Whose Game are we Playing? A Study of the Effects of Adult Involvement on Children Participating in Organised Team Sports

Simon Walters

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2011

School of Public Health and Psychosocial Studies

Primary Supervisor: Professor Philip Schluter

Table of Contents

viii

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ACEP	American Coaching Effectiveness Program
AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
CET	Coach Effectiveness Training Program
CI	Confidence Interval
GACU	The Greater Auckland Coaching Unit
NSO	National Sporting Organisation
NYSCA	National Youth Sports Coaches Association
NZRU	New Zealand Rugby Union
PACE	Program for Athletic Coaches Education
POISE	Parents' Observation Instrument at Sporting Events
SPARC	Sport and Recreation New Zealand
RSO	Regional Sporting Organisation
RST	Regional Sports Trust
TGfU	Teaching Games for Understanding
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America

List of Publications Arising from Doctoral Thesis

Peer-reviewed Journal Publications

Papers currently under review

Walters, S. R., Schluter, P. J., Thomson, R. W., & Payne, D. (in submission). The nature and target of coaches' comments at children's team sports games. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise.*

(Simon Walters 80%, Philip Schluter 10%, Rex Thomson and Debbie Payne 10%)

Papers published

Walters, S. R., Payne, D., Schluter, P. J., & Thomson, R. W. (2010). It's all about winning, isn't it? Competing discourses in children's sport in New Zealand. *European Journal for Sport and Society, 7*, 105-116.

(Simon Walters 80%, Debbie Payne 10%, Philip Schluter and Rex Thomson 10%)

Peer-reviewed Conference Presentations

Walters, S., Payne, D., Schluter, P. J., & Thomson, R. W. (2009, May). *It's all about winning isn't it? Competing discourses in children's sport in New Zealand.* Paper presented at the 6th European Association of Sociology of Sport Conference, Sports, Bodies and Identities. Rome, Italy.

(Simon Walters 90%, Debbie Payne, Philip Schluter, and Rex Thomson 10%)

Non Peer-reviewed Publications

Oldham, T., & Walters, S. (2010, June). *School of hard knocks: How do you develop mentally tough athletes?* Paper presented at the Backyard Legends Coaching Conference, AUT University, Auckland.

(Tony Oldham 70%, and Simon Walters 30% co-presented and provided supporting data from thesis findings for the presentation)

Walters, S. R., Schluter, P. J., Thomson, R. W., & Payne, D. (2010, June). *The nature and target of coaches' comments at children's team sports.* Poster presented at the Backyard Legends Coaching Conference, AUT University, Auckland.

(Simon Walters 90%, Philip Schluter, Rex Thomson, & Debbie Payne 10%)

Walters, S., Schluter, P., Thomson, R., & Payne, D. (2010, June). *Can we have our ball back please? Children's perspectives on organized team sports.* Poster presented at the Backyard Legends Coaching Conference, AUT University, Auckland.

(Simon Walters 90%, Philip Schluter, Rex Thomson, & Debbie Payne 10%)

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

_____

17 March 2011

Acknowledgements

friend. During the many fraught times I have encountered during this study, you have consistently offered me your full support and kept me sane! I will sorely miss you.

Rex, it has been such a pleasure to get to know you during these last five years. Your enthusiasm is infectious, your stories so entertaining, and your passion about improving the experiences of children participating in sport has consistently reinforced to me the importance of this study. I always come away from our meetings re-energised. I have also very much enjoyed the healthy dose of cynicism you bring to the supervisory team!

Debbie, although you joined us later during this study, your knowledge, friendship and support has been invaluable to me. You have taught me so much and your insight has added so much value and depth to this thesis. The meetings with all three of you have kept me motivated and on track. I could not have had a better supervisory team and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. I hope we can continue to collaborate on future projects together.

To Shelley, you have been my rock. You have created the space for me to complete this work and without you it would simply never have happened. Thank you so much. To dad, thanks for all your support over the years. Without your encouragement I would never have changed careers. For my mum, who sadly passed away many years ago, I don't think she would have quite believed that her son would have finally settled down to do some real study.

This thesis is primarily about children and their experiences in sport. I would like to thank all the children who participated in this study. You all love your sport so much and some of your stories almost moved me to tears. It is my hope that this thesis will play some small part in laying the groundwork for a future that will bring about a shift in attitudes towards children's sports. This thesis is for every kid that has been

yelled at for dropping a ball, being in the wrong position, running the wrong way, or quite simply not being an All Black.

Thesis Abstract

There are clearly identified social, physical, and mental health benefits of physical activity in primary aged children. With an unequivocal link between sport and physical activity, it would appear to be fundamentally important that children are encouraged to participate in sporting activities. Parents and coaches have been acknowledged as key influences in their children's uptake, enjoyment, and ongoing participation in sport. However, concerns have been commonly expressed in the media, both in New Zealand and internationally, about inappropriate sideline behaviour displayed by adults at children's sporting events. In spite of this, few studies have examined the nature and effect of parental or coaching behaviour at children's sporting events. In addition, although young children's views are increasingly becoming seen to be important, relevant and valuable, there is no evidence in the peer-reviewed literature of New Zealand based research that has been undertaken with children in this area.

Using a scientifically robust epidemiological design and observation instrument, a key aim of this research was to benchmark the prevalence of various coaching behaviours at children's (aged 6 to 11 years) events for four major sports (rugby union, touch rugby, soccer, and netball). Utilising a mixed-methods approach, another key aim of this research was to give voice to sporting administrators, parents, children, referees/umpires, and coaches about the effects of parental behaviours at children's sporting fixtures.

The findings presented in this thesis provide prevalence and patterns of verbal coach behaviour from 72 sporting fixtures not previously recorded in New Zealand. In total, 10,697 coach comments were recorded at, on average, 3.71 (95% CI: 3.64, 3.79) comments/minute. The coaching behaviours recorded did not always reflect a nurturing, positive, developmentally-appropriate approach to the coaching of children's team sports. Of the total number of comments recorded, 35.4% were categorised as positive,

21.6% as negative, and 43% as neutral. Significant differences in the distribution of comments were found between sports, with rugby union coaches recording the lowest percentage of positive comments and the highest percentage of negative comments. The percentage of negative comments aimed at umpires and officials was higher in touch rugby and in rugby union than in netball and soccer.

Drawing upon Foucauldian notions of discourse, the discursive analysis employed in this study revealed the dominance of a sport as competition discourse that would appear to serve the needs more of coaches and parents than the needs of children. There is pressure on children, through disciplinary measures, to conform to the normative behaviours associated with a dominant competitive discourse in sport.

The findings of this thesis are vital to promote understanding of the relationships between all the stakeholders in children's sport. The results of this research provide an evidence-base to inform policy and the development of interventions with regions and nationally; evidence which may also be applicable to other developed countries. Until a child-centred approach to coaching is routinely adopted across all sports, the sometimes extremely negative perceptions of children's sport will remain.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Setting the Scene

Foucault's description of a disciplined body [...] could have been written about disciplined athletes in modern sport. The sections on 'Docile Bodies' and 'Correct Training' from *Discipline and Punish*, which itemize the components of modern power as it emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, read like a 'how to' manual for coaches two hundred years later. (Shogan, 1999, p. 9)

The role of sport in children's lives is open to many conflicting interpretations, both positive and negative. The positive impact that sport can have on participants, especially children, has long been acknowledged (Allen & Howe, 1998; Woolger & Power, 1993). Sport is not only a potential source of enjoyment for children, but has been shown to have cognitive, emotional, physical health, and motor-learning benefits (Woolger & Power, 1993). There is an obvious link between participation in sport and physical activity. At a time when concerns about inactivity levels have been expressed in New Zealand (Ministerial Taskforce on Sport Fitness and Leisure, 2001), it would seem to be important that children participate in sporting activities. However, although a focus on increasing the levels of physical activity was a stated national health priority in the Statements of Intent issued under a Labour government in 2005 (Ministry of Health, 2005), and remained a focus between 2006 and 2009 (Ministry of Health, 2006), the equivalent most recent national Statement of Intent under the National government makes little mention of physical activity as a health priority (Ministry of Health, 2010b).

This is perhaps surprising, as there has been for some time increasing evidence supporting the wide ranging benefits of physical activity for people of all ages (Kolt et al., 2005). The ground-breaking 1996 United States (US) Surgeon General's report (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996), the more recent United Kingdom (UK) Chief Medical Officer's report on physical activity and health (Department of Health, 2004), and the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2010) all highlighted a comprehensive range of benefits associated with physical activity. The benefits identified related to positive physical health gains, social development, the development of motor skills, and benefits in the emotional and cognitive domains (Kolt et al., 2005). In particular, the childhood years are highlighted as a crucial time when ongoing participation in physical activity can be nurtured and maintained.

The nurturing of a child's proclivity to participate in physical activities normally falls into the domain of adults. Parents have been identified as key influences in children's enjoyment of sport (Jowett & Cramer, 2010; Shields, LaVoi, Bredemeier, & Power, 2007; Woolger & Power, 1993). They play a pivotal role in the development of children's sport attitudes and behaviours (Weiss, 2000). There are many positive aspects of parental involvement on a child's experiences in sport. For example, parents are a key determinant for a child's commitment to physical activity and a source promoting enjoyment, physical competence and feelings of self-worth (Hamstra, Cherubini, & Swanik, 2002). Kolt et al. (2005) also noted that parental influences are extremely important determinants of physical activity behaviours of young children but highlighted the increasing concern over the apparent decreasing physical activity levels of both New Zealand children and adults.

In addition to parents, coaches also play a significant role in children's enjoyment of organised sports (Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007). Coaches are ideally

placed to foster positive athletic environments that not only promote skill development but also nurture the psychosocial development and overall well-being of the athletes in their care (Smoll & Smith, 2006). Coaches have been identified as important motivational influences for young children, and positive coach behaviours have been shown to enhance a child's enjoyment of sport (Allen & Hodge, 2006; Keegan, Harwood, Spray, & Lavallee, 2009; Smith et al., 2007).

However, some negative perceptions exist about the sometimes excessive role played by both parents and coaches. One extremely negative perception views children's sport as a system that promotes cheating, aggression and encourages abusive behaviour by parents and coaches (Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005), although it might be argued that this negative perspective of sport is largely derived from anecdotal and media stories that focus on what are extreme but infrequent incidents. Concerns are commonly expressed in the media about excessive parental and parent-coach touchline behaviour; see, for example, Rattue (2006) and Harris (2006) in New Zealand, and Harrison (2007) in the UK.

There is also evidence of concern from the academic literature about the nature and degree of parental and coach involvement in organised sport for children (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; Engh, 1999; Kidman, McKenzie, & McKenzie, 1999; Smoll & Cumming, 2006). Reports of excessive parental behaviour at children's sporting events are not uncommon (Kidman et al., 1999; Omli & La Voi, 2009). To minimise these negative elements, it has been claimed that parents and coaches need a better understanding of the impact of their own behaviour, to be better equipped to moderate their actions and comments, to establish and maintain appropriate levels of involvement, and to ensure that they foster positive, enjoyable sporting experiences for

their children (Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, & Pennisi, 2006; Kidman et al., 1999; Stein, Raedeke, & Glenn, 1999).

For many young people it would appear that competitive, regulated, organised sport is increasingly holding less appeal; as evidenced by decreasing numbers of young people participating in organised sports (Petchlikoff, 1995; Thomson, 2000). There have been calls for organised sports to become more child centred; to move away from adult-oriented goals to child-oriented goals (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; Kraus, 2006). Evidence exists that demonstrates that the highly structured, organisational nature of youth sports can be changed to maximise fun (Siegenthaler & Gonzalez, 1997).

The New Zealand Context

Governance

Since the 1950s in New Zealand, as in many other developed countries, children's leisure time has been increasingly spent in highly organised, regulated, adult-controlled sport (Coakley, Hallinan, Jackson, & Mewett, 2009). Coakley et al. noted that over this period parents have steadily and willingly devoted more and more of their time and resources towards supporting their children's participation in sport. However, by the 1980s, evidence began to emerge that a significant proportion of New Zealand children were beginning to reject and withdraw from highly structured organised sports (Gerrard, 1993; Thomson, 2000).

At a time when there were perceived concerns about both the physical inactivity levels of New Zealand children, and attrition rates from organised sports, the New Zealand Government established and delegated the responsibility for sport, fitness and recreation to the Hillary Commission (Thomson, 2000). In 1988, one of the first actions of the newly formed Hillary Commission was to initiate the KiwiSport programme; a

programme that introduced children to modified versions of sports with a primary focus on fun and skill development, as opposed to competition (Gerrard, 1993). Based on an Australian children's sports programme, Aussie Sport, KiwiSport targeted children under 12 years of age (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998). KiwiSport was in effect divided into three parts: participation, development, and delivery. The initiative for participation focused on fun, provided fully inclusive modified versions of sports, and incorporated the KiwiDex programme, which was designed to promote enjoyable daily exercise and activity (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 2000). The focus on development related to the provision of training for leaders (including parents), and ongoing evaluation of programme delivery. The third primary focus of KiwiSport, the actual delivery of the programmes, relied on the Hillary Commission's work in conjunction with the National Sporting Organisations (NSOs), Regional Sporting Organisations (RSOs), Regional Sports Trusts (RSTs), schools, and clubs. The programme was extensively promoted and was, as noted in an article in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, "widely applauded" (Gerrard, 1993, p. 15).

In the decade since its inception, 29 sports had been introduced to the KiwiSport programme, $12 million New Zealand dollars had been invested, 2 million children had participated, and over 120,000 teachers and sport leaders had received training in KiwiSport (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998). The programme had grown "to such an extent that almost every young New Zealander has now been exposed to these modified activities" (Thomson, 2000, p. 37). In spite of the KiwiSport initiative, many young people in New Zealand were still withdrawing from organised sport, and instead participating in more unstructured leisure activities, such as skateboarding (Gerrard, 1993; Thomson, 2000). The initially much lauded KiwiSport initiatives appear to have gradually been restricted.

In 2000, a Ministerial Taskforce on Sport, Fitness and Leisure was formed and commissioned to examine New Zealand sport. One outcome from the taskforce was the replacement of the Hillary Commission in 2003 with Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) (Cassidy & Kidman, 2010; Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010f). On their web site SPARC outline their mission as being to create a sporting environment where "more New Zealanders participate, support and win" and their priorities are to "young New Zealanders, grassroots sports, recreation, organisational capability of sport and recreation organisations, high performance sport" (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010b). The sport and recreation organisations that SPARC refer to include 17 RST partners, 90 recognised NSOs, with each of these NSOs being made up of RSOs. KiwiSport coordinators operated out of each RST (Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1998), but each RST is an independent charitable trust with its own Board of Trustees and as a consequence has its own needs and priorities. Sportnet NZ is an umbrella organisation that was set up for the 17 RSTs, and was designed to improve national relationships and enhance communication (Sportnet NZ, 2010), but as noted in the 2008 Sport Southland (one of the RSTs) Annual Report:

> While all Regional Sports Trusts are similar in terms of the broad outcomes we are striving to achieve – there are also huge differences in the way we operate. It is important that whilst we align with national initiatives and work collaboratively within and for our regional sports trust network, we also ensure that we advocate for and cater to our regional needs and priorities. (Sport Southland, 2008, p. 3)

Within the RSOs are the clubs. For children in the primary school age group (5 to 11 years) the delivery of organised sport is primarily the responsibility of the RSOs and the clubs. The organisation of sport in primary schools is hugely variable, and when

schools do have organised teams they enter them predominantly in local and regional competitions organised by the RSOs.

The team sports that are the focus of this thesis are rugby union, netball, soccer, and touch rugby. These team sports were selected because of their high participation rates amongst New Zealand children for both females (netball, soccer, touch rugby) and males (rugby union, touch rugby, soccer) (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2005). The differing approaches adopted by sporting organisations are exemplified by the actions of the four RSOs responsible for each of these team sports within the region where this thesis was located. A brief description of each of these approaches is presented below.

For rugby union, children aged up to 12 years play junior "non-competitive" rugby. While the clubs and teams may keep score and record tries, the RSO does not collect and collate this information. In the beginning grades for children 5 and 6 years of age, a modified form of rugby is played – rippa rugby – which involves no tackling. For player safety and developmental reasons, teams throughout the junior years are graded according to both age and weight. For example the J6 grade is made up of children aged 6 years of any weight, children aged 7 years under the weight of 30 kilograms (kg), and children aged 8 years under the weight of 25 kg. The J5 grade is made up of children aged 7 to 9 years again with different weight restrictions, and so on. All new coaches have to attend a two hour coaching course (a requirement set down by the NSO the New Zealand Rugby Union) administered by the RSO. Although weekly junior rugby is non-competitive, at the end of the season, teams of children aged from 8 years upwards have representative competitions, where the best players in each club are selected to represent their club. The structure of junior rugby appears to differ little between the RSOs throughout New Zealand.

The netball RSO organise competitions for primary schools and clubs for children aged 6 years and upwards. Netball for children aged 6 and 7 years is labelled as "Fun Ferns". Although there is a stated emphasis on fun and development for netballers in this age bracket, matches are competitive, results are recorded, and league tables are maintained. Coaches of children aged 6 and 7 years are encouraged to attend introductory coaching courses, and these courses are compulsory for coaches of teams of children aged 8 years and over. Other netball RSOs in New Zealand have their own structure, however, and compulsory coaching courses are at the discretion of each RSO.

For soccer, the RSO coordinates junior soccer competitions for teams of children representing school and clubs from the age of 5 years upwards. Although introductory coaching courses are offered, they are not compulsory. There is a competitive structure to junior football and for children from the age of 6 years, points are awarded for game results and league standings are maintained and published on the website.

In touch rugby, the structure is competitive throughout all the junior ages, from the age of 5 years upwards. Game results are recorded and prizes are awarded at the end of the season to grade winners. Each RSO operates along broadly similar lines, with coaching courses being voluntary. In New Zealand, many organisations which are not affiliated to the NSO, Touch New Zealand, can also run competitions. For example, rugby union clubs often run summer touch rugby competitions as fund raising sources of revenue.

As can be seen, the delivery of primary school-aged children's sport varies significantly even within one region. The age that a competition structure is introduced varies between sports. In addition, the delivery and structure of the same sport can differ

from club to club, and from region to region. Some sports have compulsory coaching programmes, others do not.

A number of countries (for example in Canada, Australia, and the UK) have implemented nationwide coach education programmes (Cassidy & Kidman, 2010). Cassidy and Kidman noted that in recent years, there would appear to have been a policy shift in New Zealand moving away from the creation of standardised, accredited coach education programmes, to a focus on ongoing professional development for coaches informed by an athlete-centred coaching approach. SPARC (2004, 2006, 2007) has produced a number of policy documents which are designed to influence coach education and the delivery of coach training through the RSTs and RSOs (examples include, but are not restricted to, *The New Zealand Coaching Strategy*, *The Coach Development Framework*, and *It's all about children and young people: Implementing a child/young person centred philosophy in sport and recreation*). The responsibility of training coaches is predominantly left to the RSOs and clubs and they are encouraged to develop programmes that are informed by an athlete-centred coaching philosophy.

The 17 RSTs are responsible for the promotion of sport in their region, and work to provide co-ordination between the different sporting codes. Within Auckland the promotion of a co-ordinated coaching policy is the responsibility of a further organisation, The Greater Auckland Coaching Unit (GACU). With a vast range of organisations involved in the administration of sport, there would appear to be difficulties in enabling a cohesive nationwide delivery of children's sport. The once lauded KiwiSport initiative is one example of a policy that appeared to fade away. The term 'Kiwisport' is now applied to a new and different national initiative launched by the New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, in 2009, which earmarked $82 million over four years for investment in sport for school aged children. Of this total, $45 million is

allocated to schools with the remainder allocated to community sport initiatives involving clubs, school and community groups. (North Harbour Sport, 2010)

Research

The experiences of children playing organised sport in New Zealand, particularly for children in the junior age group (5 to 12 years), has also attracted scant attention from academics. There is little evidence in the peer reviewed academic literature of sporting studies that have focused on this age group. Concerns have been regularly expressed in the media about adult touchline behaviour and studies have been conducted at undergraduate level at Waikato University, Massey University and also at AUT University. However, at this point there is a paucity of published research material.

A number of New Zealand researchers have expressed concerns about young children's sporting experiences. As early as the 1970s, Williams (1974) noted that at the 1974 General Assembly of the International Federation of Sports Medicine in Melbourne, there was "considerable concern about the strong emphasis that has come to be placed upon highly structured sports competition for young children" (p. 17). Thomson (1993, 1996a, 1996b, 2000), also, has consistently expressed concerns about the potentially damaging effects of the increasingly competitive nature of organised sport for pre-adolescents. Thomson (1993) noted that he had drawn attention to some of the potential issues associated with children's sport as early as 1980. The New Zealand government through Department of Education guidelines and through the work of the Hillary Commission had attempted to address some of these issues, but Thomson noted that he was still expressing the same concerns in the mid 1990s.

More than ten years later, Pope (2006) was voicing similar misgivings over the adult-controlled versions of sport that existed which had a tendency to diminish, rather

than enhance, children's motivations to continue participating in organised sport. Grant and Pope (2004) conducted a project commissioned by Sport Waikato to examine sideline behaviour in children's sport. The study focused on sideline behaviour at children's (aged 5 to 18 years) organised sporting events in the Waikato region of New Zealand and found that the sporting experience of the majority of children was positive, although not free from undesirable sideline behaviour. The impact of the negative comments recorded did, however, appear to impact not only on children's enjoyment of sport but their desire to continue participating. Although the study received considerable media coverage at the time, and while Pope gave a number of conference presentations related to the topic of sideline behaviour (Pope, 2005; Pope & Grant, 2001), there does not appear to be any evidence of the findings of this research in the peer reviewed academic literature.

Kidman and colleagues conducted similar observational research of sideline behaviour in the Dunedin area of New Zealand, and subsequently presented and published the research findings (Kidman & McKenzie, 1996; Kidman et al., 1999). Kidman et al. found that the relatively high percentage of negative comments made by parents gave cause for ongoing concern. Subsequently, Kidman has been a consistent advocate for coaching practices that are more child-centred, focus on the enjoyment of the child, the enhancement of independent decision-making processes, and the long term development of skill (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). However, there is no evidence that New Zealand researchers have continued to build upon the work conducted by both Kidman and Pope. With evidence that (i) an increased competitive framework, and (ii) negative adult behaviour experiences are important drivers (amongst others) which may contribute to the decline in participation rates in sport (Kidman et al., 1999; Thomson, 2000), there would appear to be a clear need for further New Zealand specific research in this area.

Purpose and Significance

In spite of the apparent concerns expressed in New Zealand through the media, there is a paucity of published empirical studies examining adult influences on children's participation in organised sport. Although participation rates in organised sport are difficult to establish, it would appear that most children engage in some sport during their primary school years. Although national surveys have been conducted related to adult physical activity rates, the most recent information relating to children's participation comes from a survey conducted by the Hillary Commission in 1997 (Statistics New Zealand, 1997). The results from the survey indicated that participation rates for primary school aged children in sport and active leisure were as high as 93%. It may seem surprising that with a significant number of young children participating in organised sport that the experiences of this sector of the population have been largely ignored by successive governments, sporting agencies, and academics. What focus there has been, has tended to be on the experiences of elite athletes, and the voices of children do not appear to be considered worthy of interest.

As a lifelong participant in sport as both an athlete and a coach, I was concerned over what I perceived to be the seemingly regular occurrences of excessive aggressive adult behaviour I witnessed at children's sporting events, and the comments reported in the various forms of the media. Although I am a lecturer involved in the field of sport and recreation, a coach in a range of sports, and a parent, I felt helpless to affect change. This sense of helplessness, a strong feeling that organised sport should primarily be a source of fun and enjoyment for young children, and the evident lack of empirical studies in this area were the primary driving forces for this thesis.

The first purpose of this thesis was to address the apparent gap in literature and establish a benchmark for the nature and frequency of adult behaviours at children's

organised sporting events. In attempting to bridge this gap, it is hoped that a quality evidence-base will emerge to inform appropriate interventions and policy making decisions that will enhance children's sporting experiences. The second purpose was to explore the impact of these identified behaviours on key stakeholders involved in children's sport, and in particular to examine how these behaviours affected children's enjoyment of sport. By focusing on this issue, it was hoped this thesis could play some small part in affecting change.

This thesis focuses on adult behaviours at children's (ages 6 to 11 years) organised sporting events. As stated above, the positive and negative influences of both parental and coach behaviour on children in this age group are of vital importance. Studies on adult athletes have indicated that the childhood years have been identified as a time when parental influences are most significant and it has been suggested that parental behaviour can hinder child enjoyment and may inhibit a child's desire to participate in sport altogether (Woolger & Power, 1993). If, as Thomson (2000) has suggested, New Zealand children are withdrawing from organised sport as they move into adolescence, it would seem to be fundamentally important that the experiences of primary school-aged children become a priority.

Before going further, it is important to acknowledge the unique cultural make-up of New Zealand society, and the special place that Māori, as the indigenous people of New Zealand, hold as tāngata whenua (people of the land). The Pasifika community is also especially significant in New Zealand, and plays a major role particularly in the area of sport. The potential differences between Māori, Pasifika, and Pākehā groups and the perceptions of children from each of these groups were potentially an area of significant interest for study. A further area of potential interest was the consideration of gender influences on adult behaviour. Pringle (2001) has identified a dominant

discourse of manliness in relation to sport in New Zealand, specifically in relation to rugby union, which has traditionally been regarded as a sport of national and cultural significance. However, within the constraints of a doctoral study it was important to keep the research within manageable constraints. Little is known as yet about adult behaviour in general at children's sporting events in New Zealand. At the onset of this study, it was decided that more research into this behaviour in the general population is needed before comparative studies of ethnicity or gender are initiated.

Calls have been made for further New Zealand specific research into adult behaviour at children's sporting events (Kidman et al., 1999). Concerns have also been expressed about abuse targeting both children and sports officials in New Zealand (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2003). This project is designed to directly answer these calls and address these concerns.

Aims and Objectives

There were a number of overall aims that were associated with this thesis. Due to the anecdotal nature of much of the evidence to date relating to adult behaviour at children's sporting events in New Zealand, it was important to provide empirical evidence to provide a benchmark for these behaviours. While acknowledging that adult presence at children's games is not solely confined to coaches and parents, this thesis specifically focuses on the behaviours of these two groups as they have long been identified as the most significant influences on young children's enjoyment of sport (Gould, 1987/2007; Woolger & Power, 1993). It was also important to explore the impact of the identified behaviours on the key stakeholders associated with children's sport.

