability of highly organized or varsity type athletic competition for children of elementary and junior high age. The controversy spirals when the topic in question turns to contact sports and football specifically. Countless statements and recommendations have been made both in support for and in opposition to this competition but research bearing directly on the problem has been limited.

Perhaps the most frequently cited issue is whether the stresses of school boy athletics are sufficiently great to endanger the normal growth and development of young boys. A second issue relates to the possible undesirable effects of competitive sports on the psychological and emotional well-being of the young boy. The concern is whether at such an age the boy is emotionally mature enough to face the psychological stresses of league and tournament competition. A third issue is concerned with the possible exploitation of children to satisfy the whims of overly ambitious parents, coaches and community boosters. Herein lies a real threat to the welfare of youth. When this becomes a prominent motive, then the primary purposes of such programs are lost and the child becomes a pawn to be manipulated at the fancy of the public (26). Lastly, some feel strongly that varsity type programs for children

at this age level give the child a distorted sense of values. His interpretation of the importance of the event may in no sense reflect its true value. It is doubtful if children of this age are sufficiently mature to make this judgement.

It is clear that there is much we need to know about the effects of varsity type athletics on young boys. At this point the major consideration should be the conditions under which such programs are run and the quality of leadership which is provided. Several organizations and agencies representing health, physical education, education, medicine, and recreation have developed guidelines for future children's programs. The guidelines set forth by these organizations stress such considerations as:

1. Before being allowed to report for practice or to participate in any phase of interscholastic athletics, each boy should have a thorough medical examination which includes a careful review of his health history. Subsequent medical examinations should be given as needed (5, 18, 19).
2. Participants should be furnished with complete, well-fitted protective equipment of the highest quality (18, 19).
3. Participants should be so matched in terms of height, weight, physiological maturity and ability that they may, to a reasonable degree, participate with safety and satisfaction (18, 19).
4. Individual participants should be allowed to take part in interscholastic contests only after an adequate period of physical conditioning and training (18, 19).
5. A physician should be present during all athletic contests in which injuries are likely to occur. Definite procedures for obtaining,

without undue delay, the services of a physician to care for injuries that occur during practice sessions should be established (18, 19).

6. There should be established policies, procedures, and responsibilities for first-aid and referral of injured athletes, definite treatment and follow-up, and evaluation and certification for return following injury or illness (18, 19).

7. The rules, the equipment, and the playing area for each interscholastic activity should be modified in accordance with the interests and capacities of the participants, as should the length of the playing season. The number of games played during each season by elementary or junior high school children should not be greater than half the number played by the senior high school teams. No boy should participate in more than one interscholastic contest a week (19).

8. Certified officials should be engaged to officiate at all athletic contests (18, 19).

9. There should be competent teaching and supervision with regard for the relative hazards of each particular sport (18). The competent, professionally prepared physical educators and recreation leaders are the persons to whom communities should look for basic leadership (19, 25).

10. There should be no play-offs or all-star games (1, 18, 25).

11. To be avoided are undesirable corollaries to organized competitive athletics, such as excessive publicity, pep squads, commercial promoting, victory celebrations, elaborate recognition ceremonies, paid admission, inappropriate spectator behavior, and high pressure public contests (1, 18).

12. Spheres of authority and responsibility must be established

for school and community administrators, family, sponsor, physician, coach and athlete (1, 18, 19, 25).

13. Children's athletics should not be used as a farm system for the intensive development of high school prospects (1, 19).

The various organizations point out the hazards of sports with collision risk such as football, stressing the fact that these risks depend upon the condition under which the activities are conducted and the quality of supervision provided (18, 19).

An eleven-man, tackle football program for boys in the fifth through eighth grades was started in 1966 by a group of interested businessmen in Missoula, Montana. As stated in the By-laws for Incorporation, the purpose of the league is to provide a healthful and instructive new recreational outlet for the boys' energies and a greater attainment of physical, social and moral values through cooperative and individual effort and achievement. Since 1966, Little Grizzly Football has grown and now consists of twelve, twenty-five man teams separated into two leagues--American League for fifth and sixth graders, National League for seventh and eighth graders. The program has changed in its three years of existence. In the beginning there was little pressure to win and much emphasis was placed on participation and learning. Today, it has evolved to the point where winning is extremely important and participation secondary.

The Problem

The problem of this investigation was to evaluate the 1969 Little Grizzly Football Program in Missoula, Montana, using as criteria for the evaluation suggested recommendations of various professional

organizations and agencies representing expertise in health, physical education, education, medicine, and recreation.

Significance of the Problem

Every program of this type needs to be evaluated periodically to assure adherence to the high standards recommended by the various organizations and agencies. It is hoped the outcome of this study will positively effect the conduct of the Little Grizzly Program in the future.

Definitions

For purposes of clarification and understanding the following terms and their definitions were used in this study.

1. Little Grizzly Football - An eleven-man, tackle football program for boys in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades in Missoula, Montana.
2. American League - An eleven-man, tackle football league in Missoula, Montana, composed of fifth and sixth graders divided into six teams.
3. National League - An eleven-man, tackle football league in Missoula, Montana, composed of seventh and eighth graders divided into six teams.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The more we learn about children and adolescents the more we recognize the fact that vigorous activity and competition are vital to their growth and development (11). In stressing the importance of competition for youth, Donovan F. Ward, past president of the American Medical Association, said, "Competition is a part of life. To avoid competition would be to vegetate. But I want to stress the importance of the qualifying words--within limits" (38).

Shaeffer (33) says that adolescents are going to compete with or without sanction and that our concern should be aimed at the way in which sports are conducted rather than on this penchant for competition. He recognized the emotional and physiological dangers involved in highly organized varsity type sports but says there is relatively little exposure to harm where good leadership, medical supervision and acceptable educational aims are insisted upon.

Physical Growth

The effects of organized competition upon the physical growth of children is a question not easily answered because it requires the assessment of growth patterns over many years, giving due attention to such factors as type of participation, training regimen followed, frequency of contests, age at which participation began, and the number of years of participation. Some attempts have been made, however, to

examine the effects of one or more seasons of athletic competition upon human growth.

In an early study, Rowe (30) attempted to determine what effect interschool competitive athletics had upon the growth of junior high school boys. Questionnaires were sent to teachers of physical education in junior high schools asking them to report on the height and weight increases of boys on football squads and also on a comparable group of boys not taking part in football. Rowe concluded that there appeared to be without question an appreciable diminution of the growth process for the boys taking part in football during the period of competition, as compared to boys not taking part.

A study by Fait (10) tends to agree with the results reported by Rowe. He administered anthropometric tests of height, weight, chest width, bi-acromial width, and bi-crural width to 107 boys in three junior high schools. Two of the schools participated in interscholastic athletics while the third did not. After a six month period, Fait found that the nonathletic group consistently showed greater growth at all three maturational levels: pre-pubescent, pubescent and post-pubescent. More specifically, those who did not participate in varsity athletics grew .365 of an inch more than those who did participate. This difference was significant at the .01 level.

More recently Schuck (34) reported that among 366 seventh, eighth and ninth graders under observation, the growth trends of those involved in interscholastic sports were not different from those who had not participated. However, he reported an apparent retardation in growth of seventh and eighth grade boys participating in a 17 game season of basketball as compared to those involved in a more limited schedule of

12 games per season.

Studies like the last three, particularly those involving subjects in the pubertal years, must be viewed with caution, since athletes for the most part tend to be drawn from the larger, early maturing, fast growing boys and any positive or negative effects of athletic activity on growth are likely to be masked by the time of onset of the growth spurt.

Astrand et al. (3) conducted a comprehensive study of the effects of rigorous training and highly competitive athletics on 30 girl swimmers. Longitudinal growth data available on the entire sample from 7 to 16 years of age clearly showed that the growth curves of these girls were normal throughout this period, being somewhat accelerated during the training years. The majority of the girls had begun training before 13 years of age, some as early as 10 years. When the girls were 18 years of age, two years after completion of the investigation, medical examinations disclosed no harmful effects of the training regimen. A second part of this study entailed a questionnaire given to 84 women finalists in the 1946 to 1955 Swedish swimming championships. The swimmers, some 6 to 15 years after the competitive years, were healthy and socially and psychologically well adjusted. More than three out of four were married and two-thirds had children. They had a positive attitude toward swimming, although many questioned the advisability of present strenuous programs and some considered them to be detrimental.

Rarick (27) reports that persons who have been subjected to heavy physical work in childhood and adolescence tend to be taller, heavier and of a more robust build than those who have been exposed to a less vigorous childhood. He concluded that any recommendations

regarding the intensity and duration of exercise in childhood must consider the maturity level of the child, his constitutional make-up, his nutritional and health status, and his pattern of living.

