

THE IMPACTS AND BENEFITS YIELDED FROM THE SPORT OF
QUIDDITCH

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents two individual studies aimed at providing insight into the impacts and benefits of participation and involvement in an alternative sport. Thus, the purpose was to monitor and evaluate the authentic sport of quidditch, based on the *Harry Potter* franchise, and the governing body, the International Quidditch Association (IQA).

In Study 1, through a grounded theory approach, I examined the impact and benefits on participants and determined similarities and differences to traditional sport activities. Findings suggest involvement with quidditch provided leadership skills, social gains, increased health and fitness, self-confidence and pride, along with a positive sporting experience, all of which have been recognized in more traditional sports. Further analysis revealed the grassroots component of the sport provided leadership opportunities that organized traditional sport often cannot provide.

In Study 2, I furthered my exploration with the sport of quidditch through a grounded theory approach and examined the impact and benefits for volunteers who chose to work for the IQA. Findings suggested the unique atmosphere of quidditch was able to produce an environment that yielded positive impact on the volunteers. It was found that volunteering for the IQA resulted in two themes recognized as a precursor to social capital development: A positive experience within a sport setting and meeting new people and like-minded individuals. Two additional themes, satisfaction and pride, and enhanced job marketability and networking, were found to result in personal gain.

As grounded theory methodology suggests, this study aimed to advance substantive theory in regards to alternative sport impact in an effort to assist in the development of formal theory. From a practical standpoint, this dissertation implies the importance of alternative sport endeavors in an effort to reach those whom normally might not be found on the field, court, or ice.

DEDICATION

To my grandmother Goldie Salkin for being one of the most influential, supportive, and caring people in my life. You once told me; "You're going to be a great professor one day." I hope this is just the beginning in fulfilling that prediction. I wish you were here to see me graduate, but I know you would be extremely proud of everything I have accomplished and will accomplish in the future.

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In addition to my grandmother, I have several other people I wish to acknowledge for their support in making this dissertation possible. First and foremost, I have to thank the rest of my family, especially my grandfather, Benjamin Salkin, and my parents, Ellyn Salkin and Bob Cohen, for their boundless support. Each of you has been instrumental in my upbringing and you inspired my passion and desire to utilize sport towards social justice.

I also would like to thank my committee members, George B. Cunningham, John Singer and Michael Edwards for their insightful feedback, comments, and lessons shared which enhanced this dissertation and helped encourage the research and methodology. Special thanks to my committee chair, Jon Welty Peachey. Simply put, the best mentor under which I have ever worked. I have learned more under your guidance than all my previous supervisors combined. I am grateful for your unwavering support of my research ideas (and willingness to read hundreds of pages about quidditch) which others in academia may have considered polarizing.

Finally, I have to recognize my PhD cohort at Texas A&M for their positive impact on my experience here in College Station. Special thanks to Nicole Melton and her 24/7 availability to partake in debates, arguments, and collaboration; Brandon Brown for his unlimited enthusiasm and excitement during the tough moments; and, Jami Lobpries for being one of the most passionate people I have ever met in the sports

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Physical fitness and healthy well-being currently have ample competition attracting the attention of citizens in the United States. According to the 2012 Participation Report conducted by the Physical Activity Council, over 68 million Americans are totally inactive, accounting for 24 percent of the country's population. The study goes on to recognize that in the past three years the rate of inactivity has increased by over eight percent (Physical Activity Council, 2012). Getting people to participate in organized sport or physical fitness activities is a greater challenge than ever before due to a plethora of distractions (e.g., internet, television and video games) that enable individuals to stray from sport participation. For example, the average 6-11 year old spends 28 hours a week watching television (McDonough, 2009) and only 50 percent of youth ages 12-21 regularly participate in vigorous physical activity (Hedley et al., 2004). Research has also noted that people withdraw from sport for varied reasons, such as conflicts of interest, lack of playing time, lack of success or improvement, lack of fun, dislike of the coach, boredom, and injury (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2008; Gould & Horn, 1984) or insufficient motivation to participate (Vallerand, 2007; Vallerand, Blais, Bri re, & Pelletier, 1989).

Despite the recognition of inactivity in America, physical education and other means of fitness have often been cut from school budgets around the country. Studies have demonstrated the increased need for innovative sport initiatives due to negative trends in sport programs within the traditional school setting (Up2Us, n.d.). Up2Us, a

non-profit, sport-for-development organization that researches youth sport programs, recently noted in a report:

An estimated \$1.5 billion was cut from school sports budgets during the 2010-2011 school years. This was on top of the estimated \$2 billion cut during the 2009-2010 year. . . . Four key trends emerged illustrating the state of school sports: slashed budgets, increasing fees, eliminated opportunities, and growing inequities (Up2Us, n.d., executive summary, para. 1).

Similar studies have recognized that almost 40% of schools in the U.S. have reduced or eliminated recess from the schedule (McMurrer, 2007) despite research illustrating its importance for youth development (Ramstetter, Murray, & Garner, 2010). Recently, the U.S. government has recognized this negative trend in funding and for increased physical activity in the school systems. In 2013, Michelle Obama launched the Let's Move! Active Schools campaign, an effort to bring fitness back into the school systems that is prominently funded by a \$50 million Nike donation, along with an additional \$20 million from other groups.

In an effort to engage people who may normally be turned off by more traditional endeavors, or who may not have access to such activities, sport and physical fitness outlets have constantly been adapted, reinvented, or even created from scratch. Often the root cause of these innovations is the burnout or dropout among participants that occurs with more traditional activities when sport loses its enjoyment for them (Gould & Horn, 1984; Gould, 1987; Smith, Gustafsson, & Hassmen, 2011). Specifically, Thorpe and Rinehart (2010) suggest:

Unlike traditional sport (which is often seen as highly regulated, regimented and surveilled), alternative sport - or at least the alternative activities themselves - are more likely to be lived in the moment, at the moment of discovery (p. 127).

There are several terms utilized in sport management literature which recognize sports that are not "mainstream." For example, *grassroots* sports (EUC Report of Session, 2011), *lifestyle* sports (Mintel, 2003), *non-traditional* sport (Lyras, 2012) and *extreme* sports (Donnelly, 2006) are all terms that have been used in an effort to define an activity and the participants (see Appendix A for further detail). For the sake of this research, a broader term, *alternative* sports, will be utilized. Jarvie (2006), defined alternative sports:

Any sport that may threaten a particularly powerful ideology may be deemed to be an alternative sport and yet not all alternative sports are associated with lifestyle, opposition or have the potential to be a social movement. . . .

Traditionally alternative sports have been enjoyed by smaller groups of people, and cherished a lack of competition, organization and commercial intervention (p. 273).

Regardless of the term utilized, the common trait each shares is the emphasis on the ability to reach participants who might have rejected more conventional or structured sporting opportunities. Thus, traditional activities like baseball or softball might be shunned for a local kickball league, or a former varsity football star might join an Ultimate Frisbee team.

Research Context and Problem Statement

Considering the growth in alternative sport activities and initiatives, and the increasing need for innovative outlets to inspire physical fitness and participation in sport, the goal of this research was to investigate a sport organization using an alternative sport to address these needs. Calling for further investigation of alternative sport, Wheaton (2010) states, "research needs to continue to illustrate the competing and contradictory messages disseminating through popular forms of (lifestyle) sporting culture" and continues to suggest exploration of a wide variety of sport should "inform our understanding of sport's relationship to wider social, economic, and political processes" (p. 1073). In an attempt to answer this call, I selected a sport that was merely an idea in the head of a fiction writer 15 years ago; an alternative sport which has grown rapidly in less than a decade that features a new type of sporting equipment which is more likely to be found at The Home Depot than Modell's. Founded in 2005, the sport of quidditch shifted from a fictional game featured in the *Harry Potter* series to a real life, full contact, coed sport that happens to feature a broom.

Created in Vermont, a group of students decided to try something new after they got bored of every recreational sport their school offered. What began as a local fad, quickly started to become popular at other universities. Riding the popularity and desire for expansion, the International Quidditch Association was formed and staffed with all volunteers. As of today, over 350 teams are located around the globe, with hundreds more in communication with the governing body to start their own teams and leagues. In

an effort to stress their desire for the sport to remain inclusive, yet competitive, the IQA mission statement stresses their 'three C's' [sic]:

Our three goals are based on the three essential elements. They represent the progression from an idea to a fully-fledged national organization. They can be emulated on any scale and unfold in the following order: creativity, community, and competition (IQA, 2013).

What started on the pages of a fictional novel penned by J.K. Rowling over 15 years ago has expanded to an initiative aimed at providing an inclusive sporting environment and a fun atmosphere for all that choose to take part. Although significant research on conventional sport impact exists (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Silliker & Quirk, 1997), a need for innovative and alternative sporting opportunities has been recognized (Coakley, 2001; Riewald, 2003); however, there have been limited efforts in examining their impact. In a report to Sport England, it was noted: "To date, research on lifestyle sport has tended to focus on how individuals construct identities in these sporting cultures, the impact of commercialization, and the experiences of minority groups" (Tomlinson, Ravenscroft, Wheaton, & Gilchrist, 2005, p. 8). Hence, I aimed to further the knowledge and awareness of one alternative sport (quidditch) in an attempt to illustrate its value within the sporting community. Specifically, this research hoped to demonstrate the value of alternative sport and the benefit it can serve in society.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to answer the following overarching research questions:

RQ1: What impacts and benefits are received by athletes in an alternative sport setting that are similar to traditional sport?

RQ2: What, if anything, differentiates the impacts and benefits of this alternative sport from traditional sport?

While this investigation aimed to focus on the impact on the players, a third research question emerged via the inductive nature of this investigation. It was recognized that the sport had an influence beyond the participants, as the volunteers were also impacted in a significant manner. As such, the following additional research question was developed:

RQ3: What impacts and benefits are received by volunteers in an alternative sport setting?

Research Paradigm

'Nerd' to me is a very complimentary term. It's just someone who cares enough about something to study it very thoroughly and really apply themselves (sic). There are dirt nerds (geophysicists) and music nerds and horse nerds and electronic-nerds (Sandy Lerner, Nerds 2.0.1: A brief history of the internet, 1998).

Advocates of qualitative methodology have recognized the importance of the "human instrument" and its ability to investigate complex human nature or activity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maykut & Morehouse, 2002). That being the case, I will provide a brief self-assessment of myself and my background to provide the context which has influenced my research paradigm (Newman, 2006).

I fully agree and embrace the above quote by Lerner and recognize that my "nerdy" personality traits have influenced this research effort. For example, I learn about sabermetrics and baseball analytics for fun, have witnessed reenactments of three different historical battles (Bunker Hill, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg), drive my car to NPR, fall asleep to TED Talks, and yes, I have read all seven *Harry Potter* books (twice), seen all eight movies, and have even paid to see the band Harry and the Potters. Additionally, sport participation was a significant aspect of my life throughout my school years, along with my subsequent efforts to find activities suitable for my interests. For one reason or another I have joined, and quit, numerous sports in my life. When I was eight I quit taking gymnastics lessons, after I turned 12, I stopped figure skating, eighth grade was the last time I played organized baseball, I quit basketball and soccer my sophomore year of high school and, I resigned from competitive tennis in my senior year of high school. However, I still had a desire to remain involved in sport, and I replaced the gaps with other activities such as Ultimate Frisbee, kickball, coed softball, wallyball, kayaking, and fly-fishing.

In a broader sense, I grew up in an altruistic household with two parents heavily involved in the non-profit sector and other philanthropic endeavors. Volunteerism (or

mitzvahs - as good deeds are often referred to in Jewish households) was always a part of my life, first, when I was dragged along as a child and later, when I willingly donated my time through the Americorps VISTA initiative. I eventually decided to return to school to get my master's degree at Northeastern University because of the opportunity to combine my love of sport and desire to remain involved in public policy and philanthropy through its Sports Leadership program and affiliation with a non-profit called Sports in Society. As I learned through my studies and practitioner experience about the field of sport-for-development, I was determined to remain in academia and become involved with the growing monitor and evaluation efforts, along with promoting the unique benefits of sport participation to the general public (Coalter, 2010; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011).

As suggested by Charmaz (1994), a study often depends on "researcher's training and interests" (p. 98). Thus, considering some of my background interests and motivations, it might not be surprising that I ultimately chose to investigate an endeavor adapted from a sport played by fictional teenage wizards. Additionally, my focus was geared towards researching factors such as benefits, impacts, and health outcomes versus other prominent aspects of the sport management field such as marketing and sales.

Epistemological Paradigm

In an effort to conduct a qualitative, exploratory study on a largely untapped research stream in academia, I will be using an interpretive constructivist lens (Havercamp & Young, 2007). As stated in the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors*, constructivism is a "viewpoint in learning theory which holds that

individuals acquire knowledge by building it from innate capabilities interacting with the environment" (Houston, 1995, p. 68). Simply put, this approach suggests that I will reach conclusions by constructing my own understanding through observations, interactions, and previous experiences and knowledge.

Choice of Methodology

In an attempt to investigate a sport that was invented within the last decade and which has not previously been researched in academia, I utilized a grounded theory approach. Beyond the sport of quidditch in particular, most research with alternative or lifestyle sport has focused on culture and identities, not impact or benefits (Tomlinson, Ravenscroft, Wheaton, & Gilchrist, 2005), leaving another gap of knowledge worthy of inductive exploration. Specifically, the aim of this methodological approach was to allow the data to drive the findings versus existing knowledge and theoretical frameworks driving the data collection (Charmaz, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Advocating for data and observation to guide future research, Hambrick (2005) recommended that theory develop from the field, not from the literature:

I am pretty sure about where theories don't come from. They don't come from scholars struggling to find holes in the literature. I don't think you can read your way to developing a theory. It is far better to start with real-life, interesting puzzle; then develop a preliminary set of ideas for solving the puzzle; and then turn to the literature for guidance and insight (p. 124).

Mintzberg (2005) stated, “everything depends on the creative leap” (p. 22) and “[theory] is really about discovering patterns” (p. 25) and being created organically. For this dissertation, an extensive literature review before data collection was not conducted as recommended by Glaser (2004), but some background investigation and initial readings did occur to allow for a precursory foundation and understanding of the research subject.

In an overview of grounded theory research in sport, Weed (2009) identifies eight elements common to the approach: (a) an iterative process, (b) theoretical sampling, (c) theoretical sensitivity, (d) codes, memos, and concepts, (e) constant comparison, (f) theoretical saturation, (g) fit, work, relevance, and modifiability, and (h) theory development. While the initial focus of this study was on the participants of the sport, a new topic emerged leading to my third research question centered on the non-participants (volunteers) of quidditch. As Weed (2009) notes, "Studies which collect data, and then claim to use grounded theory to analyze the data without allowing for the possibility of future iterations of data collection following analysis . . . are the clearest examples of the mis-application of grounded theory" (p. 505). This iterative process and the recognition of impact beyond the field of play led me to continue my data collection and further analyze additional stakeholders.

Thus, through content analysis, observations, and interviews, I attempted to answer the research questions presented. Within my methodology sections of Study 1 (Chapter II) and Study 2 (Chapter III) I will further detail the data collection and analysis as guided by the tenants of grounded theory.

Design

This dissertation is comprised of two studies that aimed to answer the above research questions along with an appendix to further inform the reader of the evolving state of sport participation, alternative sport initiatives, and its current place in academia. Study 1 focused on the sport's participants and was a four step process, consisting of content analysis and informational gathering, an open-ended survey that was administered online, focus groups that occurred in person and via Skype, and firsthand observations at the 2011 Quidditch World Cup. Study 2 incorporated the previous methodology and further explored the sport by investigating the volunteers and their experience. This was accomplished through conducting online focus groups of board members, committee members, referees and event volunteers.

Also guiding these two studies were two additional investigations that emerged through my collaboration with the IQA and my research with the sport of quidditch. While not specifically part of this dissertation, they were important precursors to this effort, as their findings helped me define quidditch as a unique alternative activity and a different experience from traditional sport. First, Cohen, Brown, and Welty Peachey (2012) looked into the motivations to take part in the sport and concluded the large majority of quidditch participants were driven by intrinsic reasons, including: camaraderie and friendship, desires to have fun, desires for trying something new, and desires to get in shape, and note the sport's potential "to reach young people who normally would not partake in traditional sport" (p. 13). Second, Cohen, Melton, and Welty Peachey (in press) focused on the unique coed aspect of the sport and its impact

on gender equality. Building on the findings of these two studies through grounded theory methods and analysis, the impact and benefits of this alternative sport will be explored in this dissertation.

Dissertation Format

This dissertation is composed in a journal article format and is organized in the following manner. This current section (Chapter I) serves as an overarching introduction to the investigation. In Chapter II, I discuss the impact and benefits of an alternative sport on its participants while in Chapter III, I look at the impact and benefits of an alternative sport on its volunteers. Chapters II and III are self-contained chapters which will be completed journal articles that have both been guided by grounded theory methodology and analysis. In Chapter IV I provide a discussion of the two studies and give broader analysis of the contributions and implications for theory and practice. Additionally, Chapter IV will discuss limitations and areas of future research. Finally, the Appendix provides background literature to inform the reader further about aspects of sport participation, alternative sport initiatives, and the position of alternative sport within sport management.

CHAPTER II

ALTERNATIVE SPORT AND THE IMPACT IT PROVIDES

Throughout the years, sport and physical activities have constantly been adapted, reinvented, or even created from scratch. Often the root cause of these innovations is the burnout or dropout among participants that occurs with more traditional activities when sport loses its enjoyment for them (Gould & Horn, 1984; Gould, 1987; Smith, Gustafsson, & Hassmen, 2011). Thus, traditional activities like baseball or softball might be shunned for a local kickball league, or a former varsity football star might join an Ultimate Frisbee team. Several alternative sports have developed in recent years attracting a wide range of participants. Community flag football and slow-pitch softball leagues can be found catering to a vast level of skill, from elite-level athletics to recreational athletes. Other sports such as surfing, skateboarding, and BMX biking have been popularized by events like the X-Games. While professional, college, and varsity high school sports are often the recipients of attention and fanfare, alternative sports have appealed to a wide demographic of individuals due to their accessibility and ability to attract a diverse population of participants. Additionally, research has recognized decreases in traditional sport participation, such as volleyball and basketball, and increases in activities like snowboarding and mountain biking (Stotlar, 2002). Numerous definitions and terminology exist for these alternative or non-traditional sports such as "extreme," "lifestyle," and "action." One factor they all have in common is the ideology suggesting these activities are enjoyed by smaller groups of people due to reasons such as deemphasized competition and commercialization, and surrounding sub-cultures that

appeal to participants (Jarvie, 2006). In other words, these are "activities that either ideologically or practically provide alternatives to mainstream sports and mainstream sport values" (Rinehart, 2000, p. 506).