Aims

The aims of this thesis are to:

- identify the nature of adult behaviour at children's sporting events;

- establish the prevalence of these behaviours at children's sporting events;

- examine the effect of adult behaviours on the key stakeholders involved in children's sport; and

- explore the impact of adult behaviours on children's enjoyment of sport.

Objectives

The key objectives of this research are to employ rigorous, robust contemporary scientific methods and epidemiological principles to:

- provide important yet hitherto unknown benchmark figures on the type and prevalence of various coach behaviours;

- examine the influence of potential predictive variables on the positive and negative comments made by coaches; particularly sport, athlete age, adult gender, and game result;

- provide empirical data on the impact these behaviours have on the key stakeholders;

- heighten awareness of the impact of parental and coach behaviour on the key stakeholders involved in children's sport;

- disseminate findings not only to academic audiences, but also to individuals and organisations involved with the administration of children's sport in New Zealand; and

- promote discussion and ultimately inform appropriate intervention and policy decisions.

Thesis Outline

Beyond this introduction, this thesis is structured into ten chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant academic literature. The review examines literature related to

studies of young children's (aged 6 to 11 years) experiences of organised team sports, with a specific focus on the influences of adult behaviour.

Chapter 3 begins with a discussion around the theoretical perspectives that informed the approach adopted in this thesis. The rationale for adopting a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach for the qualitative components of this thesis is explained. The chapter then accounts for the rationale, purpose, and design of the mixed methods approach adopted. This chapter concludes with a discussion relating to the considerable ethical considerations that arose from this thesis.

Chapters 4 to 8 provide detail of the five sub-studies that were conducted within this thesis: Chapter 4 is a Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis of a focus group interview conducted with sport administrators; Chapter 5 is a quantitative cross-sectional observational study of coaches at children's sports matches; the findings of a survey administered to children and their parents are discussed in Chapter 6; Chapter 7 again draws upon Foucauldian notions of discourse to examine eight focus group interviews conducted with primary school-aged children; and the final sub-study chapter, Chapter 8, relates to the administration of an electronic web-based survey to coaches and referees.

Chapter 9 is the overall discussion chapter, where the findings and implications of all five sub-studies are brought together. The framework adopted in this discussion chapter is built around the aims of this thesis.

The conclusion chapter, Chapter 10, brings the thesis to a close, and considers the implications of this research for the future direction of children's sport in New Zealand.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature pertinent to the influences of adult involvement in children's sport. A number of studies have examined adult influences in sport across a range of ages and from a broad range of perspectives. Examples include: relationship with physical activity (Jago, Fox, Page, Brockman, & Thompson, 2010); barriers to participation in sport (Hardy, Kelly, Chapman, King, & Farrell, 2010); socio-economic status of families (Dollman & Lewis, 2010); children with disabilities (Roth & Rimmerman, 2009); athlete burnout (Dubuc, Schinke, Eys, Battochio, & Zaichkowsky, 2010); and benefits to physical health (Moola, Faulkner, Kirsh, & Kilburn, 2008). However, the specific focus of this thesis is on the sideline behaviour of adult parents and coaches, and the affects of these behaviours on children's participation in sport. This review necessarily narrows its focus, and will concentrate on the literature directly relating to parental and coaching behaviours that impact on children's (aged 6 to 11 years) sporting experiences.

Search Methods

Computer searches were conducted of the peer reviewed literature in the English language that focused on adult influences on children (aged 6 to 11 years) participating in organised sport. The following databases were searched: Academic Search Premier, Annual Reviews, Australia/New Zealand Reference Centre, Australian Public Affairs Full Text, Cochrane Library, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Communication Abstracts, ERIC, General OneFile, Hospitality and Tourism Index, Humanities and International Index, Index New Zealand, JSTOR, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts, MEDLINE, MLA Bibliography, National Library of

New Zealand Catalogue, NetLibrary, Periodicals Archive Online, Project MUSE – Standard Collection (2006), ProQuest Central (Legacy Platform), Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycINFO, Scopus, Social Sciences Citation Index, Social Services Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, SPORTDiscus with Full Text, and Web of Science. Collections of theses were also searched on Australasian Digital Theses, Proquest Dissertations and Theses, and ScholarlyCommons@AUT. Manual searches were also conducted on the AUT University Library catalogue search engine.

To ensure literature relevant to this thesis was not overlooked, Google Scholar was also utilised as a search tool. The standard Google search engine was also used to locate relevant New Zealand specific material. Combinations of keywords utilised during the searches were: sport, child, parent, coach, Foucault, POISE, covert observation, rugby, netball, touch rugby, soccer, football, referee, umpire, discourse analysis, figurational, process sociology, discipline, punish, sideline behavio(u)r, touchline parent, New Zealand.

Children's Enjoyment of Sport

Concerns have been expressed about children's organised sport experiences for some considerable time. Originally published in 1975, the book *Every Kid Can Win* was motivated by the authors' concerns about the damage caused by win-at-all-costs behaviours exhibited by teachers, parents, and coaches (Orlick & Botterill, 1975). Orlick and Botterill provided an overview of the predominantly qualitative research they had conducted with children that highlighted the vital importance of children's early sporting experiences. Interviews with children showed that children played sport primarily for fun and for the action. The concept of 'fun' and 'enjoyment' for children can mean different things. What consistently emerged from the interviews conducted by Orlick and Botterill, was that sport was perceived to be fun and enjoyable when: there

was less emphasis on winning; that goals set for them were realistic and attainable; and that activities were conducted in a supportive environment. As sport became more serious, these children clearly indicated that they did not like being yelled at, getting little game-time, or feeling as though they were failures. The authors also cited evidence that showed that children, as they grew older, were already withdrawing from a range of organised sports. For example, in 1973, there were 600,000 players registered with the Canadian hockey association, with 53% of these being aged under 12 years, 35% aged from 12 to 15 years, and only 11% over the age of 15 years. There was also evidence that children were beginning to withdraw from sport aged as young as 7 years. Orlick and Botterill concluded with a call for adults involved in the administration of organised sport to put the fun back into children's sport which could be achieved with less of a focus on competition and winning.

Similar concerns were being expressed by Vaz (1974) and Devereux (1976), who noted that the seriousness of adult controlled sport diminished children's sense of fun and the potential for rewarding learning experiences. Vaz's (1974) study of minor league hockey players (ages 7 to over-17 years) in Canada, suggested that the value of winning and success was an institutionalised aspect of children's sport at all levels. Devereux (1976) similarly found that Little League baseball in the US focused almost exclusively on winning, with well intentioned volunteer coaches seemingly oblivious to the damage that this focus could have on children themselves, especially on those children who "warmed the bench all afternoon" (p. 47). One obvious repercussion of this focus on winning is that those children not exposed to regular game time would eventually withdraw from organised sport.

Concern over attrition rates in children's sport has been ongoing for researchers, and a number of studies have focused on children's attrition rates and reasons for

withdrawing from sport. However, conflicting evidence has emerged (Gould, 1987/2007; Weiss & Amorose, 2008) and many of these studies have focused on the older teenage age group. The findings of the early studies conducted by Orlick indicated that children under the age of 10 years were withdrawing from sport due to feelings of a lack of success, being exposed to little game time, and experiencing a fear of failure and stress due primarily to an over-competitive sporting environment which is created by coaches and parents (Orlick, 1973, 1974). However, children appear to have multiple reasons for either participating or deciding not to participate in organised sports (Biddle, 1999). Gould (1987/2007) noted that other larger scale studies (for example Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978) have suggested that children may temporarily withdraw from sport, engage with other sports, or withdraw for reasons that differ from the more negative ones referred to by Orlick. Gould (1987/2007) concluded from his review of descriptive studies that the available evidence indicated that it was the younger children (pre-adolescent) who were more likely to withdraw from sport for the more negative reasons associated with over-competitive adult behaviours. Although there are a range of reasons as to why children withdraw from sport, studies have consistently shown to varying degrees that a lack of fun, an over-competitive sporting environment, and perceived low levels of competence are regular contributing factors to early withdrawal (Gould, 1987/2007).

Thirty-five years after Orlick and Botterill (1975) highlighted their concerns about the competitive nature of children's sport, similar misgivings are still being expressed. Gracey's (2010, p. 133) article begins with the statement that "children's recreational sport is never just a game" and Gracey draws upon Foucauldian notions of discipline to critique the disciplinary role that adults adopt when shaping children's experiences. Coakley (2001) has suggested that there are two models for sport: the power/performance model and the pleasure/participation model. Gracey (2010)

contends that although children's sport should be about fun, the power/performance model is often dominant resulting in children's sport no longer being primarily a site for enjoyment and play. The negative influences of adults on children participating in sport are recurring themes in the literature, with the significance of the behaviour of both parents and coaches often highlighted (Arthur-Banning, Wells, Baker, & Hegreness, 2009).

Parental Influences

Although parents have been identified as key influences determining the level and quality of involvement of their children in sport (Clark, 2008; Kremer-Sadlik & Kim, 2007), there have been few studies that have monitored and examined the actual effect of parental behaviour at children's sporting events (Kidman et al.1999). Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes and Pennisi (2006) noted that there is a positive to negative continuum on which parents can affect a child's sporting experience and the popular press have tended to highlight the more extreme negative examples of parental behaviour. Although recent international media coverage relating to parental involvement has tended to be sensationalist in nature some quite disturbing stories have been revealed. An Australian publication published details of some of the more extreme cases that have occurred (Ugly Parent Syndrome, 2002). Probably the most extreme relates to a Boston, Massachusetts father, who in 2000 used hockey sticks to beat another father, with the victim subsequently dying from his injuries. Another case related to a father who was banned from attending four of his 8 years old son's football games and forced to undergo counselling sessions after swearing at and slapping a **junior** volunteer umpire at one of his son's games. Similar stories have been reported in New Zealand. Sideline behaviour at netball matches in one area of Wellington resulted in six young umpires ending up in tears in the president of the league's office (Haines, 2002). As a result the president asked schools for help and twenty regular volunteers

subsequently patrolled the courts, monitoring parental behaviour. Other more recent reports include an incident where an Auckland father went onto the field after his son's under-15 years rugby union match and punched his son twice in the face before being restrained by other parents (Ihaka, 2007), and a Dunedin father who was convicted for punching a man for swearing at an under-10 years rugby union match (Otago Daily Times, 2010). It is not only the parental spectator behaviour which is attracting media attention, as highlighted by an Auckland journalist:

> While taking part in an over-30s training in Auckland a few years ago, I watched in horror as the man labelled as the coach of a tiny soccer team berated his charges to the point that you wondered why any of those kids would ever turn up again (Rattue, 2006, p. C15).

There would appear to be increasing media concern over what is deemed to be inappropriate and excessive parental touchline behaviour in many countries, including the US, Australia, the UK, and New Zealand. However, there are few studies which have measured the extent and prevalence of this behaviour.

Early Review of Parental Influences

Woolger and Power (1993) conducted a review of literature that discussed the role of parents in socialising and developing children's attitudes towards organised sport. They discovered a dearth of literature related to parental influences in the sporting environment. The studies they did locate usually conformed to one of two approaches. First, a number of studies drew upon retrospective accounts from adult or college-age athletes about their childhood experiences in sport (e.g., Greendorfer, 1977; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1991; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1999). Second, primary or secondary school aged children provided reports about their parents' parenting practices (e.g., Greendorfer & Lewko, 1978; McElroy, 1982; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984). Woolger

and Power (1993) acknowledged the potential unreliability of retrospective accounts and noted that desirable prospective studies were at that time apparently nonexistent.

Despite the limitations that existed, Woolger and Power (1993) concluded that the sports literature they did review affirmed the significance of parental influences on children's sporting experiences. The paucity of literature, however, led Woolger and Power to draw parallels with the significance of parenting practices on academic achievement, and they drew upon literature in this field to create a framework to guide future research in sport socialisation. Woolger and Power highlighted the potential significance of five aspects of parenting to the sport socialisation process. These were: acceptance - related to the importance of warmth, and unconditional love to children's self-esteem; modelling - where parenting behaviours model the desired behaviours in the child; performance expectation - with medium levels of parental expectation being associated with children's enjoyment and high or low expectations associated with low levels of enjoyment; rewards and punishment – as a motivator for performance; and directiveness – where parents actively instruct their children focusing on areas for improvement. Woolger and Power believed this framework for future research, focusing on these five specific parenting practices, would prove a stronger basis to better understand parental influences in children's sport. Although Woolger and Power provide an interesting overview of research on the significance of parents' behaviour on children's experiences of sport, there is a focus on achievement and excellence as much as, if not more than, enjoyment.

Elite Sport

A number of studies have supported the theory that parental support plays a significant role in a child's ongoing participation and performance in higher level sport. A study of the four families of three elite junior rowers and an elite junior tennis player

(aged 18 years) examined the retrospective accounts of family members in relation to parenting practices (Côté, 1999). Côté divided the development stages of these athletes into the sampling years (ages 6 to 13 years), the specialising years (ages 13 to 15 years), and the investment years (ages 15 and over). Côté found that the families of these elite athletes were predominantly supportive of their child participating in a range of sports during the sampling years, and put no undue pressure on them as they progressed through the specialising and investment years. A subsequent British study focused on elite young athletes (ages 8 to 17 years) and interviewed athletes and parents to identify how these athletes were encouraged into intensive training programmes (Baxter-Jones & Maffulli, 2003). The study found that these athletes' involvement in elite level sport was initially heavily dependent upon parental involvement, with clubs and coaches playing a significant later role. The authors concluded that many talented children with lesser motivated parents would not participate in sport. A study by Power and Woolger (1994) on competitive swimmers (ages 6 to 17 years) also reported a significant relationship between parental support and child enthusiasm for their sport. More recent studies have confirmed these earlier findings related to the significance of positive parental support in the early sampling years (Lauer, Gould, Roman, & Pierce, 2010; MacNamara, Button, & Collins, 2010).

Evidence relating to the negative aspects of parental behaviour tended to emerge as children moved into their teenage years. Lauer et al. (2010) found that the more controlling negative parental behaviours, such as putting expectations on children, seemed to occur during the specialising years. The complexity of the parent-child relationship was acknowledged by Power and Woolger (1994), who noted that the balance between parental pressure and parental support was a difficult one to measure, but noted that the setting of unrealistic performance goals by parents could have detrimental effects on a child's motivation.

The focus of many of the studies on elite athletes has naturally tended to be on the significance of parental influences on achievement, as opposed to children's enjoyment of sport. However, the consensus across these studies was that parents of successful athletes generally created an enjoyable, positive, supportive, and varied environment during the early years of their child's sporting development. Parents either became more controlling or withdrew completely as their child moved into adolescence.

Although a number of studies with elite athletes have indicated that these athletes appear to benefit from exposure to a range of sports in their early years, there are also supporters of Ericsson's (2003) recommendation for early specialisation in one sport involving up to 10,000 hours of deliberate practice (Helsen, Hodges, Van Winckel, & Starkes, 2001; Helsen, Starkes, & Hodges, 1998). Côté, Horton, MacDonald, and Wilkes (2009) compared the benefits of this early specialisation with the sampling of a range of sports during childhood. Côté et al. noted that not only did studies of elite athletes suggest that exposure to a broad range of sports was beneficial to long term athlete development, but also that this exposure was more enjoyable for children. Early specialisation was intensive, could lead to boredom, and burnout or complete withdrawal from sport. Côté et al. recommended that important lessons could be learnt by both teachers and parents. Children who enjoyed their early experiences in sport were not only exposed to psychosocial benefits, but also early enjoyment of sport has been linked with a child's ongoing participation in sport as they move into adolescence.

Parents as Negative Influences

Although there are many positive parental influences on children participating in sport, unfortunately, children's sporting experiences can also include more negative ones such as perceived stress, lower self-esteem, and amotivation (Woolger & Power,

1993). The impact of the parent on the stress, anxiety, and motivational levels of children playing sport has been examined in a range of studies (Barber, Sukhi, & White, 1999; Conroy, 2001; Hamstra et al., 2002). Conroy (2001) noted that much of the research conducted by sport psychologists had focused on issues relating to performance enhancement. Whilst the enhancement of sporting performance is of understandable interest to sports researchers, Conroy (2001) acknowledged an obvious need to focus on the perspective of the child and advocated the nurturing of a child's holistic development through sport, with potential benefits not only for a child's physical health and emotional well-being, but also for overall social development.

Parents' demands, family structure, and parent-child communications have been identified as key factors in the development of a fear of failure for children (Conroy, 2001). Infants begin life with little fear of failure, but as they progress through childhood, the consequences of failure become apparent (e.g., from forms of punishment such as criticism), and based on their experiences children display varying degrees of a fear of failure (Conroy, Coatsworth, & Kaye, 2007). The stress and anxiety associated with this fear of failure can be potentially extremely damaging to a child's social development (Conroy, 2001). The study by Conroy et al. (2007) found evidence of sport performance anxiety, a fear of failure, and associated feelings of low self-esteem in female athletes as young as eight years of age.

Levels of anxiety generated by perceived parental pressures have also been associated with physical health risks, demonstrated by high levels of youth sport injury rates (Hamstra et al., 2002). A concern with the volume of sports injuries being treated led to the *Athletic Therapy Today Journal* devoting an issue to this theme in 2002 (Pfeiffer, 2002), but the majority of articles focused on injuries related to the adolescent athlete (e.g., Dubuc et al., 2010). Pressures placed on children to succeed in sport at a

young age has not only been associated with the overuse injuries of young children (Brenner, 2007), but also as a contributing factor to athlete burnout in adolescence (Brenner, 2007; Coakley, 1992).

Coaches are well situated to offer insight into the influences of parents on children participating in sport. The perspective of coaches on parental behaviour was the focus of a study that surveyed 132 US junior tennis coaches (Gould et al., 2006). Parents were perceived by the coaches to play a significant role in junior tennis success. Most parents (59%) the coaches had been involved with were deemed to have a positive influence on their child's development in sport. However, it was felt by coaches that a significant number of parents (36%) negatively influenced their child's sporting experience. Examples of negative parental behaviour included too much of a focus on winning, the setting of unrealistic goals, and ongoing criticism of their child. Gould et al. identified the need for ongoing parent education and concluded their article with a call for further research on parental influence in sport.

Excessive Parental Behaviour

Frankl (2004) explored the impact of excessive parental behaviour at children's sporting events in the US and noted that reports of inappropriate and violent behaviour by adults were on the increase. Although concerns are often expressed about the excesses of parental behaviour in children's sport, there still remain relatively few studies that have observed and recorded these behaviours. The earlier studies that were conducted (Graham, Ratliffe, Faucette, Salter, & Walley, 1982; Randall & McKenzie, 1987; Walley, Graham, & Forehand, 1982) indicated that parent spectators were not overly verbal at their children's games. Subsequent studies (Blom & Drane, 2008; Kidman et al., 1999) concluded that although the comments made by parents were predominantly positive, the significant amount of instruction provided by parents from

the touchline, and their level of negative comments recorded, did give rise for concern. The authors of both of these later studies highlighted the need for further research to establish more accurately the nature and prevalence of parental behaviours, with Kidman et al. calling for interventions to educate and inform parents on how to provide a more supportive and positive sporting experience for their children.

There has been an inconsistent approach to the use of observational instruments in studies of spectator behaviour. Different categorisations of behaviour have been used, studies have focused on different age groups, different sports, and both interval and event recording techniques have been utilised. From the relatively few observational studies conducted to date, it is difficult to compare and contrast results, and therefore difficult to establish the true extent of the nature of parental behaviour in children's sport. Another pitfall for researchers conducting studies in this area relates to the potentially misleading citing of findings from the observational studies completed to date. Kidman et al. (1999) have been cited by a number of authors studying adult influences on children participating in sport. Many of these articles do not adequately describe the rationale behind the classification system used in Kidman et al.'s study, particularly in relation to the negative categorisation of instructional comments. The implication that could be drawn from some of the studies located in this review is that the 34.5% of negative comments reported by Kidman et al., primarily relate to aggressive or angry behaviour as opposed to instructional behaviour (for examples see Omli and LaVoi, 2009, and Rainey and Granito, 2010).

One account by Fiore (2003) tracked the development of youth sport in the US. Fiore (2003, p. 104) referred to the "epidemic" of incidents of "parental rage" and believed that the traditional and self regulated backyard games once played by children began, in the 1950s, to be replaced by structured, competitive activities and leagues.

Although the introduction of leagues was originally well intentioned, Fiore believed that these leagues came to be characterised by increasingly high degrees of parental control and by incidents of inappropriate and often violent behaviour. A number of reasons have been put forward to explain this behaviour. One observation worth considering is that parents involved in their children's sport are the most dedicated of spectators and have a high emotional investment (Herbst, 2000). A further possible reason put forward was that vastly increasing numbers of children are participating in organised sport, and there are associated difficulties for organisations to regulate the behaviours of adults involved with children's sport (Fiore, 2003). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the organisation of children's sport increasingly reflects the structures of adult professional sport, as opposed to being designed to meet the needs of the children themselves (Engh, 1999). The outcome of this highly regulated, competitive, structured approach is the development of a win-at-all-costs mentality for parents and coaches, which eventually filters down and is embodied in the behaviours of the children themselves (Schuette, 2001).

A behaviour related to the adoption of this win-at-all-costs mentality is verbal aggression, which has been identified as having a major detrimental effect on young athletes, especially if they are subjected to this behaviour over long periods of time (Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2008). The negative impact of verbal aggression is not only felt by the target, but there is evidence to suggest that regular exposure to background anger is equally distressing for all children witnessing these types of behaviours (Cummings, 1987; Omli & La Voi, 2009). Goldstein and Iso-Ahola (2008) drew upon self-determination theory to examine the levels of anger and aggression displayed by parents spectating at their children's (ages 8 to 16 years) soccer games. Self-determination theory is based on Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory relating to the relationship between the capacity individuals have to exercise control over their social life (autonomous

control), and the control that is exerted by external social environmental factors (control oriented). Goldstein and Iso-Ahola (2008) found that parents who were more control oriented were more likely to exhibit aggressive, defensive behaviours. Individuals who exhibited higher levels of self-regulation had a higher threshold for controlling reactive behaviours to events which were perceived to be a threat to their child. In the sporting context these perceived threats include the behaviour of opposing parents, players, or referees.

Fields, Collins, and Comstock (2007) conducted a review of literature related to violence in sport and found evidence of violence at all levels of sport, from professional level down to children's leagues. Although studies relating to violence in sport tend to focus on the adolescent athlete, the findings are of interest as they show how exposure to violence can become normalised, accepted, and condoned by youth athletes themselves (Bredemeier & Shields, 1984; Shields, 1999).

Fields et al. (2007, p. 360) were concerned that violence in sport at all levels appeared to often be marginalised and trivialised as a case of "boys will be boys" by the media, public, observers, and participants. The potentially long-term damaging effects of exposure to ongoing violence were, in effect, being ignored. Fields et al. noted that this view of violence was potentially leading to the acceptance and eventual normalisation of aggressive behaviour in sport. They concluded their review with some thoughts about the implications of their review for sport and suggested that numbers and details of violent incidents needed to be tracked to provide an evidence base, and noted that interventions needed to be evaluated to ensure their benefits could be maximised.

Regular exposure to the more excessive examples of negative parental behaviour, such as verbal and non-verbal acts of aggression, can only have negative impacts on children's self-esteem, and can create feelings of anxiety and a fear of

failure (Kraus, 2006). However, there would appear to be consensus that if parents were provided with information that would enable them to better understand the implications of their own behaviour, they would be more likely to moderate their actions to help create a more positive sporting environment for their children (Gould et al., 2006; Kidman et al., 1999; Stein et al., 1999).

The Influence of the Coach

Although coach behaviour is only one determinant affecting children's sporting experience, it has been widely recognised that coaches hold considerably influential positions over children's enjoyment and ongoing commitment to sport (Jowett & Cramer, 2010; Woolger & Power, 1993). The privileged position held by coaches is highlighted in an innovative article by Jones (2007) which created a fictional dialogue between characters who represent coaching science (CS) and educational relationships (ER). During the dialogue, ER challenges CS to:

> re-examine yourself and your basic mission, as you have a very privileged position. You have the opportunity to shape and influence how our children and athletes are coached, not only for elite sporting success but also for lifelong participation. (Jones, 2007, p. 164).

Jones (2007) highlighted the tendency for the field of coaching science to focus on delivery style and the transmission of specialised knowledge, at the expense of a more meaningful examination of the potential of the pedagogical nature of coach-athlete relationships. Jones further called for coaching to become a truly pedagogical profession, focusing on the unpredictable micro-relationships that occur between coach and athlete, which would enhance the experience for all athletes and also enhance the learning process. There has been a tendency for coaching to be presented simply as the art of imparting knowledge, with little regard for the significance of the complex

interactions and subsequent human relationships that exist between coaches and athletes (Jones, 2009; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000).

However, in New Zealand, as elsewhere, the delivery of children's sport relies heavily on the parent volunteer (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010e), and it has been claimed that many youth sport coaches receive little or no appropriate training (Siegenthaler & Gonzalez, 1997; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). With children's experiences of organised sport so heavily dependent upon the behaviour of untrained volunteer coaches, aligned with a recognition of the complex nature of the art of coaching itself (Jones, 2009), it is perhaps not surprising that the behaviour of coaches in children's sport has aroused considerable concern. The reliance of coaches on simply instructing and telling children what to do, has given rise to concerns about not only the affects constant instruction has on effective learning and on the development of autonomous decision-making skills, but also on a child's enjoyment of sport (Kidman et al., 1999).

Although much of the coaching literature has focused on the older teenage or competitive elite athlete, there appears to be overwhelming evidence that coaches who adopt a caring attitude towards athletes in their care and acknowledge the feelings and needs of these athletes, are more able to nurture an environment where athletes can reach their potential (Jones, 2009). Caring coaches can also facilitate a climate that encourages children to become more autonomous, intrinsically motivated, and develop greater decision making capabilities than those athletes exposed to a more controlled environment where they are exposed to little choice (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

In recent years, the benefits of autonomy-supportive behaviours by coaches on a child's sporting experience have been well documented. Weiss (2008) noted that during the 1970s and 1980s much of the literature on social and psychological factors related to

youth sport was atheoretical. Subsequently, she adopted an approach she referred to as developmental sport psychology, to highlight the significance of taking into account developmental differences when examining children's sporting experiences. The significance of coaching behaviours has been closely related to the sporting experiences of children of all ages, but would appear to be especially significant for younger children. The fostering of a sporting environment where a coach exhibits a coaching style which encourages athlete autonomy and provides feedback which is informative, encouraging, and positive, along with low levels of punitive behaviours has been related to feelings of higher athlete perceived competence, greater intrinsic motivation, and enjoyment (Amorose & Weiss, 1998; Theeboom, De Knop, & Weiss, 1995; Weiss, 2008).