There is considerable evidence that suggests that young boys participating in varsity type athletics are physiologically and skeletally more mature than nonathletically inclined boys. Hale (14) determined the physiological maturity of Little League baseball players participating in the 1955 World Series of Baseball by means of the Crampton Pubic Hair Index. He concluded that although the boys were only 10, 11 and 12 years of age, 50 percent were post-pubescent, which indicates that they were as mature as the average 14 or 15 year old. He also found that all but one of the pitchers were post-pubescent (the exception was pubescent) and that all boys batting in the "cleanup" (fourth) position were post-pubescent.

Based on skeletal age assessments, Krogman (22) concluded that the Little League baseball players who competed in the 1957 World Series were, in general, older for their age. These boys succeeded, according to Krogman, because they were more mature, biologically more stable and structurally and functionally more advanced.

Clark and Shelley (8) support the findings of Hale and Krogman. They constructed profiles of elementary and junior high school boys rated as outstanding athletes by their coaches. The profiles were based on measures of maturity, skeletal structure, strength, motor ability and intelligence. They found that athletes in the age range 10 to 15 years were stronger and structurally more mature than nonathletes of the same chronological age. Football players were found to be the most mature group, followed by wrestlers, track and field participants,

baseball players and basketball players. The football players were definitely superior in structural measures and also were much stronger than the athletes representing the other sports.

Clark and Petersen (7) compared maturational, structural, strength and motor traits of upper elementary and junior high school boys with different levels of athletic groups with nonparticipants. Levels of athletic ability were differentiated according to success as participants on interschool competitive teams. It was found that the outstanding athletes at both school levels had significantly higher mean skeletal ages than did the other groups. In studying maturity relative to chronological age, only the outstanding elementary school athletes were found to be advanced. Athletes were significantly larger than nonparticipants at the junior high level than at the elementary school level. This was particularly true for the gross measures, such as the Strength Index and the mean of 12 cable-tension strength tests. In the standing broad jump, the means of the outstanding athletes and the regular players were significantly higher than the means of the nonparticipants at both school levels. This suggests that the decision as to whether boys are physically ready for interschool athletic competition should be determined by factors other than chronological age or grade in school.

Psychological, Emotional and Social Considerations

Much concern has been expressed that children 6 to 13 years of age are not psychologically mature enough to cope with the competitive aspects of varsity type competition or league and tournament play. At the present time, there is no adequate way to measure the psychological stress which occurs before, during, and after such contests. It is

equally difficult to determine if there are lasting traumatic effects or if involvement in such activities has beneficial effects on the social and personality development of the child (18). Reichert (19) says that:

Strong emotional reactions are too often gendered by high pressure competitive games especially by inter-community or inter-scholastic schedules and championships. Such responses occur not only in children but also in adults--parents, teachers, coaches and spectators. These exaggerated reactions can lead to abnormal psychological responses, both in parents and in children in many ways. The hero worship of the star, the sense of failure in the boy who does not make the team or who fails to make the crucial point in the game, the obvious disappointment of the parent when the boy fails or the excessive pride and praise when he wins, the apparent difference in social acceptance by playmates and adults between the winners and losers--all these can have a profound effect on a child's emotional development and social adjustment.

There seems to be little objective evidence that the tensions arising from league and tournament play are any greater than those occurring in physical education classes. For example, Skubic (36) studied the immediate and delayed emotional responses by means of the galvanic skin response of boys 9 through 15 years of age one-half hour after a highly organized competitive baseball contest. He concluded that youngsters were no more stimulated by competition in league games than they were by competition in competitive physical education games. However, there was some evidence of greater excitability following winning than after the loss of a game.

Skubic (35) also conducted a questionnaire survey concerning the attitudes of players and parents toward Little League and Middle League competitive baseball, the selection of players for teams and the extent of injuries received by players during one season of participation in baseball. A total of 640 questionnaires were sent to parents, players and teachers and 470 replies were received. The results indicated that boys chosen for teams were better adjusted socially and emotionally than

boys who were not members of teams. Approximately one-third of the parents of boys participating in Little League baseball indicated that their sons were too excited following a contest to eat normally. In some instances the excitement lasted long enough to interfere with the normal onset of sleep.

There has also been concern that competitive athletics might have some unfavorable socializing effects on the behavior of young boys. Seymour (31) evaluated behavior characteristics of participant and non-participant boys in Little League baseball. The study showed that there was little difference in the number of problems or needs affecting the participants and nonparticipants. The boys who took part in the Little League program came into it somewhat better endowed in terms of desirable personality traits and retained that position during and after participation with little change in the difference between the two groups. In addition, the boys who took part in Little League baseball started at a higher level of social acceptance and retained that advantage.

Hein (16) suggests in reference to social learning that:

We claim certain social values for athletics; educators would be the last to deny these. Sports, properly guided, can help to build qualities like loyalty, courage, and over-all good sportsmanship. They can contribute to the development of leadership ability. They can teach the importance of both individual effort and team play. But all of these values and some others can be realized for children right in their own school and communities without high-powered tournaments, bowl games and the like. To claim any special social values for an athletic trip across the state or nation is simply not facing facts. These same values could be gained from a band tournament, outing activities, an educational excursion, or simply a trip with family or friends.

Fait (11) says that:

Mouthing the great benefits from inter-school sports does not insure their existence. A definite plan for the development of desirable characteristics must be made and carefully worked out during practice sessions and actual competition. This precludes that winning the games is not the most essential feature of inter-

school competition. The great emphasis upon winning which permeates inter-school sports from junior high school to college is largely responsible for the development of undesirable characteristics. To aid in the development of good character and personality, inter-school sports must be directed toward the individual, not toward the trophies, the gate receipts or the press box.

Krogman (21) says that:

Preadolescence and early adolescence is a period of emotional tension and maladjustment. The period is one of awareness of self, realization of others and reevaluation of one's whole world. The "moodiness," "dreaminess," "irritability" and "self-consciousness" are but surface manifestations of deep-rooted tensions--not spiritual, so much as physiological and biochemical. The very chemistry of the body being resynthesized as never before and the essence of this ferment is distilled into behavioral reactions of many and varied sorts. Here, then, is another sphere of "vulnerability." If at this time football--or any game--is emphasized to the point where winning is an all-in-all and defeat an end--all then taut nerves and tensed tissues may vibrate to the point of breaking.

The research regarding psychological, sociological and emotional effects of varsity-type competition on school age children is at this point indecisive.

Physiological Effects

Physical changes in upper elementary and junior high school boys are fast and dynamic. The rapid growth spurt is characterized by gains in height, weight, and size. Biochemical activity of the body results in internal physical change. A sub-committee of the AAHPER studying Desirable Athletic Competition for Children (1) indicated that the growth spurt during this age had implications for fatigue. Two hundred and twenty pediatricians and general practitioners were canvassed for opinions concerning functional and structural factors influencing athletic activity for junior high school boys. Sixty-one percent of those surveyed tended to feel that there was a likelihood for students to carry activity past the stage of healthful fatigue to a level of harmful exhaustion. This study was an opinion survey and conclusions were not a

result of objective research.

Lowman (24) polled 400 orthopedic surgeons concerning athletic competition during the vulnerable age (below the tenth grade). Of the surgeons, 73.5 percent agreed with a statement made by the State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation to the effect that interscholastic athletic competition was not good for young adolescents and that body contact sports should be eliminated. Only 12.4 percent disagreed with the statement and 14.1 percent made no response. Only 19 of the surgeons considered football to be a safe sport at that age level.

Hale (15) says that the normal heart cannot be injured by strenuous exercise and that a number of safety valves prevent physiological trauma during and following strenuous activity. He has also stated that:

No physiological harm can be done to the child, regardless of the sports we play today. A broken bone is an injury but it will not be harmed physiologically--actually, it is stronger when it heals.

Jokl (20) reports that the heart of a normal individual will never exceed the well-defined magnitude of physiological measurements. Only in cardiac patients with an impairment in the quality of the heart muscle, will acute enlargement of a pathological nature occur. The old idea of heart enlargement (athlete's heart) due to strenuous exercise has been disproved.

The role of physical exercise and sports activities in promoting physical development under highly organized competitive situations has been questioned. Johnson (17) studied 59 junior high school boys 12 to 13 years of age classified as pre-pubescent, pubescent or post-pubescent according to the Crampton Pubic Hair Index, to determine the difference

in work output and cardiovascular adjustment between motivated and non-motivated exercise. The boys were motivated by being placed in a competitive situation prior to exercising on the bicycle ergometer and were encouraged during the exercise. He found that the boys worked harder when put under competitive conditions but that their output was not significantly greater than the boys who were not motivated. In fact, the added stimulus sometimes reduced the achievement. The competitive group showed a slower recovery from heart and blood vessel strain than did the control group. Nausea developed in 37 percent of the subjects in the motivated group either during the exercise or during the period of recovery, but only one case of nausea occurred in the group not under conditions of competition.

There is virtually no evidence that strenuous physical activity has a detrimental effect on the physiological function of healthy young males 6 to 13 years of age. There is considerable evidence that vigorous physical activity for young boys is beneficial.