One example of a modern, non-traditional sport recently developed and which has gained popularity in community leagues, college campuses, and high schools around the U.S. and beyond, is a game called quidditch. Created in 2005 at Middlebury College in the U.S., a handful of undergraduates who were tired of their available sport options decided to get creative. Using J.K. Rowling's fictional game of quidditch from the *Harry Potter* book series as a blueprint, a new coed sport was designed. Driven by local students and young adults, teams began to emerge in communities around the U.S. In some instances, they were conceived by high school students who wanted a fun activity to partake in after school, while others were established by college undergraduates who wished to form clubs in an attempt to meet new people and be active on campus. Other young adults formed teams and leagues within their communities through recreation departments. Currently, over 350 official teams can be found throughout the world, with hundreds more entering the inception stage. The governing body of quidditch, the International Quidditch Association (IQA), states the mission behind the creation of the sport:

Our three goals are based on the three essential elements. They represent the progression from an idea to a fully-fledged national organization. They can be emulated on any scale and unfold in the following order: creativity, community, and competition (IQA, n.d.).

What started as a whim in a dorm room setting has escalated to a large grassroots endeavor that has reached communities across the U.S. and the world. While there is significant research on the positive impacts sport can have on the lives of individuals (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Silliker & Quirk, 1997), there are far fewer examinations of non-traditional, grassroots sporting activities. Additionally, recent studies have demonstrated the increased need for innovative sport initiatives due to negative trends in sport programs within traditional school settings. Up2Us, a non-profit, sport-for-development organization that researches youth sport programs, recently noted in a report:

An estimated \$1.5 billion was cut from school sports budgets during the 2010-2011 school years. This was on top of the estimated \$2 billion cut during the 2009-2010 year. . . . Four key trends emerged illustrating the state of school sports: slashed budgets, increasing fees, eliminated opportunities, and growing inequities (Up2Us, 2012, executive summary, para. 1).

Due to the need for original, inventive, and cost-effective sports programs along with a gap in the literature, the purpose of this research was to examine the impacts and benefits gained by participants of the sport of quidditch. To guide this study, two research questions were developed:

R1: What are the impacts and benefits of participating in this alternative sport that are similar to traditional sport?

R2: What differentiates the impacts and benefits of this alternative sport from traditional sport?

Specifically, I aimed to discover the similarity (or differences) of quidditch to conventional sport and if similar positive impact occurred on and off the field of play.

To answer these questions, a grounded theory approach was employed (Charmaz, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), as this methodology allows the researcher to develop theory and meticulously explore a phenomenon that has not yet been studied in great depth. Being able to determine the substantive value of an innovative, alternative sport endeavor can help endorse the need for diverse and accessible sport programming for individuals that choose not to take part in more traditional sport.

Research Context and Conceptual Framework

While quidditch is based on the *Harry Potter* books and features terminology such as "bludgers" (dodgeballs), "quaffles" (volleyballs used to score points), and "snitches" (humans draped in yellow clothing with a flag hanging from a belt), along with the mandatory rule of running with a broom between one's legs at all times, this sport has many similar traits as several activities in existence. The IQA touts the game as a combination of rugby, dodgeball, and capture-the-flag. Points are scored when "seekers" successfully throw a ball through one of three hoops. Simultaneously, "beaters" serve as defenders that throw dodgeballs at opponents in an effort to stop them. Quidditch combines athleticism and silliness which potentially attracts a new demographic of participants and like most sports, it requires running, jumping, throwing, and tackling. Finally, another major aspect of the game that makes it unlike other full-contact sports is the mandatory coed requirement. There must be a gender ratio of at

least five to two (i.e., five females and two males on the field or the opposite) at all times.

The sport of quidditch was chosen as an appropriate alternative sport for this study due to its recent inception, perceived demographics of participants, and non-traditional nature. Although the sport has many traits commonly found in conventional team sport such as running, tackling, throwing balls, and scoring, it was reasoned that many participants would have character traits less commonly seen in a "typical" athlete. In an effort to confirm this conjecture, quidditch participants were asked to provide three self-descriptive adjectives, resulting in 328 words or phrases. As seen in Figure 1, the top 25 adjectives have been illustrated in a word cloud design. While several of the descriptors would commonly emerge amongst all athletes (i.e., athletic, dedicated, competitive) others seemingly illustrate the uniqueness of those whom partake in quidditch (i.e., nerdy, quirky, creative).



Figure 1: World cloud illustrating top 25 self-descriptive adjectives of quidditch athletes

In a perspective article published in the *Journal of Sport Management*, Earle Zeigler advocated for the promotion of sporting activities that target a vast array of populations:

I firmly believe that provision for managing and promoting developmental physical activity in sport, exercise, and physical recreation for people of all ages, be they part of accelerated, normal, or special populations, should at least be an auxiliary part of our mission in sport management (Zeigler, 2007, p. 306).

One of the principle factors driving the need for diverse sports opportunities is the decline in participation and lack of motivation to join a team or club. Research suggests that there are various reasons why dropout or burnout occurs in sport or physical activities (Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett, 2002). For instance, Gould and Horn (1984) identified five factors for dropping out of sport: conflicts of interest, lack of playing time, lack of success, lack of fun, and dislike of coach or structure. Others have supported these claims and note that participants often debate the value of taking part in sporting endeavors versus the negative costs (i.e., time allocated, financial costs, minimal enjoyment), which leads to withdrawal if costs outweigh benefits (Gould, 1987; Harris & Watson, 2011). Additional literature has suggested the necessity for innovative ideas in physical activity that focus on fun, variety, and social components to alleviate dropout and burnout (Coakley, 2001; Riewald, 2003), factors that were thought to be found on the quidditch pitch.

Numerous studies examining the benefits of traditional sport participation have been conducted. Some positive impacts include physical gains, sense of community, and

social gains with family and friends (Dixon & Bruening, 2010). In a review of the outcomes associated with physical education and sport through a meta-analysis, Bailey (2006) separates the benefits into five domains: (a) physical (i.e., health benefits and movement skills); (b) lifestyle (i.e., healthy living and desires to partake in physical activity); (c) affective (i.e., psychological well-being and increased self-esteem); (d) social (i.e., inclusion and development of social skills); and, (e) cognitive (i.e., positive academic impact and increased mental awareness). Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2006) provide three broader categories that highlight sport participation benefits: physical health, motor skills acquisition, and psycho-social development.

Considering the recent reports of physical inactivity and obesity that have become a medical concern throughout the world, the benefits and value of physical activity are receiving amplified attention. Specifically in the U.S., childhood obesity has tripled in the last 30 years and over one-third of today's youth are considered overweight or obese (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). A health survey in England also reported that physical inactivity was rising across all age groups and recommended the need for greater fitness (Joint Health Surveys Unit, 2004). Other research in Canada noted that obesity in children went from 5% to 16.6% in boys and 5% to 14.6% in girls from 1981-1996 (Tremblay & Willms, 2000). Considering the rising need to address health issues, researchers have examined the positive impact of sport and physical activity on physical health, such as weight loss and increased endurance, (Dishman, 1988; Paffenberger & Hyde, 1988; Paffenberger, Hyde, Wing, & Hsieh, 1986), lower blood pressure (Malina & Bouchard, 1991), lower risk of diabetes (U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services, 1996), and healthy bones (Bailey & Martin, 1994). A study conducted by the Canadian government outlined the health benefits of sports on youth, including; stronger bones and muscles, good balance and posture, improved fitness, and a healthier heart (Janssen & Leblanc, 2010).

Additional research has focused on a wide range of positive influences that sport participation generates beyond physical benefits. Some studies suggest that athletes more than non-athletes have higher educational and occupational aspirations (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999; Darling et al., 2005; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), spend more time doing homework (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), have more positive attitudes towards school (Darling et al., 2005; Eccles & Barber, 1999), and experience a reduction in delinquency issues (Mahoney, 2000). In a study with 50,168 U.S. high school students, findings determined that athletes had less emotional distress, a healthier self-image, and lower tendencies towards suicide behavior (Harrison & Narayan, 2003). In another longitudinal study of U.S. high school students, Marsh and Kleitman (2003) found that participation in sports improved self-esteem, led to higher grades, and heightened desires to attend college. Furthermore, a study in Canadian high schools noted that through their sport, athletes gained values such as honesty, teamwork, and respect (Camiré & Trudel, 2010).

One line of research that falls under Fraser-Thomas and Côté's (2006) category of psycho-social development recognizes the social impacts and leadership skills that are developed and honed through sport participation. For example, Wankel and Berger (1990) claim that sharing athletic experiences and working with one another can bring

teammates together. Other studies have highlighted the ability of recreational activities to assist in the development of relationships and social skills (Holland & Andre, 1987; Otto, 1982). The team sport environment helps to cultivate common goals which drive athletes to achieve (Barcelona, 2002). Specific to recreational and intramural sports, Chen (2002) found that these sporting endeavors promoted social interactions among students who normally may not have partaken in social exchanges.

In an effort to define the traits of leadership amongst team leaders, Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam (2009) developed a framework that revealed four distinctive platforms of team leadership that fall under the classification of "formal" and "informal" and the locus of "internal" and "external". Morgeson et al. (2009) define formality as a "reflect[ion] whether the responsibility for team performance is formalized in the organization (formal) or whether there is no direct responsibility for a team's leadership and performance (informal)" (p. 4). Internal is defined as an individual with an affiliation or position within a team structure, while external refers to an individual that is positioned outside of the team (Morgeson et al., 2009). Internal and formal leadership represents designated leaders who are team members while external and formal leadership corresponds with designated leaders who are not team members (i.e., coaches, general managers). Internal and informal leadership is when responsibilities are shared between members of the team. Lastly, external and informal leadership takes place when individuals outside of a team aim to meet the vital needs of a team (i.e., a volunteer who is not specifically affiliated with a team) (Morgeson et al., 2009).

Although there is limited research on alternative sport and its impact on participants, there has been research on the outcomes of recreational sport activities. For instance, Iso-Ahola (1989) notes, "one mechanism for coping with the constant demands related to college life is through participation in recreational activities, which has been shown to play an important role" (p. 38). Others have commented on the value of extracurricular activities and the development benefits they provide such as academic achievement and positive social gains (Astin, 1984). In a similar fashion, the sport of quidditch could yield outcomes with benefits as valuable as the ones seen in traditional sport, but positioned within the community sport sphere.

Method

This grounded theory examination served as an appropriate technique to undertake a multidimensional, monitor and evaluation effort to assess the sport of quidditch and its influence on the athletes. In a review of qualitative literature on sport participation between 1990 and 2004, Allender, Cowburn, and Foster (2006) endorsed qualitative efforts due to the ability to gain in-depth insight into sport participants' experiences and perceptions of sport and physical activity. Corbin and Strauss (1990) note that "The procedures of grounded theory are designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study. A grounded theory should explain as well as describe" (p. 5). Thus, for the current study focusing on the benefits and impacts of participating in an alternative sports team, this exploratory methodology was chosen as a suitable option to fully investigate the sport (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The data were

continuously analyzed by the constant comparative method (Kihl & Richardson, 2009; Weed, 2009) throughout the data collection process with open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This coding system was employed to outline the themes that emerged and finalize the factors that represented the findings.

Procedures and Participants

In an effort to heighten the trustworthiness of the study, along with minimizing researcher bias and triangulating the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I undertook a four-step data collection process or theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I did so to "get a better fix on something that is only partially known or understood" (Hage, 2007, p. 63). Considering the paucity of research on quidditch, and its recent creation, this progression allowed for a deeper understanding of the sport, the participants and the overall impact that became evident. The first step involved learning about this new sport. After an extensive search to make certain that quidditch had not been discussed within academic literature previously, I undertook broad efforts to become knowledgeable about the game and its history, rules, and players. This required examination of media resources such as magazine articles and newspaper reports along with social media outlets (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and forums) affiliated with the IQA and its participants. Additional outlets that helped yield information about the sport came from reading the 39-page IQA rulebook, viewing YouTube videos of practices and previous tournaments, along with firsthand observations of local teams at a Southwest University in the U.S. Finally, multiple conference calls and meetings occurred between the IQA CEO and COO and myself in an effort to learn more about the organization's long-term objectives

and mission. Throughout this exploration, memos and notes were documented to track available information. This aided in further developing ideas to explore benefits and impacts of quidditch.

The second data collection step involved a qualitative survey that was hosted online and distributed to participants of the sport. Open-ended questions were employed to allow respondents to express their opinions rather than be requested to make a choice (Foddy, 1993). It has also been suggested that open-ended questions can be more suitable than close-ended questions by producing a broad variety of information that would potentially be restricted by scales and yes/no questions (Choi & Pak, 2005). Due to the grounded and exploratory nature of this research, this survey model was deemed optimal.

The survey link was provided to the IQA and was distributed to its social media outlets: IQA listserv, Facebook, and Twitter account. All players affiliated with the IQA (over 350 teams, or approximately 5000 quidditch athletes) were invited to take part anonymously. As seen in Table 1, the survey was taken by 346 players and the majority of respondents were in the age ranges of 18-21 years old (248) or 13-17 years old (47). Additionally, players were asked about their background in organized sport and their reasons for dropping out of sport based on Gould and Horn's (1984) research involving sport dropout. Each one of Gould and Horn's dropout motivators was noted by at least 10% of survey respondents, while lack of fun and lack of skill accounted for over 40% (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics and background information on survey participants

Survey questions and demographics	Response
Gender:	
Male	149 (43%)
Female	197 (57%)
Age:	
13-17	47 (14%)
18-21	248 (72%)
22-24	35 (10%)
25+	15 (5%)
Before joining a quidditch team, when is the last time you participated in an organized sport:	
Playing other sport/s currently	63 (19%)
1-11 months ago	92 (27%)
1-2 years ago	65 (65%)
3-4 years ago	42 (12%)
5+ years	48 (14%)
Never	30 (9%)
Please select the following reasons (if any) you do not participate on a traditional sports team:	
Lack of fun	113 (41%)
Lack of playing time	49 (18%)
Lack of success or improvement	68 (25%)
Dislike of the coach	28 (10%)
Too organized and structured	75 (27%)
Not skilled enough to make the team	125 (45%)
Other	98 (35%)

To assess the benefits and impact of quidditch, the survey contained questions such as: “Please describe, in as much detail as you can, the benefits (if any) you received since joining a quidditch team?” and “If a quidditch team was not available for you to join, what is the likelihood that you would be on a different sports team? Would you be getting the same amount of physical activity? Please explain.” Additional questions attempted to gain participants’ perspectives on inclusivity and competitiveness of the sport. The survey was hosted online for 14 days, and a reminder email to the participants was deemed unnecessary due to a sufficient amount of respondents and data saturation occurring as themes began to reinforce and overlap (Charmaz, 2006; Weed, 2009).

Once open coding of the data from the surveys began to uncover raw data themes, the third step in this grounded theory study consisted of conducting focus groups with 21 quidditch players. One focus group took place with players on a Southwest University team in the U.S. Two additional focus groups were carried out online with quidditch players from other regions in the U.S. These athletes were purposely selected in order to have a representative sample in regard to age (four high school students, 14 college students, and three young adults in the 22-24 age range), gender (9 females and 11 males), geographic location (five different regions throughout the U. S. were represented, three from the Northeast, five from the Mid-Atlantic, four from the South, five from the Midwest, and four from the West), and skill level. The three focus groups consisted of 6-8 participants each, which has been suggested by Krueger and Casey (2009) as an optimal size to allow adequate speaking time for each person in the group. Online focus groups were chosen to compliment the in person focus group as a cost-

effective effort to reach a wider and more diverse population (Im & Chee, 2006; Stancanelli, 2010). The focus group participants were promised that confidentiality would be provided by masking any information that could be used to potentially identify individuals. Semi-structured interview guides were designed for these discussions in an effort to stimulate free-flowing conversation and were based upon survey results and previous observations. Topical areas, in regard to benefits and impact of participation, included asking quidditch players about their positive (or negative) experiences taking part in the sport along with tangible benefits they received through their participation. Sample questions included: (a) "Please describe your favorite parts about playing on a quidditch team." and, (b) "Please discuss some of the ways (if any) the sport of quidditch has impacted you." Three focus groups were believed to be satisfactory due to data saturation when the conversations reinforced data obtained from the survey (Creswell, 1998).

The last stage of the data collection process was to attend and observe the 2011 Quidditch World Cup. This event occurred in New York City and involved 93 college, high school, and community teams. Over 1,600 participants competed in this tournament (teams from 27 U.S. states as well as several international teams from Canada, Finland, and Iceland). Over 30 matches were observed and additional observations were made on the potential impact that occurred with the players, both during game play and downtime. Beyond observing games and team dynamics, informal conversations also took place with volunteers, fans, and IQA staff members to gain a deeper understanding

of the sport and the participants. Memos and field notes were utilized to strengthen the previous data collection procedures.

Data Analysis

During this entire process, data were continuously analyzed and positioned in open (raw data themes), axial (first-order themes), and selective coding categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Memos, survey responses, transcripts of focus groups, and field notes were coded using Nvivo9 software. The data were scrutinized line by line by in an effort to recognize emerging views. First, 87 raw data themes emerged from the open coding process which collapsed into 20 first-order themes (axial codes) that further represented the data. For example, codes such as "met best friend," "met significant other," and "bonded with fun people" were grouped together into the theme "build relationships." Another example set of open codes involved stamina (i.e., "ran my first mile because of quidditch" and "jogged for the first time in years") and collapsed into the theme "increased endurance." These themes were grouped into five general dimensions and quotations (selective codes) were chosen to best represent these dimensions and themes. The themes, dimensions, and illustrative quotations are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes, general dimensions, and illustrative quotations

First order themes	General dimensions	Illustrative quotations
Increased organizational skills Planning and development skills Resume builder Job/internship opportunities	 Leadership skills 	“Sophomore year I acted as co-captain, and the teamwork and leadership skills gained that year and throughout my time on the team are immeasurable.” “It gave me the opportunity to step up as a captain, a roll that I was unsure about taking.” “I ran a successful quidditch tournament and got bullet points for my resume. I basically am involved in the growth of something that will be massive in years to come.” “Had lots of interest in it by interviewers looking at my resume, got a job with the IQA that will make me a significantly more interesting and talented job-prospect.”
Built Relationships Meet like-minded individuals Increased self-confidence More involvement in other extracurricular activities	 Social gains 	“I have made tons of new friends; not only at my own college but many other colleges and organizations across the country.” “I think the community has been the best benefit. I have found a great group of friends from quidditch and will be friends with them for years to come.” “I have gained so many friends, both from my school's team, and from other schools. Quidditch brings together many people.” “Everybody on any team I've met is just so awesome, because it's a really intense, yet totally ridiculous sport.”
Increased fitness Increased endurance Lost weight Gained motivation to exercise	 Increased health and fitness 	“I definitely would not be getting anywhere near the amount of physical activity. I would probably be spending all the time I currently play quidditch at home watching tv or something.” “The physical aspect of the sport definitely makes Quidditch the number one sport for me. I'm in better shape because of Quidditch than the other sports I've played in college.” “There is a 0% chance I would be involved with another sports team or be getting the same amount of physical activity.” “I'm actually getting some kind of physical activity other than running late to class”
Gained confidence Increased happiness Sense of belonging Stress relief	 Increased self-confidence and pride 	“The team really helped me massively to become comfortable with who I am and have fun.” “It also enabled me to start working on my shyness and actually gave me the courage to talk to people.” “Quidditch makes me more confident and outgoing, and I think it's one of the best decisions I've made.”
Experience competitive environment Take part in tournaments Opportunity to travel Gained teamwork skills	 Positive sporting experience 	“Being able to say I've played in an actual college tournament for a sport is pretty cool.” “Playing in an interscholastic tournament was probably one of the best experiences of my college career.” “I've built teamwork, coaching, and tactical skills since playing Quidditch.” “The World Cup last year was one of the most incredible experiences I've ever had.”