A number of studies have focused on the perception of the child and have highlighted the coaching behaviours that children perceive to be positive and supportive. One qualitative study by Keegan et al. (2009) examined the combined influences of coaches, parents, and peers on young children's (ages 7 to 11 years) perceptions about their motivational climate. The main themes that emerged specifically relating to coaches were: coaches who used selection to create competition (more game time for more able players) were perceived to have a negative motivational impact by those children not selected; children liked receiving individual feedback; they also liked competitive activities that challenged them; they preferred coaches who evaluated them on the basis of effort and improvement rather than on success and winning; and the children felt a fear of failure and anxious when coaches criticised or found fault with them.

Similar findings emerged from a study by Conroy and Coatsworth (2007) who surveyed the perceptions of 165 recreational youth swimmers (aged 7 to 18 years) about

the autonomy-supportive behaviours exhibited by their coaches. Although the study covered a relatively wide age range, the findings are of interest as young athletes (aged 7 to 11 years) were included as participants. Conroy and Coatsworth found that the coaches included in this study were perceived to exhibit predominantly controlling behaviours, rather than practices which encouraged children to have some input into their own sporting experience and development. The study also showed that young children are capable of distinguishing coaching strategies that create an autonomy-supportive motivational climate.

The ability of children to distinguish between different types of coaching behaviours was also examined in a study by Smith, Cumming, and Smoll (2008). Similar to Conroy and Coatsworth (2007), they found that children under the age of 11 years were capable of distinguishing between task/mastery or ego-involved motivational climates. Task/mastery involvement related to a focus on self-referenced success and centred on skill development, improvement, and effort. An ego-involved climate tended to be based on social comparison, where feelings of success related to one's performance in relation to others. More successful outcomes were associated with coaches who placed greater emphasis on self-referenced improvement, encouraged and praised effort, and established a co-operative learning environment. Coaches who placed more emphasis on outcomes such as success and winning were more likely to create a climate that induced feelings of performance anxiety, low self-esteem, a fear of failure, and ultimately avoidance. Over-competitive coaching behaviours have not only been associated with children's motivational climates, but perceived poor coaching behaviours have also been associated with poor behaviours demonstrated by children themselves (Shields et al., 2007).

On a positive note, a number of studies have shown that it is possible to change coach behaviour. The considerable work conducted by Smith and Smoll, in particular, has been successful in changing coach behaviours to enhance children's sporting experiences. Smith and Smoll have reportedly run workshops delivering the Coach Effectiveness Training programme (CET) to over 13,000 youth sport coaches, with evidence that as a consequence young players reported higher levels of enjoyment and self-esteem (Smith & Smoll, 1997; Topor & Gill, 2008).

Smith and Smoll (1997) provided an overview of their research programme that had spanned almost twenty years. Smith and Smoll initially observed and measured coaching behaviours, and examined young athletes' perceptions and reactions to these behaviours. Following on from the findings of their early observational studies, they applied their research to the development of behavioural intervention programmes for coaches. The resultant CET was underpinned by five key principles. They first drew attention to the differences between the adult, professional sports model - which focused on financial gain and winning – and the developmental model, which primarily focused on the creation of a positive developmental climate for the child. Smoll and Smith noted that children's sport programmes drawing upon this developmental model should primarily be about fun, enjoyment through playing in a team, learning new skills, reducing fear of failure, and increasing self-esteem. Second, coaches should use positive reinforcement, accurate instruction, focus on building positive relationships with children in their care, and avoid punitive and negative interactions. Third, coaches should encourage the positive social support aspects of playing in a team and helping one another. Fourth, coaches should involve young athletes in decision making processes rather than enforcing compliance. Finally, coaches were encouraged to gain ongoing feedback on their own behaviours and to continually monitor that they were adhering to the CET guidelines.

A key observation made by Smith and Smoll (1997) was that coaches had little awareness of the true nature of their coaching behaviours. As a consequence, a focus of CET workshops was to raise coach awareness of their own behaviours. When comparing coaches who had undergone CET training with control groups who had received no training, Smith and Smoll found that the trained coaches provided more reinforcing feedback, were more positive and encouraging, gave more accurate technical feedback, and exhibited less punitive actions. The young athletes involved in the studies also reported higher levels of enjoyment, self-esteem, and were less likely to drop out of their organised sports.

A number of coaching interventions have drawn upon CET training principles. For example, the Penn State Coach Training Program introduced by Conroy and Coatsworth (2004), showed an increase in the reward and reinforcement behaviours exhibited by coaches who had undergone the training programme. However, even when programmes have not been shown to be entirely successful, there is no evidence to suggest that the programmes have had a detrimental effect on a child's sporting experience. Although the intervention study by Conroy and Coatsworth (2004), which examined the influence of a psychosocial training programme for swimming coaches, found that the programme did not significantly reduce youth swimmers' fear of failure, the authors strongly advocated ongoing studies that examined the effects of such programmes. Conroy and Coatsworth noted that there was no evidence in the coaching literature that indicated that psychosocial coach training programmes could have any harmful or negative effects, and that as coach training programmes continued to be refined they would continue to yield at least some benefits. However, Smoll and Smith (2006) noted that of the four US based training programmes designed to influence coach behaviour with athletes (the American Coaching Effectiveness Program [ACEP], the National Youth Sports Coaches Association [NYSCA], the Program for Athletic

Coaches' Education [PACE], and CET), only CET had an empirical base and foundation. They also noted that despite the fact that ACEP, NYSCA, and PACE had delivered workshops to thousands of volunteer and school coaches, very little research had been conducted to evaluate the efficacy of these programmes.

The importance of coaches as role models of appropriate behaviours for children has also been highlighted. The way that coaches model positive behaviours when dealing with failure, disappointment, and success, has been shown to be influential in the development of these same behaviours for young children (Siegenthaler & Gonzalez, 1997). Coach behaviour has been identified as a significant determinant of the nature of a child's sporting experience (McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000) and coaches have been identified as the most significant role models beyond parents and teachers (Tofler & Butterbaugh, 2005). Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) have claimed that in the sporting environment, coaches have even more influence and interactions with children than parents do. The behaviours coaches exhibit to handle winning or losing, how they control aggression, deal with violence, and how they interact with others, are observed and internalised by children (Seefeldt, 1992). Much of the coaching behaviour that gives cause for concern would appear to be displayed by outcome-driven coaches, who are concerned more with winning than ongoing athlete development (Tofler & Butterbaugh, 2005).

As there is little evidence to suggest that volunteer coaches involved in children's sport receive formal training, it is unsurprising that they have inadequate knowledge of the psychological and psychosocial developmental needs of children (Tofler & Butterbaugh, 2005). As a consequence, Tofler and Butterbaugh noted that many coaches are outcome-driven and physically and verbally embody a harsh punitive coaching style. The findings of studies conducted with youth sport coaches show that

coaches themselves acknowledge that they receive little coaching education and training (McCallister, Blinde, & Kolenbrander, 2000; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Wiersma and Sherman suggested that coaches are keen to receive coaching education and training, despite the time constraints that attendance at training programmes would impose. Furthermore, these coaches acknowledged the significant impact that their own behaviour had on both children and their parents who attended games.

There is potential for the development of the relationship between children's coaches and their parents which has been often neglected (Hopper & Jeffries, 1990). Although it would appear that coaches themselves are exposed to very little training, Hopper and Jeffries claimed that coaches could be instrumental in helping parents develop behaviours that promote long term athlete development as opposed to primarily focusing on winning. They advocated that coaches could hold regular meetings with parents throughout the season, to ensure that children are exposed to supportive and developmentally appropriate behaviours at their sporting events. This approach which suggests that coaches meet with parents is one commonly advocated in the coaching literature (Gould, 2010; Martens, 2004). Although the triad of coach, parent, and athlete has obvious significance to a child's sporting experience (Hopper & Jeffries, 1990), it would seem to be a fairly unrealistic ideal in young children's sport that coaches who are predominantly untrained, should also be responsible for the development of appropriate behaviours for parents too.

However, it has been noted that for any tangible benefits to emerge from children's participation in sport, this is only achievable through strong and effective youth leadership (Donnelly, Darnell, Wells, & Coakley, 2007). Any sports programme has the potential to reap positive outcomes if the right leaders are appointed. Donnelly

et al. recommended that significant resources and effort should be allocated to train professionals and volunteers involved in leadership roles in sports programmes.

Creating Motivational Sporting Climates

Both parents and coaches play a significant role in creating an enjoyable sporting climate for children. It has been argued that one of the biggest influences on a child's ongoing participation in sport, is their motivational belief relating to that activity (Simpkins, Vest, Dawes, & Neuman, 2010). Weiss and Williams (2004) noted that the concept of motivation can be best understood as a series of answers to *why* questions. Why do some athletes strive to win and be successful while others give up? Why do some people appear to play sport for innate enjoyment while others get pleasure from external factors and rewards? Why do some children ultimately withdraw from sport? The range of contemporary motivational literature that has attempted to answer these questions has gradually adopted an approach that acknowledged the significance of a number of factors that embrace both social environmental factors and individual differences, and acknowledged that a focus on single causal influences is inadequate (Weiss & Amorose, 2008). However, the influence of adults, such as coaches and parents, is a predominant recurring theme, especially for younger pre-adolescent aged children.

A study by Simpkins et al. (2010) examined the relationship between parents' behaviours and children's motivational beliefs in relation to both sport and music. Their findings suggested that parents can adopt a range of parenting behaviours to increase a child's self-concept and motivational beliefs. These behaviours include: role modelling; providing regular easy access to sporting equipment (balls, bats, etc.); providing ongoing encouragement; and co-activity where parents actively engage with their children in a range of sporting and leisure activities.

Parental influences and relationships with their child have been related to a child's enjoyment, feelings of self-worth, motivation, and feelings of competence in relation to their sport (Jowett & Cramer, 2010). However, feelings of self-worth and self-esteem are complex and are dependent upon the relationships children have, or they perceive that they have, with significant others (Harter, 1999). A number of studies have focused on the slightly older athlete but raise salient points which highlight the complexity of studying the network of relationships that contribute to a child's motivation related to sport.

How parental involvement is perceived by the child is an important aspect of a child's sporting experience. Stein, Raedeke and Glenn (1999) argued that it is not the perceived level of involvement so much as the perceived quality of parent involvement that more strongly influences a child's sporting experiences. Young children's perceptions of their ability in sporting activities are strongly influenced by their parent (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Weiss & Amorose, 2008). Through their behaviour and levels of encouragement, parents convey messages that strongly influence young children's perceptions of their own competence, their perceived chances of success, their choices of activity, and ultimately their ongoing participation in an activity (Collins & Barber, 2005; Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005).

Although Weiss and Amorose (2008) highlighted the significance of parental and coach feedback and influences on younger children's feelings of physical competence, they noted that as a consequence, this reliance on external sources to shape their perceptions of physical competence can lead to inaccurate levels of self-awareness. Studies have indicated that correlations between actual competence and perceptions of their own competence of children aged 8 to 13 years increase with age as children begin to rely less on external sources of feedback and increasingly come to rely on intrinsic

forms of feedback (Horn & Weiss, 1991). The consideration of the significance of child development processes are important, as it has been shown that children, as they age, perceive competence in different ways (Weiss & Amorose, 2008). To help develop children's feelings of competence and to nurture the development of more intrinsic sources of feedback, Harter (1981) recommended that adults, especially parents, created positive, supportive environments that offered encouragement for effort and improvement, as opposed to praising and rewarding only successful outcomes. In addition, children's perception of negative adult behaviours, such as unrealistic expectations and pressure to perform, have been associated with the creation of feelings of anxiety (Brustad, 1988). On a positive note, parent behaviours (Babkes & Weiss, 1999), and coach behaviours (Amorose & Weiss, 1998), such as praise, informative feedback, and modelling, have been regularly associated with children's enhanced feelings of competence and enjoyment.

For children participating in sport, the ability to become confident, autonomous and self-motivating is strongly influenced by the motivational climate created by both coaches and parents (Weiss & Amorose, 2008). Studies have indicated that a motivational climate that is driven by external factors (such as success, performance, or winning) tends to undermine intrinsic motivation, whereas a task oriented motivational climate, that emphasises improvement and effort, supports the development of intrinsic motivation (Theeboom et al., 1995).

Sources of athlete enjoyment are varied, but studies have indicated that less perceived pressure from both parents and coaches is conducive to an enjoyable sporting environment for children (Scanlan & Simons, 1992). However, although significant, parents and coaches are only two aspects of a range of factors that affect a child's self-belief and perception of competence. A study by Ullrich-French and Smith (2006)

focused on older children (ages 10 to 14 years) and noted that to adequately understand the linkage between social relationships and motivation, it was important to consider combinations of relationships (for example athlete, coach, parent, peers, etc.) rather than simply focus on one aspect (such as the relationship between parent and child).

It has been suggested that an athlete's ongoing commitment to sport is determined by not only enjoyment, but also by four other primary determinants (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons, & Keeler, 1993). These are: involvement alternatives - through the attraction of available alternatives to sport; personal investment – which relates to the amount of time, cost, and energy an individual would lose if they discontinued with a sport; social constraints – the influences and pressures from significant others to continue with a sport; and involvement opportunities – the anticipated benefits from continued participation (Scanlan et al., 1993; Weiss & Amorose, 2008). Although there would appear to be a range of factors that influence children's commitment to sport, what consistently emerges from the literature is that children participate in sport primarily for fun and enjoyment (Scanlan et al., 1993; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988).

Summary

Although the literature embraces a range of theoretical approaches and perspectives related to the athlete-parent-coach triad, there is compelling evidence to indicate that both parents and coaches play a significant role in shaping the motivational sporting environment that surrounds the child-athlete. There is considerable evidence to suggest that coaches and parents play a major role, in particular, in influencing younger children's (ages 6 to 11 years) experiences of organised sport. Outcome-driven coaching behaviours have been shown to create a fear of failure, greater levels of anxiety, an ego-

involved motivational climate, and ultimately lead to greater rates of attrition from organised sport.

However, much of the literature has tended to focus on the experiences of the older and competitive athlete as opposed to the younger child. Indeed, Bowker et al. (2009) believed that as parental and coach behaviour appeared to become more competitive as children got older, studies should focus on the adolescent group as opposed to the younger child. Although there is some evidence to support the claim that children's sport becomes increasingly competitive with age, it is also evident that many children have withdrawn from competitive sport before they even reach adolescence. Many coaches of these younger age groups are volunteers exposed to little or no formal training. The studies reviewed in this section have highlighted the complex nature of coaching, but there appears to have been little academic focus on the needs of both the younger child and on the beginner volunteer coach. With claims in New Zealand that 93% of primary school aged children have participated in organised sport (Statistics New Zealand, 1997), there would appear to be a need for further studies that focus on the sporting experiences of children in this important age group.

Chapter 3: Adopting a Mixed Methods Approach

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical stance that informed the approach adopted in this thesis, and the rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach. A brief overview of the methods used is presented. However, this chapter does not go into depth on the specific methods utilised, as these methods are described in detail in the sub-studies presented in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The chapter concludes with a section relating to the ethical considerations of the approach adopted in this thesis.

Orienting Frameworks

Potter (1996) has argued that it is fundamentally important that researchers acknowledge their epistemological position when presenting their qualitative research and has been critical of authors who have not theoretically underpinned their studies. Giddings (2006) similarly believes that it is useful for researchers to be explicit about their orienting framework. In her critique of mixed methods research, Giddings noted that very few of the nursing studies she reviewed acknowledged any methodological positioning. This lack of theoretical underpinning appeared to reflect a perception that appeared to emerge from the 1990s onwards, that mixed methods research was tending to be seen as a methodological movement in its own right. Gidding's concern was that this lack of theoretical underpinning could maintain what she perceived to be "the marginalisation of non-positivist research methodologies" (p. 195).

Giddings (2006) also highlighted the common inconsistencies that were applied to the terms 'methodology' and 'methods'. She reiterated her belief that the term methodology should relate to the theoretical stance that underpinned a research

approach, and the term, 'methods', should be applied simply to the tools used to gather and analyse the data. The apparent tendency for researchers to present their studies as simply mixed methods, and to assume that this approach in itself reflected the methodological approach, is thus flawed. It was important that qualitative researchers considered their research question from their theoretical position before deciding on the methods to use to best answer these questions. During the design of this thesis, this was the approach adopted. There was no initial intent to conduct a mixed methods study. First, the research questions were framed and refined. Second, drawing upon theoretical considerations, the most appropriate methods to best answer these questions were decided on.

Although this is not a figurational sociological thesis, the theoretical considerations that underpinned the initial approach to this thesis drew upon some of the ideas from the field of figurational sociology. Figurational sociology is strongly influenced by the work of Norbert Elias (1897-1990), and involves the study of complex human inter-relationships or figurations. A key aspect of Elias's work was *The Civilizing Process* in which Elias explained ongoing changes in Western societies as a series of unintended changes in the structure and standards of behaviour in these societies (Elias, 1939/2000). According to Elias's theory, over a period of time, behaviour in Western society became less violent, more civilised and refined, through an inculcation of higher standards of self-restraint and shame. These changes in behaviour occurred (and continue to occur) within constantly changing figurations which are characterised by complex and dynamic power balances (Smith, 1999). These figurations, or relationships, therefore reflect balances of power, are historically influenced, interdependent, and dynamic in nature. A key aspect of figurational sociology is the acknowledgement that there are no universal truths to explain any

particular social phenomenon. Rather, it is acknowledged that social problems are complex and therefore a search for some absolute cause is futile.

Leaving Elias's ideas of a civilizing process aside, the focus of figurational sociologists on understanding the dynamics of relationships was central to informing the approach adopted in this thesis. To examine these relationships in the context of children's sport, it was first necessary to establish who the key stakeholders were. These were identified as being coaches, parents, administrators, referees, and most importantly the children themselves. As noted by Smith (1999), power relationships are complex. Power is not simply exercised by one dominant group over another oppressed group. Borrowing from the theoretical ideas of figurational sociology enabled an approach that could focus on the study of the relationships between these key stakeholders to help unravel the complexities of these power dynamics.

Moving Forward

Having framed the research aims of this thesis, outlined in Chapter 1, the next stage was to consider the optimal approach to adequately address these aims. At the heart of these considerations was an awareness that there would be no definitive answer; rather, the purpose of each aim was to enhance understanding of issues related to adult behaviours at children's sporting events. To best achieve the aims of this thesis, it would be important to speak in some depth to several of the stakeholders. In particular, to gain a better understanding of how coach and parent behaviours affected children, it seemed fundamentally important that the voices of children were taken into consideration. It was at this point that the possibility of a mixed methods study was first considered.

As noted by Giddings (2006) there has been considerable debate over the use of mixing methods in research. Smith and Heshusius (1986) argued against the mixing of

qualitative and quantitative methods in research. They claimed that researchers that did so in effect ignored the different theoretical assumptions that underpinned the two approaches. Quantitative research was essentially positivist and objective, and qualitative research was subjective and interpretive. They were therefore incompatible (Smith & Heshusius, 1986).

This position has been challenged by a number of researchers, including Grant and Giddings (2002), Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), Creswell (2003), and Greene (2008). However, debate has continued over the issue of paradigmatic positioning of mixed methods research. Both Crotty (1998), and Grant and Giddings (2002), created frameworks to provide theoretical clarity for social researchers. In their framework Grant and Giddings identified four main research paradigms: positivist; interpretive; radical; and poststructuralist. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) have suggested a further paradigm, that of pragmatism, as an overarching paradigm for mixed methods research. But in her critique of mixed methods research, Giddings (2006) noted that many pragmatic mixed methods studies did not venture beyond merely descriptive design, results, and integration, and rarely considered a subjective or constructionist world view.

The intent of this thesis was to go beyond description, to try to understand children's perspectives and to try to unravel the complex power relationships that affected a child's experience of organised sport. The inherent difficulties in adopting this approach in a mixed methods study are eloquently expressed by Giddings:

> The 'thinking' of positivism continues in the 'thinking' of mixed methods, its postpositivist pragmatic underpinnings assumed. The positivist scientific tradition continues to be privileged as a way to know; its dominance is strengthened, rather than challenged, by mixed-methods research. If accepted naively as a new inclusive research movement, the methodologies from the

interpretative, radical/critical, poststructural and indigenous paradigms, so recently 'accepted' within social science and health research disciplines, may become relegated to the margins as electives or advanced research specialities. Our vision for a research culture in the social science and health disciplines which embrace all research paradigms may be lost. (Giddings, 2006, p. 202)

In attempting to understand the complexities of children's sport, there was a need in this thesis to embrace methodologies that went beyond description. In considering an approach that drew upon a figurational perspective, the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault resonated. Researchers drawing upon the ideas of Foucault have tended to be situated in the poststructuralist paradigm. Grant and Giddings (2002) and Crowe (1998) provided insight into the meaning of the term 'poststructuralism' in the context of a research paradigm. Researchers located within this paradigm acknowledge that there are no universal truths about social life. The underlying philosophy is that we stand within the constraints and traditions of our time. We are influenced historically, politically and culturally, and we need to take into account inter-relating power relationships. There were strong correlations here with the figurational sociological approach informed by the work of Elias (1939/2000).

A number of poststructuralist scholars have drawn upon Foucault's notions of discourse, and in particular, on his focus on the relationship between knowledge and power (Cheek, 2000). Although discourse analysis, as a relatively new approach can be situated within a range of research traditions (Powers, 2001), it enables the examination of complex power relationships through an analysis of dominant discourses. As a consequence, discourse analysis would appear to sit well within a poststructuralist paradigm. Although Elias and Foucault have been placed by scholars in different philosophical camps, a number of authors have drawn attention to some of the parallels between the thinking and works of the two, including a specific focus on the dynamics

of power (Samuel, 1999; Smith, 1999; Szakolczai, 1995). Both would appear to view discourses as forces that "structure the realities we experience" (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 21) and worthy of analysis.

As the focus of this thesis was to try and achieve a better understanding of the effects of adult behaviour on the child participating in organised sport, a mixed methods study was considered to be the preferred approach. As noted by Bryman (2004), mixed methods "may provide a better understanding of a phenomenon than if just one method had been used" (p. 464). In addition, discourse analysis appeared to sit well within the initial framework that emerged. The consideration of discourse analysis in relation to this thesis therefore went beyond that of a research tool. There are undoubtedly complex and dynamic power balances inherent in the relationships that play themselves out in relation to children's sport. Discourse analysis facilitates the study of complex relationships, the analysis of power balances through the identification of dominant discourses, and encourages the researcher to contextualise the phenomenon under study.

Why Foucault?

> I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area. I would like the little volume that I want to write on disciplinary systems to be useful to an educator, a warden, a magistrate, a conscientious objector. I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers. (Foucault, 1974/1994, pp. 523-524)

Discourse analysis studies have become increasingly prominent in the social sciences since the 1980s (Crowe, 2005) and a number of these studies have drawn upon Foucault's notions of discourse. However, Foucault has not provided a systematic theoretical framework that researchers can apply to their studies (Mills, 1997). Rather, as Foucault (1974/1994) stated, his ideas can be drawn upon and used as tools to enable the study of social practices.

In relation to this thesis, Foucault's discussions on power and discourse were of particular interest. A number of Foucauldian texts were reviewed to gain a broader understanding of how a study of discourse could enhance understanding of the dynamics of power. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault (1969/2002) noted that discourses reflected power structures, and the right to the practices associated with any given discourse - the rules, the processes, the right to decision-making practices – was confined to specific groups of individuals. Therefore, these groups, or individuals, acting through discourse, generated what was perceived to be knowledge or truth at any given time.

Foucault's (1975/1995) work in *Discipline and Punish* considered the complexity of power. Unlike, for example, a Marxist perspective, where power is held and one group is essentially exploited by another, Foucault saw power as a far more complex and dynamic social process. Through the use of technologies of power, individuals exercised power, rather than possessed it. These technologies of power included forms of discipline, such as punishment, but also gratification, such as the use of rewards to generate the desired behaviour. Although power may be resisted, a conforming body can become "docile, that [it] may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 136). What was interesting, from this Foucauldian perspective, was how individuals, or bodies, themselves contributed to this transformation. By moderating their own behaviour, and adhering to the normative practices generated through a specific discourse, individuals in effect disciplined themselves.

A number of sporting studies have drawn upon Foucault's notions of discourse, power, and conformity to understand how athletes seemingly readily conform to what are often the excessively punishing normative practices associated with competitive

sport. Some examples of these studies include a study on high performance adult wrestlers, swimmers, gymnasts, and track athletes (Johns & Johns, 2000); a study of competitive youth swimmers (Lang, 2010); and a study on adult women rugby union players (Chase, 2006). To continue participating in elite level sport, it appeared that athletes were prepared to accept, and at times excuse, the sometimes abusive behaviour of coaches they had encountered (Johns & Johns, 2000).

From reading these articles, it appeared to me that Foucault's notion of discourse, and the associated ideas relating to power and conformity, were useful frameworks to apply to this thesis. They enabled a framework that would allow me to probe deeper to glean a greater understanding of children's experiences of organised sport. Rather than simply describe, a Foucauldian analysis appeared to provide opportunities to go further and actually challenge what was seemingly obvious: "What we must do, in fact, is tear away from [what we take for granted], their virtual self-evidence, and to free the problems that they pose" (Foucault, 1969/2002, p. 28). There was no search for simple explanations for human behaviour apparent here, but rather the exposing of normative social practices opened them up for discussion and further analysis. This was one of the aims of this thesis, to try and expose what was perceived as normal adult behaviour in the context of children's organised sport, and why it was perceived that way. As a consequence, a Foucauldian informed discourse analysis appeared to sit well within a framework informed by figurational sociology (Elias, 1939/2000), and to be the optimal approach to adopt in the qualitative components of this thesis.