The Injury Problem

Anytime children engage in physical activity, there is a chance of injury. This chance is increased under highly competitive conditions. It is universally held that all, regardless of age, should have a thorough physical examination prior to joining an athletic team. A study conducted by the American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (18) throws some light on the extent to which this recommendation is followed. Seventy-nine of 193 surveyed schools did not require a medical examination before the boy was permitted to join a team. Only 58 of the 336 surveyed communities have this requirement.

Castellanos (5) recommends that a pre-season physical examination

be given to all boys participating in sports and that the examination include the following:

1. Brief questionnaire to parents regarding the presence of syncope or sudden death in other members of the family.
2. The assurance of the existence of an effective tetanus immunization.
3. A cardiovascular examination including blood pressure readings.
4. The search for the presence of an unrecognized hernia.
5. Urine examination for the possible detection of diabetes or renal disease.

Some reliable data is available on the incidence and nature of athletic injuries in competitive athletics. For example, Skubic (35) studied the extent of injuries received by 100 Little League and Middle League participants in California. The study showed that in league games during a season of play, there were 69 sprains and 5 broken bones in addition to 145 cuts and bruises. Among the 60 Little Leaguers in the study there was a total of 123 injuries reported with 19 indicating no injury.

Hale (13) analyzed injuries among 771,810 Little League baseball players over a period of five years. During this period there were 15,444 injuries of sufficient severity to require medical attention. This figure constituted an incidence of two percent, which the investigator felt was remarkably low in view of the number of exposures (148 million pitched balls, alone). The chief cause of medically reported injury was the pitched, thrown or batted ball. The most common injuries were abrasions and contusions, followed by fractures (chiefly of the

fingers), sprains, lacerations, concussions and dental damage. It is worthy to note that injuries were fewer in number and severity among the 8 to 12 year old Little League participants than among the 13 to 15 year old players.

Allman (2) points out that the Pop Warner Program of tackle football for youngsters which has had over 1,000,000 participants over the last 40 years, has not yet had a fatality. Even so, he cites data from a recent national poll showing that 43.5 percent of the physicians expressed unqualified opposition to body contact sports.

Walker (37) points out that general criticism seems to be that the younger, less mature adolescent, 12 to 15 years old, is more susceptible to injury than the older boy 16 to 18 years and for this reason football is more hazardous in junior high school. A survey of Texas schools involving 9,000 participants revealed an injury incidence of only five percent in junior high school compared with ten percent in high school. In personal observation of an elementary school program, Walker cites the fact that under well-modified conditions involving over 360 participants during a three-week period, the program failed to reveal one single injury.

The threat of permanent injury to the epiphyses of the long bones is one of the most often heard arguments against competitive athletics for children. Krogman (21) says that long bone growth is at its maximum in the pre-adolescent period. The entire area of the epiphyses is unusually rich in blood and is especially liable to injury. Injury to the site might result in a premature union of the epiphysis and diaphyses involved, which means retarded bone growth at that site. Rather a high price to pay for an ill-timed and vigorous "exercise."

Krogman is supported in his views by 70 percent of the orthopedic surgeons questioned in a 1952 survey (1), who indicated that the pre-pubertal years constitute a period when the joints are unusually vulnerable to injury.

Shaffer (32) states that although the epiphysis is potentially vulnerable to injury, epiphyseal injuries occur infrequently. He points out that damage to the growing bones in the pubertal years comes from a variety of causes other than sports' injuries or even trauma.

Larson and McMahon (23) agree with Shaffer. They conducted a study of 1,338 athletic injuries seen by four orthopedic surgeons and concluded that epiphyseal injury was a hazard in sports participation, just as it is a hazard in all activities of children. It is the failure to recognize epiphyseal injury and to provide proper treatment that is the real hazard in either athletic or nonathletic injury. Of the 1,338 athletic injuries, 371 occurred in the age range 15 years old and younger. Of these, 23 or 1.7 percent were epiphyseal injuries. This amounts to six percent of all injuries occurring in the age group 15 years old and younger. Epiphyseal injury does not mean permanent deformity. Certainly growth disturbances can occur but are the exception rather than the rule. The majority are epiphyseal displacements which can be reduced with little likelihood of permanent damage.

From the limited data available, it is evident that the injury problem in competitive athletics for youth in the 6 to 13 year old range is of sufficient magnitude that it cannot be ignored.

Summary

There is much evidence suggesting that young boys participating in varsity type athletics are physiologically and skeletally more mature

than nonathletically inclined boys. There is little evidence to suggest that the stresses of school-boy athletics endangers normal growth. There seems to be little objective evidence that the tensions arising from league and tournament play are any greater than those occurring in physical education classes but the research regarding psychological, sociological and emotional effects of varsity-type competition on school age children is at this point indecisive. There is virtually no evidence that strenuous physical activity has a detrimental effect on the physiological functions of healthy young males 6 to 13 years of age. There is considerable evidence that vigorous physical activity for young boys is beneficial. The injury problem in the 6 to 13 year old age range is of sufficient magnitude that it cannot be ignored. It is clear that there is still much we need to know about the effects of varsity type athletics on young boys. There is no overwhelming body of evidence to indicate that this type of activity is necessarily dangerous but there are certainly optimum conditions under which such programs should be conducted and certain qualities of leadership that should be provided.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY

The basic data gathering instrument used in this study was that of a questionnaire which was sent to parents of all boys participating in the 1969 Little Grizzly Football Program. Prior to the development of the questionnaire, a comprehensive review of literature related to the problem was made. Every effort was made to investigate all research relevant to the effects of athletic competition on elementary and junior high school children. In addition, desirable guidelines and practices as advocated by educational, athletic and medical organizations and agencies were solicited in order to develop criteria by which programs of this nature could be evaluated. Such review disclosed that the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and a sub-committee of the American Medical Association had published such guidelines. In consultation with the author's advisor, a questionnaire was developed which reflected desirable program guidelines for competitive athletics for youth 9 to 14 years of age. The questionnaire solicited information from parents about the participant's age, weight, height, grade in school, leisure time activities, equipment, medical examination, number and types of injury, practice sessions and games, parental views about the program, objectives of the program, positive and negative aspects of the program,

and recommended changes for the program. Upon completion, the questionnaire was forwarded to 335 parents of Little Grizzly Football players. Multiple questionnaires were sent to families in which more than one boy from the family participated in the program. In order to encourage a high return, a self-addressed, stamped envelope was enclosed with the questionnaire, along with a letter explaining the purpose of the study. If the questionnaire was not returned within one month from the mailing date, a telephone call was made to the parent to determine the status of their cooperation. It was necessary to send 45 additional questionnaires to parents who indicated by phone they had not received the initial questionnaire. If after two weeks parents had not responded to the questionnaire, telephone contact again was made to determine the status of the questionnaire. This procedure resulted in 255 responses to the questionnaire.

Data secured from the respondents was tabulated and organized into tables to facilitate analysis and interpretation. Finally, on the basis of the results obtained from the respondents, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

In addition to the previous procedure, on site observations were made by the author of all aspects of the Little Grizzly Program. Particular attention was paid to the following aspects of the program: the issuance and fitting of equipment, practice sessions and games, coaching styles, techniques and strategies, officiating, first aid and medical procedures and league structure and organization. Anecdotal records were kept of significant observations and whenever important are commented on in the body of the paper.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

For purposes of clarity, the discussion of the results of the questionnaire and personal observations will be discussed together under eight sectional headings of the questionnaire. Also, the data was organized into tables to facilitate as simple an analysis as possible. Numbers and/or percentages were indicated for most items studied relative to the total number of questionnaires answered and returned to the investigator, and percentages were calculated to the nearest whole percent unless otherwise indicated.

Seventy-six percent or 255 of the 335 parents returned questionnaires sent to them. Eight of the questionnaires sent failed to reach the parent and ten questionnaires were not returned because the son withdrew from the program prior to participating.

Objectives

For purposes of incorporation, the following statement of purpose was included in the By-Laws of Little Grizzly Football:

The corporation shall conduct an eleven-man, tackle football program for grade school boys in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, thus providing them with a healthful and instructive new recreational outlet for their energies and greater attainment of physical, social, and moral values through cooperative and individual effort and achievement.

This represents the only published statement of purpose or objective of the Little Grizzly Football Program. It was the purpose of this

section of the questionnaire to present to the parents typical objectives of children's programs and allow them to make judgements about their importance. Space was provided to allow the parent to add any objectives or comments he felt were important. Table 1 gives the results of the responses to this phase of the questionnaire.