Dependability and Credibility

This four-step data collection process and subsequent analyses aimed to augment the credibility and dependability of the findings. To further increase the credibility and dependability of this study, many discussions occurred between myself and dissertation committee chair throughout each step of the data collection process. All coding and theme development was reviewed by the chair, who was not involved in data collection, in an effort to provide an additional perspective to the analysis and serve as a check and balance to the procedures. Additionally, focus group participants were invited to assess their transcripts as a form of member checking and to review study findings (Creswell, 1998). None of the quidditch athletes responded with any concerns about their responses, and participants generally agreed with interpretations of the findings.

Findings

The central research questions of this study were: (a) What are the impacts and benefits of participating in this alternative sport that are similar to traditional sport? and, (b) What differentiates the impacts and benefits of this alternative sport from traditional sport? Results indicate that involvement with quidditch provided increased leadership skills, social gains, increased health and fitness, increased self-confidence and pride, along with a positive sporting experience, all of which has been recognized in more traditional sports. Further analysis revealed the grassroots component of the sport of quidditch provided leadership opportunities that organized traditional sport often did not, or could not, provide (i.e., community organizing skills, job/internship opportunities, captain/team president leadership roles). These findings are demonstrated below

utilizing quotes drawn from both the focus groups and online surveys (see Table 2 for additional illustrative quotations for the five themes) and observations from the 2011 World Cup.

Increased Leadership Skills

Similar to research pertaining to traditional sports (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2006), the opportunity to build leadership skills was a prominent finding with quidditch athletes. This category also served as one of the unique factors differentiating this alternative sport from traditional team sports. The necessity for nearly each team to be founded with limited to zero support from a school or town recreation department created a need for proactive leaders and organizers. Beyond learning leadership and communication skills relevant to the field of play, a common occurrence for quidditch participants was the need to promote the sport, recruit players, fundraise, make travel and lodging plans, and coordinate tournaments. For example, one female commented on the skills she developed in an effort to start a team at her high school:

I, along with three of my friends, started the team at my high school and it definitely taught us leadership skills. We worked hard, from asking for the official rules from the IQA to breaking those rules down in an epic Powerpoint, to playing, to getting the equipment.

Another college sophomore male noted how he was thrust into a position of leadership and the knowledge he gained: "Well, as a captain I have gained so much experience learning about the ins and outs of event planning, managing a team, budgeting, implementing events, and just general leadership skills."

Having the opportunity to lead or captain a team was mentioned by many other participants such as this undergraduate college female: "In my year as co-captain of the team, I learned how to lead a team, how to motivate players, run practices smoothly, make executive decisions, work in a group, organize events, and much much much more." Another college senior went beyond forming a team and helped implement an entire conference in a Southeast state and hoped those skills would assist him in the future: "I plan on using the formation of my quidditch team, as well as my assistance in the forming of the [Southeast location] Quidditch Conference in my applications to grad school."

Others noted how quidditch provided skills and even potential job opportunities such as this college senior: "I've gotten interviews for a few interesting positions based mostly on my experience as a leader in quidditch." In a similar vein, one participant, who also volunteered with the IQA, mentioned how beneficial his experience with the sport had been: "I also played a major part in writing the rulebook and managing the league this past year, so I've gained valuable skills that will help in my future employment from that."

Finally, others commented on how the experience leading their respective quidditch teams provided an opportunity to make beneficial connections, including one female college senior:

The people on campus, university student government, and recreation staff, recognize me as the quidditch authority on campus. I have made numerous

connections with them that can hopefully benefit me through various scholarships, references, and planning successful events on campus.

Many of these leadership traits were also noted at the 2011 World Cup. Leading up to the tournament, dozens of teams undertook fundraising efforts (i.e., bake sales, T-shirt sales, walk-a-thons), nearly each driven by the players themselves without supervision or support from schools or organized bodies. At the World Cup, captains were often seen giving pre-and-post game speeches and leading their teams in each game. From an organizational standpoint, dozens of volunteers and interns worked 18-20 hour days in an effort to make the event as successful as possible. Thus, as exemplified in the data, quidditch provided an opportunity for many athletes to gain leadership skills that could assist them on and off the field.

Social Gains

Another finding similar to the benefits of participating in traditional sport is the social outlets, friendships, and relationships that participants gain. One participant, a college junior, noted how her social gains via quidditch were far more impactful than her previous sporting experiences:

My quidditch team became my family. I had already known how a team could come together as a result of my previous participation in competitive sports, but these people became more than my friends. They were my solace - we did much more together than just practice and play quidditch.

Another first year college student told a similar, poignant story about the support his team provided during a down period of his life:

The people on my team are also my best friends. I lost my mother months before the team got really active, then a long-term relationship ended, and then we had to sell our family home. The team and quidditch helped me stay strong and keep a positive attitude.

Others simply commented on how they met some of their strongest friends through the sport, such as one high school senior: "The most amazing benefit of joining the quidditch team was the friends I made. Almost all of my friends are on the quidditch team, and they are definitely the people I spend the most time with." One 25-year-old female, who hoped to start a team in her local community, touted her quidditch team as one of the highlights of her college experience: "Two of the greatest things happened to me while I was in grad school. The first one was getting my masters degree. Second was making lifelong friends through the quidditch team."

Many players suggested that the whimsy and unique nature of quidditch created a welcoming environment, as exemplified by one college junior:

I've made plenty of new friends. It makes me really happy – we bond as a team, we get to release positive aggression on the field, we get to be silly, and we get to build something great together. It's an awesome extracurricular.

Another college senior also praised the inclusive nature of the sport:

I think that quidditch brings people together. You can be a complete nerd, not have any athletic ability at all, and still [play] quidditch. Or you can be a complete jock, with huge muscles, star of the soccer team, and still love quidditch. When a quidditch team is put together people no longer care about

social cliques. We all become players on a team. I love that feeling of being on a real team where everyone around me supports me.

These relationships were observed often at the World Cup. Nearly every team took part in rituals such as warm-up routines or dances, wore similar war paint and costumes and bonded further throughout the experience. For a demographic where 41% of participants no longer took part in traditional sport due to "lack of fun", quidditch provided an environment that fulfilled that desire.

Health and Fitness

Despite being an alternative sport that involved running around on a broomstick, quidditch participation resulted in comparable health and fitness impacts to traditional sports. Many participants suggested that if it was not for quidditch, their fitness levels would be minimal to non-existent. One example was a first year male in college who noted:

I definitely wouldn't be on another sports team, and I definitely wouldn't be getting the same amount of physical activity. None of the other sports really appeal to me, and I was never really skilled enough to play any other sports anyway. I might have joined another extracurricular, but none of them really seemed as fun as this one.

Another high school female had a similar sentiment: "If I didn't have quidditch I probably wouldn't play other sports because they don't interest me. So I wouldn't get the same amount of physical activity, because one of the main reasons I run and exercise is for quidditch."

Other players commented on how the sport has raised their desire to gain fitness in an effort to improve their skills and help the team. One such example was a college sophomore who stated: "Essentially, more motivation for getting into shape has been the most notable benefit. Quidditch keeps me motivated to get in shape for the better of our team." Another college senior noted how quidditch drove him to exercise more than any other sport: "Even with another sport, I probably wouldn't be getting the same level of physical activity because I'm enjoying quidditch more than I have any sport in my life, and it's been motivating me to work out outside practice."

Another valuable benefit that was mentioned by several players was their weight loss and fitness gain since becoming involved with the sport. One male college senior touted this benefit: "Quidditch helped me also realize how out of shape I was. When I was on the team, I lost 20 lbs." A similar result occurred with a high school junior who was proud of her fitness improvement: "Got in better shape: I went from barely being able to play half of a game to probably being able to play 5-6 games in a row without much of a break at all." One quidditch athlete even promoted an initiative called "Get Fit for Quidditch" on the IQA website and its Facebook page. The founder of this program offered to donate \$5 for every person who lost 20 pounds (maximum \$500).

As seen in the above quotes, quidditch was a driver in motivating individuals to exercise and keep fit. Due to the sport's ability to reach a demographic of participants that normally shunned physical activity, quidditch may have the ability to reach a group of people who might typically not have received these types of benefits and impacts through sport.

Increased Self-Confidence

Beyond fitness gains that occur with sport, participants often receive mental benefits as well (Bailey, 2006). In the case of quidditch, the participants acquired increased levels of self-confidence and pride that are often gained through traditional sports participation. For many of the players, taking part in a quirky sport loosened inhibitions and self-awareness. One graduate student noted these attributes that he gained:

It has actually improved my confidence. If you can get used to running around campus with a broom between your legs and start to not feel weird about it, then you have mastered your self-esteem issues and can talk to anyone!

Another college first year student talked about how he stopped caring about his appearance as a result of his participation: "It made me less self-conscious about how I looked while playing or the image that came with playing quidditch."

Other players suggested their heightened confidence levels aided in off-the-field activities such as one college junior: "Quidditch gave me self-confidence and motivated me to take on challenges in other areas of life that I previously would never have dared." Players who had previously considered themselves introverted seemed to embrace the atmosphere, such as one college senior: "I have become much more outgoing, as I now make speeches at the beginning and end of each practice, send daily email, and feel totally comfortable greeting my teammates in the halls." In some specific instances at the World Cup, a few team leaders seemed to become more comfortable with the environment game by game. As certain teams advanced in the tournament, it

was noted that speeches and rallying cries often became more passionate and inspired, a sign of increased confidence.

As seen with the above findings, the opportunity to gain self-confidence, increase self-esteem, and reduce self-consciousness were significant results of participation in this non-traditional sport.

Positive Sporting Experience

As noted earlier, many participants had limited team sport experience or chose to quit organized sport. Quidditch managed to not only reach a unique demographic and draw them to the sport, but it also created strong emotions and passions which resulted in a positive sporting experience through benefits that traditional team sports provide such as teamwork skills, opportunity to compete against others, and opportunity to travel and play in front of fans. One college sophomore reflected on his opportunity to be part of a team:

I got to experience what it's like to be part of a team sport. Before the 2010 World Cup I'd never been to a pep rally, never been to a sporting event, and certainly never played a team sport.

Another college freshman suggested that features of sport that are second nature to many, were something he was able to enjoy for the first time: "I had several sports experiences I never thought I'd have [such as] tournaments, being part of a ranked team, buying sports equipment, having opinions on rules and guides."

Others gained teamwork skills they previously did not have, such as one high school senior: "My teamwork skills vastly improved. Prior to this I was always adamant

that my way was the only way to do things; quidditch helped me gain humility towards others." Another graduate student who was a current athlete in other sports enjoyed the opportunity to teach teamwork skills to rookie athletes: "I get to help build teamwork skills with players that might not have played sports before."

The World Cup provided many new experiences for athletes such as playing in front of hundreds of fans, playing in a stadium or under lights, and even competing against people from around the country (and the world). One high school senior reminisced about her experience at the World Cup and its unique environment compared to other sporting events:

I have experienced tournament play like no other. Although as a high school and club athlete, tournament play was not a new experience, there was just something about a new sport drawing this many people from colleges that had a sort of feel-good atmosphere to it.

Finally, some simply loved the opportunity to experience the routine of practices and team camaraderie. This was mentioned by a college junior who recalled his experiences with the team: "I'm generally a happier person since I began playing Quidditch, and can't wait for every practice and game coming up." A similar feeling was stated by a high school freshman who was proud of his increased role with the team; "In the span of a week, I went from being involved in zero school sports, to being a team member of an intramural team, to being that team's designated referee, to being named co-captain."

Thus, in accordance with findings with traditional sports, the sport of quidditch was able to provide similar impacts and benefits. Whether a quidditch athlete was a former three-sport veteran or someone who had never been on a team before, numerous responses from participants suggested some type of positive sporting experience evolved from being part of a unique grassroots, sport atmosphere.

Discussion

Through a grounded theory study (Charmaz, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the purpose of this research was to examine the impact and benefits participants of the alternative sport of quidditch received and determine similarities and differences to traditional sports. As Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2006) suggest, three categories can summarize the benefits of sport participation: physical health, psychosocial development, and motor skills acquisition. The results of this study confirm that participants in the sport of quidditch achieve all three of these. Furthermore, this study helps develop theory suggesting alternative sporting activities can yield positive impact on participants and notes the need for the development of formal theory guided by these findings and relevant literature. Lastly, while the focus of the findings suggested similarities to traditional sport, this study also indicates there are benefits that may typically not be gained from participation on a conventional sports team, primarily derived from the unique leadership opportunities this endeavor presented for many of the participants.

One of prominent findings of this study correlates with Fraser-Thomas and Côté's (2006) suggestion that psychosocial development can be achieved through sport.

Repeated instances of increased levels of self-confidence, heightened self-esteem, and gains in leadership skills were reported and observed with quidditch athletes. As noted in the findings, passionate individuals created many teams in a grassroots fashion. This aspect differed from many traditional sporting models which possess infrastructure, leadership, and governance. Conventional outlets like varsity sports or town community leagues often do not have organizational tasks for the players to take on and achieve success in recruitment, fundraising, and promotions. These skills and demands were necessary for many quidditch teams to be conceived and sustainable. According to the framework on team leadership by Morgeson et al. (2009), many of the quidditch participants fall under the dimensions of internal and informal leaders. Unlike a typical varsity football team or college intramural softball team where the structure is in place, formal leaders are designated and funding is provided by a governing body, nearly every quidditch team began from scratch as a vision of a future participant. Even after teams became established, it was noted the difficult nature in sustaining membership and participation due to the newness and origin of the sport. Foti and Hauenstein (2007) suggest that leaders often materialize naturally or informally (and not by a vote, election, or a hiring), a scenario that occurred often with the creation of each new quidditch team.

The social impact of the sport was apparent. Nearly every athlete in this study mentioned the friendships gained and interpersonal skills developed through their quidditch experience. As noted by Cohen et al., (2012), niche sports can allow participants to satisfy social desires (which may not be realized without the existence of the sport) because of four reasons: (a) camaraderie and friendship, (b) desires to have

fun, (c) desires to try something new, and (d) desires to get in shape. This suggests that alternative sports have the potential to activate psychosocial development with demographics of individuals who normally might shun traditional sports (Chen, 2002; Wankel & Berger, 1990). Specifically in regards to quidditch athletes, several noted the social benefits of team sports they never received before, such as traveling on a team bus, playing in front of a live crowd, and having their scores reported by a local newspaper.

In regard to Fraser-Thomas and Côté's (2006) category of physical health, studies have found that influence on activity is strongest when "they allow students' experiences of self-determination and feelings of competence in their own abilities" (Bailey, 2006, p. 398). Additionally, studies have noted that increased levels of fun, innovation, and enjoyment can lead to greater desires of fitness and physical activity (Sallis, McKenzie, Alcaraz, Kolody, & Faucett, 1997; Riewald, 2003). As seen in the results, quidditch participants were often driven to live a healthy and fitter lifestyle due to their participation in the sport, which resulted in higher levels of endurance, weight loss, and increased motivation to exercise.

Lastly, Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2006) advocate that motor skills development can often occur with sport participation. Quidditch athletes on various levels of skill development also achieved this benefit. Some participants stepped on to a sporting field for the first time in their lives and learned simple skills like throwing and catching. Others were former varsity athletes who had a great deal of skill and athletic ability. While a sport based on the fictional *Harry Potter* books may not seem like a vehicle for

talented competitors, many players took the matches extremely seriously. Several players even proclaimed that their sport is more difficult than any of the traditional options due to them having to tackle, throw, and catch with one arm while the other arm is handicapped by holding a broom at all times.

Considering that all studies have limitations, they must be recognized within this research endeavor. First, nearly every participant who voluntarily chose to complete the survey or participate in the focus groups had a positive experience with the sport. Thus, there could have been a social desirability bias, where participants provided data they believed the researchers wanted to hear. The lack of diversity in this study should be noted as well (N=291, 85% White). Future investigations along the lines of this sport or other alternative sport could purposively select a more diverse sample to gain further insight. Finally, the sport of quidditch is relatively new and evolving (The IQA is currently on version five of its rulebook). The cross-sectional nature of this study may not reflect the thoughts of players who had their opinions of the sport altered due to rule and logistics changes.

Conclusions

This research examined the benefits and impacts that the alternative sport of quidditch had on participants and how these benefits and impacts are similar or dissimilar to traditional sport. Although quidditch involves running around on a broom (sometimes with capes), my findings recognize the similarity it has to more traditional sport. Considering a large number of the participants indicated their minimal desire to take part in more conventional sporting opportunities, these findings suggest quidditch

players are still able to gain similar positive impacts. With higher rates of burnout and dropout along with decreases in programming and funding for traditional sport, there is an increased need and desire for innovative activities that captivate diverse demographics of potential athletes. By illustrating an alternative sport's potential to change lives, this study aims to advocate for practitioners to consider innovative means to entice and impact those who have shunned or quit more traditional activities.

The IQA, through the sport of quidditch, has implemented and designed such a sporting endeavor that has been enjoyed around the globe. Although quidditch is considered a niche sport that has received limited mainstream attention, it has grown beyond a pop culture parody of a cultural icon. The IQA and the sport recently gained national media attention with an exhibition between U.S., Canada, England, France, and Australia during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. With thousands of participants and fans in existence, numerous requests for information on how to form a team, and an annual World Cup that grows larger in size and recognition each year, the sport is gaining popularity and establishing a broader reach.