Mixed Methods: Purpose and Design

Hunter and Brewer (2003) observed that researchers undertaking mixed-methods research need to be convinced that their research problem poses more complex

questions than one single method can consider. This appeared to be the case in this thesis. Creswell (2003) also noted that mixed methods proposals should clearly convey the purpose of both quantitative and qualitative components. Creswell referred to mixed methods studies that used an over-arching theoretical lens as transformative. The purpose of this transformative mixed methods thesis is to achieve a clearer understanding of adult behaviour and all components of this study, both quantitative and qualitative, are designed to enhance our overall understanding of adult behaviour at children's sporting events.

Purpose

The mixed methods approach adopted in this thesis drew heavily upon the ideas of Greene (2007). Greene noted that the purpose of a study should inform the subsequent design. In relation to mixed methods, there are five major purposes: triangulation, development, initiation, expansion, and complementarity (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Briefly summarised: triangulation is where the same phenomenon is assessed using different methods; development is where the use of one method informs the use of subsequent methods; initiation is where different methods are used to study the same phenomenon, but focuses on different perspectives of the phenomenon with a view to highlighting areas of conflict; expansion is where different methods are used to study different phenomena; and complementarity is where different methods are used to explore different features of the same phenomenon. Mixed methods studies with a complementarity purpose are useful for studying dynamic and complex inter-relationships, to enable better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

As a consequence, the purpose of the mixed methods approach adopted in this study was that of complementarity. The phenomenon under study was adult behaviour at children's team sporting events. The design of the study, therefore, focused on how

different methods could be best used to reveal a deeper understanding of some of the issues surrounding children's sport.

Design

Greene (2007) outlined two mixed methods designs: integrated and component. With an integrated design, there is integration of methods throughout the study, across theoretical lenses, methods and analysis. The design adopted in this thesis reflected a component design, where methods remain discrete and independent throughout, and integration occurs as the findings are interpreted.

The aim of this thesis was to explore the perspectives of key stakeholders to elicit a broader understanding of issues pertaining to children's sport. The quantitative components were designed to provide empirical information relating to the nature and prevalence of adult behaviours. These components directly related to the following aims of this thesis (re-stated from Chapter 1):

- to identify the nature of adult behaviour at children's sporting events; and
- to establish the prevalence of these behaviours at children's sporting events.

The qualitative components were designed to address the aims:

- to examine the effect of adult behaviours on the key stakeholders involved in children's sport; and
- to explore the impact of these behaviours on children's enjoyment of sport.

The design of the methods utilised in this thesis also reflected a pragmatic approach. It was important to elicit the views of all stakeholders: parents, children,

administrators, coaches, and referees/umpires. However, this thesis also had to operate within the constraints of a doctoral study. These constraints included cost, time, access to appropriate participants, and relied very much on the goodwill of a number of organisations involved in the data collection stage. The research components included in the initial design of the study were as follows:

1. A focus group interview with administrators involved with each of the four team sports. The focus of this aspect of the study was on the stories (both positive and negative) administrators had about adult involvement in children's sport.

2. A structured observational study of parents observing children's sporting events. The aim of this study was to use the Parents' Observation Instrument at Sports Events (POISE) to record the frequency and nature of parent comments. (The initial design approach adopted was flexible and the design of POISE was later adapted to observe coaches – who in children's sport are predominantly parents. The rationale for this design change is discussed in Chapter 5).

3. Surveys to be completed by children (ages 6 to 11 years) and their parents/caregivers. The purpose of the questionnaire issued to children and their parent/caregivers was two-fold. The questionnaire was sufficiently detailed and distributed to provide data worthy of analysis in its own right. The questionnaire was designed to elicit parental views relating to both the positive and negative aspects of children's sport. It was also designed to establish the children's levels of engagement and enjoyment of organised sport. The second overall purpose of the questionnaire was as a tool to identify suitable participants for the focus group study with children.

4. Focus group interviews with children (ages 6 to 11 years). The aim of this component was to give voice to children and to hear their perspectives of their experiences in organised team sports.

5. Surveys to be completed by coaches and referees/umpires. These surveys were designed to provide a forum for coaches, referees and umpires to express their views about adult behaviours at children's sporting events.

Although the main purpose of this component design was to highlight different features of the same phenomenon, these sub-studies were designed to be of sufficient interest to stand alone and be publishable in their own right. The specific details and rationale relating to the methods adopted in each component are discussed in detail in the appropriate chapters in this thesis.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval to proceed with this study was granted on 20th June 2007 by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee - AUTEC (Appendix A). As a consequence of the mixed methods approach adopted in this thesis, which involved a broad range of participants, the ethical documentation was necessarily comprehensive. All documentation for each of the five sub-studies is included in Appendices B - F. With the exception of the coaches who were observed, all participants in the study provided fully informed consent to participate. Participants who were children provided assent, with a parent providing consent.

Consultation Process

During the design phase of this thesis consultation was initiated with the Head of the School of Education at AUT University, the Manager of AUT University Health Counselling and Wellbeing, and with the Treaty Staff Developments Officer, Project Manager (Centre for Educational and Professional Development: AUT University).

Consultation with the School of Education resulted in an adopted recommendation that a female qualified primary school teacher accompany me at all times during the interview process with children. It was felt that the presence of a

female primary school teacher would: help build a rapport with a group of children comprised of both boys and girls; reassure parents consenting for their child to participate in a focus group interview; and reassure the schools.

In the unlikely event that any child became upset as a result of the focus group interviews, the AUT University Health, Counselling and Wellbeing Centre offered a free counselling service to these children and their parents. The availability of this service was relayed to parents in the participant information sheets associated with that phase of the thesis.

Any research in New Zealand needs to consider the bi-cultural nature of Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Consultation with the Treaty Staff Developments Officer at AUT University identified no issues related to the impact of this research for Māori. Ethnicity was an area that would be potentially of great interest in this thesis. It was felt, however, that at this time, such a focus would increase the scope of this thesis beyond manageable limits. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, little is known as yet about adult behaviour at sporting events. More research into this behaviour in the general population is needed before comparative studies are initiated. The hope was expressed that this thesis would lay the foundations for more specific research in the future.

Covert Observation

One aspect of this thesis that did arouse considerable ethical debate was the use of covert observation, where a participant's behaviour is observed without their consent, to record the behaviours of adults at children's sporting matches. Careful thought was given to the ethical implications of using a covert observation instrument. However, covert observation appeared to be the optimal approach for this research.

A key aim of this thesis was to identify the nature and prevalence of adult behaviours at children's sporting events in New Zealand. The POISE is a published instrument that has been designed and previously employed to measure such adult behaviour. Other methods utilised in this study are able to explore the effects of behaviour, but are not able to reliably determine prevalence rates. The Hawthorne effect is well documented and relates to a phenomenon where a study subject's behaviour alters as a direct consequence of the subject becoming aware they are being observed (Eckmanns, Bessert, Behnke, Gastmeier, & Rüden, 2006; Mangione-Smith, Elliot, McDonald, & McGlynn, 2002). In this instance it was believed that awareness of observation would significantly influence a participant's behaviour.

All covert observation was to be conducted in public places. During the 80 team games to be observed, adult coaches were selected for observation. At no time before, during, or after the observation was the identity of the observed known or recorded by the researchers. Neither was any potentially identifying information (such as age, ethnicity, appearance or mannerisms) collected. The instrument was used to record the prevalence, nature and target of comments made by each subject under study. There was no audio or video recording of the subject whatsoever. This instrument had already been used in New Zealand and consultation took place with Dr. Lynn Kidman, the co-author of the initial study using the POISE (Kidman & McKenzie, 1996). Kidman and McKenzie had employed POISE on two separate occasions and Dr. Kidman attested that due to the busy and chaotic nature of sporting events at public places, with many games occurring simultaneously on council grounds, researchers had unobtrusively blended into the spectators.

In presenting the ethical case for this thesis, it was stressed that there were considerable potential benefits to this research. Concerns had been expressed about the nature of adult behaviour at children's sporting events in New Zealand (Kidman et al.,

1999). Sport and Recreation New Zealand had also specifically drawn attention to the effect of what they referred to as "sideline abuse" directed at officials involved with children's sporting events (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2003). It was widely acknowledged that little research has been conducted in this area. By establishing the nature and prevalence of adult behaviour, the findings of this study could be used to strengthen recommendations for effective co-ordinated interventions and policy which would directly address the issue of adult behaviour at children's sporting events in New Zealand.

Due to the nature of the observation in a public place, the anonymity of participants was assured thus alleviating risk of harm to participants. Dissemination of the findings would ensure individuals or groups were in no way identifiable. As a consequence, the risks to participants were minimised. In the ethics application it was stressed that the ultimate potential benefits to children participating in sport would outweigh any risk of harm to adult participants in this study.

In relation to erosion of community trust, Riley and Manias (2004) conducted a review of a number of studies that utilised covert observation. The authors were critical of a number of studies that failed to give adequate explanations of how ethical concerns were negotiated by the researchers. Lack of consideration of ethical issues is an area of concern and one that is likely to erode ongoing community trust. It is important that dissemination of the findings of this thesis would ensure that explanations and details relating to the negotiation of ethical concerns were explicitly addressed.

One of the guidelines of our institution's ethics committee – AUTEC – stated that:

> In general, in research involving deception, concealment or covert observation, adequate and prompt disclosure must be made and 'debriefing', including a sufficient explanation of the approach followed, provided to each participant as soon as practicable after the participant's involvement is completed. The more

significant the deception or concealment, the more thorough the 'debriefing' should be. (Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee, 2006)

This *'post hoc'* disclosure is a complex issue and was explored in a study by Hobson (2006) on the ethics of covert observation. In Hobson's study a class of doctoral students were exposed to covert observation (both as subjects and as observers). There were three main findings which arose from the study:

- there was evidence of an observer effect which supported traditional arguments that data collected through covert means may result in more valid or trustworthy data;

- covert observation participation can result in distress to both participants and observers; and

- in spite of an increased awareness of distress that can result from covert observation (to both observers and researched), most participants felt such methods can be justified in certain situations.

Hobson suggested that it is the actual *post hoc* disclosure that causes the distress. The conclusion drawn from Hobson's study acknowledges the complexity of this ongoing debate but leads to the consideration that either covert observation should be avoided completely, or researchers should not be obligated to seek consent after the event. In relation to this thesis, it was felt that any distress or risks to both researcher and participants could arise from the act of disclosure itself.

Although the observation of coaches that took place in this thesis was covert, the sporting organisations responsible for the administration of each of the team sports were fully informed of the nature of the study. Each organisation provided permission for their coaches to be observed, and preliminary reports of the findings were

distributed to each of the organisations on completion of the study. Full ethical permission to conduct this study was ultimately granted by AUTEC, but the use of covert observation was an issue that quite rightly provoked rigorous debate.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the theoretical considerations that underpinned the approach adopted in this thesis. The rationale for adopting a mixed methods study was also explained, with detail of the mixed methods purpose and design approach adopted. The specific methods were only briefly introduced as each method is detailed in the relevant chapters of this thesis. The chapter concluded with a discussion around the ethical issues that arose from this thesis, in particular relating to the use of covert observation in research.

The next chapters (Chapters 4 to 8) provide details of each of the sub-studies conducted in this thesis. To ensure the anonymity of all participants, pseudonyms are used throughout.

Chapter 4: Administrators' Story

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of a focus group that was conducted with sport administrators representing each of the four team sports that were the focal point of this thesis (rugby union, soccer, touch rugby, and netball).[1] There were two primary reasons for the decision that the focus group interview with sport administrators would represent the first phase of this investigation. First, it was felt that sport administrators were uniquely placed to offer an insight into the issue of sideline behaviour in children's sports. Adminstrators involved with the governance and organisation of children's sport in a region need to deal with a number of groups and individuals at a broad range of levels. These can include NSOs, RSOs, clubs and their representatives, coaches, referees/umpires, and parents. Administrators are responsible for the implementation of the competition structures and rules that constitute their sport; and for the implementation of coaching and refereeing guidelines. They also deal with complaints from clubs, referees, and parents about any issues that arise. Second, this initial work with administrators helped begin a relationship with their organisations which would support the implementation of subsequent phases of this study.

In New Zealand, as in many societies, the increasing regulation of children's sport now sees highly organised leagues and competitions being run for children as young as five years of age. These games are structured, adhere to clear rules, and are competitive. Participation in sport during these childhood years is heavily dependent upon parental involvement. The focus of this chapter is on the experiences of sports

---

[1] An article based on the findings of the focus group analysis was submitted and accepted for publication with the European Journal for Sport and Society (Walters, Payne, Schluter, & Thomson, 2010).

administrators in relation to parental involvement in children's sport. Sport administrators play a key role in shaping the environment within which children play organised team sports. In New Zealand, it is widely recognised that volunteers are the backbone of sports (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010e). Administrators rely heavily on parental involvement to ensure their sports can run from week to week, and from season to season. As such, sport administrators are uniquely placed to offer an insight into the effects of parental behaviour at children's sporting events.

Methods

This qualitative phase of the thesis drew upon Foucauldian notions of discourse analysis to analyse a focus group interview conducted with sport administrators. The target population for this study were sport administrators involved in the organisation and coordination of children's (ages 6 to 11 years) team sports in two districts of Greater Auckland.

Participants

A process of purposive sampling was utilised to identify eight sports administrators, drawn from RSOs and a Sports Trust responsible for the coordination and delivery of the four team sports that were the focus of this thesis. The criteria used to select participants were that they were primarily involved in children's (ages 6 to 11 years) sport, and had experience working with a range of stakeholders including club representatives, managers, referees, coaches, and parents.

Procedure

Four RSOs representing each of the four team sports were approached and invited to nominate administrators heavily involved in the coordination of children's sport (ages 6 to 11 years) to participate. One of the RSOs representing touch rugby did not respond to either e-mail or telephone request, so a Sports Trust that co-ordinated

touch rugby and soccer tournaments in the same region was invited to nominate participants.

A total of between five and eight participants have been identified as an optimal size for an effective focus group (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001). Thus eight administrators were invited to participate in the focus group, two representing each of the team sports involved in this thesis. All eight administrators were extremely keen to participate, although due to competing commitments it was only possible to bring five participants together for the focus group meeting. One participant represented rugby union (male), one participant represented a sports trust coordinating touch rugby and soccer (female), two participants represented netball (male and female), and another participant represented soccer (female).

Conducting the Focus Group Interview

The focus group meeting was conducted at AUT University, Auckland. One focus group meeting was conducted and facilitated by the principal researcher. Three focus statements were written on a whiteboard at the beginning of the meeting. The statements were expressed as follows:

What I am specifically interested in is:

- How parental behaviour impacts upon you as a sport administrator.

- Your perception of how parental behaviour impacts upon children's sporting experiences.

- Your perception of what factors influence these parental behaviours.

The focus group meeting was scheduled to run for between 60 and 90 minutes in line with recommendations by Bloor et al. (2001). However, participants were keen to

continue for longer than scheduled, and the meeting ran for almost two hours. After transcription and preliminary analysis, follow-up conversations were held with individual members of the group to elicit clarification and further illumination on various aspects of the data. The final transcription of the focus group meeting was distributed to all participants for feedback to serve the purpose of what Maxwell (2009) refers to as respondent validation (member checking).

Participants were asked to describe their experiences, both positive and negative, of parental involvement in sport. The aim was to gain an insight into the processes that influence parental behaviour in relation to children's sport. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants expressed the view that they had found the meeting informative and of value as they had little opportunity to meet and have discussions with people involved with the organisation of other sports. The focus group meeting was audio tape recorded and transcribed with fully informed consent for all aspects of this research having been provided by all participants (see the section on ethics in Chapter 3).

Theoretical Framework

The term discourse, in the context of this study, refers to Foucault's idea of discourse as opposed to the purely linguistic meaning more commonly applied to the term, especially in relation to discourse analysis. Foucault (1969/2002, p. 54) speaks of discourse as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak". Thus objects, statements, and ways of thinking are produced and given meaning by discourse. The focus of this phase of the thesis was on analysing the identities, speaking and power positions each identified discourse offered its various speakers. In relation to sport, what we think, speak, and understand about sport operates within a discursive framework. This discursive framework both enables and sets the limits of our understandings of ourselves as athletes, players, referees, coaches, or administrators in sport. However,

Foucault (1976/1981) noted that there are often contradictory discourses and as a consequence "subject positions are never stable" (Pringle, 2001, p. 426). A child's sporting experience would appear to occur within a number of overlapping but competing and often contradictory discourses. This statement would be true, whether we are talking about children's experiences in sport, or any other aspect of social life. However in sport the clash of these discourses appears to create hugely conflicting experiences, with discourses pulling parents and coaches in a number of directions.

The method of analysis adopted involved repeated close readings of the transcript of the focus group meeting. In adopting a Foucauldian concept of discourse, the text was read and reread to identify how discourses were revealed and played out through participants' words. The analysis focused on the ways in which the participants constructed sport and children as discursive objects. Three predominant discourses were identified (these were verified by an academic colleague experienced in discourse analysis who I worked closely with during the analytical phase of this component of the thesis) and then the social and power relations that each identifiable discourse offers its subjects (children, parents, and coaches) were examined. Operating within this Foucauldian concept of discourse, there was a focus on how a discourse creates objects and subjects (Potter, 2004). Potter noted that the purpose of discourse analysis using this approach is to make visible the ways in which discourse is central to actions, and to illuminate the ways it is used to constitute events and identities. As noted by Pringle (2001) an advantage of Foucauldian theorising is in the ability to recognise how competing discourses can create tensions and a range of apparently contradictory experiences for subjects. This analysis attempts to show how discourses compete and collide with one another.

Competing Discourses in Children's Sport

In the context of sport, discourses shape the framework in which parents, coaches, and children create their identities. Three dominant discourses emerged from the analysis which produce a network of power relationships and may influence a child's sporting experience. The three discourses deployed by the participants were what I have called: a progressive-developmental discourse; a competitive discourse; and to a lesser extent, a discourse of sport as fun. This is not to lay claim that these are the only discourses of children's sport, but these were the dominant discourses identified through the words of the participants. These discourses result in three different and competing constructions of sport: sport as a developmental vehicle; sport as winning; and sport as fun. The child is also created as a subject differently by these discourses.

The Progressive-Developmental Discourse

Participants spoke of children's sport as playing a key role primarily in the development of a child as a long term player of the sport. This long-term developmental approach, with a focus on athlete learning, takes into account the developmental stages of childhood: cognitively, emotionally, and physically. This discourse is revealed in the following excerpt:

> Rugby: [...] if we are selfish as a rugby union we want ALL the kids playing the game to learn all the skills and to be in a position when they go to secondary school and beyond to actually continue playing…
>
> [...]
>
> Netball: [...] teach the kids to love the game, enjoy it and stick with it for life […]
>
> Rugby: You go along, you play, you learn the skills, that's been something that's implemented from the NZRU [New Zealand Rugby Union]. They have set rules and structure, developmental guidelines for junior rugby. So for 5 and 6 year olds, these are the rules, these are the playing dimensions etc., and it goes

on a step by step continuum. The idea being the focus is on coach education. It means that 5 and 6 year olds, you tell the coach, because we have compulsory coaching courses, all you have to teach your kids are to catch, pass, and to play rippa rugby, which is non-contact for 5 or 6 year old, and if you can do that over the 2 year period then you've done your job.

Here the child is constructed as an athlete who will progressively develop the skills necessary to be a competent player of the game. It is hoped in turn that this will encourage ongoing participation and commitment to the game. A nurturing aspect emerges here where a child-centred approach to coaching is advocated, which takes into consideration the physical, social and emotional development of the child.

Much of the individual sports' coaching literature advocates a similar philosophical position. Netball New Zealand's first stated objective in their guidelines for junior netball to "provide the best possible experiences for all young netballers in order to encourage lifelong participation" (Netball New Zealand, 2008, p. 2) is a typical example. The construction of children's sport within the progressive-developmental discursive framework is driven by a desire to play a holistic developmental role in a range of dimensions and is seemingly child-centred. It is inter-connected with the fun discourse (explained below), getting the children to love and enjoy the game, but in essence what emerges is a desire to develop better players who in turn will contribute to the long term development of their respective sports. By nurturing a love for the game, there is the added benefit that children will stay with that sport as they get older. The more people who continue to be involved with a particular sport, the stronger that sport will become. In effect, the progressive-developmental discourse is sport centred. There is a genuine concern that a child should enjoy their experience but ultimately the adoption of a child-centred approach is a means to an end.

The Competitive Discourse

Participants also spoke of sport as a competitive activity. The following excerpt illustrates how coaches and parents who are heavily influenced by this competitive discourse can shape a child's experience of sport.

Touch Rugby: Parents and coaches can be very competitive, especially if it is the parents' first experience with their children in the sport. They come in very competitive thinking that the win is all that matters. It's when a lot of the one-eyed business comes in and parents' willingness to bend the rules to suit their child or the outcome of the game is incredible.

Rugby: There was an issue with one of the coaches I spoke to and he sort of said to me "I started playing [the better] guys for longer and longer because we wanted to win".

Here the touch rugby administrator is referring to experiences associated with sport for children aged 5 and 6 years. Already the 'win' is all important. From a parent or coach influenced by this competitive discourse, the child's long term development as a player is secondary to the short term goal of winning each game. The administrators attributed much of the excessive behaviour they were concerned about to parents or coaches who viewed sport as a competitive activity with the primary outcome of winning. This focus on winning condones or creates the space for manipulation of the rules. The construction of sport within this discourse is more adult centred than child centred. The child's identity is that of 'good' player or 'bad' player, with their worth being measured by their contribution to the team. This focus on winning can lead to children who are perceived to be less 'able' getting less game time than other more skilled and 'effective' players.

The Fun Discourse

A third way in which sport was spoken of by the participants was of sport as fun. It is interesting to note that when the focus group participants referred to 'sport as fun' it

was always in the context of what the children wanted, as opposed to what coaches or parents wanted.

> Netball: The kids just want to play netball, and want to have some fun. Just let them have a bit of fun.

> Rugby: If you got twenty kids together, chuck them a ball and said go and make up a game, they will end up making a game that's somehow manipulated to their benefit. They'll play a game and all have fun.

Coaches influenced by this discourse create a version of sport which is child-centred and is primarily a source of enjoyment for the child. The child as a subject of this discourse, is not an 'athlete' or a 'player', but simply a child playing a game for enjoyment. What is also apparent here is that there is a belief that if the children were given the power to determine and shape the rules of their game, the version of sport that would be constructed could be quite different from the highly regulated version of sport commonly experienced.

When Discourses Collide

Although we can position individuals within particular discourses, we are often subjects of more than one discourse (Grant, 2005). The following excerpt illustrates a collision between the progressive-developmental and competitive discourses:

> Rugby: …we call it the Jonah Lomu syndrome whereby in junior rugby you can win every game if you have a big kid, a fast kid and a kid that can pass and kick. Basically, you tell the kid that can pass, pass to the fast kid and tell the fast kid to run around everyone. You tell the big kid that as soon as he gets the ball to run straight through. What that does over a long period of time it teaches the big kid to hold the ball and run straight, the fast kid to run around everyone, and the small kid to pass every time. As they grow up and everyone matures and develops they don't have any skills to play the game at a higher level and so

they drop out. So our thing is trying to keep as many people involved in our sport, or any sport, as long as possible.

[....] I mean the outcome is really irrelevant; it's about the development of the players.

Although the initial aim of the focus group meeting was on parental influences, what quickly emerged was concern over the behaviour of the volunteer parent-coach. The New Zealand Rugby Union, from an administrative perspective, has clear guidelines for clubs and coaches on adopting a developmental approach to children's rugby. However, the participants observed that coaches often develop practices that embody the competitive discourse. If the coach simply wanted to win every game they got the 'stronger' players in their team to do what they already innately did best, whether that was running straight because they were bigger, or running around because they were faster. The Rugby Union in New Zealand have identified that this short term focus on winning each and every game is at the cost of long term skill and player development.

The effect of the collision between the progressive-developmental and competitive discourses on the child would not appear to be a positive one for administrators. As evidenced in other studies, the potential results of over-competitive behaviours by coaches include increased anxiety for children, and an increase in the number of children who withdraw from organised sport (Smith et al., 2007). It is, in effect, a lose-lose situation. Fun does not enter the equation. If it does, it relates to the enjoyment associated with competing and winning. Working with clubs and coaches influenced strongly by the competitive discourse caused frustration for administrators:

Rugby: When I go to junior coach and managers' meetings, the biggest thing I get is "PC [politically correct] bullshit!" It's the thing they throw at me all the

time, but for us it creates long term effects. By being overly competitive it means that more people are going to be put off the sport long term.

The feeling that sport is purely about winning can be deeply entrenched. Anything that is seen to challenge that dominant discourse is deemed to be 'soft' or written off and labelled as politically correct. There is a clash predominantly between the developmental and competitive discourses. It is interesting that the fun discourse is almost marginalised, although it is consistently referred to by the participants as what the children would want.

> Netball: Kids just want to have fun.
>
> Soccer: Not all kids though. No, a lot of kids are competitive and they want to go hard.

As the effects of these discourses collide, it does not seem possible for sport to be about competition, development and fun at the same time. It is interesting to observe how competing discourses can create what would appear to be contradictory experiences and identities (Pringle, 2001). Each sport, each club, and each coach for each team can operate differently and be influenced to a lesser and greater extent by different discourses. In addition, a child, season by season, may have widely contradictory experiences depending on the philosophy of their coach. Although the sporting organisations facilitate and organise the sport, parents and volunteer parent-coaches hold considerable power in shaping the children's experience of the game itself. While an organisation can advocate a developmental approach where the focus is not solely on winning, the competitive discourse is perceived by administrators to be the dominant one being played out by coaches and parents on the court, field, or sidelines. Rugby union and netball, as organisations, hold compulsory coaching sessions for all potential coaches. At these sessions they can attempt to influence coaches to 'buy into'

their developmental philosophy. Other sports, however, do not have compulsory coaching sessions.

The competitive discourse is evident in the apparent concern revealed in the words of the participants that if children are not taught how to win, they will never develop a competitive edge. In rugby union, in the area that this research was conducted, "non-competitive" rugby has been introduced for the younger age groups (5 to 11 years of age). No league tables are maintained and no points are awarded for a win, draw or loss. Another rugby initiative is trying to keep games level so games are not too one-sided. If a score exceeds a differential of 35 points at half time the coaches are encouraged to come together and come up with strategies to even out the game.