Table 1
Parental Opinion as to Importance of Objectives

	<u>Primary</u> <u>Importance</u>		<u>Secondary</u> <u>Importance</u>		<u>No</u> <u>Importance</u>	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Develop high school and college football players	59	24	156	62	35	14
Give everyone a chance to participate	212	85	31	12	7	3
Teach good fundamental football	199	80	50	20	1	
Have fun	193	77	52	21	6	2
Provide a healthful and instructional recreational outlet	233	93	16	6	1	
Produce winning football teams	32	13	128	52	87	35
Provide an outlet for aggression	61	25	95	37	84	35
Develop muscular strength and coordination	181	72	66	26	3	1

Additional objectives receiving five or more responses.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Teamwork	27
Sportsmanship	23
Self-discipline	13
Meet other boys	6

Results clearly indicate that parents feel providing a healthful and instructional recreational outlet, giving everyone a chance to participate, teaching good fundamental football, having fun, and developing muscular strength and coordination are of primary importance to the Little Grizzly Program. Of secondary importance to the program was developing high school and college football players, producing winning football teams, and providing an outlet for aggression. Eighty-seven parents thought that producing winning football teams was of no importance and 84 parents thought providing an outlet for aggression was of no importance. Thirty-five parents believed developing high school and college football players to be of no importance.

The parent was also asked whether there should be more or less emphasis on winning and everyone getting to participate. The results are indicated in Tables 2 and 3.

Sixty-five parents thought there should be less emphasis on winning while nine believed there should be more. One hundred seventy-seven parents indicated they were pleased with the emphasis on winning.

Table 2

Parental Opinion of Emphasis on Winning

<u>More Emphasis</u>		<u>Less Emphasis</u>		<u>Same</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
9	4	65	26	177	69	4	2

One hundred forty parents felt there should be more emphasis on everyone getting to play. Only 5 thought there should be less participation and 197 thought that the emphasis towards participation should remain the same.

Table 3
Parental Attitude Towards Participation

<u>More Emphasis</u>		<u>Less Emphasis</u>		<u>Same</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
140	55	5	2	107	42	3	1

Giannastros (12) has said:

We have reached the crossroads. We can continue to take our outstanding young athletes along the downward path physically, emotionally and spiritually by permitting some parents and some coaches to compensate for their own frustrations and build up their own egos with winning teams composed of only the best participants--with too few children carrying the burden, with too few developing their physical capabilities, and with few or none developing a sense of fair play and good sportsmanship; or we can demand that all children learn, practice, participate and have fun!

General Information

The primary purpose of this section in the questionnaire was to assess age, weight and height measurements of the participants in both leagues. Also, because the National League has a weight limit for its running backs of 120 pounds and the American League a 95 pound weight limit for its backs, a question was asked in order to determine how many boys attempted to lose weight prior to weigh-in at the start of the season. Because boys are assigned to leagues according to grade in school, such information was solicited in order to compare actual age

with grade in school. Other information requested included years of participation in the Little Grizzly Football Program, extent of parental attendance at games, and leisure time activities of participants.

As revealed by the respondents, the youngest boy in the American League was nine years, six months old and the oldest was twelve years, nine months. The mean age of American Leaguers was eleven years, one month. The youngest boy in the National League was eleven years, eleven months and the oldest was fourteen years, eleven months. The mean age of National Leaguers was thirteen years, one month. There was an age range of three years and three months in the American League and three years in the National League.

There were vast differences in both height and weight. The range in height of the participants in the American League was from 52 to 66 inches and in the National League from 52 to 72 inches. The mean height for the American League was 58 inches and for the National League 62 inches. Weight ranged from 62 to 175 pounds in the American League and from 75 to 160 in the National League. The mean weight for the American League was 87 pounds and that for the National League was 105 pounds.

Table 4

Number and Percent of Boys in Both Leagues
Losing Weight Prior to Season

<u>Lost Weight</u>		<u>Did Not Lose Weight</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
15	6	238	93	2	1

Table 4 reveals that 15 boys or 6 percent attempted to lose weight prior to the beginning of the 1969 Little Grizzly Season. The six percent answering yes, seems small; but upon closer examination, most of the boys losing weight were close to or above the limit for running backs.

Table 5 indicates the grade level of the participants. It is interesting to note that two fourth graders competed in the American League and two sixth graders competed in the National League. This is a clear violation of the league's rules. Neither of the fourth graders had repeated a grade. Both were young, being only nine years, ten months old. They were both nearly average in height but one boy weighed only 64 pounds. The two sixth graders had repeated a grade and were of average age, height and weight for their assigned league.

Thirty-nine boys in the program repeated one or more grades in school which suggests that eventually older boys will be competing against younger boys. Nine boys repeated the fifth, sixth or seventh grades.

Table 5
Grade Level of Little Grizzly Participants
During 1969 Season

<u>American League</u>		<u>National League</u>	
Grade	Number of Participants	Grade	Number of Participants
Fourth	2	Sixth	2
Fifth	64	Seventh	59
Sixth	63	Eighth	63
No Answer	1	No Answer	1
Total	130		125

Table 6 indicates the number of years the boys had participated in the Little Grizzly Program. The great number of first year players is indicative of the rapid growth of the program. There were 96 first year players in the American League and 34 in the National League.

Table 6
Years of Participation

<u>American League</u>		<u>National League</u>	
Years Participating	Number of Participants	Years Participating	Number of Participants
One	96	One	34
Two	33	Two	43
Three		Three	47
No Answer	1	No Answer	1
Total	130		125

The response to the question referring to the number of games parents observed suggests tremendous interest in the program. Nearly all the parents watched some if not all of the games.

Most of the boys carried on typical leisure time activities during the football season. Scouting, swimming, hunting, fishing, band, hiking, and flag football were a few of the activities most frequently mentioned by the parents.

Equipment

Contact sports such as football provide sufficient stress on the bony, ligamentous, and muscular structures making up the body that it can be accommodated only by external protective equipment. Such equipment must provide protection from impact forces as well as the mobility

required for skilled play. Only properly fitting equipment of the highest quality gives the protection and mobility necessary. Blythe (4) says that:

All coaches, physicians and trainers should take special care to see that the player's equipment is properly fitted, particularly the helmet. It is imperative that old and worn equipment be renovated or discarded.

In surveying direct football fatalities sustained during the 1931 to 1968 interval, a slowly progressive shift occurred, with a proportional diminution of incidence of abdominal and internal injuries and a corresponding elevation of the mortality rate due to head and spinal cord injuries. A total of thirty-six fatalities were directly related to football during the year 1968. All of the fatalities resulted from injuries to the head, neck, and spinal cord (28). Enforcement of the rules prohibiting "spearing," the practice of driving the head directly and with force into the chest, stomach, and kidney areas of an opponent when blocking or tackling, properly fitted helmets, and excellent physical condition are the factors which will help reduce fatalities and serious head and neck injuries resulting from participation in football (28).

The helmet with face bar, shoulder pads, hip pads, pants and game jersey were provided by the Little Grizzly Football Program. In addition, the league required the mandatory wearing of a mouth guard and athletic supporter. Shoes and practice jersey were provided by the boys. It was the purpose of this section to determine whether this equipment fit properly.

Observations. 1. Issuance of equipment - The equipment was stacked and stored by team in the basement of the Western Montana Bank. At a given time, all the boys from one team would come for their equipment.

Parents and coaches would attempt to get everyone a complete, properly fitting uniform. Unfortunately, the basement was very dimly lighted, there was much confusion, and there was no one in attendance to actually fit the boys properly. Everyone had a different idea about how the equipment should fit.

2. "Fitting of helmets - There was a tremendous problem fitting the smaller boys with helmets because the majority of the helmets were too large. The boys were given no choice but to make do with what they received. The author observed on several occasions boys wearing helmets that were so loose you could literally spin them around the head.

3. Mouth guards - The writer observed many practices and games and found it quite common, especially in practice, for boys to participate without inserting the mouth guard.

Table 7 indicates the results of the parents' responses as to whether the equipment fit properly. There were 81 instances in which parents thought the helmet was either too tight or too loose. Of these, parents in 70 cases thought their son's helmet fit too loose. In response to the question, what adjustment did your son have to make in order for the equipment to fit properly, 50 parents said they had to pad the helmet in some way. This adjustment ranged from stuffing the helmet with newspapers to using shims. Two boys completely removed the padding from their helmets to make them fit.

Getting the proper fit in a helmet is, of course, a basic prerequisite of maximum protection. A helmet should fit comfortably but not loose enough so that it can turn on the head. A loose helmet is apt to expose areas that are vulnerable to injury (28). Clearly, the Little Grizzly helmets did not fit properly and represent a tremendous

danger to the boys wearing them. Shims and newspapers do not make a loose helmet fit properly and removing the padding from the helmet places the head in direct contact with the shell of the helmet.

Furthermore, it was found that 23 shoulder pads and 18 hip pads were either too tight or too loose. The number is small; but as is the case with helmets, shoulder pads and hip pads that do not fit properly are a danger to the wearer.

In addition, 53 pants and 41 game jerseys were described as being too tight or too loose by parents. The game jersey is also a part of the football player's protection, it provides protection against shin abrasions and holds the shoulder pads in place, a function the jersey cannot properly perform if it is too loose. Properly fitted pants have proved very helpful in cutting down injuries as a result of knee pads and thigh guards being held in place properly (28).