It should also be noted that numerous other non-traditional or alternative sport opportunities have begun to emerge, and it is important to consider their appeal to a wide range of possible participants. Non-traditional sports can range from the extreme (e.g., parkour, canyoneering) to the "outlandish" (e.g., shin-kicking, chess boxing), to family-friendly (e.g., geocaching). The creation and implementation of these activities has been equally diverse. Ranging from groups of teenagers gathering at a skate park to engage in an alternative sport, to volunteer teachers leading crowds of high school students in

afterschool club sports, the opportunities to take part in athletics can be nearly endless. While these options might not lead to college scholarships or varsity high school letterman jackets, they all are being enjoyed by participants and in turn may potentially lead to positive impacts and benefits in the same fashion as quidditch. For an example of the popularity and scope of non-traditional sports, one can look at the development of the running industry. No longer is the only option for participation that of running in a traditional marathon or 5K-10K road race. Organizations around the U.S. have attempted to create a more dynamic and interactive racing experience to appeal to a wider audience. For example, the "Color Run" requires people to wear all white and get covered with colored powder throughout the run; "Run for Your Life" features a race with puzzles and pursuing zombies; and the "Tough Mudder" is a 10-12 mile race that consists of military-style obstacles throughout the course. To give a monetary example illustrating the popularity of these events, Red Frog Events, a company that organizes "Warrior Dashes" (5K runs with obstacles) was reported to be on pace to make \$50 million in revenue in 2011 (Harris, 2011).

It is evident the sport of quidditch has the ability to provide similar positive outcomes that traditional organized sports provide. These findings also suggest that participating in quidditch could have the ability to provide additional leadership outcomes that organized sport often does not due to the extra efforts required to launch a team, recruit players, fundraise, and promote the team. Although a great deal of time, money, and resources are focused on traditional organized sports, research has shown an overall decline in participation rates (Up2Us, 2012) and increased levels of burnout and

dropout (Gould & Horn, 1984; Smith, Gustafsson, & Hassmen, 2011). This has created a need for more innovative and modern sporting initiatives that can potentially engage those who have chosen to not participate in organized sport but still desire to be on a team and partake in physical activity.

Considering this study suggests similar benefits and impacts occur from participating in quidditch as can be gained through participation in traditional sport teams, a case can be made for the continued creation, promotion, and support of alternative sport initiatives of this nature. These findings recommend further support for alternative sport avenues in communities and school systems. While the majority of participants in this study were in high school or college, the sport has begun to reach a wider range of demographics, such as middle and elementary school students, along with young adults who have introduced the sport in their resident communities. One recent success story about quidditch in Great Britain was described in *The Telegraph*, which reported a physical education initiative stimulating 100% attendance; “Girls' participation in PE lessons had fallen to as low as 25 percent . . . But since quidditch was introduced to the curriculum at the beginning of the year all year 10 and 11 girls classes have flocked to the playground for PE lessons” (Telegraph, 2012).

The implications of this research suggest that promotion of alternative sports such as quidditch should be considered in an effort to maximize outreach and provide similar impact to people who normally might not take part in team sport. In addition, alternative sports such as quidditch can often provide a more cost-effective and accessible option for potential athletes. From a theoretical standpoint, the results from

this grounded theory approach suggest the need for further exploration of alternative sport impact and more formal theorizing on how future research should explore this field. Taking into account the sport of quidditch might not appeal to everyone looking for a team sport, future directions in this line of research could entail further analysis of different sport initiatives and if their impacts and benefits are similar or dissimilar to traditional sports. While the focus of this study aimed to highlight the similarities of quidditch to traditional sports, a fruitful line of research could further investigate the differences between quidditch and traditional sport and the quidditch subculture. Conducting longitudinal research with quidditch and other alternative sports would also be useful in determining long-term impact. Another line of research could focus on the governing bodies and organizational structures of alternative endeavors to determine their influence on impacts and benefits. An additional gap in the literature is noted by Morgeson et al. (2009) who indicate "we are not aware of any research focused on informal, external leadership" (p. 5). This dimension of team leadership may potentially be found in people who volunteer with the IQA in roles such as refereeing or event management, despite never being involved with a team. This demographic could serve as a valuable population to evaluate volunteer motivation and impact with an alternative sport. Finally, quantitative efforts could be utilized to compliment the results of this research.

In summary, numerous research endeavors have noted the benefits that derive from sport participation. Whether a team sport involves a bat, lacrosse stick, or even a broom, there is a high likelihood of positive impact taking place with the athletes who

partake in the activity. While quidditch does not have the funding and infrastructure of a high school varsity team, it has been driven by passion and energy. Local parks and gymnasiums have been embracing the IQA's three goals of "creativity, community, and competition" and changing the lives of people who take part in the sport. The findings of this research note the potential sport can have, beyond the traditional and formal outlets that are more commonly offered. Thus, there is need for continued innovation in sport offerings to provide accessibility and options in an effort to make these benefits available to as many individuals as possible.

CHAPTER III

ALTERNATIVE SPORT'S IMPACT ON VOLUNTEERS

The majority of studies that have investigated alternative sport (Jarvie, 2006; Skille & Waddington, 2006) aimed to define culture (L'Etang, 2006; Wheaton, 2010), demographics of participants (Wheaton, 2010), impacts of participation (Anderson, 2013), or marketing opportunities (Andrew et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009). Specifically, alternative sport has been defined as an endeavor which may be "enjoyed by smaller groups of people, and cherished a lack of competition, organization and commercial intervention" (Jarvie, 2006, p. 273). One aspect of alternative sport that has been investigated to a limited degree is the experience of the volunteers who donate their time and energy. In regard to volunteerism in sport, most research has focused on motivations of volunteerism and large-scale sporting events enticing volunteers (Bang & Chelladurai, 2003; Bang & Ross, 2009; Bang, Alexandris, & Ross, 2009) and not how volunteerism can impact the volunteers themselves. Considering the limited budgets of alternative sports versus events like the World Cup or the Olympics, it is valuable to determine how these volunteer opportunities have an impact on one's experience in a positive or negative manner to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention (Meier & Stutzer, 2004).

Stressing the value of research of volunteers within a sport setting, Cuskelly (2008) estimated that 18 to 27 percent of volunteers worldwide do so within a sporting context. Thus, the importance of fully understanding the volunteer experience in sport, including impacts of the volunteering experience on the volunteers, is paramount. While

research on volunteerism in sport has been conducted (Bang & Chelladurai, 2003; Cuskelly, 2008) and to a limited extent, impact of sport volunteerism on the volunteers has been examined (Kay & Bradbury, 2009; Peachey et al., 2013), this theme has not been investigated in an alternative sport setting. In Chapter II and in Cohen et al. (2012), it was highlighted that alternative sport provided an outlet to those who normally might not have taken part in sport. In the same vein, it was conjectured alternative sport had the ability to positively impact volunteers who potentially would not have donated their time to a sport organization. Thus, given this lack of evidence or empirical data on volunteer impact in this setting, and recognizing factors that lead to positive impact with volunteers can potentially contribute to the sustainability of alternative sport organizations, the purpose of this study was to investigate what impacts and benefits are received by volunteers in an alternative sport organization (the International Quidditch Association – IQA). To guide this research effort, two research questions were developed:

R1: What are the impacts and benefits individuals gained from volunteering with the IQA?

R2: Did the environment produced by the IQA and the sport of quidditch impact the experience of the volunteers?

In an attempt to answer these questions and develop substantive theory on volunteer impact within an alternative sport setting, a grounded theory approach was employed (Charmaz, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Stemming from a collaborative effort with the IQA to monitor and evaluate their impact on participants of the sport, a

unique volunteer culture emerged and was deemed worthy of further investigation.

Considering the lack of research on volunteer impact and the sport of quidditch, utilizing grounded theory allowed for in-depth exploration of a phenomenon without being based on preconceived notions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

While most global sporting initiatives have an established staff and budget, the IQA consisted of one full time staff member, the CEO, who at the time of this research still was not able to pay himself a livable wage. Despite the lack of full time employees, this organization still managed to conduct a world championship tournament that hosted over 90 teams and 15,000 fans, create a 39 page rulebook, support over 350 teams and recruit 100s more to become full members of the association, launch a professional website, promote the sport on social media (16,530 followers on Facebook and 11,108 on Twitter), and conduct advocacy initiatives such as their focus on gender equality and literacy. Passionate volunteers dedicated to the sport and mission of the organization substituted for what normally could constitute hundreds of thousands of dollars in salary and thousands of hours of employee capital.

Research Context and Literature Review

Inception and Governance of Quidditch

The *Harry Potter* franchise has become a worldwide phenomenon since the first of seven books was published in 1997. Not only has this franchise conquered the literary world, it has also dominated other aspects of pop culture and commerce. Combining book, movie, and toy sales, the total sales total of *Harry Potter* related products and media has been estimated at over 24 billion dollars (Statistics Brain, 2012). While the

term quidditch may be recognizable to the devoted fans of *Harry Potter*, the sport is no longer simply a fictional creation played by wizards. Founded in 2005 at a small college in Vermont, Middlebury College, the real sport of quidditch was invented and designed by a group of undergraduate students. What began as a grassroots initiative with a cult following on one campus has rapidly grown to a global sport with over 350 official teams and over 1000 more schools and community initiatives attempting to start their own team. The rapid growth of the sport was recognized by *TIME* Magazine:

Quidditch is a sport striving for legitimacy. It has a rule book, a governing body and its own live streaming webcasts. Its players move with the grace and ferocity of top athletes; the best of them look like lacrosse players and hit like linebackers. . . . For a five-year-old sport, it's a remarkable ascension (Jones, 2010).

While the sport might initially be dismissed as an off-shoot of Dungeons and Dragons or Live Action Role Play games, due to the rule requiring a broom between one's legs at all times, quidditch should be recognized for its physical aspects common to many sports such as running, jumping, and tackling (Cohen, Brown, & Welty Peachey, 2012). Touted as a sport that combines characteristics of dodgeball, rugby, and capture the flag, the athletic component is quite apparent. In an effort to stay true to the *Harry Potter* books, the game features terminology like "quaffles" (volleyballs used for scoring through hoops), "bludgers" (dodgeballs used to 'knock-out' opponents), and "snitches" (a neutral participant who defends a flag; see below for further details). Additionally,

another key aspect of quidditch is the mandatory coed requirement which makes sets it apart from all other full contact sports (Cohen, Melton, & Welty Peachey, in review).

In an attempt to help with the growth of the sport, a few passionate participants founded the International Quidditch Association (IQA), an initiative aiming to create a sporting atmosphere which combines inclusivity and healthy competition with a mission "dedicated to promoting the sport of quidditch and inspiring young people to lead physically active and socially engaged lives. We're serious about fun." (IQA rulebook, n.d. p. 6). Like most non-profit organizations, the IQA is heavily dependent on volunteers fulfilling many vital roles (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Along with its current volunteer roster consisting of nine members on the executive leadership team and dozens of people serving on various committees and departments, the IQA also recently announced openings for volunteer positions that included: World Cup 2014 organizing team, game play department, marketing department, human resources department, and referees. In addition, another unique volunteer role in the sport is the role of the snitch. This position is held by a trained individual who attempts to avoid capture from opponents on both teams. An extensive literature search did not turn up another sport where a person participated on the field of play, but as a neutral entity without allegiance to either team. To illustrate the importance of this position, the IQA began launching "snitch academies" across the country for any volunteers who wanted to fill this role. As noted on their website:

IQA Snitch Academies are being set up across the United States to bring the world of academia to our snitch runners. These sessions are designed to train

snitches in their age-old art, mastering techniques such as stealth, hand to hand combat, evasion, and other things snitches should know.

Along with the snitches, the role of referees is a difficult and important position the IQA needs to fill. For optimal officiating, the IQA aims to have five referees at every match. Two to watch the goals, two to supervisor the bludgers, and one head referee to oversee the entire game. Including one snitch, volunteer commentators, and volunteer scorekeepers (at larger events), this suggests up to 10 volunteers are necessary for a match to take place under optimal conditions. At an event like the World Cup, which has four to five matches occurring at a time, over 40-50 volunteers are needed just on the field of play.

As specified by Wheaton (2003), alternative sport can create a “sense of subcultural authenticity and localized resistance to conspicuous consumption, institutionalization, and materialism” (p. 94). All of these unique aspects in the sport of quidditch derived from the leadership of the IQA and resulted in tight knit community or subculture. Spawning from that affinity to the sport and the *Harry Potter* brand was a distinctive opportunity for volunteerism which attracted applicants by the dozens. While the opportunity to be immersed within a sport atmosphere certainly had its appeal, there was also an environment that spawned from the creation of quidditch. The larger events often feature live music, improvisational comedians to provide commentary, and assortments of food and beverages (e.g., snitchwitches and butter beer). Other opportunities include demonstrations, clinics with children, advocacy opportunities, and conventions such as Quid-Con and Comic-Con. Taking into consideration the

environment produced and the individuals that take part both on and off the field, one can draw from the literature on social capital (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1995) and volunteer impact (Meier & Stutzer, 2004; Monga, 2006; Wakelin, 2013) to help understand how volunteering can potentially yield positive impacts.

Social Capital

Calling for 'fresh spaces' for social encounters, Schulenkorf (2013) notes the potential of innovative environments and activities within a sport setting to yield positive feelings. One such 'fresh space' could be an alternative sport or a sport "opposed to 'mainstream', 'traditional' or conventional' . . . Such activities tend to be much more loosely, and less formally, organized than conventional sports" (Skille & Waddington, 2006, p. 252). Beyond the physical activity itself, alternative sport often spawns a unique subculture, or as stated by Gilchrist and Wheaton (2011) "[is] increasingly central to the physical activity and cultural lifestyles" (p. 110) of participants. In an effort to gain deeper perspective on the relationships that take place within an alternative sport setting, one framework that can be utilized is social capital. As summarized by Coalter (2007), social capital occurs through "networks based on strong social ties between similar people – people 'like us', with relations, reciprocity and trust based on ties of familiarity and closeness" (p. 547).

While the term social capital has existed since the late 19th century (Putnam, 1990), it first became popularized by Pierre Bourdieu nearly 100 years later (Bourdieu, 1984). In the 1990s, the theory grew in popularity and began to be utilized as a research framework in several fields based in sociology (Coleman, 1990; Putnam 1995, 2000).

Even though most of the research on social capital focuses on social gains, leaders advocating for the use of social capital in academia differed in the treatment of the concept. Putnam (1995, 2000) defined three types of social capital. With bonding social capital, he refers to the connections that one might have with similar people (i.e., connections that occur within a family or on a close-knit sport team). Bridging social capital refers to the connections that we have with dissimilar “others” (i.e., individuals with differences based on social class, religion, or ethnicity). The third type is labeled as linking social capital (Woolcock, 2001), which refers to vertical connections or relationships between people on different levels (i.e., citizens and politicians, employees and supervisors). Coleman and Bourdieu discuss social capital at the individual level and suggest, "just as physical and human capital facilitate productive activity, social capital does as well" (Coleman, 1988, p 101). While there has been debate over the variations and uses of social capital in research, Schulenkorf (2013) makes reference to Coalter's (2007) proposition that "as a common element, social capital refers to social networks based on norms and values that enable people to trust and cooperate with each other" (p. 26).

Although social capital has not specifically been utilized to evaluate impact within the structure of an alternative sport organization, this theoretical framework has been employed to assess the many types of relationships, social gatherings, and group dynamics that occur within a sporting context. Putnam (2000) commented on sport as a vehicle for the development of social capital: “To build bridging social capital requires that we transcend our social and political and professional identities to connect with

people unlike ourselves. This is why team sports provide good venues for social-capital creation” (p. 411). This would suggest that sport is capable of changing individuals and societies beyond the limitations of the playing field and infers that sport can play a significant role in development. Researchers have noted that sport can assist social capital development by creating an environment of social inclusion, and because sport serves to help individuals develop networks, make relationships, gain friends, and reduce isolation (Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield, & Bradley, 2002; Sherry, 2010; Spaaij, 2009). Studies also suggest that sporting activities at the grassroots level have the potential to motivate individuals to volunteer in an effort to address social issues such as cultural differentiation, war, disasters, and health risks such as HIV/AIDS (Burnett, 2006; Sherry, 2010). Additional research has found that in disadvantaged communities throughout the world such as in the U.K. (Skinner, Zakus & Cowell, 2008), the Netherlands (Spaaij, 2009), and in Australia, it was revealed that sport contributed to the development of social capital by yielding networks and access to human services for the disadvantaged (Burnett, 2006).

While most research has found benefits of social gains within marginalized populations as a result of the relationships and networks formed between individuals and groups, examinations have noted the negative aspects or ‘dark side’ of social capital can yield in respect to bonding (Coalter, 2010). Coalter argues that while disadvantaged individuals are linked together, they simultaneously can be excluded from broader reaches of society. Schulenkorf (2013) further highlighted that "closing" a group to outsiders may inhibit development when negative and exclusive identities are enhanced.

In a study on individuals experience homelessness who took part in a sport-for-homeless initiative called Street Soccer USA, Welty Peachey, Lyras, Borland and Cohen (in press) acknowledged the potential of bonding to further exclude and marginalize this population.

In summary, social capital has served as a useful framework to examine various sporting environments and should continue to be utilized and further developed. As suggested by Schulenkorf (2013): "To develop this potential [of sport] into lasting social benefits, organizers and communities need to engage in long-term cooperation and follow-up activities. In other words, short-term interventions may kick-start wide social outcomes" (p. 34). In the following section, I will discuss the impact of volunteerism within an alternative sport and ways social capital has been associated with volunteer impact.

Volunteerism and Impact

Considering the reliance on volunteers by non-profit organizations around the world to achieve success in carrying out their mission and goals, additional focus within academia on volunteerism has begun to emerge (Meier & Stutzer, 2004). The field of volunteerism has been recognized for its diversity and numerous opportunities making it difficult to classify with a specific definition or characteristic (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Wakelin, 2013). Wilson (2000) describes volunteering as "any activity where time is given up freely to benefit another person" (p. 215). Davis-Smith (1998) notes volunteering is "any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit" (p.10). In an effort to advocate for the necessity of positive impact

of a volunteer experience, and not a mandated one, Van Til (1988) stressed volunteerism consists of "a helping action of an individual that is valued by him or her, and yet is not aimed directly at material gain or mandated or coerced by others" (p. 6).

While most research on volunteering has focused on motivations and not impact, some studies have suggested positive outcomes can be yielded from volunteerism (Meier & Stutzer, 2004; Monga, 2006; Wakelin, 2013). In an evaluation of volunteers' experiences at the charity Action for Children, Brodie and Jackson (2012) found nine impacts on volunteers, with the most prominent being increased self confidence/worth, development of skills, using the volunteer experience as a route to employment, and personal satisfaction. In another study involving 86 undergraduate students' experiences with volunteerism, two impact themes emerged: "Self-focus" (i.e., personal rewards, personal growth) and "other-focused" (i.e., sense of belonging, feeling valued) (Bromnick, Horowitz, & Shepherd, 2012). In both of these investigations, one of the most pronounced impacts for volunteers was social gains. Specifically in regard to sport volunteerism, the volunteer experience can lead to developing leadership skills (Burnett, 2006), gaining a larger social network (Tang, 2009), and learning about marginalized populations (Welty Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2011). Finally, McBride, Lough, and Sherraden (2010) compared 325 international volunteer participants to 366 non-participants, and found volunteer service had a positive impact on international awareness, international social capital, and international career intentions.