> Rugby: We monitor the scores, and if it's a 110-nil we'll go hang on a minute, what's going on in this team? But we've had situations where a kid will make a break, and the coach will go "no, no, no" so the kid will put the ball down in the middle of the field and wait for the opposition to come and get it, so they don't get past that 35 point threshold, so they can absolutely thrash them in the second half!
>
> Soccer: But teaching parents, educating parents, to understand that the kids aren't learning anything when it is a thrashing is a real challenge isn't it?
>
> Rugby: Yes and some coaches will go "Nah, it's a good lesson for them, you know, for the boys, they're going to lose and they'll do it with pride".

Here again, the dominant discourses clash. Irrespective of the structures put in place, coaches manipulate the rules to their own ends. The competitive discourse competes for ascendency through the actions of the coaches. From a Foucauldian perspective, the child is both the object, and subject on which these discourses are exercised, and is caught between these conflicting discourses.

There would also appear to be a perception that there is a threshold age when the focus of sport changes from 'fun' to being 'serious'. With the exception of the rugby union participant who advocated a developmental approach throughout childhood, participants from other sports appeared to feel that the focus for sport becomes more competitive at around the ages of 10 or 11 years. The following excerpt reveals again the almost binary opposition that emerges between winning and fun:

> Netball: The older kids want to win but the little kids […]
>
> Soccer: Oh well, I'm talking about the 11 year olds.
>
> Netball: I'm talking about my daughter now, she's played since she was little, right through till 15 and plays really competitive now and had some really good coaches and doing really well and you know she started out for fun and now….
>
> Soccer: I totally agree, they get to a certain age and they want to start to play their best.

Many of the participants reveal here how they are caught and move between the three discourses and are unable to place themselves firmly in any one discourse. Sport for children starts off being about fun, but as the children get older it is perceived by the administrators to be more about competition and winning. It is interesting how it is assumed that at some stage the children's ideas about winning will eventually align with the sport as competition discourse when they will want to win themselves. The discourses of fun, competition and development, as revealed in the participants' words, are distinct and compete with each other. However, the dominance of the competitive discourse emerges through the assumption that for the children, sport will eventually be primarily about winning.

Discourse and Power

These discursive practices produce relations of power (Pringle, 2001). A Foucauldian perspective does not conceive power as something that is possessed or

repressive; rather it is unstable, flexible, and practised (Kendall & Wickham, 1999) and importantly, it can be resisted (Foucault, 1980). Children's sport discourses both produce and are played out within a complex web of power relationships, involving a diverse range of groups and individuals including national and local government, regional sport organisations, national and regional governing bodies for individual sports, clubs, schools, coaches, parents, and children themselves. It is through these relations of power that discourses are created, and as a consequence our understanding and notions of truth are constructed (Foucault, 1980; Nicholls, 2008). What emerges from the analysis of the data is that parent-coaches hold considerable power in determining the nature of a child's sporting experience. The 'truth' about children's sport for many of these coaches would appear to be that sport is a competitive outcome-driven construct, primarily focused on winning.

The profile of a volunteer coach would appear to be fairly consistent across all the team sports represented. Coaches often were identified as being parents of children who are held to be more skilled and talented than their peers at their chosen sport.

Soccer: When I took over, every convenor for each (age) grade had a kid in the top team in that grade, their kids are high performers and they [the parents] generally end up running the grade. The big challenge is getting the parents of the developing kids involved.

In 2000, the new Labour government initiated a complete review of the delivery of sport in New Zealand (Sam & Jackson, 2004). The resulting Ministerial Taskforce on Sport, Fitness and Leisure produced a report in 2001 which proposed a number of recommendations relating to the structure of sport delivery. A major proposal was a call for Regional Sport Trusts to lead and unify the currently fragmented local sport sector. There are a range of powerful legitimated bodies therefore, attempting to influence the

delivery of children's sport. There is a clash however, between the discourses influencing policy, and the delivery of sport at grassroots level, even for children as young as 5 years of age.

Theoretically, one would imagine that sports administrators hold considerable power. They are responsible for implementing their national and regional sports organisation policies, they implement the structure of the competitions children play in, and they deal with complaints about inappropriate behaviours. However, a sense of helplessness and an inability to influence coach behaviour emerged from some administrators:

> Netball: [...] what happens is that [the children] have good coaches and then next year they don't and then parents become really frustrated because these are the things they've done last time, or last year or been done in the past and then you see your kids lose interest in a sport because all of a sudden they don't have that same coach which is a shame.

Here the netball administrator talks about "good" coaches and "bad" coaches as though this is the way it is and there is nothing that she can do to influence this lack of continuity or consistency. The soccer representative was even more forthright about her inability to influence change:

> Soccer: Exactly, like in my situation with this tournament, I had no clout to say – "no, you're not going to do that, you are representing the club, you are going to do what we're asking you to do", which would have been the better thing for the club. I couldn't do that.

This feeling of helplessness and inability to enforce consistency and rules emerged for all administrators when they talked about dealing with coaches. Children's

sport relies heavily on the goodwill of volunteers to keep going (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010e). As volunteers are giving up their free time, they are not really accountable to anybody; especially it would appear, to the organisations they are volunteering for. With the exception of rugby union, little evidence emerged of cohesive strategies put in place by the sporting organisations to make volunteers accountable for their actions.

> Rugby: Most of our volunteers like our coaches or referees are in that same position like, I'm a volunteer, I don't need to take this, I'll drop out. [...] I get people questioning me all the time. "Can we change that? Why can't we do that?" I say, well it's the New Zealand Rugby Union, it's our rules. We run and govern rugby in our area and these clubs are part of our area and so if you join that club, so you buy into how we run this sport and we buy into the NZRU. They [the NZRU] make the rules [but] I think it's such a hard thing to try and disperse all that information out.

Thompson (1988) has noted that rugby union has been commonly cited as not just being New Zealand's national sport, but as the country's major passion and religion. It has also been associated closely with New Zealand males' sense of identity (Pringle, 2001). The NZRU is the most powerful and affluent team sports organisation in New Zealand. In spite of even their resources, this full time sports administrator expressed his frustration with volunteers. Foucault (1976/1981) noted that wherever there is power, there is also resistance. This resistance is nowhere more visible than in the actions of volunteer coaches, who clearly act in ways that contravene the guidelines laid down to them by their governing bodies.

A child also, should not be viewed as powerless. Children in fact, as they get older have the potential to resist and exercise their power by refusing to play or withdrawing from playing sport. A key focus for the administrators was on encouraging

children to remain involved in their sport long term. Increasingly in New Zealand, it appears that as children move into their teenage years they are exercising their power by opting out of structured sport activities controlled by adults (Thomson, 2000).

Reflections on the Implications for Children's Sport

In their guidelines for children's sport, the majority of sports are heavily influenced by the progressive-developmental discourse. However, in the words of administrators who are closely involved in creating the structure in which children's sport takes place, contradictions emerge revealing the conflict between the progressive-developmental, competitive, and fun discourses. These administrators are at the 'coal-face' of children's sport, and as a consequence are confronted with the excesses of parental behaviour. The child also, is vulnerable to the tensions that play themselves out in the subject positions adopted by governing bodies, administrators, coaches and parents. Although the policy documents of sports organisations reflect the progressive-developmental discourse for children, the structures that are put in place for many sports, including grades, leagues, and representative competitions, are influenced by the competitive discourse. It would seem logical that the behaviour of parents or coaches that administrators are concerned about simply reflects the structures that are put in place. Competitive structures will lead to competitive and at times, *excessively* competitive behaviour. Even when progressive-developmental structures are put in place, such as 'non-competition rugby', coaches and parents who are more heavily influenced by the competitive discourse can undermine the intended outcomes.

The competitive structures that are put in place do not reflect the apparent developmental goals of the organisations. In addition, parents and coaches strongly influenced by the competitive discourse show resistance to the developmental discourse. An almost binary opposition emerges where sport apparently cannot be about both

development and winning. Little evidence emerges that the playing of sport is primarily a source of intrinsic enjoyment that is not outcome dependent.

These tensions and contradictions are played out both on the sports field and on the children. The sports field is not an exclusive place that allows certain discourses to be or not to be. Conflicting messages from coaches and parents influenced by different discourses potentially create confusing experiences for young children. The confusion that appears to surround children's sport creates a space where what is perceived by the administrators to be undesirable adult behaviour can emerge. Any adult behaviour that belittles children, and physically and verbally abuses referees, gives cause for concern. Unless sport governing bodies can negotiate a clear pathway between these discourses, and create clarity and clearly defined structures and processes for volunteers, a child will continue to be vulnerable to the more aggressive behaviours arising from the clashes of these dominant discourses.

Limitations

There is no explicit claim about the generalisability of these findings. Although the study design attempted to draw upon a purposive sample, an element of researcher control was lost when responsibility lay with the sporting organisations to nominate participants. The final sample that emerged could perhaps better be described as a convenience sample. It would appear, however, that this group is important in offering an insight into the effect of parental influences on children's sport. Sport administrators are caught in the middle so to speak, charged with the implementation of policies handed down by their national organising bodies, and dealing with volunteer coaches and parents at the grassroots level of sport. There is little evidence to indicate that sport administrators, although uniquely placed to offer an insight into children's sport, have

participated in research in this area. As such this study may provide potentially illuminating insights from an under-researched population.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of a focus group interview held with sport administrators. Three pre-dominant discourses emerged from the analysis: a progressive-developmental discourse; a competitive discourse; and a discourse relating to fun. Through the words of these administrators the collision and competition between these discourses becomes visible in the practices and behaviours exhibited by organisations, coaches, and parents. Although the initial focus of this thesis was on parental behaviour, what emerged from this initial study was a major concern over the behaviour of coaches. This concern about the significance of inappropriate coaching practices caused a re-evaluation of the focus of this thesis and as a consequence shaped the development and implementation of the next phase of this thesis, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Parental Observational Instrument at Sporting Events

Introduction

This chapter presents the results from prospectively collected verbal behaviours, using a systematic observation instrument, of coaches of children (aged $6 - 11$ years) at games/matches for four sports codes conducted in the Greater Auckland area.[2]

The original focus of this thesis was on parental behaviour at children's team sporting events in New Zealand and arose from an apparent lack of empirical evidence relating to the prevalence and nature of parental behaviours. As such, the original intent of the design of POISE was to specifically observe parental behaviour. These observations were intended to build upon previous use of POISE in New Zealand by Kidman et al. (1999). However, the initial focus group conducted with the sport administrators (discussed in Chapter 4) revealed a greater concern with the behaviour of sports coaches than with the touchline behaviours of parents. As a consequence, the design of the use of POISE was adapted to focus on observations of coaches rather than parents. It is important to note, however, as identified by the sport administrators, that the majority of people who volunteer as coaches in young children's sport are also parents. As there was no evidence of any previous recorded observations of coaching behaviours in children's sport in New Zealand, this shift of focus allowed for an opportunity to set a benchmark for the nature and prevalence of such behaviours. A number of studies have focused on the causes of inappropriate behaviour in children's sport settings, but few have examined the frequency of such behaviours (Shields et al., 2005).

---

[2] An article based on the findings of these observations is currently under review with the journal Psychology of Sport and Exercise (Walters, Schluter, Thomson, & Payne, Under submission).

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, coaches play a significant role in nurturing not only a child's enjoyment of sport, but their behaviours have been identified as being influential in determining whether a child will continue participating in sport as they move into adolescence (Keegan et al., 2009). Media reports in New Zealand have increasingly highlighted concerns over inappropriate coach behaviour at children's sporting events (Robertson, 2009) and therefore the focus of this phase of the thesis was on establishing the exact nature of coach behaviour. The impact of over-competitive coaching behaviours on children have been related to feelings of low self-esteem and increased stress for children (Petlichkoff, 1993). Using a scientifically robust epidemiological design and instrument, the objective was to measure and compare the prevalence, pattern and nature of coaches' verbal behaviours at children's events for four major team sports. The first purpose was to measure and compare the frequency and rate of coach comments across four sports. The differences in the rate of comments and the distribution of comment type across the four sports were also examined. The influence of potential predictive variables on the positive and negative comments made by coaches; particularly sport, athlete age, coach gender, and game result were determined. Finally, the differences in the frequency and distribution of the target of negative comments made by coaches across the four team sports were examined. The use of the observation instrument employed in this phase of the thesis differed from previous research in that coach behaviour was observed as opposed to adult spectator behaviour, as was done in the studies by Walley, Graham and Forehand (1982) and Randall and McKenzie (1987), and parental behaviour, as in the studies by Kidman et al. (1999) and Blom and Drane (2008). A number of previous studies have observed and recorded coach behaviours, for an example see Conroy and Coatsworth (2004), and considerable work has been undertaken examining the effect of coaching behaviours on the athlete (Cumming, Smoll, Smith, & Grossbard, 2007; Smith et al.,

2007). However, in this phase of the thesis the specific interest was in benchmarking and examining the differences between coach behaviours across different team sports.

Methods

This phase of the thesis adopted a cross-sectional observational study of children's team sport coaches stratified across four team sports: netball, rugby union, soccer, and touch rugby in the 2008-2009 seasons. The study was originally designed to have equally sized strata with 20 games per sport, 80 in total. The target population for this study were coaches of children's (ages 6 to 11 years) team sports in two districts in the Greater Auckland area.

Participants

The aim was to observe eighty different coaches of children's team sports, 20 per sport, selected from published fixture lists.

Observation Instrument

The systematic observation instrument employed was initially designed to record adult spectator behaviour at children's sports games (Graham et al., 1982; Walley et al., 1982). The instrument was subsequently adopted by Randall and McKenzie (1987) to record adult spectator behaviour at youth soccer games. These studies all employed interval recording of adult spectator behaviour. Kidman et al. (1999) adapted this earlier instrument and developed the POISE to record and analyse the nature of parents' comments at children's sport competitions. Kidman et al.'s use of POISE differed from previous studies in that it employed a system of event recording, and focused specifically on parents rather than on adult spectators. The POISE, as designed by Kidman et al., was subsequently used to observe parental behaviour in children's sport in the US by Blom and Drane (2008). This system of event recording was also utilised in this phase of the thesis as it was felt that the observation and

recording of all events that occurred during an entire game would reveal a more complete picture of coach behaviour than would be the case if an interval recording approach was adopted.

The POISE is used to record the following information:

- all comments made by the coaches under observation;

- the target of the coach's comment (e.g. player, referee, team etc.);

- the event (e.g. ball in play, penalty, goal etc.) that is occurring as the comment is made;

- the outcome of the game (win, loss or draw);

- coach gender;

- duration of game in minutes.

The nature of the comments are categorised as *Positive*, *Negative,* or *Neutral.* The nature of recorded comments are broken down into sub-categories as follows:

Positive

- *Reinforcing:* A supportive comment such as "well done".

- *Hustle:* A motivating comment such as "go, go, go".

Negative

- *Correcting:* A comment made which establishes that a specific action was not satisfactory and should be altered, such as "you need to shoot earlier". The comment is made in an unsupportive manner with no supporting positive comment such as "bad luck" or "good effort" before providing the corrective feedback (as has been recommended by Smoll and Smith (2006)).

- *Scolding:* Where a player is criticised.

- *Witticism:* A comment often involving sarcasm or ridicule, such as "Oh great shot" when the shot has been anything but.

- *Contradicting:* A comment that may vary from positive to negative, and may be confusing for a player, e.g. "Tackle, that's it, no you committed yourself too early".

Neutral

- *Instructional:* telling the player what to do e.g. "Play it forward".

- *Direct Question:* e.g. "Do you want to come off?"

- *Indirect Question:* a question aimed at a player but not relating to this event e.g. "Who will be at training next week?"

- *Rhetorical Question*: a question requiring no answer e.g. "Where's the passing today?"

- *Social:* any comment not related to the event e.g. "Let's get a coffee after".

- *Other:* any comment that does not fit into any other category.

In the previous New Zealand study using POISE (Kidman et al., 1999), and in the study by Blom and Drane (2008), instructional comments were classified as negative, as from an athlete-centred coaching perspective telling children what to do takes away from the athlete's decision-making process (Kidman et al., 1999; Martens, 2004). Kidman et al. argued that when a child is simply told what to do learning is inhibited. For this phase of the thesis the instrument has been adapted and instructional comments are categorised as neutral. The rationale for adapting the instrument draws upon previous research relating to the benefits of effective instruction. Instruction in

itself is neither negative nor positive. As pointed out by Smoll and Smith (2006) *skilled* instruction can enhance athletic potential. Smoll and Smith's Coach Effectiveness Training programme (CET) advocated that when coaches instruct, they should do so in a positive and encouraging way. When coaches adopt this approach instruction can be beneficial and have a positive impact on the athlete. However, when a coach simply repeatedly tells an athlete what to do, particularly if the athlete knows they have made a poor decision, this can lead to athletes becoming irritated (Smoll & Smith, 2006) and can have a negative impact on athlete confidence and development (Kidman, 2005; Kidman et al., 1999). When recording coach comments using POISE, the tone adopted by the coach was also taken into consideration. For example, a simple instruction to "play it forward" would be recorded as instructional. A coach dissatisfied or frustrated with the performance of a player and subsequently yelling "PLAY IT FORWARD" would be recorded as scolding and negative.

Procedure

After gaining full permission from the sports bodies responsible for the administration of the four team sports for their games to be observed in this study, details of their fixture lists for children's (ages 6 to 11 years) games for the coming season were requested and provided. Dates and venues were identified for recording and matches were pre-selected for observation from the fixture lists to ensure a spread of age representation. The observer at the game then selected a coach for observation during the team talk stage immediately prior to the game. During data collection every comment made by the coach under observation, the target of the comment and the event were recorded by the observer into a voice recorder. The recordings were subsequently transcribed and coded into an Excel spreadsheet.

With 80 weekend and/or evening matches to be observed across the four sports, the data gathering in this phase of the thesis involved a significant time commitment. As a consequence, a research assistant was employed to assist with the observations and the recording of data. The principal researcher and research assistant conducted the initial pre-testing of the instrument observing and recording the comments made by one coach at two separate soccer games. The results were compared to review inter-coder reliability. During this pre-testing phase, points of discrepancy between our results were discussed and reviewed before the main study was initiated. We subsequently separately attended selected games for the four sports and recorded the verbal comments made by a targeted coach. To ensure comments were being audio tape-recorded in a consistent manner and to establish inter-coder reliability, we recorded comments for the same coach at two different games. The recorded results were then compared and inter-observer reliability was established at 92%, which is an acceptably high level of agreement for an observation instrument (Herson & Barlow, 1984). The formula used to determine inter-observer reliability was as used by Kidman and McKenzie (1996) and as recommended by Siedentop (1991).

On completion of the initial analysis of the data a preliminary summary report of the findings was sent out to each of the participating sporting organisations (see Appendix G).

Data Analysis

Comments were recorded and converted into codes and tabulated representing the nature of the comment, the target of the comment, and the event. Fisher's exact and chi-square (χ^2) tests were used to compare distributions of categorical variables across the four sports. Poisson regressions were used to estimate and compare rates of comments per minute between sports treating game length, which varied between

sports, as an exposure variable. The effects of child's age, gender of the coach, game result, and the team sport played on the rate of comments per minute were also investigated using Poisson regression. All analyses were performed using Stata version 10.0 (StataCorp, College Station, TX, USA) and a level of 5% was used to define statistical significance.

Results

In total, 72 matches and coaches were observed including 19 netball coaches (18 female, 1 male), 18 rugby union coaches (all male), 17 soccer coaches (4 female, 13 male), and 18 touch rugby coaches (8 female, 10 male). The study design intention to observe a total of 80 matches was not ultimately possible within the time constraints of this phase of the thesis due to a range of factors including adverse weather conditions, researcher illness, and game cancellations.

The Prevalence of Coaches' Comments

Overall, 10,697 coach comments were observed and recorded. The number of comments recorded for rugby union coaches (4,033) was greater than for any of the other sports observed, although the length of game time observed was also greater for rugby (Table 1).

Poisson regression analysis revealed that, on average, 4.38 (95% confidence interval (CI): 4.25, 4.52) coach comments per minute were made in rugby union; a rate significantly higher than the other three sports ($p < 0.01$). In contrast, the average rate of comments per minute for netball, touch rugby, and soccer were similar, ranging from 3.29 (95% CI: 3.15, 3.43) in soccer to 3.49 (95% CI: 3.36, 3.63) for netball (Table 1).

Coaches made regular verbal comments throughout all of the 72 games observed. The lowest rate of comments was recorded for a netball coach of 10 to 11-year old girls. This coach only made 46 comments in a 40 minute game, a rate of 1.15

comments per minute. The most vocal coach was the coach of a 6-year old mixed soccer team. During the 30 minute game, this coach made 266 comments, at a rate of nearly 9 comments per minute.

Table 1: *Number of Games Observed, Total Comments Recorded, Total Number of Minutes Observed and Rate of Comments per Minute*

Sport	Games	Comments	Minutes	Rate *(95% CI)* [a]
Netball	19	2,656	760	3.49 *(3.36 - 3.63)*
Rugby	18	4,033	920	4.38 *(4.25 - 4.52)*
Soccer	17	2,169	660	3.29 *(3.15 -3.43)*
Touch	18	1,839	540	3.41 *(3.25 -3.56)*
Total	72	10,697	2,880	3.71 *(3.64 -3.79)*

[a] Rate is number of comments per minute

A breakdown of the nature of comments made by coaches revealed that the most common type of comment fell into the neutral category (43.0%). These were predominantly comprised of instructional comments (n = 4,437, 96.4%). Positive comments accounted for 35.4% of total comments made and negative comments for 21.6% of the overall total (Table 2).

Table 2: *Number and Percentage of Categories of Coaches' Comments*

Nature	Verbal Behaviour	Number of Comments	Total Comments	
			n	*(%)*
Positive			3,785	*(35.4)*
	Reinforcing	1,984		
	Hustle	1,801		
Negative			2,310	*(21.6)*
	Correcting	744		
	Scolding	1,520		
	Witticism	37		
	Contradicting	9		
Neutral			4,602	*(43.0)*
	Instruction	4,437		
	Direct Question	88		
	Indirect Question	0		
	Rhetorical Question	6		
	Social	2		
	Other	69		
Total			10,697	

A further breakdown of the comments by sport revealed significant differences in the pattern of comments between sports ($p < 0.01$). Rugby union coaches recorded the lowest percentage of positive comments (26.5%) and the highest percentage of negative (23.0%) and neutral comments (50.5%), whereas soccer recorded the highest

percentage of positive (46.8%) and the lowest percentage of negative comments (19.8%), (Table 3).

Table 3: *Number and Percentage of Coaches' Comments by Sport*

Sport	Positive Comments		Negative Comments		Neutral Comments		Total
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	
Netball	1,037	*(39.0)*	540	*(20.3)*	1,079	*(40.6)*	2,656
Rugby	1,069	*(26.5)*	926	*(23.0)*	2,038	*(50.5)*	4,033
Soccer	1,016	*(46.8)*	429	*(19.8)*	724	*(33.4)*	2,169
Touch	663	*(36.1)*	415	*(22.6)*	761	*(41.4)*	1,839
Total	3,785	*(35.4)*	2,310	*(21.6)*	4,602	*(43.0)*	10,697

Testing the Effects of Sport, Athlete Age, Coach Gender and Game Result on Positive Comments

Poisson regression analysis found no significant difference in positive comments by sports ($p = 0.06$), by age of child athlete ($p = 0.14$), or by coach gender ($p = 0.82$). However, a significant difference in positive comments by game result (win, lose, or draw) was observed. Using 'winning' as the reference category, incidence rate ratios of positive comments were 0.85 (95% CI: 0.68, 1.06) when the team lost and 1.30 (95% CI: 0.95, 1.79) when the team drew. This implies that when the team was losing, the rate of positive comments made by the coach on average dropped by 15% compared to

a team that was winning. The rate of positive comments increased in extremely close games (when a team drew).

Testing the Effects of Sport, Athlete Age, Coach Gender and Game Result on Negative Comments

Poisson regression analysis found a significant difference in the effects of the sport played on negative comments ($p < 0.01$). Using 'netball' as the reference category, incidence rate ratio of negative comments were 1.70 (95% CI: 1.20, 2.39) for rugby union, 0.90 (95% CI: 0.60, 1.35) for soccer, and 0.88 (95% CI: 0.62, 1.25) for touch rugby. This implies that the rate of negative comments made by rugby union coaches were, on average, significantly higher than the other sports (70% higher than netball). No significant difference was evident in the rates of negative comments between the other three sports.

No significant difference was found in negative comments by athlete age ($p = 0.08$) or game result ($p = 0.39$), although, a significant difference ($p = 0.02$) in negative comments by coach gender was identified. Females had an incidence rate ratio of 0.71 (95% CI: 0.53, 0.95) to that of males. This implies that the rate of negative comments made by female coachers was 29% lower than negative comments made by male coaches. When both the sport and the coach gender were simultaneously included in a Poisson regression model the difference in negative comments between sports remained statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) but the gender of the coach was no longer significant ($p = 0.50$). While sport and gender are related, as seen in the beginning of the results section, this finding suggests that the sport played is the key driver of the negative comments made, rather than the gender of the coach.

The Target of Coaches' Comments

The frequency and distribution of the target of coaches' negative comments for each of the four sports is presented in Table 4. While a statistically significant difference emerged in the patterns of targeted negative comments ($p < 0.01$), these comments were predominantly aimed at the team as opposed to individual players in all four sports. The percentage of negative comments aimed at umpires and officials, however, was visibly higher in touch rugby (8.7%) and in rugby union (7.3%) than in netball (1.3%) and soccer (2.1%).

Table 4: *Target of Coaches' Negative Comments by Sport*

Target	Netball		Rugby		Soccer		Touch		Totals
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	
Team	312	*(57.8)*	482	*(52.1)*	262	*(61.1)*	307	*(74.0)*	1363
Player	218	*(40.4)*	372	*(40.2)*	158	*(36.8)*	71	*(17.1)*	819
Umpire	7	*(1.3)*	51	*(5.5)*	9	*(2.1)*	36	*(8.7)*	103
Official	0	*(0)*	17	*(1.8)*	0	*(0)*	0	*(0)*	17
Opposition	0	*(0)*	4	*(0.4)*	0	*(0)*	0	*(0)*	4
Other	3	*(0.5)*	0	*(0)*	0	*(0)*	1	*(0.2)*	4
Total	540		926		429		415		2,310

A further breakdown of the targets of negative comments also revealed variations across the four sports (Table 5). An analysis of the differences between sports in the rate of negative comments that targeted match officials revealed a significant difference ($p = 0.001$). Officials' decisions were challenged or criticised by coaches in

12 out of 18 of the games of rugby union observed, and 11 out of 18 of the games of touch rugby observed.