Table 7

Fit of Equipment

Equipment	<u>Too Tight</u>		<u>Too Loose</u>		<u>Fit Properly</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Helmet	11	5	70	27	171	68
Shoulder pads	8	3	15	6	225	91
Hip pads	6	2	12	5	232	93
Pants	31	12	22	9	199	79
Game Jersey	27	11	14	5	210	84

Medical Exam and Injuries

There is general agreement among experts in the field that a

thorough medical examination be mandatory before participating in football.

About this matter Blythe (4) states the following:

It should be mandatory that all football players receive a thorough and complete medical examination and medical histories at the beginning of each football season. The complete medical examination and medical history should be on file with the proper authorities before an athlete is permitted to participate in any phase of the football program. It should also be required that a physician give written approval to permit a player to return to practice and competition after injury.

Whenever possible, a physician should be on the field of play during game and practice sessions. When this is not possible, arrangements must be made in advance to obtain a physician's immediate service when emergency arises.

At the present time, Little Grizzly participants are not required to have a medical examination, however, the league does require the parents to sign a letter of consent giving permission for the boy to compete. In this investigation it was revealed that 50 percent of the boys did not have a physical examination prior to participating in Little Grizzly Football.

Respondents were also asked to identify the nature of any injuries received by their son and whether the boy was forced to miss any practice sessions and/or games as a result of injury. In addition to responses received from the questionnaire, injury reports were reviewed from the company providing insurance to the program. Insurance was purchased as part of the \$5.00 participation fee paid when the boys entered the league. All injuries were not counted because some parents did not return the questionnaire or used their own private insurance.

Tables 8 and 9 reveal that a total of 68 injuries were reported. A breakdown of these injuries reveal that the knee was the most often injured body part with 13 injuries, the back received 9 injuries, the fingers 8 injuries, and the leg was injured 6 times. There were 16 sprains, 21 bruises, 4 fractures, 3 cuts, 2 surgeries, and 21 "other"

injuries. Note: the "other" category includes all injuries that do not fit into the other areas, e.g. hurt back, knee injury, sore shoulder.

Thirty-two injuries were reported which required a doctor's care. There were 7 knee injuries, 5 back injuries, 4 neck injuries, 4 finger injuries, 2 rib, wrist and ankle injuries, and 1 toe, shin, tooth, leg, and shoulder injury. The more serious among the injuries seen by doctors include 2 knee surgeries, a broken wrist, finger, and ankle, a compression fracture of the ninth and tenth thoracic vertebrae, one case of heat exhaustion, and 1 broken tooth. In addition, there were 7 sprains, 5 bruises, and 14 "other" injuries requiring a doctor's care.

There were an additional 36 injuries not requiring a doctor's care reported on the questionnaire. Table 9 reveals that these include six knee injuries, five leg injuries, and four finger, thigh, and back injuries. A compilation shows there were sixteen bruises, nine sprains, three cuts and eight "other" injuries.

Eighteen claims totaling \$1,395.75 were reported to the company insuring the league. This figure compared to the \$642 paid by the league for the medical coverage indicates that the company absorbed more than a hundred percent loss during the 1969 Little Grizzly Season. An additional eleven injuries, including a knee surgery, were not reported to the league's insurance company.

In 1968 claims totaled \$658 and in 1967 only \$181. Between 1968 and 1969 there has been over one hundred percent increase in claims, however, it should be noted that one claim, a knee surgery, represented over half of the 1969 total. The number of boys actively participating has doubled since 1967 but the increase in injuries could also be attributed, in part, to the increased emphasis on winning. When winning

Table 8

Tabulation of Treated Injuries as Reported on
Questionnaires and Insurance Reports

Body Part	Sprain	Bruise	Fracture	Surgery	Other	Total
Ankle	1		1			2
Back	1	1	1*		2	5
Finger	2		1		1	4
Heat Exhaustion					1	1
Knee	2	1		2	2	7
Foot					1	1
Neck					4	4
Rib		2				2
Shin		1				1
Shoulder					1	1
Toe	1					1
Tooth					1	1
Wrist			1		1	2
Total	7	5	4	2	14	32

*Compression Fracture of Thoracic Vertebrae

Table 9
 Tabulation of Nontreated Injuries as
 Reported on Questionnaire

Body Part	Sprain	Bruise	Cut	Other	Total
Ankle	1				1
Arm		1			1
Back	2	1		1	4
Elbow			1		1
Finger	3			1	4
Foot		1			1
Hand		1			1
Head			1	3*	4
Knee	1	4		1	6
Leg		5			5
Mouth			1		1
Shoulder				1	1
Wrist	2				2
Unknown		3		1	4
Total	9	16	3	8	36

*Concussion

is the criteria by which coaches judge their own performance, parents', participants', and coaches' emotions are bound to run high. In addition, when 62 pound boys wearing improperly fitting equipment compete against 175 pound boys, injuries are inevitable.

Thirty parents indicated that their boy missed either a game or practice session because of injury.

Table 10 indicates the number of boys following a special training program. The results show that 162 of the boys did follow some special program, the most common being more sleep and a balanced diet. Others used supplements such as salt or vitamins and some lifted weights or did extra jogging and exercising.

Observations. 1. Physicians in attendance - There were no physicians at practices and on two occasions there was no physician in attendance at the games.

2. Ambulance service - There was no ambulance present at the games.

3. Diagnosis - Several times boys were injured but received no examination or diagnosis other than from the parent.

4. Doctor's approval - Boys were not required to see a doctor for readmittance to league play after being injured.

5. Coaching guidelines - Coaches had no guidelines to follow regarding first aid procedures, or referral to the doctor.

6. Playing while injured - One boy was allowed to play in the championship game when his wrist was still injured.

7. Failure to use mouth guards - Boys often did not keep the mouth guard inserted. There was some evidence that the broken tooth was caused by failure to wear the mouth guard.

Table 10

Number and Percent Following Training Program

<u>Followed Training Program</u>		<u>Did Not Follow Training Program</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
162	64	90	33	3	1

<u>Categories of Training*</u>	<u>Number of Replies</u>
Regular and/or plenty of sleep	130
Food	110
light breakfast before game	34
proper foods	17
improved eating habits	11
did not eat before games or practices	14
regular meals	10
ate fewer sweets	8
good nourishing food	6
balanced meals	5
bigger meals	5
ate more to gain weight	4
ate high protein foods	4
did not eat chocolate	3
good breakfast before game	3
no milk	3
dieted	3
lots of milk	2
stayed away from fats	2
no fried foods before games	1
drank tea and toast day of game	1
no pop	1
light lunch	1
more liquids	1
Supplements	7
More salt	4
used vitamins	2
used gatorade	1
Jogging and/or exercise	13
Weight lifting	5

*Only categories receiving five or more replies were listed

8. Assumed concussions - It was reported by two parents that their boys were knocked out but were not referred to a doctor for examination.

Coaching

The competence of the coach, as evidenced by his experience, and his background of training in physical education and sports is a factor of considerable consequence in safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of the participants (18).

In 1962 the AAHPER created a task force on Certification of High School Coaches. Its purpose was to propose certification standards which would represent basic understandings and competencies without which no individual should be allowed to coach at the high school level. The Task Force concluded that a physical education minor plus varsity experience in the sport to be coached was minimal acceptable qualifications. In addition, the Task Force recommended course work in the medical aspects of athletic coaching, principles and problems of coaching, theory and techniques of coaching, kinesiological foundations of coaching, and physiological foundations of coaching (9). Every coach no matter at what level he coaches should have some minimum level of preparation in the above areas, even if the preparation is given in league coaching clinics.

Coaches at the Little Grizzly Football level must be especially aware of the problems of children's athletics. They must understand the special vulnerabilities of children 9 to 14 years of age relative to growth and development, emotional and psychological strain and injury. At the present time, anyone can coach Little Grizzly Football. There are no league requirements that coaches have any special training or

qualifications, therefore, coaches range from those with no training or experience to those with vast experience and training. Many coaches had played football in high school or college, but few had taken any professional preparation courses in physical education.

This section was included to determine parental attitude and opinion toward the coaching received by the boys. Table 11 indicates that the majority of respondents, 85 percent, were pleased with the coaching. Only 36 parents were unhappy with it. The reasons for this displeasure varied considerably between coaches. Ten parents complained about one coach suggesting he was a very poor coach, did not know much about the game, got mad, was sarcastic, and was not old enough. Seven parents complained of vulgar and profane language being used by one coach.

Several parents complained of not enough substitution and an over emphasis on winning. Others complained of practices being too long, not fitting boys to positions, using poor coaching techniques, too much criticism, screaming insults, short tempers and favoritism.

Let me emphasize that the overwhelming majority of parents were pleased with the coaching and were thankful that someone was available to coach the boys.

Observations. 1. Physical conditioning - Many of the coaches began scrimmaging before the boys had any degree of physical conditioning.