Further exemplifying the diverse findings in volunteer literature, Wicker and Hallmann (2013) observed a "plethora of theories that have been used to describe

voluntary engagement and working in the sport sector" (p. 111). Taking to account the numerous directions volunteer literature within the sport field has taken and the focus on theoretical frameworks, Cuskelly, Hoye, and Auld (2006) call for further empirical evidence in the genre. Considering the possible social gains and networking derived from the volunteer experience, social capital has been advocated as a framework to help guide research with volunteers. Putnam (1995) notes volunteering in sport in the same manner as volunteering in other community initiatives can contribute to a community's social capital. Doherty and Misener (2008) also state social capital may be achieved within community sport organizations. Additional findings have also noted social capital development among volunteers at a sporting organization is often context specific to the environment and leadership (Kay & Bradbury, 2009; Welty Peachey et al., 2013). While this literature review did not result in any findings on volunteerism within an alternative sport setting, Cuskelly (2008) and Nichols et al. (2004) note that bonding social capital would be likely to occur within a community sport setting due to one's personal connection to the sport.

Considering that limited research has examined the impact of volunteering within a sporting atmosphere on the volunteers themselves, specifically within the context of an alternative sport environment, this effort aims to fill that gap. While volunteer experience in sport has been previously investigated, it is believed the unique nature of the sport of quidditch and the IQA was influential in driving social capital which in turn resulted in tangible impacts.

Method

Taking into account the lack of literature on volunteer impact, especially within an alternative sport setting, a grounded theory approach was employed to delve into the experiences of people who chose to donate their time and energy to the IQA. Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate the use of grounded theory to investigate unexplored social phenomenon and Charmaz (2006) proposes that grounded theory is an iterative process to be utilized when theoretical saturation of a subject has not been achieved. While there are several streams of research regarding volunteerism and volunteerism in sport, it was deemed that the unique nature of quidditch, the subculture it invoked, and the roles with the organization distinguished this volunteer experience from others that had previously been researched. Thus, for the current study focusing on the impacts of volunteering for an alternative sport's governing body, this exploratory methodology was selected as a viable choice to further examine the sport (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

This study emerged as part of a collaboration with the IQA that aimed to monitor and evaluate the sport of quidditch and its impact. While the initial focus of the partnership was to focus on the athletes' experiences, the informal opportunity to speak to and observe volunteers illuminated another population which seemed to also be impacted in a positive manner by the sport of quidditch. The main stimulus that illuminated my awareness of the volunteer experience occurred at the World Cup in 2011. This event took place on Randall's Island in New York City, with over 1,600 participants from 93 college, high school, and community teams from around the U.S. and Canada, Finland, and Iceland taking part. Beyond attending over 30 games and

observing team interactions, I also had numerous conversations with fans and volunteers to further my understanding of the sport and the participants. As suggested by Weed (2009), studies that gather information and use grounded theory to analyze the data "without allowing for the possibility of future iterations of data collection following analysis . . . are the clearest examples of the mis-application of grounded theory" (p. 505). This is also supported by Ladson-Billing (2003), who notes, "keep open the possibilities of limitless thinking and innovation" (p.12). Thus, my efforts to fully examine the sport expanded beyond the initial aim of targeting the participants and utilized exploratory data analysis to discover unanticipated results and gain further insight (Berg, 2009).

Utilizing the constant comparative method (Strauss & Crobin, 1990; Weed, 2009), the data were continuously analyzed with open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which served to highlight the themes that represented the findings. As recommended by Weed (2009), "the methodological strategy for this stage of grounded theory is to move from codes (description) to concepts, aided by memos" (p. 505-506).

Procedures and Participants

To enhance the trustworthiness of the examination, I collected data from multiple perspectives and angles. In an effort to triangulate the data and reduce researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), interviews (one-on-one and focus groups), observational data, memos, and content analysis were all incorporated into the data collection process. These exploratory methods allowed for flexibility to permit the data to guide the

researcher and provide a more open-minded understanding of quidditch and the role of the IQA. The initial stage of this study entailed observing the volunteers at the 2011 World Cup. Although the purpose of attending this event was to observe players and matches, the presence and necessity of the volunteers to put on a global event was noticeable. First, it was noted that five referees and one snitch multiplied by four fields were required for a successful match to take place. Then, after informal conversations with the CEO and other board members, I was informed over 100 people volunteered for various roles with the event (e.g., registration, set-up, commentary, hospitality). After speaking with a few of the volunteers, it was learned many of them made sacrifices such as using vacation time or missing classes in an effort to be part of the World Cup. Throughout my time at this event, daily notes and memos were taken to document my observations and experiences.

The second data collection step involved two interviews (N=2) and three focus groups (N=14 participants) with IQA volunteers who were purposefully selected to provide a diverse range of age, gender, and volunteer roles with the organization. First, I spoke with the CEO, the only IQA staff member that earned a wage (below cost of living) to gain his perspective on the volunteer experience and his recruitment methods. Another personal interview took place with the COO who had been with the IQA since its inception. Her role included managing volunteers and working on a quarterly publication on the sport. Next, three focus groups were held, with each group consisting of 4-5 participants, a number within the range of participants recommended by Krueger

and Casey (2009) as an optimal amount of people to allow sufficient time for everyone in the group to speak and share their opinions (see Table 3).

Table 3
Participant demographics

Name	Age	Race	Gender	Role with IQA
Alan	26	White	Male	Executive Leadership
Allison	25	White	Female	Executive Leadership
Brandon	24	African-American	Male	Board Member
Chris	22	White	Male	Rules Committee
Eric	21	White	Male	Board Member / Snitch
Jessica	23	White	Female	Snitch
Jerry	27	White	Male	Head Referee
Kyle	23	White	Male	Referee / Snitch
Lisa	24	White	Female	Literacy Committee
Meg	24	White	Female	World Cup organizer / Marketing department
Patricia	18	White	Female	World Cup volunteer
Randy	21	White	Male	Social Media Coordinator
Rob	19	White	Male	World Cup volunteer
Stephanie	20	White	Female	World Cup volunteer
Tina	23	Hispanic	Female	Board Member
Wendy	24	White	Female	Title 9 3/4 team

Recruitment for interviews was assisted by the CEO who had access to the volunteers and was able to recommend a diverse range of personnel who could give various perspectives on their experiences. The CEO assisted with providing contact information for volunteers based on various roles with the IQA, and I then contacted them via email to set up interviews. Each potential participant was assured his or her participation in the study was completely voluntary and would not impact his or her role within the IQA. As seen in Table 1, the age range of participants was 18-27 years old with eight males and eight females participating. Finally, 15 of the 16 volunteers noted this was their first time volunteering for a sport organization. This suggested quidditch served as an attractive opportunity to entice people to donate their time to the IQA.

In an effort to reach this diverse population, online interviews and focus groups via Skype and Google+ were conducted. This allowed me to have access to a wider range of volunteers due to accessibility and cost-effectiveness (Im & Chee, 2006). Additionally, Stancanelli (2010) advocates for online methods to be used due to their similarity to in-person interviews: "Online focus groups and traditional focus groups have more commonalities than differences. Once I understood the traditional focus group process, it became apparent that online focus groups were merely a variation of traditional focus groups" (p. 764). The study participants were told confidentiality would be granted by masking as much information as possible by assigning pseudonyms and omitting specific job titles. As suggested in grounded theory methodology, theoretical sensitivity acknowledged I was entering this study with an awareness of the IQA and the sport from my previous interactions and observations, but these interviews and focus

groups were conducted without pre-conceived notions (Weed, 2009). Specifically, Charmaz (1995) suggests interviews be conducted in a semi-structured manner that allows researchers to deviate from their interview guides and for the data to steer the conversation.

Questions were designed in an effort to stimulate conversation and reflection about each person's volunteer experience and impact. Sample questions included: (a) "What was the most impactful experience volunteering for the IQA?" and (b) "Do you think you received any tangible benefits from your choice to volunteer with the IQA?" Sixteen participants was deemed satisfactory due to data saturation when the emerging themes began to overlap and repeat themselves (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998).

Data Analysis

The data collection and analysis was an evolving process from the beginning of my collaboration with the IQA to my interviews and observations of the volunteers. During this entire process, data were continuously analyzed and positioned in raw data themes (open coding), first-order themes (axial coding), and representative quotations (selective coding) as guided by grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Memos, transcripts of one-on-one interviews and focus groups, and field observations were coded utilizing Nvivo10 software. To initially gain insight into emerging themes, the data were analyzed line by line. First, the open coding process revealed 54 raw data themes which then aided in conceptualizing the second stage of axial coding which collapsed the raw data themes into 14 first-order themes that further characterized the data. For example, the open codes "met likeminded individuals" and "made new friends"

were placed within the theme "acquaintance building." Another set of open codes related to gaining future employment such as "resume builder" and "conversation starter in interviews" and collapsed into the theme "job attainment." These themes were grouped into four general dimensions which are represented by quotations and observations (selective codes) within the findings (see discussion for further examples).

Dependability and Credibility

The constant comparative method (Strauss & Crobin, 1990; Weed, 2009) aimed to enhance the dependability and credibility of the findings. In addition, in an effort to minimize preconceived notions and bias, several discussions took place between myself and the chair of my dissertation committee. All emerging themes and coding were reviewed by the chair in an attempt to provide an outside perspective on the analysis and findings along with serving as a check and balance throughout the process. Finally, all interviewees were asked to evaluate the transcripts from their interview along with reviewing the study findings as a form of member checking (Creswell, 1998). None of the study participants replied with comments or concerns about their responses and the study findings.

Findings

The central research questions of this study were: (a) What are the impacts and benefits individuals gained from volunteering with the IQA and (b) Did the environment produced by the IQA and the sport of quidditch impact the experience of the volunteers? I observed that volunteering for the IQA resulted in two themes recognized as a precursor to social capital development: A positive experience within a sport setting and

meeting new people and like-minded individuals. Two additional themes, satisfaction and pride, and enhanced job marketability and networking, were found to result in personal gain. Pictured in Figure 2, and demonstrated in the following section, these findings utilize quotes drawn from my interviews and focus groups along with observations from the 2011 World Cup and additional online media sources that spoke on volunteer experience.

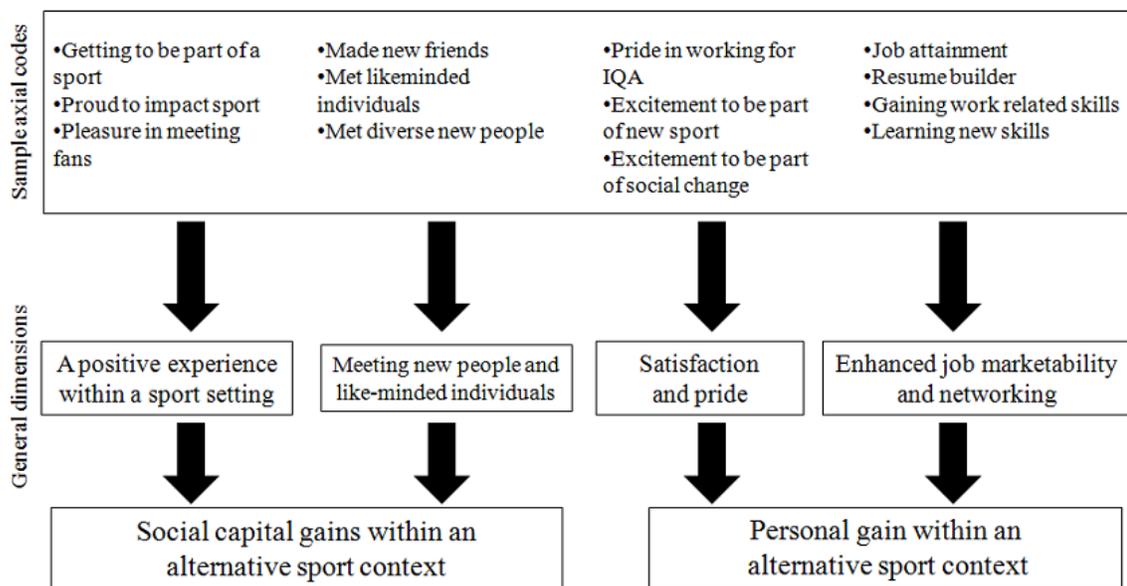


Figure 2: Illustration of sample coding and dimensions

Positive Experience within a Sport Setting

One of the most prominent findings amongst the study participants was the opportunity to have a positive experience within a sporting environment as a non-participant. While literature has recognized social capital outcomes with sporting participants (Burnett, 2006; Welty Peachey et al., in press), less focus has been paid on

the volunteer relationships in the same setting. As illustrated in this section, the opportunity for volunteers to connect with each other, the fans, and the players within the setting of an alternative sport yielded social capital. For some, they admitted that full contact or endurance sport simply was not a feasible or desirable option, but they still wanted to be part of the culture. For others, they recognized the newness of quidditch and the lack of opportunity to be on a team after high school or college, and volunteering was a way for them to still feel part of the sport. For example, Chris talked about his decision to serve as a referee:

I love the sport, I really do. Once I left college, I had to find a way to remain involved. Being able to ref, especially a sport so new the rules are constantly adapting has been nearly as fun an opportunity to keep up with the game.

Jerry was another referee who talked about remaining involved with the sport:

Well, I'm one of the older ones here and my body has already started to fall apart on me. Running around on a broom getting my ass kicked by kids five to eight years younger than me finally lost some of its appeal. Even though the players can be a little whiny and complain too much, being a ref is still a blast. Feels great still having an impact on the field in a different way.

As noted within the research context section, the role of the snitch is a very unique one within any sporting environment. This position requires complete neutrality and serves as her or his own entity on the playing field while having to simultaneously please the crowd and avoid capture from multiple opponents. The IQA specifically has a section in the rulebook regarding the snitch's use of 'spectacle' on the playing field:

Rule 3.2.3.3: *Spectacles* - Snitch runners are encouraged to be creative in their evasion tactics. . . Sometimes, a snitch runner brings a heightened level of spectacle into a match (say, by riding a bike or throwing water balloons at players). If the snitch runner intends to do something like this, the head referee must be informed before the game begins (IQA rulebook, p. 30).

Jessica excitedly spoke about her enjoyment ‘snitching’ for the IQA: “I love it! Get to tackle dudes, excite the crowd and just have fun out there.” Kyle also talked about the unique role he got to play:

It’s weird. We are guaranteed to ‘lose’ no matter what . . . the game doesn’t end until we fail. But that’s what’s so fun about it. We have our moment during close games where we are the center of attention. Both teams and the entire crowd watching and cheering, or booing. . . It’s a blast.

Rob spoke on how the experience of being part of a large scale sporting event was a positive experience: “My school didn’t have a team, but I figured why not, I signed up for whatever role they needed . . . I actually paid for my own flight . . . It was just so cool watching the sport live.” Another volunteer at the World Cup, Stephanie, noted her enthusiasm to be involved in a global event:

I always wanted to volunteer for something like the Olympics but never had the time or money. . . . the [Quidditch] World Cup being practically in my backdoor gave me a taste of that. Heck I got to meet people from Finland!

Brandon was another volunteer who recognized volunteering would be a better outlet for him to remain involved with the sport:

I'll be honest. You see me, I'm fat, I like to eat. . . . My team was awesome, and didn't make me feel weird on the field. But running around just wasn't for me. . . . That's how I got into coaching the team. I still got to be on the field, I still got to cheer and fist pump with everyone. But screw all that running.

Finally, Brandon went on to suggest: "Where else can a dude like me get to coach and have an impact on a outcome in a sporting event?"

A great deal of this exuberance was also observed at the 2011 World Cup. Volunteers took the time to watch the games, experience the surrounding events and performers, and mingle with the fans. The snitches were frequently seen surrounded by young kids and often were mobbed by crowd members during their down times. Thus, as suggested in the data, volunteering with the IQA provided a positive sporting experience which might not have been achieved through volunteerism in other outlets.

Meeting New People and Like-minded Individuals

One common impact found in volunteerism is the ability to cultivate relationships and make friends (Bromnick, Horowitz, & Shepherd, 2012). The environment of the IQA was no different in that aspect, as this alternative sport served as an outlet to bring people together. Several components beyond the sport itself led to bonding social capital (i.e., affinity for *Harry Potter*, the inclusive environment, and sense of belonging) and many of the volunteers raved about the new relationships they formed after working at a quidditch related event. Alan highlighted the IQA's effort to recruit people through the community and the organization:

We stress our three C's [creativity, community and competition] . . . but it's for the volunteers as well as the players. If they come to the World Cup, we have parties, after-hour events, mixers and so on.

This type of subculture created by the IQA was noted by Randy as he recognized the opportunity to meet new people and form bonds: "I mean, I get to hangout with a bunch of *Harry Potter* nerds, drink with a bunch of *Harry Potter* nerds then watch quidditch all day. Not a bad way to spend a weekend." Lisa stressed her various encounters with new people through her role with the IQA and her love of the community:

Each time I show up to an event, or hop on one of our group Skype chats I seem to meet someone new and cool. I think I've done quidditch related stuff in about seven different cities now . . . each time I've crashed on the couch of a complete stranger and left with a new best friend. . . Money would be cool, but these bonds are priceless.

Tina also talked about getting to meet people from around the U.S. and even the world: "Every time I get a call from someone from a new country trying to start a team, it makes my day! I think I was on the phone with a young girl from Ireland the other day, her accent was killer."

These types of friendships and connections were easy to notice and even smaller subcultures seemed to emerge with the referees and the snitches. Jessica talked about the 'snitch culture':

We're on our own little island sometimes. We aren't on a team, we aren't supposed to care who wins or loses so we just root for each other . . . I remember

at one tournament one of my friends was snitching and it took over 40 minutes for him to get caught! Like all matches we always lose in the end, but that was such a celebratory moment for all of us.

Chris also noted how referees often had to bond together:

This is a tough freaking sport to referee! Balls are flying everywhere, players are yelling at us left and right. If we didn't laugh it off, and swap stories after matches we'd probably have way less fun. . . . On the other side, we also are a great support system to go over the rules and help each other to keep the game as clean as possible.

A common theme spoken about several times was the community that was built off the field before and after events by bringing individuals together. Alan mentioned a tradition they have before the World Cup starts:

The day before the World Cup is exhausting. A lot of us work 16-20 hour shifts prepping the fields, tightening up scheduling, and just dealing with those event logistics. So we started a fun tradition where we 'drink the trophy', since our trophy is an empty vodka bottle painted gold. Then around 3-4 a.m. when we wrap up, we have a nightcap with another trophy.

Meg also reflected on the bonding that takes place off the field: "I mean, screw the actual games. Quidditch is great and all, but I love just meeting these cool people. . . . I mean I got to play quidditch at freaking Comic Con!"