Further analysis of negative and positive comments targeting individual players showed that in the majority of games observed (60%), **at least** one individual player was on the receiving end of **only** negative comments. However, there was no significant difference between sports in the targeting of individual players with negative comments ($p = 0.08$).

Table 5: *Number of Games in which Umpires/Officials or Individual Children were the Target of Negative Comments*

Sport	Games Observed	Umpires / Officials [a]		(95% CI)	Individual Players [b]		(95% CI)
		n	(%)		n	(%)	
Netball	19	4	(21)	(6 - 46)	15	(79)	(54 - 94)
Rugby	18	12	(67)	(4 - 87)	12	(67)	(41 - 87)
Soccer	17	2	(12)	(0.01 - 36)	9	(53)	(28 - 77)
Touch	18	11	(61)	(36 - 83)	7	(39)	(17 - 64)
Total	72	29	(40)	(29 - 53)	43	(60)	(47 - 71)

[a] Number of games where officials were the target of negative comments

[b] Number of games where at least one individual player received negative comments only

Discussion

The national bodies of the four team sports included in this thesis all have guidelines for junior coaches on their websites (Netball New Zealand, 2010; New Zealand Football, 2010b; New Zealand Rugby Union, 2007; Touch NZ, 2009).

Coaching guidelines for children's sports in New Zealand would appear to be no different from guidelines elsewhere; for example, see guidelines from the American Youth Soccer Association website (Woitalla, 2009). All four bodies advocate coaching that is child-centred, promotes fun, maximum engagement and activity, and skill development through experiential learning. Yet, over one in every five comments made by coaches in all sports was negative. This ratio of negative comments has been shown to be unlikely to be conducive to or promote a positive environment for children (Randall, 1992). Indeed, punitive behaviours exhibited by coaches are more likely to induce feelings of resentment from athletes as opposed to improving performance, and have been identified as factors contributing to children withdrawing from sport (Smoll & Smith, 2006). In our comparison of sports, rugby union coaches recorded the lowest percentage of positive comments (26.5%) and the highest percentage of negative comments (23.0%).

Although the national and regional sporting organisations of the sports involved in this study highlight the need for coaches to focus on longer term skill development and less on the immediate game result, our study revealed that coaches across all sports made significantly less positive comments if their team was losing. Studies of participation motivation for children playing sport have consistently highlighted that the most important reasons for children (up to the age of 14 years) to play sport are for fun/excitement, skill development, action and the challenge (Barber et al., 1999), and these reasons are supported also in this thesis (see Chapter 7). Although winning has not been identified as being of over-riding importance to children, there is evidence to suggest that children realise that winning is important to adults (Siegenthaler & Gonzalez, 1997; Smoll & Smith, 2006). The decrease in positive comments identified when a team is losing would support the findings of Smoll and Smith and would indicate to the players that winning equals praise.

In relation to the negative comments made, a significant difference was identified in the rate of negative comments made by gender (male coaches made more negative comments than female coaches) and by sport played (rugby union coaches made more negative comments than coaches from the other three sports). However, coach gender and sport played is related. When investigated together, analysis revealed that it was the sports played rather than the coach's gender which was significantly associated with the rates of comments made. This suggests that it is the culture within the sport which drives the rates of coaches' comments.

The target of coaches' comments also revealed interesting variations across the four sports. In the games observed, negative comments aimed at the referee/umpire more commonly occurred in rugby union and in touch rugby. Some typical comments recorded were "Open your eyes ref" (rugby union) and "Come on ref we're not playing rugby here" (soccer). In three of the rugby union games observed, the referee had to speak to the coach to ask them to curb their comments. In one of the rugby union games an argument ensued between the coach and the referee which resulted in the coach walking his team off the field before the end of the game (this was in a junior 7-year old game). These findings support concerns expressed in a study commissioned by the English Football Association (FA) where a survey of stakeholders involved in children's sport found that 40% of respondents were concerned about swearing and abuse aimed at referees and coaches (Brackenridge et al., 2004). The delivery of children's sport relies heavily upon volunteer officials and Brackenridge et al. reported that the English FA were up to 50% short of referees and officials with the main reason cited for this shortfall being the abuse that referees were being subjected to from the sideline.

The analysis of negative comments targeting individual players was also illuminating. Bearing in mind the age of the children involved in the games observed (6-11 years of age) it should be noted that in ALL of the 72 games observed, at least one child was scolded for not following instructions correctly or for making a mistake. As seen in Table 5, the only comments that certain individual child players had directed at them in many games were negative in nature. As a consequence, several children's experience of a game in many instances was of simply being criticised or scolded. This was the case even in a number of games where coaches' comments were predominantly extremely positive and supportive. Remembering that these are young children who are still developing skills and learning their games in what is supposedly a fun environment, these findings give cause for concern. The environment for children's sport and overemphasis on competition and success by coaches has been linked to children's feelings of low self-esteem, dropout and stress (Siegenthaler & Gonzalez, 1997).

No evidence of a significant difference between sports in the targeting of individual players with negative comments ($p = 0.08$) was identified. The relatively small sample size for this aspect of the data may explain this non-significant finding as there appeared to be a wide range between the sports where individual children were the recipients of negative comments (netball 79% to touch rugby 39%). In the netball centre where the observations took place, there is a Task Force operating who patrol the courts to monitor the behaviour of spectators and coaches. This would appear to have some impact on the negative comments aimed at umpires (only 7 comments recorded from the 19 games observed) but little effect on the nature of comments targeting teams and players.

The Role of Instruction

The previous use of POISE in New Zealand by Kidman et al. (1999) focused on the comments made by parents as opposed to coaches. Kidman et al.'s rationale for targeting parents was that while coaches have some influence on children's enjoyment and ongoing participation in sport, previous research they examined, for example Smoll and Smith (1988) had indicated that parents hold the greatest influence. The rationale in this phase of the thesis for targeting coaches, not parents, was based on the findings of group interviews with sports administrators (discussed in Chapter 4). This rationale was supported in the findings of the subsequent focus groups with children (discussed in Chapter 7) which also revealed a greater concern with inappropriate parent-coach behaviour than with touchline parents.

Kidman et al. (1999) were critical of the constant flow of instruction that was delivered from the sideline. They argued that this level of instruction did little to develop athletes' decision-making abilities and therefore in their use of POISE instructional comments were categorised as negative. If the results from the POISE observations in this thesis were viewed from this perspective, and instructional comments were categorised as negative, as Kidman et al. did, some interesting results emerge. The breakdown and distribution of comments would be positive comments (35.4% $n = 3,785$), negative comments (63.1% $n = 6,747$), and neutral comments (1.5% $n = 165$). Kidman et al. were concerned about the amount of instruction and correction provided by parents on the touchline, with 34.5% of the total comments by parents being recorded as negative. In applying the same categorical classifications as Kidman et al. to the coach comments recorded in this phase of the thesis, 63.1% of comments would be categorised as negative. The behaviour exhibited by coaches appeared to represent a predominantly directional and instructional approach to coaching. The

coaches observed did not adopt a coaching approach that encouraged experiential learning and the development of decision-making ability.

Limitations

The design intention to observe 80 matches was not ultimately possible and 72 matches in total were finally observed. The time constraints relating to a study of this nature were considerable and as two of the team sports involved in this study were winter sports played on grass pitches (soccer and rugby union), a number of games that had been allocated for observations were cancelled. However, the 72 matches that were observed were relatively evenly distributed across the four sports and across the age ranges within each sport. A stated limitation of the study by Kidman et al. (1999) was that the authors felt that "age may have been a mediating variable in terms of the relative percentages of the various types of comments that were recorded" (p. 65), and it was recommended that future studies using POISE considered this variable to facilitate comparisons between age groups of children. This recommendation was incorporated into the design of this phase of the thesis and as a consequence the age related comparisons that were conducted build on, and add to, previous research conducted in this area. However, no significant differences with child's age were identified in this study. In addition, analysis in this phase of the thesis also focused on the effect of variables such as coach gender, and game result (winning, drawing, or losing).

A further potential limitation was that the interpretation of comments by observers was necessarily subjective. However, inter-observer reliability was established at 92%, which illustrated that the interpretation of comments was conducted at a satisfactory level of consistency.

Although the findings of this phase of the thesis provide new insights into the nature and prevalence of coach behaviours at children's sporting events in New

Zealand, the study location was restricted to two districts of the Greater Auckland area. As such, this limits the claims that can be made relating to the generalisability of these findings. However, in building on previous research by Kidman et al. that was conducted in the Dunedin area of New Zealand, these findings suggest that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the nature of parental and coaching behaviours at children's sporting events in New Zealand give cause for concern.

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter provide prevalence and patterns of verbal coach behaviour not previously recorded in New Zealand. In total, 10,697 coach comments were recorded at, on average, 3.71 (95% CI: 3.64, 3.79) comments/minute. The coaching behaviours recorded did not always reflect a nurturing, positive, developmentally-appropriate approach to the coaching of children's team sports. Of the total number of comments recorded, 35.4% were categorised as positive, 21.6% as negative, and 43% as neutral. Significant differences in the distribution of comments were found between sports ($p<0.01$), with rugby union coaches recording the lowest percentage of positive comments and the highest percentage of negative comments. The rate of positive comments made by coaches when their team lost was 15% less than that when their team won. The percentage of negative comments aimed at umpires and officials was higher in touch rugby (8.7%) and in rugby union (7.3%) than in netball (1.3%) and soccer (2.1%).

Chapter 6: Parents and Children

Introduction

A number of studies have indicated that parental support plays a significant role in encouraging a child's ongoing engagement with organised sport (Baxter-Jones & Maffulli, 2003; Hoyle & Leff, 1997; Power & Woolger, 1994). However, many of the studies conducted to date have focused more on a child's ongoing participation in competitive and higher level sport, with a focus on adolescent athletes who have attained a certain level of competence and success in their chosen sport. The focus of this thesis was on the younger age group (predominantly ages 6 to 11 years). The purpose of this phase of the thesis was to gain an insight into how parents perceived their child's organised team sports, and most importantly, to give voice to children themselves.

This chapter discusses the findings of a survey that was administered to parents and their children. There were three immediate aims of this component of the study: first, to get a preliminary idea of children's sense of enjoyment of the team sports they participate in; second, to gain an insight into parents' perceptions of the positive and negative experiences associated with their children's sport; and third, to identify children interested in participating in a follow-up study (see Chapter 7). The names used in this chapter are all pseudonyms used to protect the anonymity of participants.

Methods

This phase of the thesis was a two stage cross-sectional descriptive study that utilised a two-part questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire was completed by children, the second part by parents. The questionnaire design contained both closed and open-ended questions, and drew upon both quantitative and qualitative analytical

techniques. The target population for this study were children in school years 2 to 6 who are predominantly aged 6 to 11 years, and one of their parents. The setting was based in two districts of the Greater Auckland area. In the two-stage cross-sectional descriptive study, the first stage selected from eligible primary schools and the second stage invited all eligible children (and their parents) to participate.

Participants

Primary schools.

The first stage was to invite six primary schools in the two districts to participate in the study. Schools were stratified into tertiles (high, mid, and low) based on decile and urban/rural settings. The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2008) defines a school's decile as:

> [...] the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students.

The high tertile comprised of schools in deciles 8, 9, and 10; the mid-tertile deciles 4 to 7; and the low tertile deciles 1 to 3. The design incorporated the selection of six schools, and was stratified so that one school would be selected from each tertile grouping and urban/rural setting. The stratification design reflected an attempt to gather a heterogeneous range of parents' and children's views to increase the generalisability of the findings.

Children and their parents.

The second stage was to sample all eligible children (and one of their parents) within the selected schools. The year levels in schools in New Zealand are defined as 1

to 13 where years 1 to 6 are taught in primary schools (Ministry of Education, 2009). The target population were children aged 6 to 11 years and their parents. The inclusion criterion for participation was attendance in school years 2 to 6. These school years predominantly comprise children aged 6 to 10 years. It was possible that a small number of 5-year olds could potentially be in year 2, and a proportion of children in year 6 would be 11-year olds. The final year in primary schools (Year 6) is made up of children aged 10 and 11 years. A number of 11-year olds are in Year 7, in either intermediate or secondary schools, and were therefore not included.

Instrument

Development and design.

As it has been suggested that the length of a questionnaire is inversely proportional to the response rate (Roberts & Taylor, 2002), the questionnaire was designed to be as brief as possible to encourage response rates (Neumann, 2006). The questionnaire was in two parts (refer Appendix D). Part 1 was designed to be completed by the child (with parental/caregiver assistance if necessary) and Part 2 to be completed by the parent/caregiver. The questionnaire was accompanied by a parent information sheet and consent form and a child participant information sheet and assent form (refer Appendix D). An attempt was made to keep the questionnaire brief and concise, using simple vocabulary and grammar, as recommended by Neumann (2006). Also, as recommended by Neumann and to facilitate ease of analysis, a ranking scale system (an X-point Likert scale), was utilised to establish levels of child and parental involvement in sport. Three qualitative open-ended questions were included in the parent/caregiver section of the questionnaire. The open-ended questions were designed to elicit parents' perspectives on both positive and negative aspects of their child's sporting experiences.

No open-ended questions were included on the children's part of the questionnaire, as the views of children would be examined in the subsequent focus group interviews.

Piloting.

Following recommendations by Roberts and Taylor (2002), to enhance reliability and identify any possible flaws the developed questionnaire was piloted on a convenience sample of five children and their parents. The convenience sample was comprised of friends and work colleagues who had primary school-aged children participating in organised team sports. The feedback provided by the convenience sample proved to be invaluable and was subsequently used to refine the questionnaire. Feedback highlighted the need for the wording in some of the questions to be more specific. However, participants commented that the topic was important, the questionnaire well designed, appropriate, and the supplementary materials useful. Changes were applied and the updated questionnaire was then issued to a further convenience sample of another five children and their parents. Feedback from this sample was positive and no further suggestions for improvement were made.

Procedure

Approximately two thousand five hundred (2,500) questionnaires were to be distributed in six primary schools following the Dillman protocol for reminders (Dillman, 2000). As identified by Dillman, response rates can be up to 20-40 percentage points lower if no follow-up contacts are initiated and recommended that a series of three follow-ups were necessary to maximise response rates. Therefore by following this process it was anticipated that a response rate of 40% would be achieved (n=1,000). Precision of prevalence estimates with a sample size of 1,000 is within ± 2% for any prevalence. This level of precision was considered satisfactory.

The initial intent was to approach schools within the tertiles and urban/rural stratifications that had an ongoing relationship with AUT University and/or schools that had expressed an interest in being involved in this study. In July 2007, letters (see Appendix D) were sent out as attachments to e-mails inviting the principals of six primary schools to participate in this study. Refer to Table 6 for an overview of the schools approached.

Table 6: *First Wave of Schools Approached*

Decile	Location	Size [a] (number of pupils)
High	Rural	499
High	Urban	233
Mid	Urban	255
Mid	Rural	374
Low	Urban	352
Low	Rural	165

[a] excluding year 1.

In the week after the initial e-mail was sent out to the schools, a follow-up phone call was made to each of the schools. A second follow-up e-mail was sent, and a phone call made, two weeks later to schools that had not yet responded. In August 2007, three principals agreed to participate, two from the high decile schools (one urban, one rural), and one from the mid-decile urban school.

Meetings were held with each of the three principals and it was agreed that the following procedure would be adopted for the distribution and collection of the questionnaires:

- schools would notify parents in their weekly school notices that questionnaires would be sent home with their children the following week;

- questionnaires and associated information/consent/assent forms would be distributed via the classroom teacher to all pupils in Years 2 to 6 (predominantly ages 6 to 11 years);

- completed questionnaires would be returned to the classroom teacher;

- after two weeks, a brief reminder would be sent out in the weekly school newsletter; and

- completed questionnaires would be held in a secure place in the school office until collected.

Distribution and collection of the questionnaires was conducted in these three schools in August, 2007 (first wave of three schools). To replenish the decile grouping and rural/urban make-up of the sample, a second wave of three schools were invited to participate. The same follow-up procedure as conducted for the first wave of schools was adopted. Table 7 provides an overview of the second wave of schools invited to participate.

Table 7: *Second Wave of Schools Approached*

Decile	Location	Size (number of pupils)
Mid	Rural	220
Low	Urban	93
Low	Rural	159

From this second recruitment wave, one further school agreed to participate (mid-decile, rural location). In August 2008 the questionnaire distribution and collection procedure was repeated for this fourth school.

Preliminary analysis of the data was conducted in August-September 2008 and individual and overall preliminary summary reports of the findings were sent out to each of the four participating schools in October 2008 (see Appendix H).

Data Analysis

Data were recorded onto a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Data were initially analysed separately for each school to generate the individual preliminary summary reports. The data were then collated to represent all of the four schools together. Initial analysis was descriptive, both for the quantitative and qualitative data. For the quantitative analysis, Fisher's exact test was used to determine associations between categorical variables as this test appropriately deals with the small cell sample numbers seen in some cross-tabulations. All quantitative analyses were performed using Stata version 10.0 (StataCorp, College Station, TX, USA) and a level of 5% was used to define statistical significance.

In terms of the qualitative component, the open-ended questions were designed to be kept simple and prompt relatively brief answers of a descriptive nature. For example, respondents were asked to simply recount incidents of both positive and negative experiences associated with their child's sport. Consequently, an interpretive approach was not adopted for the qualitative analysis. The method adopted was informed by what Sandelowski (2000, p. 335) refers to as "basic or fundamental qualitative description" and the analysis of this data was basic thematic analysis. The qualitative data was read a number of times. A qualitative data analysis software tool, Weft QDA (Fenton, 2006), was then utilised to sort the data into categories and sub-categories that were identified and emerged during the reading. The data was then re-read a number of times to ensure that all categories and sub-categories had been identified.

Results

Survey Response Rates by School

Four schools participated in this phase of the thesis. Three schools did not respond to either the initial invitation or the subsequent follow-ups. Two schools (both low-decile urban) did not wish to participate. As these are the only two low-decile urban schools in the study catchment area, and because of the time constraints imposed by this doctoral study, it was decided to continue using only the four consenting schools. The design intention to distribute 2,500 questionnaires through six schools was thus impossible; the implications of which are discussed in the limitations section at the end of this chapter.

A total of 1,204 questionnaires were distributed to all children in years 2 to 6 in the participating schools (refer Table 8), and a total of 358 completed questionnaires were returned (183 girls and 175 boys), yielding an overall response rate of 29.7%. The response rate was significantly different between schools (Fisher's exact test, $p<0.001$), with the mid-decile rural school having lower and the mid-decile urban school having higher participant rates than the two high-decile schools (see Table 8).

Table 8: *Participating Schools and Response Rates*

Decile	Location	Questionnaires sent out	Response rate	
		n	n	*(%)*
High	Rural	499	161	*(32.3)*
High	Urban	230	62	*(27.0)*
Mid	Urban	255	99	*(38.8)*
Mid	Rural	220	36	*(16.4)*
Total		1,204	358	*(29.7)*

Part 1: Children's Responses

The respondents.

Respondents were approximately evenly split between boys (175) and girls (183). Table 9 provides a breakdown of the respondents by age and gender.

Table 9: *Respondents by Age and Gender*

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*
5	3	*(0.8)*	1	*(0.3)*	4	*(1.1)*
6	20	*(5.6)*	15	*(4.2)*	35	*(9.8)*
7	41	*(11.5)*	34	*(9.5)*	75	*(20.9)*
8	28	*(7.8)*	36	*(10.1)*	64	*(17.9)*
9	36	*(10.1)*	39	*(10.9)*	75	*(20.9)*
10	36	*(10.1)*	43	*(12.0)*	79	*(22.1)*
11	11	*(3.1)*	15	*(4.2)*	26	*(7.3)*
Total	175	*(48.9)*	183	*(51.1)*	358	*(100)*

The sample included an approximately even spread of 7-10 year olds, and captured a small number of 5-year olds. No significant difference was found in the distribution of ages and genders represented (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.62$).

Team sports played.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the team sports that these children played (respondents were able to indicate more than one sport). By far the most popular sports were soccer and touch rugby, followed by the general catch-all 'other' category. The focus of this study was specifically on team sports, and it appears from some of the answers provided in the survey that many respondents included individual sports such as tennis, gymnastics, swimming etc. in the 'other' category. This would partially explain the relatively high number of children who participated in 'other' sports.

National participation statistics suggest that four of the most popular team sports for children in New Zealand are touch rugby, soccer, netball and rugby union (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010d). The figures for soccer and touch rugby from these schools reflected the popularity of these sports nationally. Participation rates for netball and rugby union were lower, which is partially explained by the fact that netball is played by girls only, and rugby is played predominantly by boys.
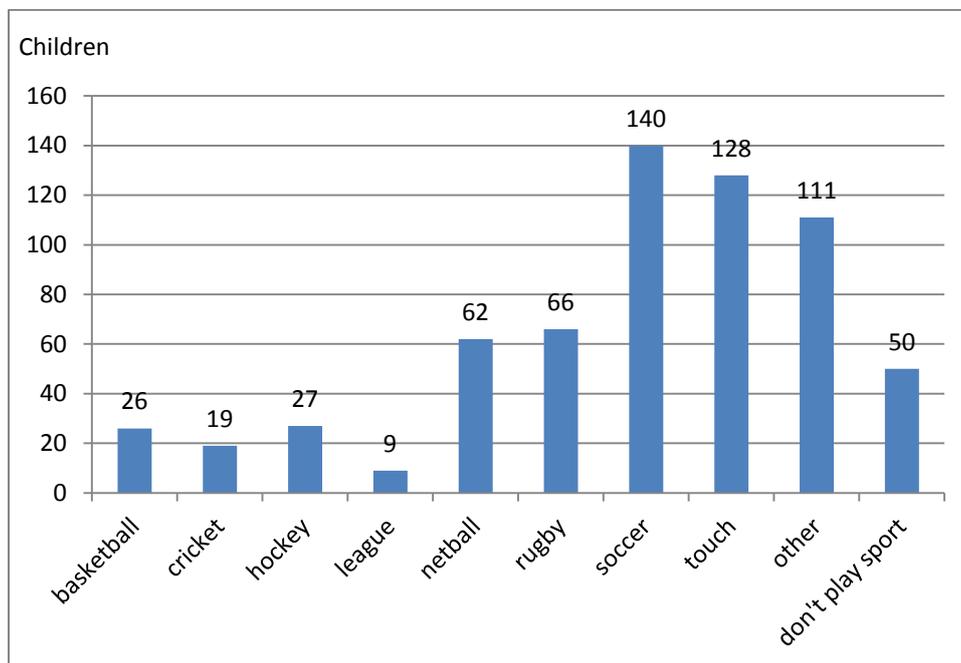
Figure 1: *Sports Children Play*

The number of sports children play.

A number of children played more than one organised team sport. Of the 358 respondents, 133 (37.1%) children only played one team sport, 101 (28.2%) children played two sports, 48 (13.4%) children played three sports, 26 (7.3%) children played four or more sports, and 50 (14.0%) children played no team sports whatsoever.

Level of enjoyment.

A total of 344 children responded to the question that asked how much they enjoyed playing team sports, 305 of whom regularly participated in team sport and 39 who did not. (See Table 10).

Table 10: *Respondents' Level of Enjoyment of their Team Sports*

Played sport	A lot		Quite a lot		It's ok		Don't like it much		Don't like it at all		Total
	n	*%*	n	*%*	n	*%*	n	*%*	n	*%*	n
Yes	220	*(72.1)*	61	*(20.0)*	22	*(7.2)*	1	*(0.3)*	1	*(0.3)*	305
No	7	*(17.9)*	9	*(23.1)*	15	*(38.5)*	3	*(7.7)*	5	*(12.8)*	39
Total	227	*(66.0%)*	70	*(20.3)*	37	*(10.8)*	4	*(1.2)*	6	*(1.7)*	344

From Table 10 it can be seen that the vast majority of the children (86.3%, n=297) either enjoyed or really enjoyed playing team sports. There was a significant difference (Fisher's exact test, $p<0.001$) between the levels of enjoyment reported by children who currently played sport, and those children who did not currently play a team sport. Of the ten children who did not enjoy playing sports (didn't like it much, or at all), eight of these did not participate in team sports. There were 16 children who enjoyed playing team sports but did not actually play. However, the questionnaire did not elicit reasons as to why children did not participate.

Involvement with sport.

A total of 320 children responded to the question designed to establish frequency of participation in sport. Of the respondents, 268 (83.7%) played their sport(s) either every week or most weeks; 35 (10.9%) played sometimes; and 20 (6.2%) did not play very often.

Part 2: Parent/Caregiver Responses

The respondents.

A total of 358 parents/caregivers responded to the questionnaire. Respondents were predominantly female (311, 86.9%). Male respondents numbered only 44 (12.3%), both mother and father completed one questionnaire, and the gender identity of two of the respondents was not clear (denoted by 'parent' only).

Parents' perceived importance of team sports to their child.

The vast majority of the 354 respondents who answered this question felt that participating in team sports was important for their child: 341 (96.3%) respondents felt it was important; 7 (2.0%) felt it wasn't important; and 5 (1.4%) weren't sure.

Parental involvement with their child's sport.

To establish parents' level of involvement in their child's sport, two questions were designed to determine frequency of their attendance at training sessions and at games. A total of 317 responded to the question relating to attendance at their child's training sessions; and 316 responded to the question relating to attendance at their child's team games/matches. Table 11 outlines how regularly parent(s) attended their child's matches and training sessions. The majority of parents appeared to be very actively involved in their children's sport, with 70% (n=222) regularly attending their child's training sessions and 89% (n=282) regularly attending their child's matches. This is not particularly surprising, as children would obviously rely on adults for transport to and from training/games.

Table 11: *Respondents' Level of Engagement with their Child's Sport*

Attended	Always		Most Times		Sometimes		Rarely		Total	
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*
Training	122	*(38.5)*	100	*(31.5)*	52	*(16.4)*	43	*(13.6)*	317	*(100)*
Matches	203	*(64.2)*	79	*(25.0)*	20	*(6.3)*	14	*(4.4)*	316	*(100)*

Parental involvement related to child's enjoyment of sport.

