Families of Elite Athletes

The goal of this study was to describe patterns in the dynamics of families of talented junior athletes throughout their development. Parents, athletes, and siblings from four families were interviewed. The interviews focused on how family members adapted to the motivation, effort, and resource demands that often constrain the development of talent in sport. The results permitted the identification of three phases of sport participation from early childhood to late adolescence: the sampling years, the specializing years, and the investment years. Various events and family conditions that might have influenced children’s involvement and achievement in sport are outlined for each stage of sport participation.


A Model of Imagery Use

This article reviews the literature on imagery use by athletes and proposes an applied model for sport. Four key factors are identified as constructs of the conceptual model: (a) the sport situation, (b) the type of imagery used, (c) imagery ability, and (d) outcomes associated with imagery use. Each of these factors is thoroughly reviewed, along with research findings in several areas in the sport imagery literature, to provide an organizational model to guide future research and application. The authors outline various testable hypotheses that stem from this model, and they urge researchers and practitioners to use the model as a guiding framework for designing imagery studies and interventions.


Effects of Not Being Selected

This study examined the experiences of 12 first-year university students who tried out but were not selected for a varsity team. A modified version of Taylor and Ogilvie’s (1994) conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes was used as the theoretical framework for the study. Open-ended interviews were conducted with the athletes 1 week and 4 months after they were released from the team. The qualitative analysis showed that perceptions of the selection process changed over the course of the first 4 months. Initially, reactions were negative, but they became more positive over time. The positive changes included fewer uncertain expectations, fewer feelings of disappointment, more positive feelings toward the selection process, more alternative behaviors, greater involvement in sport at a lower level, fewer regrets, and fewer perceptions of self as a nonathlete.
Findings from this study lend support and add new dimensions to Taylor and Ogilvie’s conceptual model.


**Sport Participation and Eating Disorders**

A total of 591 high school women (mean age = 19 years) participated in a study examining the relationship between personality factors, self-reported eating disorders, type of physical activity, level of sport competition, and hours spent on physical activity each week. All diagnoses were based on DSM-IV criteria for anorexia, bulimia, and unspecified eating disorder. Personality was measured with Karolinska Scales of Personality. The prevalence of eating disorders was highest among physically active nonathletes who were members of health or fitness clubs. However, there was no relationship between the prevalence of eating disorders and level of sport competition or time spent on physical activity. Women with eating disorders scored higher on anxiety, hostility, and detachment than those without eating disorders did, and they also scored lower on socialization.


**European Perspectives on Achievement Motivation**

This special issue of the Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports is devoted to European research on achievement goal orientations. There are nine original articles addressing issues such as the emotional correlates of goal perspectives and perceived competence, the relationship between goal orientations and exercise intentions, and the attributional consequences of different motivational orientations. Intrinsic motivation is also examined in relation to motivational climate. The issue was edited by Lintunen and includes contributions by Biddle, Duda, Ommundsen, and Roberts.


**Sport Favors Boys Over Girls**

This investigation examined children’s moral reasoning maturity and their judgments about gender stratification in sport (i.e., perceived differential distribution of power, prestige, and privilege between the sexes based on gender). Participants averaged 8 years of age and represented the sports of baseball, softball, tee-ball, and soccer. Analyses of data from the Gender Stratification Interview and the Distributive Justice Scale suggested that sport is a context in which gender stratification exists. Specifically, boys \((n = 78)\) were characterized as more advantaged in sport because they were more highly skilled. In addition, gender stratification was viewed as illegitimate by most of the children, especially girls \((n = 82)\) and older
participants. However, the relationship between moral reasoning maturity and legitimacy judgments was not significant. These findings are discussed in terms of peer conformity, growth spurts in reasoning, and scale distinctiveness.


**Baseball and the Game of Life**

The purpose of this study was to assess the salience of sport-role identity among Division I collegiate baseball players (*N* = 159). The players were first divided into groups with high, moderate, or low levels of sport salience on the basis of rankings for the importance of six role identities (peer, kinship, sport, religious, academic, and romantic). Choices between baseball-related activities and nonbaseball activities were then examined as a function of sport salience, and significant differences in choice behavior were found between the high salience group and the other two groups. More specifically, players with a strong sport identity gave higher priority to baseball-related activities than did players with a moderate or weak sport identity when there was a potential conflict of interest. These findings are discussed in relation to the potential for distress when athletes with a strong sport-role identity leave sport.