As illustrated within this theme, the IQA created a social environment through the sport, the culture beyond the field of play, and simply enabled an atmosphere conducive to meeting new people; these factors in turn resulted in forming relationships.

Satisfaction and Pride

Another prominent finding that emerged was the satisfaction and pride many of the volunteers received. Considering the newness and rapid growth of the sport, many seemed to take great pleasure in being part of an initiative in its early stages. This resulted in volunteers striving to carry out the mission of the IQA and having the opportunity to have a role in something 'big.' Whether it was helping promote the sport of quidditch, pushing for inclusivity on the playing field, or shaping rules towards gender equality, the volunteers stated their enjoyment in being part of the *Harry Potter* community and bringing quidditch to fruition. Alan, one member of the executive leadership team, highlighted the IQA's effort to recruit people:

It's honestly not tough getting volunteers. It's actually much harder finding a volunteer to coordinate all the volunteer requests we get! A lot of them want to still be part of the *Harry Potter* culture . . . Others just want to be part of this growing sport. This wouldn't work without them.

Eric agreed with the idea of being part of a growing phenomenon and shared his excitement:

It's no secret *Harry Potter* is a pretty big deal, a billion dollar franchise. Yah, quidditch isn't going to make nearly a fraction of what the books make, but it's going to get big. . . . And I like being able to brag I'm part of that.

Patricia also noted the *Harry Potter* connection that initially drew her in: "Well, I started because of my love of *Harry Potter*, but I will return because this sport is awesome. I love to see it come to life."

Jerry talked about his joy in being able to shape a new sport through his recommendations as head referee: "I get to help create rules and rewrite a playbook for a global sport. I doubt baseball or football is ever going to let me do that!" Lisa was another volunteer who reflected on the duration she had been involved with the IQA and her satisfaction in being part of the growth and future direction:

I think I've been volunteering on and off for over four years now. It's kind of crazy. Back then it was just a handful of us and a handful of teams. Now we're dealing with thousands of players and thousands of fans. . . . Cool feeling being part of something like that, seeing it grow.

A few people also commented on the social justice initiatives the IQA took part in such as its push for literacy and gender equality. Wendy, a member of the 9 and 3/4 team (a combination of Title IX and Platform 9 and 3/4 from the *Harry Potter* novels), stressed her appreciation and excitement to be able to provide access to females to play a coed sport on a level playing field:

I've been one of the leading advocates for our "gender ratio" rules. As we say, the books were coed, our sport is going to stay coed. Getting to hear appreciation from both females and males on their experiences has been fantastic. While our system is not perfect, we think we've seen far more agreement than bitching over the league format.

Allison, another member of the executive team, also made reference to the social justice initiatives of the IQA: "People come to our website and see opportunities to teach kids to read, opportunities to empower females. They want to be a part of that. It changes everyone." As seen within the outreach section of the IQA webpage, these initiatives are highlighted:

An integral part of the IQA's mission is to empower our youth and give back to the local communities . . . [they] are encouraged to give back by holding local read-a-thons, teaching Quidditch to elementary school students, and coming up with ideas for fundraisers. . . . We are strong advocates of the health benefits of Quidditch as a social and physical activity that enables all children to participate in an inclusive atmosphere where the only goal is to have fun (IQA, n.d.).

Several other participants in the study made references to their pride in having the opportunity to help something grow at their young age, like Eric who said "I'm 21 years old, not too many opportunities to be part of a start-up sport. Maybe I can actually get paid doing this someday." Thus, it was recognized the opportunity to be part of a growing sport yielded levels of satisfaction and pride which shaped a positive impact of volunteerism.

Enhanced Job Marketability and Networking

Finally, the last prominent impact that emerged from one's volunteer experience was the potential benefits that could lead to a job, promotions or skill development. As mentioned within the research context, the IQA relied heavily on volunteerism for its success. This reliance led to many opportunities for skill building in numerous

departments (e.g., accounting, event planning, public relations). Additionally, the unique nature of the sport often seemed to help their applications 'stand out' and enhance their resumes. Several people mentioned their initial hesitation in putting quidditch on their resume and the reactions they received. Meg spoke on this issue:

I was nervous putting quidditch on my resume at first. . . . I can handle getting laughed at by kids my age, and I kinda make fun of myself for it, but wasn't sure how it would look in the 'real world'. But I tossed it on, I mean it's me, I'm proud of my accomplishments with the organization, why hide it. . . . Within two weeks, I got three interviews! And no joke, the first question from each one of them, was about *Harry Potter* and quidditch.

Chris also was grateful for his experience with the IQA and the doors it opened:

I actually met a really cool dude at a clinic I was helping with at an elementary school. He was a parent of one of the kids and for some reason really liked me . . . We got to talking and eventually one thing led to another and his friend of a friend of a friend type deal somehow led to an interview and a job at a great company.

Beyond job attainment, others were appreciative of skills they gained that they were able to bring back to the classroom or their workplace. Allison spoke about the unique opportunities being on the executive committee has given to her:

I've got to do so many things and have so much responsibility. . . I've published newsletters, collaborated with advertisers, given presentations and helped with

publications like the rulebook. At my 'regular' job all I do is 'space out' like that guy said in Office Space.

Patricia also reflected on her opportunity with the IQA: "I'm only 18, this was actually my first real job, I never had one in high school. So just learning how to be part of a team and listen to instruction while getting to watch quidditch was a great way to learn!"

Alan talked about his joy in getting to write reference letters and make recommendations for volunteers that worked with the IQA:

Not only are they not embarrassed to have it on their resume, they are highlighting it coming to me. I love the players and I love the sport, that is my top priority. . . The side effect of quidditch helping people get jobs, or get into grad school, that's just awesome.

To summarize all the themes which emerged from my interviews, Chris seemed to state it best, "I show up, meet some cool people, learn some cool things, try to bring some happiness to people's lives. If I got paid, it would be the perfect job!"

While the main goal of the IQA was to create and implement a sport that impacted the athletes and promoted creativity, community and competition, the findings of this study recognize position impacts also were significant with the volunteers. Thus, the environment and community that resulted from the IQA had an influence on social capital and personal development.

Discussion

Utilizing grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the purpose of this study was to investigate the impacts and benefits that are received by

volunteers in an alternative sport organization. As illustrated in the findings, the unique atmosphere of quidditch was able to produce an environment which yielded a positive impact on the volunteers. My analysis recognized that volunteering for the IQA resulted in two themes recognized as precursors to social capital development (a positive experience within a sport setting, and meeting new people and like-minded individuals). Two additional themes (satisfaction and pride, and enhanced job marketability and networking) were also found to result in personal gain. As grounded theory suggests, this study aimed to advance substantive theory within the field of sport volunteerism which could be further examined in an effort to develop formal theory (Charmaz, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Weed 2009). This study also illustrated the ability of an alternative sport to entice and positively impact a population of individuals who normally would not have committed their time to work for a sport organization pro bono.

These findings supplement previous research which has also recognized the impact that socialization can have on volunteers (Brodie & Jackson, 2012; Bromnick, Horowitz, & Shepherd, 2012). Taking into account the IQA's emphasis on creating a positive atmosphere which resulted in volunteers bonding with the players, fans and each other, it can be suggested volunteering for an alternative sport organization resulted in social capital development and positive impacts. Considering the subcultures that often become involved in an alternative sport endeavor (Wheaton, 2003), these initiatives often attract people who normally might not be involved in sport or volunteerism. Specifically in regards to the IQA, this initiative provided an opportunity for bonding

with many likeminded individuals who wanted to be a part of the quidditch or *Harry Potter* community.

As illustrated in the findings, social capital development was facilitated both through the actual sport of quidditch, and through activities and events which lead to meeting new people (i.e., social outings, clinics, meetings, social interactions via Facebook or their website, and viral videos). First the volunteers stressed the positive experience that occurred within a sport setting and how it resulted in building relationships. In a similar manner to Study 1, quidditch provided an atmosphere that enticed volunteers to become involved with a sport organization. Many who either could not participate on an actual quidditch team or did not desire to be on a team, still wanted to be part of a sport initiative. Second, as seen in the findings, the volunteers noted how the atmosphere quidditch created was extremely conducive to meeting new people and like-minded individuals. Whether it was connecting through specific volunteer positions such as snitching or refereeing, or one of the many opportunities the IQA provided to meet new people (i.e., meetings, social media gatherings, events, and clinics), it became apparent that social connections were made far beyond the field of play. This would support Putnam's (1995, 2000) notion of bonding social capital emerging within a homogeneous group of people with similar goals and backgrounds along with additional research suggesting volunteerism serves as a precursor to socialization (Burnett, 2006; Morrow-Howell, Hong, & Tang, 2009). Further, Alder and Kwon (2002) state:

The social capital of a collectivity (organization, community, nation, and so forth) is not so much in that collectivity's external ties to other external actors as

it is in its internal structure . . . specifically, in those features that give the collectivity cohesiveness and thereby facilitate the pursuit of collective goals" (p. 2002).

In other words, the volunteers who chose to work for the IQA did so because of their affinity with the community and the sport it created, and in turn this setting created an atmosphere conducive to forming relationships.

Additionally, the findings illustrates two other tangible impacts were recognized by the volunteers. First, their self-satisfaction and pride emerged through the opportunity of becoming involved with a growing sport and social initiative. Beyond the field of play this included opportunities to help write the rule book, advocate for gender equality, promote the IQA's literacy program, serve as ambassadors and recruit teams from around the U.S. and the world, and promote the IQA through social media outlets. In a similar vein to these findings, Brodie and Jackson (2012) stated, "respondents strongly believed the most important impact of volunteering upon the volunteers themselves was the 'increased self-confidence/worth'" (p. 30) which helped ameliorate lack of confidence and enhance their abilities to succeed in the workplace. Pride from volunteering was also recognized by Kay and Bradbury (2009) who noted volunteerism with youth volunteers led to heightened altruism and citizenship. Finally, volunteers with the IQA recognized how their work enhanced job marketability and networking. This also is supported by Brodie and Jackson (2012) who suggest volunteering provided many individuals with training and education and sometimes employment. Another study with college graduates also proposed that career attainment was related to skills gained through

volunteerism (Surdyk & Diddams, 1999). Considering the IQA is an organization that currently does not employ full-time staff, it relies mainly on the goodwill and efforts of volunteers to execute the mission. This results in numerous volunteer opportunities in multiple departments with the organization. Additionally, the experiences volunteers acquired with the IQA most likely would not be attainable with another large sporting event like the Olympics or World Cup (i.e., website design, accounting, hospitality, and booking talent), especially for those without previous work experience. The volunteers who partook in this study suggested these opportunities that took place both on and off the field provided several opportunities to enhance their resume and network with potential future employers.

While the findings of this study support existing literature in sport volunteerism, it is important to reiterate that 94% of the participants noted this was their first volunteer experience in a sport setting. Additionally, none of the participants commented on previous volunteer experiences or desires. This suggests the IQA and the sport of quidditch successfully appealed to a group of volunteers who normally would not have chosen to donate their time and abilities. In the same manner alternative sport can fulfill desires for participants that traditional sport cannot, volunteer opportunities for unique activities can also satisfy a niche population. Whether it is having the chance to observe elite athletes (Bang & Chelladurai, 2003) or work with the homeless in a sport setting (Welty Peachey et al., 2013), the more diversity in volunteer opportunity the greater the likelihood of attracting volunteers and yielding positive impact.

Taking into account all research endeavors have limitations, I recognize several that could have impacted the findings of this investigation. Considering the high levels of appreciation the interviewees had with their experience with the IQA, their responses may have been calculated in an effort to state what they believed I wanted to hear. I attempted to mitigate this by promising confidentiality and requesting open and honest conversation. Having an opportunity to interview volunteers who only attended an event or meeting once and never returned could illuminate an entirely different outcome. In regard to my personal bias, having the chair of this dissertation committee review my findings and coding aimed to gain an outside perspective on the themes that materialized. Finally, research has noted the "dark side" of bonding social capital (Putnam, 1995) and how close bonds could exclude outsiders. While this did not arise in my interviews and focus groups, and everyone touted the inclusivity of the organization, speaking with volunteers who had a negative experience could illuminate an exclusive nature of the volunteers.

Conclusions

This research examined the impacts that occurred with volunteers for an alternative sport organization. Although quidditch is most frequently viewed as a fictional activity that many people have only heard of through the *Harry Potter* novels and movies, a sport has emerged and expanded beyond the pages of a book and a hi-definition television set. The IQA recently held its sixth annual World Cup in Florida and hosted hundreds of athletes and thousands of fans. In an effort to succeed, the

governing body depends on volunteerism, passion, and excitement to organize events and govern the sport.

In 2012 the IQA hosted eight interns and utilized 80 part-time volunteers throughout the year who assisted in planning the 2013 World Cup. This event was a culmination of 18 months of planning by leadership, event and rules committees, and local ambassadors who assisted in planning local qualifying tournaments. During the World Cup its volunteer base grew to approximately 300 individuals and 100 referees. As noted in the findings, many respondents discussed their increased skill-sets which sometimes led to college and job prospects. This environment served as a unique setting in volunteerism. While most volunteer opportunities for college students or "entry" level employees consist of menial tasks such as working registration, serving as an usher or doing grunt work, the IQA allowed (and required) volunteers to run the organization. Thus, instead of simply working at a large-scale event or a local tournament, volunteers had the opportunity to manage events, do accounting, and run public relations campaigns amongst many other tasks. All of these experiences served as opportunities to develop new skills and showcase leadership potential, a benefit that was expanded on by the IQA CEO:

Many of our top staff has gone on to get jobs based largely on their IQA experience. Working for a startup company like ours that has so many responsibilities and needs puts a lot of pressure on them but also gives them a lot of power and space to do great things, achieve strong results, and most

importantly learn a lot about developing, selling, and growing an idea and its associated products (A. Benepe, personal communication, August 13, 2012).

The implications of this research suggest the value alternative sport organizations can have in society beyond the impact they have on the players (Coakley, 2001; Rowe, Adams & Beasley, 2004). The findings of this investigation highlight an additional population involved with alternative sport, the volunteers and their attraction to volunteering in this unique setting. The results also endorse the potential of alternative sport to yield similar positive impact on volunteers that may be seen in more conventional volunteer opportunities. Thus it can be theorized that alternative sport has the capability to affect the lives of individuals through its unique atmosphere that produced social capital and real world gains. Although this grounded theory study did not result in findings that focused on organizational structure and mechanisms as originally intended, the environment produced by the IQA should be acknowledged and considered for future research in leveraging sporting events. Considering the bulk of the IQA's volunteer and programming efforts are centered around events such as the Quidditch World Cup and other regional tournaments and conventions, gaining a deeper perspective on the event outcomes could be a valuable line of inquiry.

As one of the first scholars in sport management to conceptualize sporting events in a social leverage framework, Chalip (2006) called for event planners and organizers to target interactions that would yield feelings of celebration and unity. Specifically, Chalip suggests five strategies for event planners to incorporate: Enabling socialibility among event visitors, creating social events related to the event, assisting with informal social

opportunities, designing ancillary events and, creating a wide range of themes. While research has begun to recognize social leverage as a framework to describe the impact of an event amongst participants and fans, few have discussed the impact on volunteers within the same setting. Considering the importance of volunteers and how positive experiences and impact can lead to retention, gaining perspective on volunteerism through leveraging is worthy of consideration (Meier & Stutzer, 2004; Wilson & Musick, 1999).

If the IQA was simply another sport organization that hosted tournaments, it can be reasoned social capital might not have been developed and many of the impacts illustrated in the findings would not have taken place. This would suggest other sport organizations consider including cultural aspects and social gatherings for their volunteers in order to optimize impact. Considering the fact that quidditch and/or the *Harry Potter* franchise might not be appealing to everyone looking for a volunteer opportunity in sport, future directions in this line of research could involve looking at more traditional sporting environments where efforts to develop social capital might not be a priority. In the same vein, another interesting avenue for research could gain the perspective of volunteers involved in the IQA who are not fans of the *Harry Potter* franchise. In an investigation with athletes of the sport, 11% of the study participants claimed they were neutral-to-minimal fans of *Harry Potter* (Cohen et al., 2012) suggesting a similar population might exist among the volunteers. Another future research endeavor could evaluate the motivations of IQA volunteers and assess if their positive impact leads to long-term retention and involvement. Finally, investigations

could be undertaken outside the field of sport to evaluate volunteer impact in other cultural avenues such as music festivals or art gatherings.

In summary, this grounded theory investigation suggests the sport of quidditch and the IQA had a positive impact on the volunteers with the sport. These findings build upon and extend previous studies conduct with participants of quidditch (see Chapter II and Cohen et al., in press). The results of this study demonstrate the potential outreach and impact alternative sport initiatives can have through the social climate it inspired. Considering the IQA successfully enticed and impacted numerous individuals who normally might not have chosen to volunteer, continued support and recognition for alternative sport initiatives should be promoted. Not only has J.K. Rowling seemingly inspired literacy and physical fitness through the *Harry Potter* franchise, but based on the findings of this study, the sport of quidditch, spawned from her work, also has the ability to attract volunteers and impact them in a positive manner.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

“We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better.” – J.K. Rowling

In case J.K. Rowling was not satisfied with earning billions of dollars, stimulating literacy and creativity around the globe, and inspiring non-profit organizations and altruism (including the *Harry Potter* Alliance, an advocacy group leading campaigns toward issues such as LGBT equality, fair trade, and recovery in Haiti), the findings of this dissertation acknowledge an additional positive impact resulting from the *Harry Potter* franchise. While Rowling never anticipated that quidditch would evolve from a fictional game played by teenage wizards to a real life physical activity, an interview revealed her awareness of sport's potential impact in society: "I had been pondering the things that hold a society together, cause it to congregate and signify its particular character and knew I needed a sport" (Furness, 2013, para 4).

Initial impressions of a sport featuring 'bludgers,' 'quaffles,' 'snitches,' and brooms might cause one to discount the sporting attributes occurring on the playing field. These similar reactions most likely took place when someone first swung a bat at a baseball or shot a basketball through a peach basket. Taking into account the abundance of academic research and empirical evidence of the role sport can play in society such as health benefits, mental health gains, and social development (Bailey, 2006; Darling,

Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2006; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), any efforts aiming to entice people to participate should be lauded and endorsed.

As Wheaton (2010) and Zeigler (2007) recommended, research needs to explore a wide variety of sport in an attempt to enhance our awareness of sport's impact on society. While investigations within alternative sport settings have begun to take place in areas such as culture, marketing, and demographics, the findings of this dissertation looked further into the impact and benefits alternative sport can have on those that take part. Although quidditch does not have the long storied history of Little League Baseball, the infrastructure and organization of Pop Warner Football, or the millions of dollars of funding like the Let's Move! Active Schools campaign, the sport has been driven by community passion and energy. What started as a game between undergraduate students looking to waste a few hours on a fall weekend has turned into a recognized global affair.