The relationship between a parent's involvement in their child's sport, and the child's expressed level of enjoyment was examined. Table 12 provides a breakdown of parents' attendance at training, attendance at matches, and their children's perceived level of enjoyment with their sport. No significant relationship was found between parents' frequency of attendance at their child's training sessions and their child's enjoyment of sport (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.467$). However, analysis revealed a significant relationship between frequency of parents attendance at their child's matches, and the child's reported level of enjoyment of sport (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.001$). Of the children whose parents always attended their child's matches, 74.1% (n=149) stated that they enjoyed their sport "a lot"; whereas only 42.9% (n=6) of children whose parents stated that they rarely attended their child's matches enjoyed their sport to the same degree.

Table 12: *Relationship between Parent's Attendance at Training and Matches, and Child's Enjoyment of Sport*

	Child enjoyed sport a lot		Quite a lot		It's ok		Didn't like it much		Didn't like it at all		Total	
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*
Parent Attended Training												
Always	85	*(71.4)*	23	*(19.3)*	9	*(7.6)*	0	*(0)*	2	*(1.7)*	119	*(100)*
Most times	69	*(69.0)*	22	*(22.0)*	9	*(9.0)*	0	*(0)*	0	*(0)*	100	*(100)*
Sometimes	40	*(76.9)*	9	*(17.3)*	3	*(5.8)*	0	*(0)*	0	*(0)*	52	*(100)*
Rarely	27	*(62.8)*	9	*(20.9)*	4	*(9.3)*	2	*(4.7)*	1	*(2.3)*	43	*(100)*
Parent Attended Matches												
Always	149	*(74.1)*	39	*(19.4)*	12	*(6.0)*	0	*(0)*	1	*(0.5)*	201	*(100)*
Most times	58	*(73.4)*	14	*(17.7)*	6	*(7.6)*	0	*(0)*	1	*(1.3)*	79	*(100)*
Sometimes	10	*(50.0)*	5	*(25.0)*	5	*(25.0)*	0	*(0)*	0	*(0)*	20	*(100)*
Rarely	6	*(42.9)*	3	*(21.4)*	2	*(14.3)*	2	*(14.3)*	1	*(7.1)*	14	*(100)*

Parents' positive experiences associated with their children's sport.

Of the 358 respondents, 308 (86.0%) identified positive experiences they have had with their child's organised sport. Analysis of these parents' open-ended responses to this question revealed the following key themes relating to positive experiences:

- seeing their child playing in a team and learning about the importance of teamwork (37.7%, n=116 of these parents referred to this),

- the social aspect: meeting new friends (parents and children) (34.1%, n=105),

- seeing their child enjoy themselves and have fun (27.3%, n=84),

- their child learning new skills (20.8%, n=64),

- winning and being successful (20.1%, n=62),

- witnessing increased confidence and self-esteem in their child (18.8%, n=58),

- improved health or physical fitness (14.0%, n=43),

- the development of broader social skills (12.3%, n=38),

- time spent at sport is quality family time (10.1%, n=31),

- good sportsmanship – learning how to win and how to lose (6.5%, n=20), and

- getting involved in coaching/management (5.8%, n=18).

Parents' negative experiences associated with their child's sport.

Of the 358 respondents, 195 (54.5%) identified negative experiences that they as parents have had with their child's sport. The major themes that emerged for these parents were:

- over-competitive or inappropriate parent behaviour (36.9%, n=72 of these parents referred to this),

- over-competitive or inappropriate coaching (27.7%, n=54),

- poor organisation (20.0%, n=39),

- bad sportsmanship from other children (13.8%, n=27),

- time constraints and financial cost associated with participation in organised team sport (10.2%, n=20), and

- unreliability of other parents (8.2%, n=16).

Further analysis of the reports of inappropriate or over-competitive behaviour by both parents (n=72) and coaches (n=54) revealed 62 reports that related specifically to verbal abuse. Table 13 provides a breakdown of the target of the verbal abuse reported.

Table 13: *Targets of Verbal Abuse by Parents and Coaches*

Target of Verbal Abuse	Reported Incidents	
	n	*(%)*
Children	48	*(77.4)*
Referees	10	*(16.1)*
Other parents/coaches	4	*(6.4)*
Total	62	*(100)*

The majority of verbal abuse reported (77.4%) was targeted at children.

Parents' negative experiences, by child age.

To examine if there was any association between the age of the child and the parent's perception of negative experiences associated with their child's sport, the open-ended free text responses were analysed by age. Table 14 is an overview of the total number of negative parental experiences by child age.

Analysis revealed a significant association between age of child, and parents reporting of negative experiences (Fisher's exact test, p=0.026). As seen in Table 14 there appeared to be an increasing trend in parental reports of negative experiences from 5-6 year olds to 8 year olds, a flattening from 8 to 10-year olds, and a further increase for 11-year olds.

Table 14: *Parents' Reports of Negative Experiences, by Child Age*

Age of Child	Respondents		Had negative experiences with their child's sport	
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*[a]
5-6	39	*(10.9)*	12	*(30.8)*
7	75	*(20.9)*	37	*(49.3)*
8	64	*(17.9)*	38	*(59.4)*
9	75	*(20.9)*	44	*(58.7)*
10	79	*(22.1)*	47	*(59.5)*
11	26	*(7.3)*	17	*(65.4)*
Total	358	*(100)*		

[a] Expressed as a percentage of the total number of parents of children in this age bracket who had identified negative experiences.

Parents' negative experiences, by child gender.

The open-ended free text questions were also analysed to examine if there was any association between the gender of the child and the parent's perception of negative experiences associated with their child's sport. Table 15 provides a breakdown of the total number of negative experiences associated with child gender.

There was no difference in the percentage of parents of boys, and the parents of girls, who detailed negative experiences associated with their child's sport (Fisher's exact test, *p*=0.112).

Table 15: *Parents' Reports (n=358) of Negative Experiences, by Child Gender*

Child gender	Respondents	Had negative experiences with their child's sport	
	n	n	(%)[a]
Male	175	103	(58.8)
Female	183	92	(50.3)

[a] Expressed as a percentage of the total number of parents of children of this gender who had identified negative experiences.

Other parents' negative impact on a child's enjoyment of sport.

Parents were asked if other parents had ever negatively affected their child's (as opposed to their) enjoyment of sport. Of the 358 respondents, 339 (94.7%) responded to this question. Seventy one of the respondents to this question (20.9%) believed that other parents' behaviour had negatively impacted upon their child's enjoyment of sport at some time. The responses either specifically related to perceived inappropriate parental behaviour (70.4%, n=50), and/or perceived inappropriate coaching behaviour (40.8%, n=29). A breakdown of the parental reports of inappropriate behaviour by both parents (n=50) and coaches (n=29) revealed 39 reports that related specifically to verbal abuse that had been aimed at their child. Four parents reported incidents of verbal altercations between parents and/or coaches that had visibly upset their child, and two parents described incidents where referees had been verbally abused.

Further analysis examined whether there was any association between child age and perceived negative impact (refer Table 16); and whether there was any association between child gender and perceived negative impact (Table 17).

Table 16: *Other Parents Negative Impact on Child's Enjoyment of Sport, by Child Age (n=358)*

Age of Child	Respondents	Reported negative impact of other parents' behaviour	
	n	n	(%)[a]
5-6	39	4	(10.3)
7	75	14	(18.7)
8	64	6	(9.4)
9	75	19	(25.3)
10	79	24	(30.4)
11	26	4	(15.4)

[a] Expressed as a percentage of the total number of parents of children in this age bracket who had identified a specific negative effect.

Analysis revealed a significant association between child age and parental reports of other parent behaviours that had negatively impacted on their child's enjoyment of sport (Fisher's exact test, p=0.016). The number of reports was highest at ages 9 and 10 years.

Table 17: *Other Parents Negative Impact on Child's Enjoyment of Sport, by Child Gender*

Child gender	Respondents	Reported negative impact of other parents' behaviour	
	n	n	(%)[a]
Male	175	36	(20.6)
Female	183	35	(19.1)

[a] Expressed as a percentage of the total number of parents of children of this gender who had identified a specific negative effect.

There was no significant relationship (Fisher's exact test, p=0.791) identified in relation to child gender and parents' reporting of negative behaviours that had adversely impacted upon their child's enjoyment of sport.

The relationship between parents' reporting of negative experiences and children's stated enjoyment of sport.

Further analysis was conducted to examine if there was any association between children's stated level of enjoyment, and parents' reporting of negative experiences. No difference was found between parents who identified negative experiences and those who did not, in relation to their child's actual stated level of enjoyment (Fisher's exact test, p=0.437).

In relation to parents who reported that other parents had adversely affected their child's enjoyment of sport, analysis revealed no difference between the stated level of enjoyment of these parents' children, and the stated level of enjoyment of children whose parents stated that other parents had not adversely affected their child's enjoyment (Fisher's exact test, p=0.718).

Further study.

A total of 213 (59.5%) respondents expressed an interest in their child being involved in a follow-up focus group interview.

Discussion

These findings draw upon a sample of children representing a reasonably even distribution of ages and gender. Of the 358 children who responded, 83.8% (n=300) played at least one sport, with 48.9% (n=175) children playing two or more sports. The four team sports that were the focus of this study (soccer, touch rugby, netball, and rugby union) were the most highly represented team sports. As such, these children and their parents were well situated to comment on experiences relating to these four team sports.

Previous research has identified that forcing children to engage in exercise or sports has been inversely related to physical activity in adulthood (Taylor, Blair,

Cummings, Wun, & Malina, 1999). Of the children who played sport, the majority of them (72%, n=220) really enjoyed their sport, with only 0.3% (n=1) stating that they didn't like sport at all. Of the children who did not play sport, only 17.9% (n=7) stated that they really enjoyed team sports. These findings suggest that the majority of these children were not being forced to engage in something they did not enjoy.

In relation to the parents, respondents were predominantly female (86.9%, n=311). Discussion with principals confirmed this finding that the majority of paperwork related to a child's schooling tended to be completed by mothers. Of the parents who responded, it appears that they invested considerable time and energy in supporting their children's participation in organised team sports. Nearly all parent respondents (96.3%, n=341) felt that it was important their child played team sports for a variety of reasons and many respondents identified a range of positive aspects. These parents perceived clear benefits in their children's ongoing participation in sport and the majority of parents (86%, n=308), identified a range of positive experiences.

For parents, the dominant themes that emerged relating to the positive aspects of sport were their child playing in a team, meeting new friends, and having fun. These findings support previous research that has highlighted parents' perceptions of positive effects for children participating in organised team sports (Dunn, Kinney, & Hofferth, 2003). These include enjoyment, the development of social skills such as working in a team, motor skill development, overall health benefits, and increased self-esteem and confidence. The following response by Annie was a typical representation of many parents' views:

> Annie: It keeps my child fit. Confidence booster. Teaches my child how to work as a team player. Dedicated parents.

The importance of their child playing in a team and the positive connotations associated with developing team skills was significant for many parents.

A number of parents also associated positive experiences for themselves, as well as their child. Perceived benefits for parents included the social aspect − meeting new friends, spending quality family time together, and getting involved in either managing or coaching their child's team.

> Denise: My daughter has played soccer for three years now and it is wonderful to see her confidence grow each year. For the adult it is a great way to meet new parents/friends.

A number of studies have highlighted that children enjoy participating in sport more when there is less emphasis on competition and winning (Allender, Cowburn, & Fraser, 2006) and it was interesting to note that more parents (27.3%, n=84) identified with the idea that sport was primarily a source of fun for their child, than those parents who identified with winning (20.1%, n=62). The majority of children at this age also enjoy playing sport, with 86.3% (n=297) of children identifying that they enjoyed playing their team sport.

Parental support has been identified as playing a significant role in creating a positive and enjoyable sporting environment for a child (Hoyle & Leff, 1997). Although no significant relationship was found between parental attendance at training and a child's enjoyment of sport, a significant relationship between parental attendance at matches and a child's enjoyment of sport was identified. Of the 282 parents who stated that they always attended their child's matches, 73.4% (n=207) of these children enjoyed their sport 'a lot'. In contrast, of the 34 parents who rarely or only sometimes

attended their child's matches, only 47% (n=16) enjoyed their sport 'a lot'. (See Table 12).

Parents identified more positive than negative experiences with their child's sport, with 86% (n=308) of parents detailing positive experiences, and 54.5% (n=195) detailing negative experiences. Although no significant association was identified between parental reports of negative experiences and child gender, these reports of negative experiences increased by child age (see Table 14). A further significant association was also found between parental reports of negative behaviours that had specifically impacted upon their child's enjoyment of sport, and child age. (See Table 16). These reports increased until ages 9 and 10 years, but dropped at age 11. There were relatively small 11-year old numbers compared to other age groups and there is a possibility that this lower level could be attributable to a sampling error. There are two possible explanations to the significant identifiable increase in negative reports with child age. The increase may simply be related to the case that the longer a child plays sport the more likelihood there is of negative experiences to be observed. However, as found by Omli and LaVoi (2009), it is apparent that as children get older, sport becomes more competitive and that this increase may actually reflect age-specific prevalence of negative behaviours. Although of interest, caution should be applied to the interpretation of the association between child age and negative reports seen here.

Some of the specific parent reports that related to negative aspects of coaching and parental behaviours give cause for concern. This concern is pertinent as the type of negative behaviour evidenced here has been cited as a major determinant of children dropping out of competitive sport (Butcher, Lindner, & Johns, 2002).

The most significant negative aspects that emerged related to inappropriate parent or coach behaviour:

Maggie: Pushy parents over-disciplining kids. Parents criticising coaches and/or refs. Coaches favouring more skilled kids.

Maggie's account revealed a concern with a range of parenting and coaching practices that was shared by a number of respondents (35.8% of respondents were concerned with parent behaviour, 27.2% with coach behaviour). Although the answers elicited in this questionnaire were brief and descriptive in nature, and are unlikely to establish reliable prevalence estimates of specific perceived inappropriate behaviours, there is evidence emerging that inappropriate parenting and coaching behaviour does exist, and is not uncommon. This evidence was supported by the accounts of coaching behaviour that respondents perceived had directly impacted upon their own child's enjoyment of sport. For example:

Belinda: His coach yelled and screamed at him when he was 5 years old. Put him off rugby until this year. He is now 10 years old.

The significance of a coach's role on a child's enjoyment of sport is well established (Smith et al., 2007) and incidents of verbal and non-verbal anger can be particularly distressing for children (Omli & La Voi, 2009). The role of the coach has also been associated with children dropping out of sport as they move into adolescence (Sarrazin, Vallerand, Guillet, Pelletier, & Cury, 2002) and the comments by Maggie and Belinda indicate how coaches had a profoundly negative impact on their children's desire to continue with a sport.

Other than the harm that verbal abuse can have on the child who is the recipient of the abuse, Omli and La Voi (2009) also highlighted a concern with what they refer to as background anger. Background anger is defined as confrontations, verbal or non-

verbal, between two or more people that does not specifically involve the observer (Cummings, 1987). Cummings noted that exposure to background anger can also be emotionally distressing for a child. Analysis of the reports of negative behaviours that parents had witnessed in this current study, revealed 100 incidents of verbal abuse, aimed at the parent's own child, other children, other parents/coaches, or referees. The following example from a mother of a 9-year old touch rugby player illustrated that children can be regularly exposed to this type of behaviour.

> Jane: PARENTS! Abusive, competitive parents on the sideline. There are many more than I expected. It's very ugly when parents misbehave.

It would appear that it is not only the recipient of verbal or non-verbal displays of anger who can be affected, but that exposure to background anger can be particularly distressing and stressful for any child (Cummings, 1987; Omli & La Voi, 2009). This would be a major concern for those children regularly exposed to incidents of inappropriate parental and coaching behaviour.

Limitations

Low survey response rates are increasingly becoming an area of concern in social research (de Vaus, 2002) and the low response rate was a limitation of this phase of the thesis. However, it has been noted that the associated impact of differential participation in targeted population studies can be small (Nohr, Frydenberg, Henriksen, & Olsen, 2006). Rothman and Greenland (1998) highlighted the traditional misconception that generalisation from a study sample must depend on that sample being a sub-group representative of the target population. They argued that it is possible for observations to be abstracted, rather than generalised, to a broader domain of experience. Although the response rates were relatively low (29.7%), it is still possible

to abstract the findings from this sample to the target population of children and parents involved with children's team sports in New Zealand.

A number of strategies were adopted to attempt to increase response rate. As noted by de Vaus (2002), one of the most important factors impacting upon mail survey response rates is the length of the questionnaire. In any research, it is important that researchers adhere to strict ethical guidelines, but this is even more important when conducting research with vulnerable populations, which includes research with children (see ethics section in Chapter 3). It was important that parents provided fully informed consent, and that the children provided informed assent. However, the result of this was that when parents received the invitation to participate in this questionnaire, they were faced with a reasonably bulky amount of paperwork of six pages (refer Appendix D for questionnaire, participant information, and consent/assent forms). It was decided to keep the questionnaire brief, concise, and as user-friendly as possible to encourage response. As a consequence this placed a limitation on the amount of data that could be generated. Although one of the primary objectives of this questionnaire was to identify children who would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview, this phase of the thesis was of value in that it offered a perspective of parents on issues relating to their child's participation in sport.

The original intention was to administer 2,500 questionnaires to six primary schools in two districts of Auckland, drawn from a mix of urban, rural, and decile groups. On contacting the schools it became apparent that a number of principals felt that their time and energy was increasingly under pressure and was leaving them with less and less time to focus on their core business, which is student achievement. Two principals stated that they were very interested in the study but were unable to commit any time and resources to it at that point in time.

It was not ultimately possible to achieve the tertile grouping mix that was planned. There are only two low-decile urban schools in the districts where this study was conducted. Both schools politely declined an invitation to participate in this study. The other schools (both urban and rural) also either declined to participate or did not respond to the invitations. A conscious attempt was made not to put pressure on any school to participate if they did not seem fully committed to the study. After the initial telephone and e-mail contact, only one e-mail and one telephone follow up contact was made. The result was that the participants in this study were drawn from two urban schools (one high and one mid-tertile) and two rural schools (one high and one mid-tertile).

In the schools that did participate, there was a significant difference in the response rates from each school (38.8% - 16.8%). Two of the schools were especially interested and supportive of this study. This support was evident in the extremely positive prompts and reminders that were placed in their schools' newsletters, and through the urging by the principal that teachers remind the children in their classrooms about the questionnaires. The higher response rates from these two schools (38.8% and 32.3%) were indicative of the support received.

Summary

This chapter has presented findings from a questionnaire that was administered to parents and their children. It was apparent that children in the primary school age group enjoyed their sports, and parents see value in their children playing team sports. The findings support previous research that highlights the relationship between parents' level of involvement, and a child's enjoyment of their sport. However, parents' accounts of some of the negative aspects of their children's sport give cause for concern. Even though all children are primary school aged, the findings suggest that children's sport

may already becoming increasingly competitive with age, with parental reports of negative experiences increasing markedly for children aged 7 years of age. The nature of the inappropriate parent and coach behaviours recorded have been widely identified as having the potential to be emotionally damaging for young children exposed to these behaviours, and have been identified as determinants of children withdrawing from competitive sport.

Chapter 7: Can We Have Our Ball Back Please? Children's Perspectives on Organised Team Sports

Introduction

A key aim of this thesis was to give voice to children's views of sport. Historically, the views of children have held little value in societies, but in more recent times, children's rights have increasingly come to be recognised and embedded within legislation worldwide (Porcellato, Dughill, & Springett, 2002). Children's perspectives are increasingly being acknowledged as legitimate and valuable, but it would appear from the social science literature that young children are still marginalised as active participants in areas of health-related research (Porcellato et al.). Morrow and Richards (1996) go so far as to suggest that sociology, as a discipline, has tended to ignore children. Instead, the social science health-related research of children has largely been left to the fields of developmental and social psychology. However, they also noted that developmental psychologists have often perceived children to be less competent than adults, which reflects "a cultural reluctance to take children's ideas seriously" (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p. 98). The experience of childhood would still largely appear to serve the interests of an adult-oriented society (Aubrey & Dahl, 2006). For a truly child-centred model of sport to emerge, it is important that the views of children themselves be taken into consideration. However, it is important to bear in mind that children's construction of sport is heavily dependent upon adult influences.

This chapter presents a Foucauldian analysis of children's views relating to their sporting experiences and examines how the group of child participants constructed sport.

Methods

This qualitative phase of the thesis followed on from the two stage cross-sectional study presented in the preceding chapter, and utilised focus group interviews with children aged 6 to 11 years in two districts of Greater Auckland. The target population were children (aged 6 to 11 years) in school years 2 to 6. The first stage selected from eligible primary schools and the second stage invited all eligible children to participate.

Participants

Primary schools.

The first stage was to invite two primary schools to participate. The two schools were to be selected from the four schools who had participated in the previous phase of the thesis that distributed surveys to children and their parents (see Chapter 6). The criteria used to select the schools were based on: schools' expression of interest in being involved with a further interview study; and sufficient interest from children and parents from these schools to participate in follow-up focus group interviews. In addition, to increase the chances of capturing more heterogeneity in the sample, the schools selected would ideally be one urban school and one rural school.

Children.

The second stage was to sample 32 eligible children (16 from each school) whose parents had indicated in the survey responses that their child would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview.

Procedure

Of the four schools that participated in the questionnaire phase of this thesis, two principals and their schools were extremely interested and supportive of this research. As a consequence, meetings were held with the two principals in September 2008 and it

was subsequently agreed to conduct the focus groups in these two schools. One school was located in an urban location (a mid decile school), the other in a rural location (a high decile school).

The second stage was to invite children to participate in the focus group interviews. During the survey phase (refer Chapter 6), 255 questionnaires had been distributed to children in the urban mid-decile school. Of the 99 completed questionnaires, 57 expressed an interest in being involved in the follow-up focus group interviews. In the larger rural high-decile school, 93 of the 161 respondents expressed an interest in their children being involved.

Typically in quantitative research, samples are smaller groups who are selected as potentially representative of the views of the larger group (Davidson & Tolich, 2003a). However, in qualitative research samples are commonly drawn from units the researcher has identified as being of theoretical importance and relevance (Davidson & Tolich, 2003b). The focus of this phase of the thesis was on the stories children had about parental and coach involvement in sport. A process of purposive sampling was utilised to identify suitable participants with specific characteristics (Higginbottom, 2004). It is acknowledged that the validity of this form of sampling relies on the researcher's ability to select suitable cases for study (Roberts & Taylor, 2002). Neumann (2006) noted that purposive sampling is used commonly in two qualitative research situations that relate to this phase of the thesis. First, to pick cases which are uniquely informative. The children selected had indicated that they regularly played more than one team sport. As children are often the subjects and objects of coaches and parents' sideline comments, they are in a unique situation to comment on the impact of parental behaviour on their sporting experiences. Second, children whose parents had detailed stories of interest in their questionnaire responses to open-ended questions,

positive or negative, also fit into Neumann's second scenario – cases suitable for further in-depth study.

Thus a process of purposive sampling was conducted to review the 150 completed surveys to identify potential participants who:

- were aged 6 to 11 years;

- regularly participated in more than one organised team sport (touch rugby, soccer, rugby union, or netball);

- had parents who were actively involved in their children's sport;

- had parents who had provided responses to open-ended questions that potentially indicated these children had a story to tell (positive or negative).

It has been recommended that the optimal size of a focus group with children is six to eight (Bloor et al., 2001). When conducting focus groups with children it has also been noted that it is better to work with children from a limited age range (Grieg & Taylor, 1999). After consultation with the Head of the School of Education at AUT University, and based on discussions with one of the school principals, it was decided to divide the focus groups into two age groups: one aged 6 to 8 years and the other 9 to 11 years. The school principal, in particular, recommended these age groupings as being the most appropriate for focus group discussions with primary school aged children.

As recommended by Bloor et al. (2001), a method of over-recruitment was utilised in anticipation that some invited participants would be unwilling or unable to attend. In each school, 10 participants (5 male and 5 female) per age group were invited to participate in the focus group study. A letter was sent to each of the parents, with the relevant participant information, consent and assent forms. The signed consent and assent forms were returned via the classroom teacher to the principal/vice principal.

Conducting the Focus Group Interviews

A total of 30 children (16 boys, 14 girls) agreed to participate, which was a much higher than anticipated response. Table 18 shows the breakdown of participants interviewed. Some participants missed the second scheduled focus group meeting, due to absence from school on that day.

Table 18: *Participants Interviewed for the Study*

School Type	Age Group	Number of Participants	
		Session 1	Session 2
Urban	6-8 years	8 (4 boys, 4 girls)	8 (4 boys, 4 girls)
	9-11 years	9 (5 boys, 4 girls)	9 (5 boys, 4 girls)
Rural	6-8 years	7 (4 boys, 3 girls)	5 (3 boys, 2 girls)
	9-11 years	6 (3 boys, 3 girls)	6 (3 boys, 3 girls)
Total		30	28

Eight focus group interviews were conducted at the two primary schools in November 2008. Each group was interviewed twice. The rationale for interviewing each group twice was drawn from recommendations made by Morrow and Richards (1996). Morrow and Richards suggested that researchers working with children need to allow sufficient time to build up a relationship between researcher and researched. As a consequence, it was decided to conduct two meetings with each group. The primary function of the first interview was to build a relationship with the children, to allow them to relax and feel free to express their views. As noted by Morrow and Richards, children are not accustomed to being asked for their opinions and need some time to become familiar with the adult researcher before they can comfortably relate their experiences.

The focus group interviews were completed on school premises during normal school hours, and were audio-taped and subsequently transcribed by a research assistant. Drawing upon advice received during the consultation process, a qualified

female primary school teacher was employed as a research assistant and was present at all times during the focus group interviews. The research assistant was encouraged to take a secondary but still active part in the focus group interviews, asking questions where she felt appropriate, and making notes relating to areas that may be of interest to prompt further discussion.

Each focus group meeting lasted for 35-40 minutes. The rationale used to establish optimum group size, number and duration of group meetings, and safe location was drawn from recommendations by authors of a number of studies related to the conducting of focus group interviewing with children in this age group (6 to 11 years) (Aubrey & Dahl, 2006; Grieg & Taylor, 1999; Haubl & Liebsch, 2009; Hesketh, Waters, Green, Salmon, & Williams, 2005; Morrow & Richards, 1996; Porcellato et al., 2002).