**Multicultural Gymnastics Motives**

Male and female gymnasts from Australia, Canada, China, India, and Israel (*N* = 701, mean age = 10.6 years) completed the Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ). Factor analysis of the PMQ revealed seven factors: team/affiliation, popularity/energy release, challenge/fun, miscellaneous, skills, achievement, and recognition/excitement. Subsequent analyses revealed significant group differences on all factors, and many of these differences were consistent with more general cultural influences. For example, Indian gymnasts rated team/affiliation motives higher than did gymnasts from all other countries, whereas Canadian gymnasts rated them lower than did all other groups. Similarly, Chinese gymnasts rated challenge/fun motives as less important than gymnasts did in any of the other countries. The findings are discussed in terms of cultural differences and their influence on the motives for sport participation.


**Coping With Anxiety**

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses, Eubank and Collins determined whether the direction of anxiety was a dynamic or stable response to
stress and how it changed over pre- and in-event situations. Twenty-two youth athletes completed the COPE, to determine dispositional coping tendencies, and the CSAI-2, to assess cognitive and somatic anxiety in four situations (low/high stress during training and low/high stress during competition). The CSAI-2 was modified to include a directional scale, which provided a means of classifying individuals as “facilitators” or “debilitators.” Semistructured interviews were also conducted at high-stress competitions with all the participants. Results indicated that facilitators perceived their anxiety responses during competition as positive, whereas debilitators perceived them as negative. In addition, debilitators demonstrated a progressively more negative response as the conditions changed from training to competition. In terms of coping tendencies, facilitators tended to use both problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies, even when experiencing difficulties during performance. Debilitators, on the other hand, did not favor any particular type of coping strategy.


### Injury and Stress Perception

Previous studies of athletic injury and psychosocial factors have found that personality, coping skills, high life-event stress, and social support contribute to increased injury risk. The aim of this study was to determine whether life events, social support, reaction times, and perceptual changes were related to athletic injury. Intercollegiate athletes (N = 196) from a variety of sports completed three self-report measures. The Life Events Survey for Collegiate Athletes was used to assess the stress associated with life events, and the Social Support Questionnaire was used to determine satisfaction with social support. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory was used to assess current state anxiety. Injury was defined as the number of injuries that caused the athlete to miss or modify at least one practice session throughout the season. Peripheral- and central-vision tasks were based on the detection of a target point during performance of the Stroop test. Results showed that reaction times lengthened, peripheral vision narrowed, and state anxiety increased for the low-social-support athletes when they were under stress. In addition, negative life events and peripheral narrowing were significantly associated with the number of injuries experienced by this subgroup.


### Exercisers That Stick Together...

The association between task cohesion and one’s self-efficacy for scheduling exercise was examined in a study of 82 older men and women exercisers (mean age = 67.4 years). All participants had been involved in a community exercise program for at least 4 months. During the first week of classes after a holiday break in the exercise program, two types of task cohesion (attractions to the group task and group integration task) were measured using subscales from the Group Environment
Sport Psychologist's Digest

Questionnaire, which had been modified for use in the exercise domain. Scheduling self-efficacy was measured 8 weeks later, and adherence to the exercise program (i.e., percentage of exercise classes attended) was monitored continuously. Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that class attendance did not explain significant variance in scheduling self-efficacy. However, attractions to the group task explained a significant 7% of variance, and group integration task explained an additional 3% of variance in self-efficacy scores. These results suggest that a cohesive exercise group could play an important role in developing scheduling self-efficacy among older exercisers.