2. Hot weather precautions - No precautions were taken during extremely hot weather to protect the health of the boys. The temperature reached 100 degrees several days early in the season. One boy suffered a case of heat exhaustion and withdrew from the program.

3. Number of practices - Coaches had more practices than the three a week authorized by the league.

4. Length of practices - Many practices were two and one half to three hours in length. Several two-a-day practices were scheduled.

5. Criticism - Some coaches were extremely sarcastic and critical of players.

6. Participation - Some coaches did not give everyone a chance to participate.

7. General - Most of the coaches seemed to be very dedicated to the program and tried to do their very best.

Table 11

Coaching

<u>Satisfied with Coaches</u>		<u>Dissatisfied with Coaches</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
218	85	36	14	1	

Officiating

Here again, parental opinion was felt to be important. One official certified by the Montana High School Association, along with three volunteers from the community officiated each game.

Table 12 indicates parental satisfaction with officiating. The majority of the respondents, 86 percent, were pleased. Only nine percent were not satisfied. The reasons for this displeasure varied but the most common complaints were that the officials did not know the rules, made many errors, and that fathers of participants should not be allowed to officiate.

Observation. Disagreement - There was some disagreement between officials concerning rules.

Table 12
 Officiating

<u>Satisfied with Officials</u>		<u>Dissatisfied with Officials</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
210	86	25	9	12	5

Practice and Games

The guidelines set forth by the organizations and agencies representing health, physical education, education, medicine, and recreation recommend that the rules, equipment, and playing area for each interscholastic activity be modified in accordance with the maturity level of the participants, as should the length of the playing season and the number of games played during the season (18, 19). Under no circumstances should the number of contests played by elementary or junior high school children be greater than half the number played by the senior high school teams. No boy should participate in more than one interscholastic contest per week (19). There should be no play-offs or all-star games (1, 18, 25) and to be avoided are undesirable corollaries to organized competitive athletics, such as excessive publicity, pep squads, commercial promoting, victory celebrations, elaborate recognition ceremonies, paid admission, inappropriate spectator behavior, and high pressure public contests (1, 18).

Observations about practices. 1. Two-a-day - There were several two-a-day practices.

2. Length of practice - Many practices lasted two and one-half to three hours.

3. Contact - Often entire practices consisted of scrimmage or contact drills.

4. Limits - Many coaches ignored the three practices a week limit imposed by the league.

Clearly two-a-day practices and practices lasting three hours or late into the evening are not suited to a ten year old boy's maturity level. There were no league rules limiting the length of practices.

Observations about games. 1. Length of game - Games were 40 minutes long for both leagues.

2. Number of games - Most teams played practice games, all had five regular season games and eight teams had two post season games. This is more than some high school teams play in Montana.

3. Crowning a champion - There was much emphasis on winning and crowning a champion. This was exemplified in the play-offs.

4. Television - The championship games in both leagues were televised.

Game length must assuredly be modified for the Little Grizzly Program, particularly for the fifth and sixth graders. The number of games should be limited to the five regular season games. There was certainly too much publicity. The practice of putting children's football games on commercially sponsored television is to be condemned as is a play-off system that determines a champion.

Tables 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 show that parents do not feel that too much time was devoted to football, nor that the season was too long. They do believe that the length of games was appropriate. However, 45 percent of the respondents felt that practices were a disruptive factor in the home. The majority of the parents said that the disruption was

of the evening meal which had to be scheduled for a later time. Other complaints were of practices lasting too long, lasting until after dark, and being held at irregular times. Transportation to and from practices was another frequent disruption.

Most parents did not feel their boy became fatigued because of practice. Only 77 answered this question affirmatively.

Table 13

Time Devoted to Football

<u>Too Much Time</u>		<u>Not Too Much Time</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
24	9	226	89	5	2

Table 14

Length of Season

<u>Season Too Long</u>		<u>Length of Season Appropriate</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
13	5	237	93	5	2

Table 15

Length of Games

<u>Games Too Short</u>		<u>Games Too Long</u>		<u>Games Appropriate</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
7	3	1	.39	238	93	9	4

Table 16
Disruptive Factor

<u>Practices Disruptive</u>		<u>Practices Not Disruptive</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
115	45	133	52	7	3

Table 17
Fatigue

<u>Practices Fatiguing</u>		<u>Practices Not Fatiguing</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
77	30	172	68	6	2

Conclusion

In this section parents were allowed to express their opinion about the positive and negative aspects of the program and to offer suggestions as to how the program might be improved.

Table 18 indicates that the majority of parents, 96 percent, believe Little Grizzly Football to be beneficial. Only two percent replied negatively. The development of teamwork, development of good sportsmanship, physical conditioning, and the gaining of new friends were the most often stated reasons for the positive reply.

Table 19 reveals parental opinion about negative aspects of the program. Coaches received more criticism than any other part of the program. This criticism ranged from poor sportsmanship to the use of profane language.

Table 18

Parental Opinion Towards Benefits of
Little Grizzly Football

<u>Beneficial</u>		<u>Not Beneficial</u>		<u>No Answer</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
246	96	6	2	3	1

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Number</u>
Developed teamwork	43
Developed good sportsmanship	36
Physical Conditioning and Development	28
Made new friends	24
Was fun	17
Learned fundamentals	15
Developed self-confidence	14
Learned the game and its rules	12
Learned discipline	12
Developed coordination	9
Learned to get along with others	8
Got a chance to participate	6
Learned cooperation	6

Table 19

Parental Opinion About Negative Aspects
Of the Program

<u>Replies</u>	<u>Number</u>
Coaches	37
Poor sportsmanship shown by coaches	11
Coaches setting a poor example	5
Poor coaches	5
Overly aggressive coaches	4
Profane language	4
Excessive criticism of players by coaches	2
Coaches yelling at boys	2
Imbalance of coaches within the league	2
Obnoxious coach	1
Coaches too rough	1
Overemphasis on winning	35
Parents	28
Overinvolvement of parents	10
Poor sportsmanship shown by parents	6
Obnoxious parents	5
Aggressive parents	4
Excessive criticism from parents	3
Not allowing everyone to play	22
Possibility of injury	16
Balance teams more evenly	12
Practices	9
Too many practices	4
Practices too long	3
More than one practice per day	2
Program should be in schools	5
Emotional strain and pressure	5
Losing weight prior to season	5
Should classify by age and size	5

Overemphasis on winning received 35 negative responses, followed by 28 negative replies about parental actions and 22 negative replies for not letting everyone play. The possibility of injury was considered a negative aspect of the program by 16 parents.

The responses to parental opinion about the positive aspects of the program are very similar to those indicated in Table 18. Once again, the development of teamwork was thought to be the most positive aspect of the program, followed by physical development and conditioning, the development of good sportsmanship, learning the fundamentals of football, giving the boys a chance to participate, making new friends, and having fun.

The last table represents parental views about improving the Little Grizzly Program. Thirty-one parents thought everyone should be allowed to play. Many parents suggested that one quarter would be enough. Parents recommended that coaches be required to attend a coaching clinic, that the league obtain better coaches, and use coaches with higher standards. Other recommendations were that the league expand, use age and size rather than grade in school in assigning boys to teams, emphasize winning less, divide teams more evenly, provide better fitting equipment, eliminate cursing and ridicule, develop better fields, and eliminate post season playoffs.

Table 20
Parental Opinion About Improving
the Program

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Number</u>
Let everyone play	31
Coaches	26
Have a coaching clinic	11
Better coaches	10
Use coaches with high standards	3
More equal distribution of good coaches throughout the league	1
Use two coaches per team	1
Expand league	13
Use age and size rather than grade in school in assigning boys to teams	11
Less emphasis on winning	10
Divide teams more equally	9
Eliminate cursing and ridicule	7
Need a functioning board of directors	7
Develop better playing fields	5
Eliminate post season playoffs	5

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the 1969 Little Grizzly Football Program in Missoula, Montana, using as criteria for the evaluation suggested recommendations of various professional organizations and agencies representing expertise in health, physical education, education, medicine, and recreation.

Questionnaires were sent to all parents of boys participating in the Little Grizzly Football Program to solicit information about the participant's age, weight, height, grade in school, leisure time activities, equipment, medical examinations, number and types of injury, practice sessions and games, parental views about the program, objectives of the program, positive and negative aspects of the program, and recommended changes for the program. In addition, on site observations were made by the investigator of all aspects of the 1969 Little Grizzly Program.

Seventy-six percent or 255 of the 335 parents returned questionnaires sent to them. Parents were clearly interested in league objectives that teach good fundamental football, allow boys to have fun, provide a healthful and instructional recreational outlet, and develop teamwork and sportsmanship. Parents indicated a desire that there be more emphasis on participation for all. Results also show that parents do not want the league to increase its emphasis on winning and 26 percent thought there

should be less emphasis on winning.