The goal of this dissertation was to provide insight into the impacts and benefits of a unique alternative sport. Thus, the purpose of my dissertation was to monitor and evaluate the authentic sport of quidditch, and the governing body, the International Quidditch Association (IQA). This was done by conducting two studies. In Study 1, I utilized a grounded theory approach to investigate participants of the sport in an effort to ascertain impacts and benefits along with determining similarities and differences to traditional sport activities. The results for this study highlighted quidditch's ability to provide leadership skills, social gains, increased health and fitness, self-confidence and

pride, along with a positive sporting experience, all of which have been recognized in more traditional sports. Additionally, the findings acknowledged quidditch provided leadership opportunities that organized traditional sport often could not provide.

In Study 2, this monitor and evaluation effort, through grounded theory methodology, was advanced by examining volunteers of the IQA and the impact and benefits gained from volunteerism. The results suggested the unique atmosphere of quidditch and the subcultures it formed were able to generate a setting that caused positive impact on the volunteers. It was found that volunteering for the IQA resulted in social capital development in two main themes: A positive experience within a sport setting and meeting people and forming relationships. Additionally, positive impact was noticeable through two additional themes: Self-satisfaction and pride, and enhanced job marketability and networking.

Contributions and Implications

There are several empirical and theoretical implications which can be gleaned from the findings of this dissertation. The empirical evidence from Study 1 and Study 2 provide further confirmation of the positive impact sport can have on society. These results also suggest that sport does not need to take place in a conventional or traditional manner for such impacts to take place. Collectively, this dissertation, and in a broader sense my overall collaboration with the IQA, has revealed that both participants and volunteers within an alternative sport setting are being positively impacted emotionally, socially, and physically. What these findings are not suggesting is that quidditch is the answer for all issues relating to burnout, dropout, or basic lack of interest in sport

(Gould, 1987; Smith, Gustafsson, & Hassmen, 2011; Rowe, Beasley, & Adams, 2004), but they highlight the importance of access and availability to a wider range of sport options.

As noted in the introduction (Chapter 1), over \$1.5 billion was cut from school sports budgets during the 2010-2011 school year. This highlights a need for cost-effective methods that can still provide the same benefits as traditional sport.

Considering many alternative sports appeal to a wide range of potential participants and are cost-effective, while still providing similar positive impact to conventional options, I recommend that schools and communities consider alternative or non-traditional outside the box to promote physical education. Using the example of quidditch, for the cost of a volleyball, two dodgeballs, some PVC pipe, a leftover broom and a willing volunteer supervisor, schools around the country can provide a fun and engaging sporting environment for its students, while still providing an outlet for health and fitness. In response to an online petition by high school students in Texas who attempted to make quidditch an official state sport, an article in Education Week (2011) noted:

In an era of budget cuts, the thought of adding another sport to the official roster may sound idealistic at best, but to quidditch's credit, most schools should have the requisite equipment (besides broomsticks) already lying around. And if a game can promote physical activity in a nonathlete demographic, would it be such a bad thing for schools to encourage? (Toporek, para 10).

Through grounded theory methodology, this dissertation also generated theory in regard to alternative sport's impact on participants and volunteers (Strauss & Corbin,

1990; Weed, 2009). It begins to illustrate the ability of alternative sport to reach niche populations who normally might not be immersed in a sport culture. In turn, this research suggests alternative sport can impact participants and volunteers in a positive manner through physical, social, and real world gains (e.g., job attainment and skill building). In recent years, sport management research has begun to suggest sport initiatives should design their programs beyond the game itself to yield greater levels of impact. Specifically, Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) advance that initiatives should "design their structure and programming around five theoretical building blocks—the impacts assessment, organizational, sport/physical activity, educational, and cultural enrichment components" (p. 324) to produce development and social change. Others have also noted the value of leveraging sporting events for social development (Chalip, 2006; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008) and recommend this can occur by enabling socialability, creating social events, facilitating informal social opportunities, constructing ancillary events, and theming an event. By designing sporting events, organizations and teams with programming and activities that take into consideration factors other than the sport itself, the likelihood of positive impact and social gains will increase. Considering the IQA produced a community beyond sport through its connection with a pop-culture phenomenon, and its mission of inspiring creativity, community, and competition, the findings of this dissertation can help advance theoretical development of this nature through enhancing existing theory and assisting to further measure alternative sport's role and impact in the field of sport management. In addition, further analysis and data collection guided by social capital theory and the volunteerism and alternative sport

literatures could also assist in developing a more formal theory involving alternative sport impact.

Future Research

There are several opportunities for future research along the same lines as this dissertation. First, longitudinal methodology should be considered taking into account the 'newness' of the sport. Quidditch is currently wearing numerous hats in an attempt to emphasize inclusivity and quality in a competitive environment while keeping the game coed and full contact. As the sport becomes more popular and commercialized, the potential for participation driven by extrinsic rewards will increase, which in turn could potentially lead to decreased positive impact, lower levels of inclusivity and dropout from the sport. Accounting for diversity within this sport setting and alternative sport in general could also be considered for future investigation. While not a focus of this dissertation, I do recognize the vast majority of study participants, both players (85%) and volunteers (87.5%), were Caucasian. Further examinations could target minorities to evaluate their experience with the sport. In addition, Study II focused on the similarities of quidditch to traditional sport. Digging deeper into the subculture of the sport could illuminate further impacts that distinguish alternative sport from more conventional options.

Research could also continue to look at pop-culture's influence in sport and beyond. For example, Andrew Slack, founder of the *Harry Potter* Alliance, recently launched the Imagine Better Project, which aims to harness societies' passions that are similar to *Harry Potter*:

Imagine a world where *Harry Potter* fans come together with fans of Doctor Who, Firefly, Star Trek and Glee to build a community of activists. Imagine this coalition of united fans working with the world's most prominent YouTube celebrities, actors and best selling authors to change the world. (*Harry Potter Alliance*, n.d., para 1).

Additional research with the IQA could attempt to evaluate organizational leadership, which could be valuable towards the design of future alternative sport programs.

Another aspect of the IQA is their mission of social change, hence examining the processes and mechanisms of the organization that assist impact and social development, could expand on previous research of this nature (Chalip, 2006; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Finally, research opportunities could involve further analysis of alternative sports to determine similarities and differences to quidditch (See Appendix A for examples).

Conclusion

Amis and Silk (2005) suggest moving beyond pure data collection and churning results to considering the use of new and innovative methods of research to actually assist practitioners, “we are not only referring to getting good, data, we are enjoined to move beyond a concern for more and better data to think about how we can work to empower the researched.” (p. 363). Thus, the purpose of this dissertation was to utilize a grounded theory approach to fully explore the sport of quidditch and ascertain the impacts and benefits from the perspective of the players and the volunteers. Given the need for society to counter rising health concerns along with uncover innovative ways to stimulate social connectedness, I have attempted to highlight one activity that has begun

to ameliorate that problem and spark interest in further research within the field of alternative sport.

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APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies throughout the years have examined the positive impact sport and physical activities have contributed to society. Findings have ranged from weight loss and improved cardiovascular fitness (Bailey, 2006; Paffenberger & Hyde, 1988) to conflict resolution and stereotype reduction (Sugden, 2010; Welty Peachey & Cohen, 2012). Utilizing the *National Educational Longitudinal Survey of 1988* (NELS, 1988), which surveyed 24,599 eighth graders in 1988 and followed up on in 1990, 1992, 1994 and 2000 respectively, researchers associated sport participation with educational benefits, labor market benefits, civic engagement, and health (Lutz, Cornish, Gonnerman Jr., & Ralston, 2009).

Despite the plethora of positive findings pertaining to sport, recent trends have noted the increased tendency for youth and teenagers to become burned out or to dropout from their respective sporting activities (Ekeland et al., 1999; Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2008). Specifically, Wearing, Swan and Neil (2010) suggest “organized sport and physical activity in general have been on the decline . . . with increasing numbers of children replacing physical activity with sedentary and home based leisure activities” (p. 43). In a broader sense, several research efforts have noted the decline in physical activity throughout the globe. From 1969 to 2009, a decrease in physical activity in the U.S. had reached 32 percent while the United Kingdom became 20 percent less active during that same time period (Ng & Popkin, 2012). Ng and Popkin (2012) also

highlighted activity declines in China (44 percent), Brazil (six percent) and India (two percent) while suggesting each country would see a spike in sedentary behavior.

In an effort to specifically distinguish the characteristics of participants, or potential participants, Rowe, Adams, and Beasley (2004) provided a “Segmentation of participation ‘market’” and illustrate four types of personalities and their affiliation with physical activity: 'Couch potatoes', 'on the subs' bench', 'mild enthusiasts', 'sport types'. The authors note, while it is possible for someone living a sedentary lifestyle to immediately begin a high impact and demanding activity, a subtle progress through those four stages would prove more beneficial in shifting attitudes and increasing understanding of health benefits along with suggesting initiatives to enhance the likelihood of sport participation

Beyond a basic lack of interest or desire leading to decreased participation in sport and physical activity, additional fiscal and equality variables have also led to a decline. For example, Up2Us (a non-profit organization that focuses on youth sport impact) recognized four recent developments occurring with school sports in the U.S.: reduced budgets, increasing fees, eliminated opportunities, and growing inequities (Up2Us, 2012). Up2Us suggested, "such conditions fuel elite athleticism and limit the benefits of youth sports to a small number of the highest performing athletes" (Up2Us, 2012, p. 10). Additional research has also noted an emphasis on elite sport driven by government policy and funding such as the United Kingdom shifting away from a 'Sport for All' philosophy and focusing increased efforts on elite athletes and Olympic medals (Green, 2006). Similar literature recognized Australia's focus on high performance and

elitism in an effort to gain global prestige (Green, 2007; Wearing et al., 2010).

Considering the increased focus on elite sport and specialization in the past two decades, many individuals who normally would be motivated to participate in physical activities have been driven away from conventional sporting outlets.

Since conventional sport and focus on elitism has deterred many participants and prevented access for many others, there has been a constant evolution in sport both from an organizational perspective and a grassroots level. Thus, sports such as baseball, soccer, and long-distance running have given way to alternative activities like kickball, Ultimate Frisbee, and Warrior Dash races. Given this foundation, the intent of this section is twofold. First, I will illustrate the motivations of sporting participants and provide a brief history of sport participation. Second, I will define alternative sport and summarize a variety of innovative organizations, missions, and efforts utilized to create sporting environments appropriate for a wide range of participants and offer examples that demonstrate these cases. In summation, the purpose of this appendix is to illustrate the necessity for diverse sporting initiatives to be developed and implemented for the vast array of willing participants who may normally be turned off by the current available sport options, and to share some of the current efforts that have attempted (and succeeded or failed) to do so.

Motivation to Participate in Sport

Motivation can be defined as something that directs, energizes, and sustains behavior (Luthans, 1998). Beyond basic motivational desires, research on motivation has focused on a wide variety of disciplines and settings such as, politics (Koestner, Losier,

Vallerand, & Carducci, 1996), education (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981), and music participation (Hallam, 2002). Motivation has also been recognized as an important factor in a person's desire to take part in sports and leisure (Gould et al., 2002; Pelletier et al., 1995; Wilson, Mack, & Grattan, 2008). A great deal of this research has noted the extrinsic and intrinsic desires driving participation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Vallerand, 2007; Vallerand, Blais, Brière, & Pelletier, 1989). When a person or persons take part in activities due to external rewards or influences, it is recognized as an extrinsic motivation. In contrast, intrinsic motivation is generated by the internal desire to take part in a game or activity for personal satisfaction or achievement. Extrinsic motivators in sport can include gains such as increased popularity, championship trophies, and potential scholarships or sponsorships. Intrinsic factors are noted as items such as fun, self-satisfaction, and self-improvement on the playing field (Vallerand, 2007; Vallerand, Blais, Brière, & Pelletier, 1989).

In an effort to further categorize participant motivation, Chelladurai (1992) noted four dimensions that encompassed an athlete's desires. Specifically, he focused on motives to take part in a variety of physical activities and noted the complexity went beyond basic extrinsic and intrinsic needs. First Chelladurai (1992) suggested people take part in sport for a *pursuit of pleasure*. This concept can be viewed broadly in many different facets of participation. For some athletes, pleasure may be gained through hoisting championship trophies or being victorious over the opposition (extrinsic). For others, the concept of pleasure may be achieved more intrinsically through basic social needs such as making new friends or meeting people.

Chelladurai's (1992) next dimension suggests that *pursuit of skill* is another key motivator to take part in a sporting endeavor. This also can be driven by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations of an athlete. For example, one athlete may go to extreme lengths such as expensive camps and lessons or private schools to increase his or her skill with the goal of moving to the next level. Others may simply attempt to get better at a sport for the self-satisfaction of improvement, such as improving on one's own marathon time. Chelladurai's (1992) third dimension in his framework looks at *pursuit of excellence*. This motivation factor suggests participation is often driven by a yearning to succeed or win on the playing field or court. For athletes motivated by excellence, sports can serve as an appropriate atmosphere to be recognized and acknowledged by the public.

Lastly, Chelladurai (1992) posits that sporting participants can be driven by *pursuit of health and fitness*. Again, this can be pursued both extrinsically and intrinsically. Some athletes might spend time in the gym to enhance their appearance in an effort to be acknowledged by others. Additionally, they might aim to improve their fitness in an effort to maximize their skill and potential in their sporting discipline so they can gain rewards through their improvement. For others, the motivation to live a healthier lifestyle or maintain a current level of fitness is enough to motivate physical activity. Additionally, physical activity can serve as a motivator to reduce health-related risks such as heart disease or diabetes.

When motivations such as Chelladurai's (2012) four dimensions are no longer deemed achievable by a sport participant, this can lead to dropout or burnout from sport

(Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008; Gould, 1987). Specifically, Gould (1987) makes note of what can occur when motivational desires fail to be met by a sporting activity; "children weigh the costs versus the benefits of participation and often withdraw" (p. 80). This is not to suggest sport cannot consist of both fun and competition. Advocating for the necessity of competitiveness to remain on the sporting field, Torres and Hager (2007) argue against trends in sport that underscore performance and outcomes. Specifically, they advocate the value of competition without having it dominate all aspects of sport and note leaders "learn to alter their damaging, decompetitive, zero-sum views of sport competition, stop overemphasizing winning and the performance ethic, and maintain their honesty in the process" (p. 207).

If sporting endeavors continue to focus on traditional delivery means, numerous sport participants may cease to take part in sport. Thus, in an effort to determine the current culture of sporting participation, it is important to evaluate what aspects of motivation are being fulfilled and what alternative methods could reach those who fit into Rowe et al.'s (2004) category of 'couch potato' or 'on the subs' bench.

Annotated History of Sport Participation

Sport participation and physical activity can be traced back centuries to when the Olympics Games served as a global spectacle that halted wars, yielded peace, and highlighted athletic achievements for elite athletes. The first Olympic Games on record in 776 BC featured only a footrace. This evolved to additional events that featured running, throwing, jumping, and combat skills such as the pentathlon, the discus throw,

wrestling, and boxing. This concept of evolution in sport has not stopped since the 8th century and has permeated and impacted athletes ranging from elite to recreational.

Over this period, youth constantly designed and took part in sport and games in unique and fun ways (Yiannakis & Melnick, 2001). As societies evolved and countries began to become developed, emphasis on ways to enhance child development and social opportunity began to emerge. This acknowledgement of the value of sport began to lead to initiatives such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which was founded in 1844 and utilized athletics to provide support and a learning atmosphere for youth. Summarizing the impact of this initiative, Riess (1997) stated, "In the late nineteenth century the YMCA became one of the most important facilitators of sport and physical training" (p. 179), and to this day, the YMCA still aims to bring people together and improve the mind, body, and spirit for all.

One of the first organizations that aimed to provide a team sport environment for youth was Little League Baseball, an initiative founded by Carl Stotz in Willamsport, Pennsylvania in 1939. As stated on its current website, the basic goal of the organization remains the same as it was in 1939:

Promote, develop, supervise, and voluntarily assist in all lawful ways, the interest of those who will participate in Little League Baseball and Softball. . . . The Little League philosophy does not permit any eligible candidate to be turned away. Emphasizing the spirit of Little League, rules require that every child plays in every game. . . . [the] program is designed to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes (Little League Baseball, n.d.).

Football was another sport that launched a youth model in the early 20th century in an attempt to keep teenagers occupied and out of trouble. In 1929, Joseph Tomlin set up a four-team football conference that had expanded to 16 teams by 1933. After an enthusiastic clinic attended by Temple's head coach Glenn Scobey "Pop" Warner, the league was renamed after him. In the same manner as Little League Baseball, the Pop Warner league aimed to make sport accessible for anyone that wished to take part:

Enable young people to benefit from participation in team sports and activities in a safe and structured environment. Through this active participation, Pop Warner programs teach fundamental values, skills and knowledge that young people will use throughout their lives. . . . Pop Warner seeks to provide fun athletic learning opportunities for children. (Pop Warner Little Scholars', n.d.)

These are simply a few instances of sporting organizations attempting to provide a recreational outlet that would benefit youth around the country. As is the case for most things that gain popularity, commercialization and efforts to monetize the product began to take place. What started as local grassroots initiatives has grown to yield products that have served millions of individuals. When Little League Baseball was first conceived in 1939 as an initiative that aimed to "teach [boys] the ideals of sportsmanship, fair play and teamwork" (Little League Baseball, n.d., para 10), the founders were most likely not anticipating a worldwide phenomena along with high cable ratings on ESPN, the largest sports medium in the world. One ESPN executive producer touted the draw of the Little League World Series, "There are Little League World Series games that do higher than college basketball. We have games rate higher than MLB games. The kids are doing a

1.2 rating, while MLB is doing a .6" (Sherman, 2012). In a similar vein, when Pop Warner and other youth football initiatives were first implemented, they existed before recruiting players for large college programs became a multi-million dollar industry and high school football stadiums grew to sizes that could seat thousands of spectators.

In both cases, the mission of these programs was, and is, to reach participants by developing an inclusive environment for all. Despite the aim of the programs, these goals often are not achieved. Often times prominent youth sport organizations have objectives to deemphasize competition and winning and aim to focus on fun and participation but still are viewed as exclusive and fail to cater to all parties that wish to participate (Collins, 2003).

Evolution of Sport

The term 'sport' has been defined and debated in various ways throughout the years. Some argue that golf or bowling are not sports since they do not require running or jumping, while others claim poker is a sport because it airs on ESPN. For the sake of this section, the definition of sport provided by the European Sports Charter (2001) will be recognized, "Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming relationships, or obtaining results in competitions at all levels" (p. 12).