Bring in the Reinforcements

This study examined whether different types of sedentary activities can serve as reinforcement for increased physical activity. In a baseline session, 40 sedentary adults were given unlimited access to three sedentary activities and a stationary bicycle. Participants provided enjoyment ratings for each activity and were randomized into one of four conditions: (a) Access to their most preferred sedentary activity was contingent on riding the stationary bike (high reinforcement), (b) access to their moderately preferred sedentary activity was contingent on riding the bike (moderate reinforcement), (c) access to their least preferred sedentary activity was contingent on riding the bike (low reinforcement), or (d) no sedentary activity was contingent on riding the bike (control). The amount of physical activity performed during two subsequent experimental sessions was monitored. Both the high- and moderate-reinforcement groups significantly increased their activity time relative to the baseline session and the low-reinforcement and control groups. Apparently, highly and moderately preferred sedentary activities can reinforce physical activity even when other sedentary activities are freely available. This does not appear to be the case, however, for low-preference activities.


Sport Participation: A Life-Long Habit?

Drawing on data from a large representative sample of Canadian adults (N = 8,560), this study examined whether high school sport participation is related to sport participation in adulthood. Participants were asked whether they regularly participated in sports during the past 12 months and whether they had been involved in organized sports while they were at school. Consistent with the school sport experience hypothesis, analyses indicated that high school and adult sport involvement were positively correlated. Individuals with interschool sport competition experience were more involved as adults than were those with only intraschool sport experience or no school participation. This relationship held even when other social background characteristics were controlled for but was stronger among younger age cohorts and men than it was among older people and women. These results suggest that physical activity during adulthood might be increased by encouraging
sport involvement during high school. The authors also suggest several lines of research that stem from their findings, such as examining whether the type of sport played moderates the effects of high school participation and whether competitive sport experiences outside school have similar effects on adult sport participation.


**Why Do You Enjoy Watching?**

This study identified variables that are influential in attracting individuals to sport events. Participants (N=177) were spectators attending one of two college basketball games. One game was based in a new arena, whereas the other was played in a 42-year-old stadium. Testing took place before the commencement of the events, and questionnaires consisted of demographic items and scales relating to sport and team fandom. An open-ended question also asked participants to list all the reasons they enjoyed attending the basketball games. Highly committed sport fans and highly identified team fans listed more reasons for enjoyment. The most popular reason for spectator enjoyment was the game or competition (49% of participants mentioned this). The social nature of the event and exciting plays were the second and third most frequently listed variables, respectively. Other popular reasons for enjoyment of the sport events included entertainment, the players, talent of the team, atmosphere, supporting the team, filling time, and being a fan. The study also discovered that participants from the two arenas did not differ in their likelihood of listing aspects of the arena as enjoyment variables.


**Verbal Aggression Among Fans**

This study examined the influence of team identification on verbal aggression among sport spectators. Hostile-spectator aggression was defined as violent actions motivated by anger with the goal of harming another person. Instrumental aggression referred to actions intended to harm another person with the goal of achieving a result other than harm. A total of 121 men and 75 women college students completed separate questionnaires before and after an intercollegiate men's basketball game. The pregame questionnaire assessed demographic items and identification levels, whereas the postgame questionnaire asked participants about the types of verbally aggressive conduct that they had engaged in during the competition. Results revealed that highly identified fans reported higher levels of both hostile and instrumental aggression than did less identified fans. Results also suggested that highly identified fans did not prefer one form of aggression over another. Furthermore, aggression directed toward the officials was particularly likely to be hostile in nature, whereas aggression directed toward the opposition was as likely to be hostile as it was to be instrumental.

Spectator Confidence Over Time

This study examined the influence of three factors on spectators’ confidence in their team: the time until the competition begins, the difficulty of the competition, and identification levels with the team. Participants (31 college students) were assessed for identification with, and confidence in, their college basketball team 3 days before attending one of the team’s games against a strong conference rival (7–1 conference record). Further tests for confidence were undertaken 12 hr before, 3 hr before, immediately prior to, and at half-time of the contest. Similar procedures were undertaken with the same participants for a second game between the college team and a team experiencing a losing season (3–8 conference record). Results indicated that spectator confidence changed significantly as the competition approached, but only for the more difficult contest. Furthermore, highly identified and less identified fans exhibited different patterns of confidence as the difficult competition approached. More specifically, the low-identification group showed a significant decrease in confidence well before the contest, whereas the high-identification group did not exhibit a decrease in confidence until the team did not perform well (i.e., at half-time). Very little fluctuation in confidence occurred as the less difficult game approached.