There were large differences in height, weight, and age among contestants within each league. Age ranged from nine years, six months to twelve years, nine months in the American League and from eleven years, eleven months to fourteen years, eleven months in the National League. Height ranged from 52 to 66 inches in the American League and from 52 to 72 inches in the National League. Weight ranged from 62 to 175 pounds in the American League and from 75 to 160 pounds in the National League.

Parents indicated that 81 helmets were either too tight or too loose. Fifty parents said they had to pad the helmets in some way in order to make them fit. Fifty percent of the boys in the program did not have a physical examination prior to participating in Little Grizzly Football. Sixty-eight injuries of all kinds were reported, 32 of which required a doctor's care. There were two knee surgeries and four broken or chipped bones.

The majority of parents, 85 percent, indicated they were pleased with the coaching. Only 36 parents were unhappy with the coaching. Eighty-six percent of the parents were also pleased with the officiating.

Parents did not feel that too much time was devoted to football or that the season was too long. They thought that game length was appropriate. Forty-five percent felt that practices were a disruptive factor in the home and thirty percent thought that practices were fatiguing.

Parents expressed an overwhelming endorsement of the program. Ninety-six percent replied that it was beneficial. The development of teamwork and sportsmanship, the learning of fundamentals, and physical development and conditioning were thought to be the most important positive aspects of the program. Even while endorsing the program, parents

suggested several negative aspects and areas in need of improvement. Coaching received much criticism as did overemphasis on winning, not letting everyone participate and overly aggressive and critical parents. Thirty-one parents recommended that coaches be schooled in league policy and coaching techniques and that the league obtain better coaches with higher standards.

Observation of the issuance and fitting of equipment suggested the following inadequacies. Many of the helmets were too large, some so large they could be spun around the head. There was no expert in attendance who could fit the equipment properly. Parents and amateur coaches attempted to do the best they could.

Many observations were made while attending practices and games concerning safety. There were no physicians at practices or on several occasions at games. After being injured boys were not required to see a doctor prior to readmittance to league play. Coaches had no guidelines to follow regarding first aid procedures, or referral to the doctor. Participants played while injured and they often did not keep the mouth guard inserted.

Many of the coaches began scrimmaging before the boys were properly conditioned. No precautions were taken during extremely hot weather to protect the health of the boys.

Coaches had more practices than the three a week authorized by the league. Some practices were two and one-half to three hours in length and several two-a-day practices were held. Some coaches were extremely sarcastic and critical of players, others did not give everyone a chance to participate.

Games were 40 minutes long in both leagues. All teams played at

least six regular season and post season games. Some teams played as many as eight games. Playoffs were held to crown a champion and last place was determined by having two bottom teams in each league play. The championship games in each league were televised.

The league needs to make many improvements but there are encouraging signs. The mere presence of the league indicates the desire on the part of the community to provide necessary recreational outlets for their young people. Coaches and officials gave freely of themselves and their time. They are to be congratulated for their efforts. The director is an extremely dedicated man who is interested in the welfare of young people. He fully cooperated with this study and has indicated an intention to closely study its recommendations.

Recommendations to the League

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations to the Little Grizzly Football League are proposed.

1. Mandatory medical examinations and medical histories should be required at the beginning of each season before allowing an athlete to participate in any football activity including preseason training.
2. All coaches should emphasize proper, gradual and complete physical conditioning.
3. A physician should be present at all games and readily available at all practices.
4. All personnel associated with the program should be cognizant of the problems and safety measures related to physical activity in hot weather.
5. There should be strict enforcement of league rules concerning number of practices.

6. Written guidelines should be established by the league to cover every aspect of the program.
7. A functioning board of directors should administer the league.
8. There should be a maximum and minimum age limit for each league and players should be more closely matched according to size and ability.
9. Helmets must be obtained that fit properly.
10. An expert in athletic equipment and its fitting should be present during the issuance of equipment.
11. Clinics should be held to familiarize coaches and officials with league rules and policies.
12. All participants in the program should be allowed to play at least one quarter a game if they have come to practices faithfully.
13. Play-offs and commercial promoting via television should be eliminated.
14. Games should be shortened to eight minute quarters, especially in the American League.
15. Any player requiring medical attention should have a doctor's permission to resume activities.
16. Practice session should not exceed two hours in duration. Practice sessions should be limited to two a week after the season begins. Two-a-day practices must be eliminated.
17. The league should limit the number of games to the five regular season contests.
18. Coaches should be carefully selected. Every effort should be made to attain coaches of high moral character, who are experienced

in playing football and have some professional training in physical education or coaching.

19. Winning should not be the most important objective of the program.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the results of this investigation, the following recommendations for further study are proposed:

1. Additional studies should be conducted next year to determine the extent to which recommendations of this study were accepted by the Little Grizzly Football League.

2. Further research should be conducted to determine causative factors relative to the injury problem.

3. The scope of this investigation should be broadened to determine the extent to which children's athletic programs in the State of Montana adhere to the guidelines presented in this paper.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Age in Years and Months at Start of
Little Grizzly Season

American League											
<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>
9			10		2	11		2	12		5
	1			1	-- 2		1	-- 5		1	-- 2
	2			2	-- 5		2	-- 6		2	-- 1
	3			3	-- 7		3	-- 4		3	-- 2
	4			4	-- 2		4	-- 6		4	
	5			5	-- 6		5	-- 2		5	
	6	-- 1		6	-- 7		6	-- 2		6	-- 1
	7			7	-- 4		7	-- 5		7	
	8			8	-- 5		8	-- 6		8	
	9			9	-- 4		9	-- 6		9	-- 1
	10	-- 2		10	-- 5		10	-- 8		10	
	11	-- 2		11	-- 6		11	-- 3		11	
									No Answer		3
Mean = 11 yrs., 1 mo.										Total	130

APPENDIX B

Age in Years and Months at Start of
Little Grizzly Season

National League

<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Yr.</u>	<u>Mo.</u>	<u>No.</u>
11			12		4	13		3	14		3
	1			1	-- 7		1	-- 4		1	-- 1
	2			2	-- 3		2	-- 6		2	-- 2
	3			3	-- 7		3			3	-- 1
	4			4	-- 7		4	-- 3		4	
	5			5	-- 1		5	-- 7		5	
	6			6	-- 7		6	-- 5		6	
	7			7			7	-- 4		7	-- 1
	8			8	-- 4		8	-- 4		8	-- 1
	9			9	-- 2		9	-- 5		9	
	10			10	-- 4		10	-- 8		10	
	11	-- 2		11	-- 8		11	-- 7		11	-- 1
									No Answer		3
Mean = 13 yrs., 1 mo.										Total	125

APPENDIX C

Height as Indicated on Questionnaire

<u>American League</u>		<u>National League</u>	
Inches	Number	Inches	Number
52	2	52	1
53	2	53	
54	9	54	
55	9	55	1
56	10	56	1
57	16	57	7
58	20	58	7
59	15	59	5
60	13	60	12
61	5	61	13
62	5	62	10
63	2	63	17
64	5	64	9
65	1	65	10
66	1	66	8
67		67	6
68		68	3
69		69	2
70		70	1
71		71	
72		72	1
No Answer	15		11
Total	130	Mean = 58	125
			Mean = 62

APPENDIX D

Weight as Indicated on Questionnaire

<u>American League</u>		<u>National League</u>	
Pounds	Number	Pounds	Number
62-68	7	69-75	2
69-75	21	76-82	9
76-82	21	83-89	7
83-89	33	90-96	19
90-96	16	97-103	13
97-103	7	104-110	19
104-110	9	111-117	8
111-117	5	118-124	13
118-124	1	125-131	10
125-131		132-138	7
132-138		139-145	4
139-145		146-152	2
146-152		153-159	1
153-159		160-166	2
160-166			
167-173			
174-180	1		
No Answer	8		10
Total	130		125
	Mean= 87		Mean=105

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS OF LITTLE
GRIZZLY FOOTBALL PLAYERS

Please fill out the following questionnaire concerning Little Grizzly Football in Missoula. Responses will help evaluate the program as well as assist in developing guidelines for future programs. Although your signature is requested, information will be treated anonymously and confidentially.

Note: All questions refer to your son's participation in Little Grizzly Football.

I. General Information

1. In the space provided, please indicate the name and birthdate of your son playing Little Grizzly Football.
a. _____ b. _____
last first month day year
2. What is your son's present height and weight?
a. height in inches _____ b. weight in pounds _____
3. Did your son attempt to lose weight prior to the start of Little Grizzly Football? _____ yes _____ no
4. How many years has your son participated in Little Grizzly Football? (Include the past season in your response.)
_____ 1 year _____ 2 years _____ 3 years
5. What grade is your son presently in? _____
Has he repeated any grades in school? _____ yes _____ no
If yes, please indicate what grade. _____
6. How many of your son's games did you as parents observe during the past season?
Mother: _____
Father: _____
Mother & Father (together) _____
7. Does your son participate in any other leisure time activity other than football during the Little Grizzly season?
_____ yes _____ no

If yes, what activities does he participate in?