From dodgeball to BMX racing, sports have deviated from the conventional options and have appealed to subcultures and niche markets across the globe (Tomlinson et al., 2005). What may seem like a traditional activity in one part of the world may be perceived as strange or foreign on the other side of the globe. In a similar fashion, a

specific sport may have been mainstream or conventional in the past and could seem antiquated today. For example, one can look at the evolution of baseball, arguably one of the most popular sports in the U.S. As illustrated in Figure 3, one of the first games (rounders) that featured a ball and base running began in the middle of the 18th century and became more formalized in Ireland in the late 19th century. Over the years, several adaptations have been made, each with unique aspects (i.e., size of ball, type of equipment), which appealed to different types of people.

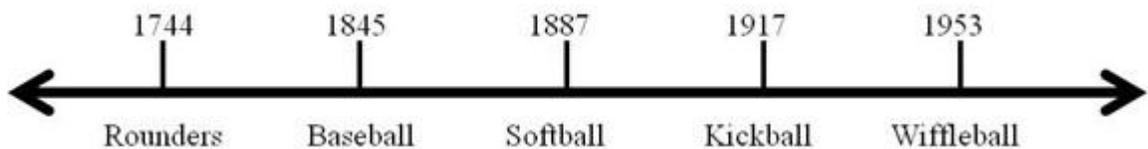


Figure 3: Evolution of sport involving ball and base-running

Another example of evolution in sport can be seen in racquet sports. While tennis is commonly known around the world, and to a lesser extent table tennis and squash, there have been many adaptations. When one goes to the ‘racquet sport’ wikipedia page, 35 examples are listed including: Real tennis, speedminton, and xare. To give one more example of sport evolution, once again the Olympics can serve as a focal point. In 2012, the British Olympic Association gave homage to its history and reflected on the Cotswold Olimpicks which took place 400 years previously in 1612, "Those early 'Olimpick' competitors were as remote as you could imagine from the Olympic stars of today, and the 'sports' included singlestick, wrestling, jumping in sacks, dancing, and

even shin-kicking" (Harsanto, 2011, para 7). This recognition of British rural sports was also written about by journalist Ron Pickering as cited by Williams (2009):

The influence of English rural sports, and the work of William Penny Brookes and Robert Dover, have been significant in the development of the Olympic Games philosophy. Almost half the events in the Modern Games are historically connected to British rural sports (p. 164).

What might seem "normal" or conventional in some cultures could be deemed "bizarre" or alternative in others. Research has suggested that niche sports can thrive in various markets due to their ability to differentiate from other sports (Andrew et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009). Simply put, it has been recognized that a broad range of participants and consumers often spend their time and energy taking part in diverse sporting opportunities when they are made available to the public (Wheaton, 2010).

Alternative Sport Terminology

Just as there are a plethora of innovative or alternative activities to participate in, there has been an abundance of terms and definitions attempting to define them and the environment they are often found or conceived (see table 4). In a broad sense each one of these terms can fall under a definition provided by Rinehart (2000) as "activities that either ideologically or practically provide alternatives to mainstream sports and mainstream sport values" (p. 506).

Table 4

Definitions for non-conventional sport

Term	Defined by	Definition
Alternative sport	Jarvie (2006)	Any sport that may threaten a particularly powerful ideology may be deemed to be an alternative sport . . . have been enjoyed by smaller groups of people, and cherished a lack of competition, organization and commercial intervention (p. 273)
Community sport	Dixon & Bruening (2010)	Organized physical activity that is based in community, school, and local sport organization (p. 192)
Extreme sport	Osland, Bird & Oddou (2012)	Defined as activities that combine a high degree of danger, speed, height, physical exertion, specialized gear, or spectacular stunts (p. 107)
Grassroots sport	EUC Report of Session, 2011	Grassroots activity varies from sport to sport . . . but is often characterized by being local or community-based and dependent on volunteers. It is not necessarily competitive (p. 9)
Lifestyle sport	L'Etang (2006)	'Postmodern' non-traditional activities linked to new 'lifestyle formations' and specific micro-cultures and 'alternative' ideologies (p. 391)
Non-traditional sport	Lyras & Welty Peachey (2011)	Sport activities that are not widespread . . . and have not been engaged in before by participants. . . . Since participants do not have previous experience in these activities, sources of tension and conflict, such as masculinity, high competitive setting and traditional sport norms and culture, are removed from the activity (p. 322)

Regardless of terminology utilized, it should be noted that the common theme suggests an activity that often caters to a specific demographic or subculture and provides an alternative option in lieu of more conventional outlets. As Wheaton (2010) noted, "unlike more traditional sports, subcultural affiliation tends not to be based around 'national' attachments . . . often connecting with other 'alternative lifestyle' groupings such as those found in domains of art, fashion and music" (p. 1059).

Leadership in Sport and Innovative Sport Models

The field of sport management has been ripe for analyses in regard to governance and organizational leadership due to the immense amount of nuances and variables within the industry. Ranging from billion dollar enterprises such as the National Football League or Major League Baseball all the way down to a local town recreational slow pitch softball league, each organization provides a unique organizational structure and mission. In some cases the goal of the sporting organization might be to maximize its return on investment and profit as much as possible, while for others the aim might be purely altruistic and community oriented. Sometimes a sporting organization might have a mission to fulfill one objective but may fail in doing so due to governance.

Specifically, in regard to sporting initiatives that aim for inclusivity and fun, there is often a disconnect between leadership and the mission due to factors such as winning, recognition, and rewards.

One common factor each sporting organization has is the obligation to appease a variety of individuals, including players, parents, coaches, staff, media, volunteers and potentially investors and shareholders. These parties can be termed as stakeholders,

invested people, or groups that, "make a claim on an organization's attention, resources, or output or who may be affected by an organization" (Lewis, 2001, p. 202). Considering that not all stakeholders are equal, this often leads to one or more groups whose needs have not been met by the organization. Many sports and activities are aimed to cater to participants of all demographics (e.g., skill, gender, race, and sexuality) but still find it nearly impossible to appeal to the motivations of all parties. Often times prominent youth sport organizations have objectives to deemphasize competition and winning and aim to focus on fun and participation but still are viewed as exclusive and fail to cater to all parties that wish to participate. Considering stakeholders of all levels, from ownership to players and volunteers, are an integral part of a sport's success and one must evaluate an organization or initiative from various perspectives.

Using the examples provided by Little League and Pop Warner earlier in this chapter, in both instances the mission of the program is to provide an inclusive and fun experience for all participants by developing a welcoming environment. Despite the aim of the programs, these goals are often not achieved due to various acts of leadership and vested stakeholders. It is not a rare occurrence for commissioners, coaches, or captains to deviate from the mission of the governing body. For example, a head coach of a Little League team may be driven by desires to give extra playing time to the best players in an effort to gain national recognition through winning games and qualifying for the Little League World Series versus giving equal playing time to everyone. In a similar vein, players who are driven by extrinsic motivations such as winning championships or gaining college scholarships can impact the experience of other athletes simply looking

to have fun or make friends. Thus, for a sporting organization to adhere to the missions suggested above, all stakeholders need to willingly embrace the goals and objectives.

Stakeholder theory suggests that an organization is affected by other groups in society and is part of a larger system (Freeman & Reed, 1983). Freeman (1984) explained that corporations or organizations consist of a set of relationships with people or groups that have a stake in the mission and it is the executive or owner's job to appease these relationships in an effort to maximize value for stakeholders. Additionally, stakeholders can also drive the mission or outcomes of an organization. Considering that not all stakeholders are equal, this often leads to one or more groups whose needs go unmet by the organization. Thus, in regard to sport initiatives, objectives such as inclusivity and de-emphasizing competition are satisfied or overlooked by stakeholders (i.e., leadership, coaches, or players) that are either complying with the organization's goals or looking out for their own self-interest.

While traditional sporting endeavors guided by leadership will often target stakeholders such as elite athletes, wealthy parents who might invest in sport specialization, or competitors who are driven by factors such as winning, other alternative sporting initiatives that focus on fun, inclusivity, and fairness will often target stakeholders that are motivated by more intrinsic needs (Rinehart, 2000; Wheaton, 2010). Thus, sport managers and leaders can and should attempt to cater activities and events to fulfill the needs of all stakeholders (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Vail, 2007). Whether it is an organization as large as Pop Warner or as small as a local community slow pitch softball league, each should aim to serve a variety of individuals and groups

to fulfill objectives (Eisenhardt, 1989; Martynov, 2009). If the motivational desires of an organization's potential constituency are not significantly achieved, participation and support can be diminished or lost entirely, which in turn could lead to budget cuts, program reduction, or even closure. While it is recognized that all stakeholders are not necessarily equal in all sporting scenarios, if the goal of physical fitness and inclusion through sport is desired, there needs to be governing bodies and leaders that recognize a wide array of participants and potential participants (Vail, 2007).

In an effort to illustrate examples of innovative leadership and new sporting initiatives that have successfully targeted and appealed a diverse range of athletes, I have singled out the organization i9 Sports and the sports of disc golf, tchoukball, and kickball. For each, I will provide an example of their current mission or philosophy which has aimed to design innovative programming targeting diverse populations within Western Culture.

i9 Sports

In a recent article, Anderson (2013) analyzed the structure of a new sporting organization, i9, and noted its founding principle was based on "youth sport normally plac[ing] too much emphasis on winning, which reduces sporting character and promotes role specialization" (p. 8). In a national survey undergone by i9 (taken by children ages 8-14), the organization determined that 84% of youth athletes at one time quit or wanted to quit a team. Specifically, the dominant reasons were; 47% for lack of fun, 29% teammates were mean, and 23% said too many practices interfered with other activities. In an effort to illustrate the structure of youth sport in Western culture and

how i9's model can help ameliorate these flaws, Anderson (2013) highlighted six ways sport yielded negative results and thus created environments that prevent participation: (a) sport and the reproduction of patriarchy (i.e., segregating and devaluing women as athletes); (b) reproduction of classism (i.e., cost can prohibit success); (c) othering (i.e., teaches youth to judge and criticize opponents or out-groups); (d) masculinity hierarchies (i.e., most athletic gain prestige while least athletic are recognized as unmasculine); (e) sport and over-adherence to authority (i.e., coaches can have too much control or authority over youth); and (f) accepting and inflicting violence and injury in sport (i.e., competitive sport endorses the necessity for violence as a component of winning).

In an effort to create an environment meant to counter those negative traits, i9 created nine pillars of virtue (Anderson, 2013): (a) revising how coaches are recruited and trained to eliminate competitiveness; (b) removing body contact; (c) gender-integration; (d) learning to play multiple positions; (e) decreasing over-conformity and permitting all participants to play all positions; (f) removing uniform models from professional teams; (g) encouraging parents to cheer for all players; (h) removing playoffs and championships; and (i) reducing the relationship between sport and a child's school. As can be seen within the pillars, this initiative requires buy in from all stakeholders including properly motivated youth and leaders (coaches and parents) at the community level. In other words, if the goal of sport is to truly be accessible for all willing participants, and there is a growing desire from potential athletes and/or their

parents, i9's model presents an option to enjoy sport within a friendly and inclusive environment.

Disc Golf

Similar to golf, disc golf is a sport which involves navigating a course with a disc in the fewest number of shots. Different from golf, disc golf is an extremely accessible and inexpensive activity. Courses are often located in public parks or forest locations and are free to play. While golf can often be frustrating due to its demand for high levels of skill, disc golf can be enjoyed by nearly anyone. According to the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA), there are over 3,700 courses in the U.S., a number that more than doubled since 2003. Additionally, the PDGA claims more than 500,000 people participate in the sport regularly (PDGA, n.d.).

Stressing the inclusive nature of the sport, the PDGA has a mission to help shape a sport for all parties to enjoy:

Disc golf can be played from school age to old age, making it one of the greatest lifetime fitness sports available. . . . Because disc golf is so easy to learn, no one is excluded. Players merely match their pace to their capabilities, and proceed from there. The Professional Disc Golf Association, with a member base of 40,000+, is the governing body for the sport and sanctions competitive events for men and women of every skill level from novice to professional (PDGA, n.d.).

While this sport is obviously not for everyone, especially those looking for activities that require more physical fitness or team oriented play, it is an endeavor in which anyone can participate.

Tchoukball

To provide another example of a niche sport with inclusivity as a priority, one can look at a sport called Tchoukball. Designed by Dr. Hermann Brandt in the 1970s, he stated the main goal of his game was to yield unity, “The objective of all physical activities is not to make champions, but make a contribution to building a harmonious society” (Tchoukball U.S.A., n.d.). This philosophy is expanded by the Federation Internationale De Tchoukball (FITB) within its charter:

Tchoukball excludes any striving for prestige, whether individually or as a team; rather it is a sport in which players pursue excellence through personal training and collective effort. Tchoukball is open to players of all degrees of ability (natural or acquired) and skill. Inevitably one will encounter players of every possible ability/skill level during play. Every player must adapt his own play and attitude (technical or tactical) to the circumstances of the moment because each player - teammate or opposing player - is due proper respect and consideration. (FITB, n.d.).

Eberly, Yohn, and Girardin (2005) summarize Tchoukball as a game which targets teamwork and inclusion. Eberly et al. (2005) continue to note the lack of player-to-player defense along with rules forbidding blocking, interceptions, and interference which enhances respect and deemphasizes violence and state “players have a feeling of contributing to the team effort and that they played an important role in the game . . . all players are needed to play and participate” (p. 25).

Kickball

To give an example of a sport where shifts in philosophy can occur, I will reference the current climate of kickball in the U.S. Commonly stereotyped as a recreational sport enjoyed by children around the country, kickball is likely perceived as an activity with minimal focus on factors such as winning and elite competition. One organizing body of the sport, the World Adult Kickball Association (WAKA), notes in its mission statement:

Founded by a group of friends in Washington, D.C. in 1998, WAKA was designed to provide and promote the joy of kickball to those young at heart. . . . WAKA continually works to maintain and enhance the player experience, through rules updates and enhancements in both the athletic and social aspects to support the all-important interaction among players both on and off the field. The organization continues to invest in its ideas, employees, and players (WAKA, n.d.)

In recent years, the sport has begun to shift to levels of high competition and national recognition. Another governing body, Kickball365 promotes the sport in a different manner, "[We are] *not* your daddy's country club. We are the *home* for kickball competition in America. Kickball365 produces The Circuit, the only national, professional tour of top-flight, competitive kickball tournaments" (Kickball365, n.d.). While kickball obviously has not reached levels of competition to the degree of other traditional sports, and still often serves as a recreational game for people around the country, it is noted that the sport has begun to attract extrinsically motivated athletes

through its popularity. Thus, a sport that might initially have been perceived as structured for reasons such as inclusivity and fun, has been altered by other stakeholders in the field.

While dozens of additional examples could be included in this section, i9 Sports, disc golf, tchoukball, and kickball serve as illustrations of innovative and alternative sporting endeavors that aim to create environments of inclusivity which may appeal to those who have spurned more traditional models. It should be recognized that sport is not a one size fits all model, thus in an effort to fulfill a wide range of motivations and desires to take part in physical activity there needs to be a wide variety of options and supportive leadership to execute these unique sporting initiatives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this appendix was to provide a brief summary and overview of motivation to play sport, the history of sport participation and its evolution, factors enabling or discouraging participation, and alternative sport examples targeting participation. In addition, this section illustrates an alternative sport's ability to yield an inclusive and welcoming, yet competitive, environment for athletes. It also recognizes the necessity of organizational leadership and stakeholders to endorse and comply with the vision and mission. Finally, this appendix acknowledges the importance of innovation and evolution in sport, and how alternative sports can target individuals who normally might shun traditional avenues (Coakley, 2001; Wankel & Berger, 1990).

APPENDIX B

Participant Survey

1. What is your gender?
 - a) Male
 - b) Female

2. What is your age?
 - a) 13-17
 - b) 18-21
 - c) 21-24
 - d) 25+

3. Current level of education?
 - a) In high school
 - b) In college (undergrad)
 - c) In college (graduate student)
 - d) Out of school / Full time worker

4. Before playing quidditch what is the highest level of organized sport you have participated in?
 - a) Never played an organized sport in my life before this
 - b) Youth sports (e.g. little league, town rec. Soccer)
 - c) High School Junior Varsity
 - d) High School Varsity
 - e) College club or intramural
 - f) College Varsity

5. Before joining a quidditch team, when is the last time you participated in an organized sport?
 - a) Playing other sport/s currently
 - b) 1-12 months ago
 - c) 1-2 years ago
 - d) 2-4 years ago
 - e) 4+ years
 - f) Never

6. Which of the following is the biggest reason (if any) you do not participate on a traditional sports team (baseball, basketball, soccer, etc.) instead of a quidditch team?

- a) Lack of fun
- b) Lack of playing time
- c) Lack of success or improvement
- d) Dislike of the coach
- e) Too organized and structured
- f) Not skilled enough to make the team
- g) None of the above

7. Please describe your reasons for joining and participating on a quidditch team (e.g. fun, social, fitness, etc.)

8. Please describe the benefits (if any) since joining a quidditch team (e.g. built teamwork skills, made new friends, gotten in better shape, performance in school, etc.)

9. If a quidditch team was not available for you to join, what is the likelihood that you would be on a different sports team or would be involved with an extracurricular activity besides a sport team? Would you be getting the same amount of physical activity?

10. Have you ever participated on a co-ed sports team before?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. Do you feel that you will participate on a co-ed team in the future? Do you feel that the co-ed component hurts or helps the game?

12. Do you feel your quidditch team is too competitive? Too physical? Or is too much of a time commitment?

12. Any other comments or suggestions on how the team or the sport in general can be improved?

Participant and Volunteer Focus Group Questions

Quidditch Focus Group Questions (players):

- How did you first find out about the sport?
- Talk about how you decided to join the team.
- Have you ever played a organized team sport? If so what's the difference between that experience and this quidditch team?
- Talk about your teammates and the relationships you've built since joining.
- Have you noticed any other benefits or impacts you've received since joining the team?
- Is this the first time you have participated on a co-ed team? How has that experience been both on and off the field?
- Any suggestions you'd have for the sport? Anything that can be improved?

Quidditch Focus Group Questions (volunteers):

- How did you hear about the sport of quidditch?
- How did you become involved with the IQA
- What has motivated you to remain involved with the organization
- What are your thoughts on the mission of the sport? Do you believe the IQA is successful in upholding the mission?
- Do you feel the players are successful in upholding the mission?
- Do you feel the sport is not competitive enough? Too competitive?
- Is there anything you would want to change about the organization or the sport in general?
- How long do you see yourself remaining involved?

IQA Permission Letter



Saturday, July 23

Adam Cohen
Doctoral Student
Department of Health & Kinesiology
Division of Sport Management
Texas A&M University
4243 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-4243

Dear Adam Cohen:

I have reviewed your request regarding your study and am pleased to support your research project entitled "Benefits of Muggle Quidditch". Your request to International Quidditch Association as an organization to research is granted. The research will include collecting surveys from participants, conducting focus groups with teams, interviews with members of the governing body and observations of the sport itself.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Alex Benepe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alex Benepe
CEO & President
commissioner@internationalquidditch.org
P: 917-817-1534