II. Equipment:

1. Do you feel that your son's equipment fit properly? Please respond by placing a check mark in the most appropriate column.

Too Tight Too Loose Fit Properly

Helmet

Shoulder pads

Hip pads

Pants

Game jersey

2. Please utilize the space below and comment on any adjustment your son had to make in order for the equipment to fit properly.

III. Medical Exam and Injuries:

1. Did your son have a medical examination prior to participation in Little Grizzly Football? yes no
2. Did your son suffer any type of injury during the past football season as a direct result of Little Grizzly Football? yes
 no

If yes, did the injury require a doctor's care? yes no

Briefly describe the nature of the injury. (If more than one injury, please specify.)

3. Did your son miss any practice sessions and/or games as result of injury? yes no
4. Did your son attempt to follow any kind of training program as to sleep and eating habits during the Little Grizzly Season?
 yes no

If yes, specify what the training program consisted of.

IV. Coaching:

1. Were you satisfied with the coaching your boy received? _____ yes
 _____ no. If possible please specify the reasons for your answer.
-
-

V. Officiating:

1. Were you satisfied with the officiating in the games? _____ yes
 _____ no. Briefly state the reason for your answer.
-
-

VI. Practice and Games:

1. Do you feel that too much time was devoted to football during the Little Grizzly Season? _____ yes _____ no
2. Do you believe the season was too long? _____ yes _____ no
3. Do you believe the length of the games was a. too short
 b. too long c. appropriate. (circle one)
4. Was the time of the practices a disruptive factor in the home?
 _____ yes _____ no. If your answer is yes, please specify.
-
-

5. Did your son become fatigued because of practices? _____ yes
 _____ no

VII. Objectives:

1. Listed below are typical objectives of the Little Grizzly Football Program. Mark the objectives as to whether, in your opinion, they are of primary importance, secondary importance or of no importance to the overall program. Spaces are provided at the bottom of the list for you to state any other objectives you feel should be included.

- | | <u>Primary</u>
<u>Importance</u> | <u>Secondary</u>
<u>Importance</u> | <u>No</u>
<u>Importance</u> |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Develop high school and college football players. | | | |
| b. Give everyone a chance to participate | | | |
| c. Teach good fundamental football. | | | |
| d. Have fun. | | | |
| e. Provide a healthful and instructional recreational outlet. | | | |
| f. Produce winning football teams. | | | |
| g. Provide an outlet for aggression | | | |
| h. Develop muscular strength and coordination | | | |
| i. | | | |
| j. | | | |
2. Do you think there should be more or less emphasis on winning.
 _____ more _____ less _____ about same
3. Do you think there should be more or less emphasis on everyone getting to play?
 _____ more _____ less _____ about same

VIII. Conclusion:

1. Do you believe Little Grizzly Football was beneficial for your son?
 _____ yes _____ no

If possible, please state the reason for your answer.

2. In your opinion, what are the most negative aspects of Little Grizzly Football?

3. What are the most positive aspects?

4. In your opinion, how can Little Grizzly Football be improved?

 Name (Please Print)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

APPENDIX F

University of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59801
(406) 243-0211

November 26, 1969

Dear Parent:

I am in the process of conducting an evaluation of the Little Grizzly Football Program in Missoula. This evaluation is in partial fulfillment of my Master's Degree in Health and Physical Education. I have the endorsement of Mr. Bill Cregg, Director of the Little Grizzly Program. It is hoped that from recommendations put forth the Little Grizzly Program will be improved for the coming year.

The study will require certain data that only you as a parent can furnish. Therefore, I solicit your assistance in completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to me. For your convenience and to facilitate a prompt response, a self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Although your name is requested, you have my assurance that the information will be treated anonymously and confidentially.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Williams
Graduate Student
Department of Health,
Physical Education and
Recreation

APPENDIX G

November 26, 1969

Dear Parent,

Mr. Dennis Williams has been a close observer of Little Grizzly Football during the 1969 season. His work and recommendations to our board of directors should help us improve our program. We urge you to complete and return his questionnaire forthwith.

Thanks very much.

Very truly yours,

Bill Cregg, Director
Little Grizzly Football

APPENDIX H

BY-LAWS OF L. G. F. FOR PURPOSES OF INCORPORATION AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

1. NAME-

The corporation shall be known as "Little Grizzly Football of Missoula, Inc."

2. PURPOSE-

The corporation shall conduct an eleven-man tackle football program for grade school boys in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, thus providing them with a healthful and instructive new recreational outlet for their energies and a greater attainment of physical, social, and moral values through cooperative and individual effort and achievement.

3. PROGRAM-

The corporation's board of directors shall be charged with operation of the football program with emphasis on continuity and quality. This charge shall include, but is not limited to, recruiting players, coaches, and officials; providing game fields, schedules, game equipment, and protective uniforms for players; drafting rules appropriate to the program; appointing a commissioner to enforce corporate policy; and raising adequate finances to properly operate the program.

The board is to incorporate Little Grizzly Football of Missoula as a non-profit organization and adequately insure itself against any and all possible liability claims.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS-

The board will consist of seventeen members, sixteen elected by the membership and one, the current program commissioner, whose appointment

is concurrent with his term of office.

Officers of the Board shall include a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. They will be elected by a majority of the board to serve annually. The appointment of the commissioner will be for one year at a time; his election by the board shall be by a majority plus one vote.

Board elections will be conducted at the January meeting of the board, which will meet during January, April, July, and October of each year. Other meetings may be called at the discretion of the president and/or vice-president.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in IGF shall be based on monetary contribution to the program in addition to the honorary memberships listed below. Full sponsors are entitled to six votes each to the board of directors, partial sponsors will have the appropriate fraction of six votes. Four hundred dollars (\$400) constitutes a full membership in 1967 and this amount is expected to be reduced to \$100 or less in subsequent years.

Any other contributors are entitled to one vote each.

Honorary memberships, entitled to two votes each, shall include a local doctor of medicine, an attorney, and dentist named by the board. Also each Missoula high school football coach; the director of athletics of Missoula County High Schools; the president of the Missoula County Trades and Labor Council; a current member of the school district #1 board; the pastor of St. Anthony parish; the president of the University of Montana; the U of M athletic director and dean of the P. E. department; and a local professional football official chosen by the board on the basis of seniority and/or rating.

COMPENSATION-

No board member, including officers and the commissioner, shall receive wages, salary, bonus, or any other compensation for duties performed in LGF. This is not to mean that obvious and authorized program expense cannot be repaid to one who incurs such out-of-pocket expense. The spirit and intent of this by-law, however, is that all possible services, including coaching and officiating, are to be voluntary.

Should it ever be impossible to obtain free officials, the board shall be authorized to hire them at a nominal fee determined by a majority of the board.

SPONSORS-

While LGF will diligently avoid exploiting the program, teams, or individual players for commercial purposes, it is recognized that sponsor donations are substantial amounts without which no program could exist. Consequently, what publicity and goodwill accrues to sponsors shall be well received by LGF. Consistent with the aforementioned publicity, sponsors will have the name of their firm affixed to the game jerseys of one team.

Sponsor duties, responsibilities, obligations, and/or liabilities to any team in any league, including and particularly the one that bears the sponsor's name, is nil. The intention of this by-law is to limit the obligation of any sponsor to his assessed contribution, and to absolve him of any other connection with the program. This means that a sponsor's donation is payable to LGF, Inc., pooled immediately with other existing funds, and eventually spent for any and all program expense (as opposed to being channelled to the

maintenance of one particular team).

A further intention of the above by-law is to reiterate the charge of IGF, Inc. to assign team players, equip them properly, and provide them with coaches, officials, and a league in which to play.

MISCELLANEOUS-

Any other corporate policies not listed in these original by-laws shall be reserved to the board of directors insofar as such policies do not conflict with same original by-laws. These anticipated policies shall include, but are not limited to eligibility requirements for players; starting date for practices and number per week thereafter allowed; appointment of officials and coaches; and adopting of special rules.

APPENDIX I

Means of Achieving Some of the Recommendations Set Forth in This Paper

1. The local medical association could be approached to offer their services in giving medical examinations, providing physician attendance at games, conducting clinics for coaches and developing first aid and referral procedures for the league.

2. Coaching clinics could be conducted prior to the start of the season by representatives of the Little Grizzly Program, professional football coaches (the University of Montana football coaching staff is represented on the board of directors), medical doctors, and an expert in the fitting of protective equipment (the University of Montana's equipment manager has indicated he would be available) for the purpose of familiarizing coaches with league rules and policies, especially those relating to coaching techniques and procedures, first aid and referral of injured players, pre-season physical conditioning, hot weather safety precautions, and the proper fitting of protective equipment. Additional attention should be given to the special vulnerabilities of children 9 to 13 years of age.

3. Students attending the University of Montana, majoring in physical education with an emphasis in coaching would be excellent head or assistant coaches for the Little Grizzly Teams. Arrangements could be made with the physical education department to assist in recruiting these students.