The purpose of the focus group was to stimulate discussion and to facilitate interaction between the children. Hesketh et al. (2005) noted that children are more at ease talking with their peers than with adults. Consequently, during the focus groups, it was important to play a role of observer and facilitator as well as 'interviewer'. In their recommendations for researchers conducting interviews in studies adopting a discourse analysis approach, Potter and Wetherell (1987) recommended a more interactive and confrontational approach than would be the norm for qualitative interviewers. Their rationale was that by confronting participants about statements and asking them to account for their positioning, it becomes possible to identify the different discourses that may exist. This challenging approach was not suitable or appropriate when working with children. An attempt was made to encourage the children to talk as openly as possible about a range of aspects about their sport, so that subsequent analysis would reveal the different discourses that were present. This more open approach to working

with children is supported by recommendations made by Haubl and Liebsch (2009). They advocated that an interviewer working with children needs to accept a status reversal. To be at ease in an interview situation, children need to feel it is they, not the adults, who are the knowledgeable ones. A conscious attempt was made, however, to probe and gently ask the children to account for some of their statements, rather than to accept them blindly at face value.

During the focus groups, I tried to avoid influencing the children by making my position on a topic apparent. Morrow and Richards (1996) warn of the danger of asking children leading questions. On reviewing the very first focus group interview I noticed that on occasion I had made comments such as "Your coach sounds like a good coach". A conscious effort was made to try and avoid such judgemental comments in the subsequent interviews.

Adopting guidelines by Grieg and Taylor (1999), the purpose of the focus group meeting was explained to the children at the beginning of each meeting. The main themes to be explored in the initial meeting were kept simple. Children were simply asked what they liked about their sport, and then asked what they disliked. These likes and dislikes were then explored further in that initial meeting.

The themes used to drive the second focus group for each of the groups were drawn from an initial review of the transcripts of the first meetings. In the second focus group, children were specifically asked to identify what they liked and disliked about the coaching and parental behaviours they had observed or experienced. Drawing upon recommendations by Haubl and Liebsch (2009), an attempt was made to keep questions brief and concise. Children were consistently reminded of the confidentiality of the focus group discussion throughout all interviews, but at no time were children urged to disclose information that they appeared reluctant to discuss. The children appeared to

thoroughly enjoy the focus group meetings and indeed after every meeting they expressed the desire that they would have liked to continue longer than the 40 minutes allocated. Similar observations were made by Haubl and Liebsch (2009), who found that the children they interviewed for their study seemed to enjoy and value the opportunity to have their views listened to by an adult. Haubl and Liebsch also noted that they were surprised by the length of attention span of the children, with the boys they interviewed (aged 7 to 14 years) happily being interviewed for up to an hour.

Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, a key aim of this phase of the thesis was to give voice to the views of children themselves. As noted by Fine (1992), in making this claim, it is important to acknowledge that it is not possible to simply give voice to a group, as the words of the participants in qualitative research have been selectively interpreted, edited, and presented by the researcher.

The method of analysis adopted, as in Chapter 4, initially involved repeated close readings of the transcripts to get a 'feel' for the data. The next stage of analysis involved reading the children's stories to see if and where the dominant discourses identified in the analysis of the administrators' focus group (refer Chapter 4) became visible through the children's words. Although these three dominant discourses provided an initial lens through which to view the data, it was important to remain open to the existence of other discourses that could emerge from the children's transcripts. Discourses are made apparent through the activities of people (Payne, 2002) and "in this sense, a discourse is something which produces something else (an utterance, a concept, an effect), rather than something which exists in and of itself and which can be analysed in isolation" (Mills, 1997, p. 15). Foucault noted that it was best not to view the world of discourse as divided between dominant and dominated discourses, but rather should

be viewed as "a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies" (1976/1981, p. 100).

Foucault (1969/2002, p. 45) referred to where the objects or the effects of the discourse become visible as "surfaces of emergence". In relation to this thesis the social context or surfaces where the discourses will emerge are in the experience of team sports. The transcripts were examined for the emergence of what Mills (1997) referred to as discursive structures which represented behaviour and ways of thinking, and the effects of those ways of behaviour and thinking about team sports. An attempt was made to analyse the effects of the discourses, rather than the discourse itself, to examine how sport is constructed for a child. These effects included the structures of sporting competition, and the behaviours of significant others. This analysis then drew upon Foucault's notion of power to examine how power relationships produce and restrict forms of behaviour (Mills, 1997), and how individuals' subject positions and identities are constructed in relation to the identified discourses.

To aid with the analysis of the relatively large amount of data, a qualitative data analysis software tool: Weft QDA (Fenton, 2006) was used. This software was used to facilitate the initial sorting of data and to group together excerpts from the transcripts related to the dominant discourses that emerged.

Children's Stories: It Just Makes You Feel Invincible Sometimes

As discussed in Chapter 4, the analysis of the administrators' focus group transcripts identified three dominant discourses. I have named these a competitive discourse; a progressive-developmental discourse; and a fun discourse. While acknowledging that discourses do not exist in isolation, but overlap and compete (Hardin, 2001), the initial analysis focused on how these discourses were visible in the children's words.

It's All About Winning, isn't it?

The administrators' focus group revealed that many coaches and parents drew upon a dominating competitive discourse. The behaviour described reflected a win-at-all costs attitude which in turn shaped the sporting experience of the child. I was interested in seeing what speaking positions this discourse offered children, for example, how they related to winning and losing. It was interesting that unless prompted, children spoke very little about the importance of winning. When asked what they liked about their sport, the concepts of winning or competition were rarely mentioned. In most of the groups the concept of winning had to be specifically introduced to provoke discussion. The following excerpt comes from a discussion near the end of one of the focus group (age 9 to 11 years) meetings:

SW (interviewer): Do you know what's really interesting? One thing you haven't said about what you like is winning.

Ben: Nothing comes out of winning really, but when you lose a game it actually teaches you a lesson. For example, we were playing against this team that hadn't lost a single game. They were supposed to be really good but they'd become all sloppy thinking that they would win no matter what. That's what comes out of winning, you get over confident and with confidence comes laziness.

SW: So why didn't you say winning? Is winning not important?

Jack: Well winning, it makes you feel good but if you lose you just try better next time. It's not like you're really, really disappointed or anything. Try and do better next time and I only play sport for the fun of it, it's not really competitive or anything for me.

SW: But you like playing at representative level.

Jack: Yeah, but if we don't win or get into the finals it's not like I'm really upset or anything.

This excerpt reveals how multiple discourses in sport cannot exist in isolation. Rather, they overlap and compete with each other. Foucault (1976/1981) highlighted that we should not conceive a world of discourse that is simply delineated between dominating and accepted discourses and those discourses that are dominated or excluded. While Ben is talking about soccer and Jack is talking about touch rugby, neither of the boys would appear to view sport as being primarily about winning. However, the games they play are in organised leagues, points are won and lost in each game and a league table is maintained. The points awarded in each game contribute to their team's overall position in their league. The more games a team wins then the higher position that team holds in the league. At their age group there are also regional representative teams, where only the best players in each region are selected, and Jack has represented his region in touch rugby. The systematic structure of their sport as set up by their sporting organisations is a visible object and material effect of the competitive discourse. Ben appears to be very aware of this competition structure when he talks about the unbeaten status of his opponents. In spite of this, both Ben and Jack adopt speaking positions which clearly are at odds with those offered by the competitive discourse and Jack firmly positions himself within the fun discourse. Although Jack appears to resist the notion that sport is about winning, the influence of the competitive discourse is still apparent. Winning clearly has some significance for Jack – "it makes you feel good" – and losing means you need to try harder. For Ben, a good team is one that does not become complacent and can maintain a high standard of play throughout a game. Although Ben and Jack offer resistance to the concept that sport is all about winning, their words reveal the influence of the competitive discourse. Winning would still appear to be a desirable outcome and losing means you need to improve. However, both of these children seemed to have put winning into perspective, acknowledged its existence, but it is not pre-eminent in the way they talk about sport.

When asked about winning, most of the children acknowledged that they liked the feeling of winning, but throughout all of the group interviews, winning never emerged as the sole sought-after position. The dominant ways they spoke about sport were as fun, an opportunity to be with their friends, and being encouraged. However, multiple meanings of sport emerge and winning has significance as revealed in the ways the children talked about their sport.

Although the focus of this study was on organised team sports, it was interesting that when asked about the different sports they played and enjoyed, the children spoke about their individual sports quite differently than they did about their team sports. The subject positions they adopted in relation to individual sports were firmly positioned as either "good athlete" or "bad athlete". There was no talk of fun or enjoyment unless it was related to winning. For example, the competitive discourse was absolutely pre-eminent in the way that children spoke in particular about athletics. The following selected excerpts are from the 6 to 8 years of age groups:

> Kate: I love cross country, I came first this year.
> Amber: I'm really bad at running.
> Tane: I don't like cross-country because I'm really bad at running. I only came 18th.

Although the team sports the children play are also all structured as competitive games, the children adopted quite different positions when talking about individual sports. Enjoyment of individual sports was clearly related to feelings of competence and success, which were achieved through winning. It is possible that individual sports create the possibility for the competitive discourse to be more dominant. Here the child is an individual and the outcome is dependent completely on his/her performance,

whereas the outcome in team sport involves the abilities of the team members coming together in a coherent and co-ordinated way.

A Focus on Athlete Development

In the administrators' focus group, administrators from all four team sports highlighted the importance of sport as a means of nurturing the long-term development of skill. Coaching guidelines developed by the national and regional organisations for all sports involved in this thesis highlight the focus on enjoyment and skill development for all children participating in their sports. In spite of this, the structure and organisation of children's sport created by many of these organisations is highly regulated, structured, and competitive. The influence of the progressive-developmental discourse is visible in the literature and coaching guides; but it is the influence of the competitive discourse that emerges through the structure of sport and through practices and behaviour. In eight focus group meetings the influence of the progressive-developmental discourse on perceived coaching behaviour was barely visible. When children did talk about learning new skills, in each instance it was related to an individual sport.

Andy (age 6-8 years): It makes us happy when we learn new tricks.

SW: So what sport is that where you have tricks?

Andy: Skateboarding.

Annie: Gymnastics is my favourite.

SW: Why is that do you think?

Annie: Because I get to do lots of things like the beam and bars and that.

The only time children referred to specific skill development was in relation to enjoyment and a visible representation of the sport as fun discourse. For example:

Dan (age 9-11 years): I love that in rugby you get to have scrums and you get to do high tackles.

However, the children do recognise that other lessons can be learnt from sport, such as when Ben speaks above about learning from losing. Alec (age 9 to 11 years) positions himself in the developmental discourse when he talks about the benefits of sport:

Alec: It gets your brain fit fast and it can also train your brain in different ways. And you can think of different things to win the game or at least try and beat your guys at something.

For Alec, part of the enjoyment of sport lies in the problem solving aspect. However, the influence of the competitive discourse is again apparent, as the objective is to win.

Playing for Fun

What was identified in analysing the texts was that the children, quite simply, loved playing sport. They enjoy it because it is fun. The influence of overlapping discourses reveals that children like sport for a range of reasons, but primarily sport is a source of enjoyment. Some of the children expressed a dislike of certain sports, or of certain aspects of a sport, but every child interviewed stated that they enjoyed playing at least one sport.

SW: So what's so good about your soccer?

Joe (age 9-11 years): It's hard to explain but it just feels beautiful when I play it. It just feels real – rather than reading a book. Like it's good reading but when you're running around being active it really gets you sort of being happy.

SW: So it's fun and you enjoy it.

Joe: It makes you feel good too. It just makes you feel invincible sometimes. That's what it does to me.

The opportunity for physicality and being active was a key source of enjoyment for many of the children. A sense emerged that sport offered an opportunity for freedom and exhilaration through physical activity. Girls generally expressed enjoyment through running and dodging. The boys more commonly talked about physicality.

Natasha (age 6-8 years): It feels funny dodging people and I like running.

Josh: I like scoring tries and tackling.

Tane: I like accidentally bowling over people when I'm running and sometimes I can't stop.

Janelle: I like dodging.

Danny: In [rugby] league I like running straight into them.

There are overlaps here with a number of discourses including that of manliness which has been previously identified as a dominant discourse in New Zealand, specifically relating to rugby union (Pringle, 2001), and rugby league. Pringle noted that the ability to inflict and to withstand pain have historically been much admired qualities in these sports. From a competitive discourse perspective, winning in both codes of rugby is dependent upon aggression and physicality. However, when Tane, Danny and Josh talk about the physicality of their sports, this is simply what they enjoy. Ultimately for these boys the rough and tumble which is legitimised in these sports is a source of fun. The ability to withstand pain is closely associated with rugby in New Zealand, and the All Blacks (the New Zealand men's rugby team) were often glorified in tales relating to the ability to play on through pain (Pringle). There would appear to be a gendering here of what constitutes fun. For males playing traditional male sports,

physical contact and aggression is already valued by some of the boys aged 6 to 8 years. However, girls such as Natasha and Janelle, liked to avoid physical contact.

At these early ages there would appear to be limits on enjoyment associated with physicality, with no children revealing any pride in withstanding pain. When these children were asked what they disliked most about their sport, being injured was the most significant aspect. However, when stating that their major dislike about sport was getting injured, they did reveal a lengthy list of injuries. Although there was no evidence that they enjoyed being injured, the way these children talked about injuries often appeared to reveal an element of pride:

> Tane (age 6-8 years): The worst injury I had was a broken ankle.
>
> Amber: My brother, he's had a broken arm and a broken leg, broken finger, sprained hand and sprained foot.

I Don't Want to be Chubby

There are major concerns in New Zealand, as elsewhere, about levels of inactivity and the contribution of a more sedentary lifestyle to levels of obesity (Kolt et al., 2005). There are obvious links between playing sport, physical activity, and health. Although discourses of health did not emerge in the administrators' focus group, they were highly visible in the interviews with children. Burrows (2010) interviewed young children in New Zealand (aged 9 to 10 years) and analysed the discourses that these children drew upon when they talked about their health. Recently, a number of public health initiatives have been instigated in New Zealand and children are now "saturated with messages around healthy eating and exercise" (Burrows, p. 235). Burrows noted how parental and media talk about issues relating to obesity had influenced children's often harsh and moral judgements on why children ended up being fat. The children

interviewed in this phase of the thesis consistently referred to the health benefits of playing sport.

> SW: So what do you like most about your sport?
>
> Natasha (age 6-8 years): I like playing sports because it keeps me fit.
>
> Josh: It makes you not fat. I don't want to be chubby like my brother.
>
> SW: So if you don't play sport do you think it makes us fat?
>
> Tane: It makes you obese, yeah.

For the 6 to 8-year olds, there was a simple relationship between sport and obesity. If children did not play sport they would end up being obese. At this early stage these children have taken up the whole health promotion discourse about physical activity, energy expenditure, and obesity. Ironically, a common practice in children's sport is the handing out of lollies (sweets) after the game.

> SW: So is that good to get lollies after sport?
>
> Amber (age 6-8 years): It makes you fat.

Although the children in this study liked lollies, Amber's comment reveals the background anxiety already associated with eating sweets. Burrows (2010) highlighted how these health discourses can begin to induce feelings of shame, disgust, and anxiety in young children. The 9 to 11-year olds also saw health benefits to sport; being active was positive while being inactive was seen as a negative.

> Kath: It feels good to be active and running around.
> Alec: Whereas if you play no sport, you're just a big sloth who sits on the couch and day dreams.

For Kath, the sport as fun discourse is closely inter-related with the healthy aspect of sport. Running and physical activity simply 'feels good'. For Alec, there were clearly negative health connotations associated with physical inactivity. For many of the children, like Alec, there is a certain degree of moralising emerging. It is not good to sit on a couch all day and be inactive, it is not good to be obese or "chubby" like Jack's brother, and although the children like lollies, there is already evidence of feelings of guilt emerging.

A Sense of Fair Play

A strong and consistent message that emerged from the children interviewed related to a notion of 'fair play'. Coaching practices that focused on winning were perceived as being unfair. One of the most important aspects of sport for these children was that they got equal opportunities: to experience equal game time irrespective of gender or ability; to have the opportunity to try different positions; and to get regular touches of the ball. All of these practices would relate to the behaviours of coaches clearly influenced by the progressive-developmental discourse. For the children it is simply the importance of being treated fairly and a 'good coach' was one that treated children equally:

> SW: Could you tell me about your coach?
>
> Alec (age 9-11 years): We're all friends with him and he doesn't treat us unfair, he treats us all equally. Even his son who is in the team [...] and that's what I like about it, he treats us all like we're his kids.

For Alec, the coach-athlete relationship was more of a friendship and he clearly respected his coach. Although winning was important for these children, it was not important enough to treat children unfairly. A good coach was perceived to be one who treated children fairly and coaches perceived to be strongly influenced by winning were

not held in the same high regard. The significance of winning to many coaches was apparent to a number of children.

> SW: What's the most important thing about sport do you think?
>
> Dave (age 9-11 years): To have fun, it's not if you win or lose. My coach thinks it's if you win or lose, but it's if you have fun.

Dave's depiction of sport here clearly competes with the practices he sees adopted by the coach. Dave's view of sport is firmly influenced by the fun discourse. While many of the children like winning, predominantly for them sport is fun. The over-riding principle and outcome for these children is that everyone has a turn, and one's abilities do not become the criterion for having access to the game. Whereas with an outcome that is about winning and competition, access to play is denied and determined by one's ability. In one focus group the children were talking about coaches who did not give them equal game time, but these children had also expressed that they enjoyed winning too. I was interested to see what would be most important to them if they were coaches themselves:

> SW: So if you were the coach would you keep the best players on or give everybody the same game time
>
> A number of children (ages 9-11 years): The same game time.
>
> SW: But if you kept your best players on you would have more chance of winning. [...] So are you saying it doesn't matter if you win or lose?
>
> Jan: As long as everybody gets a turn.
>
> Dave: It needs to be fun.

The children here are resistant to the win-at-all costs attitude which appears to be displayed by some coaches. The notion of fair play strongly emerges again as does the belief expressed by Dave that sport is more about fun than winning. Some of the practices of the children's coaches though are not seen by the children to be fair:

> SW: So how does it feel if you don't get much game time?
>
> Andy (age 6-8 years): The boys complain [...] and the girls just go like "awww"
>
> Annie: But most of the time the boys are on the longest.
>
> SW: Is that in touch rugby?
>
> Annie: A mixed team.
>
> SW: What do you think of that?
>
> Annie: It's like saying that us girls aren't as good as the boys.

These examples would appear to indicate that these are competitive coaches who want to win. The best players are kept on in order to achieve a winning result. Although the children position themselves in effect within a progressive developmental discourse that practices a principle of fairness and equal game time, the power of the coach ensures that the over-riding experience of sport for these younger children is already firmly shaped by the competitive discourse.

Alarmingly, in mixed (boys and girls) sports from Annie's perspective, there is a clear message that girls are not as good as boys. It is interesting that the coach of a mixed team would appear to openly give more game time to boys than to girls. Given the influential role a coach can have on the emotional reactions of young children and their ongoing continuation in organised sport (Smith et al., 2007), the discriminatory coaching practices that appear to be exhibited here would have the potential to have an effect on Annie's self esteem and perception of herself as an athlete. Although the

behaviour of this coach is reflective of a dominant competitive discourse, there is a marginalised discourse emerging through Annie's words. Foucault (1969/2002) highlighted how marginalised discourses can be important sites of resistance in challenging dominant discourses. Annie's excerpt revealed her insight into how this coach's behaviour reflected a belief that boys in the team were more physically competent than girls. There is some evidence in the coaching literature that supports Annie's perspective. In relation to athlete gender, it has been suggested that many coaches may inaccurately stereotype girls as being not as 'naturally talented' as boys in areas of physical activity (Horn, Lox, & Labrador, 2006). In spite of well documented research that indicates that there are extremely limited physiological differences between boys and girls prior to puberty (Malina, 2002), these social perceptions have the potential to influence coaches' expectations and their resultant behaviour towards their athletes based on the athletes' gender.

The notion of fair play also emerged from the other younger age focus group. These children talked about how they did not get to touch the ball often when they played.

> SW: So if you were the coach of your team what is one thing you would do differently?
>
> Danny (age 6-8 years): I'd let everyone have the ball.
>
> John: I'd make everybody score tries.
>
> Janelle: I'd keep on telling them [the players] if you've already had a try let somebody else have a try.

For children there is no one dominant discourse and they talk about sport in a very multi-faceted way. These children do like winning but sport for them is not an activity that is primarily about winning or losing. In making sense of sport, these

children expressed insightful views that negotiated between sport as winning, sport as fun, and sport as a vehicle for athlete development. They put winning into perspective, acknowledged its existence, but accorded it a position of importance that was not pre-eminent. However, the seeming imbalance of the power relationship between children and adult coaches sees children participating in a version of sport that often does not appear to mirror what they actually want.

Power, Discipline and the Compliant Athlete

In adopting a Foucauldian notion of power, power is not viewed essentially as repressive, it is not purely the exploitation of one group by another, rather it is something that can be analysed as a "series of relations between forces" (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 51).

> Power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege' [...] of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions − an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. (Foucault, 1975/1995, pp. 26-27)

Although Foucault never specifically related his ideas to the field of sport, a number of studies in recent years have drawn upon Foucault's ideas to analyse sporting issues. One key idea to emerge from these studies is that in relation to the high performance competitive sport discourse, athletes are exceedingly compliant and willingly engage in the disciplinary processes associated with competitive sport (Chase, 2006; Johns & Johns, 2000). To be productive, disciplined and docile bodies (Lang, 2010), athletes knowingly and willingly subject themselves to often excessive punishing and severe routines of exercise and rehabilitation, and adhere to extremely strict nutritional guidelines. The majority of studies that have focused on this notion of conformity by athletes have examined perceptions of the older athlete. In her study of

competitive youth swimming, Lang (2010) acknowledged the knowledge gap that exists in the exploration of power relationships specifically in youth sport, but her study also draws upon interviews with coaches and their perspectives of youth sport, rather than the perspectives of the youth swimmers themselves. In this phase of the thesis, an attempt was made to draw upon the children's perspectives to try and unpack the power relationships that are played out in children's sport.

It has been long recognised that coaches play a significant role in shaping children's experiences of sport (Keegan et al., 2009). When the children in this study talked about coaching practices, they regularly referred to the punitive disciplinary practices of their coaches:

> Tane (age 6-8 years): My coach yells at me.
>
> SW: Which sport is that in?
>
> Tane: Soccer. Because I'm in midfield so you don't score many goals and then when I don't score a goal he yells at me.
>
> SW: So how does that make you feel?
>
> Tane: I hate my coach.
>
> Natasha: Sometimes when they yell it makes me shoot goals and go faster. But sometimes it's bad because sometimes I drop the ball and the other team get the ball.
>
> SW: How does it make you feel when you get yelled at for dropping the ball?
>
> Natasha: Sometimes it makes me go faster and stuff but sometimes I can't.

The children do not like being shouted at. Tane also recognises that the coach is being unfair to him as the coach is playing him in a position that makes it difficult for him to score goals, but still yells at him when he doesn't score. What is interesting,

though, is how Natasha perceives some positive benefits to the shouting if it makes you score a goal. She is excusing the coach behaviour as long as there is a positive outcome. This positive outcome, perceived sporting success, is firmly situated within the competitive discourse. Natasha is a subject of this competitive discourse, as the coach yells at her to influence her behaviour in a particular way. The coach, in effect, is the speaker of the discourse and interpellates Natasha as a subject. The coach holds considerable power in the relationship with players. Foucault noted that knowledge is produced by power (1975/1995) and the coach draws upon his/her coaching knowledge to lay claim to the 'truth' about sport; a truth that it is primarily about how to win and achieve success. Johns and Johns (2000) found that athletes will accept power relationships if they can find reasons to justify and internalise such structures, and it may be seen that Natasha has already started to acknowledge the truth that sport is about being successful and winning, even when talking about coach behaviour she dislikes. Foucault (1975/1995) noted that punitive measures (in this case yelling at players who have made a mistake) should not be viewed simply as repressive, but that they can support positive and useful effects. The positive and useful effects for those situated within the competitive discourse relate to successful execution of a skill, improved performance, scoring a goal, or winning. Natasha clearly identifies this punitive behaviour with some positive effects related to perceived sporting success.

This coach-athlete power relation imbalance is also apparent in the way that "disciplinary power is exercised through technologies of dominance" (Lang, 2010, p. 22). Technologies of dominance relate to the different strategies that are employed to exert power. For example, the children speak on a number of occasions of how coaches use exercise as punishment.

Ben (age 9-11 years): My tackle rugby coach is strict and if you talk you have to do push ups.

Mark: In league this team has to run around the field for every [score] they lose by.

SW: Do they actually have to run around the field if they lose?

Mark: When they come back to training they have to, like if they [lose] by two times [scores] then they have to run around the field two times.

This use of exercise to punish children was seemingly often employed by coaches to punish children when they played badly or lost. The practice of punishment to prevent repetition of an undesired behaviour is an old one (Foucault, 1975/1995). The 'truth' about sport that will emerge for children is that winning is of paramount importance, and losing is an extremely undesirable outcome. However, when talking about discipline, Foucault noted that "punishment is only one element of a double system: gratification-punishment. And it is this system that operates in the process of training and correction" (p. 180).

Tanya (age 6-8 years): In touch if you play good you get a certificate.

SW: You like getting a certificate?

Andy: That's what I like about it too.

Marcus: And I like the prize giving to see who gets the most improved player and the best player, but I haven't got one of those yet.

Certificates and prizes are the primary type of gratification for children in this system. These children liked getting rewarded and these rewards normally related to playing the game well or being successful. In the operation of this dual gratification-punishment system, children are punished if they do not play well or try hard enough, and praised and rewarded when the coaches perceive they have been successful. The

children themselves are beginning to accept this dual gratification-punishment approach:

> Mark (age 9-11 years): Sometimes in the finals for touch or tackle rugby when we score they yell out "Yeah". My mum always cheers me on to get a try.
>
> SW: Do you like that?
>
> Mark: Yeah.
>
> Megan: And even if they say something like, you should have kicked the ball harder, it doesn't mean they are putting you down.

Mark and Megan are talking here about parents shouting on the touchline. None of the children liked being shouted at, but are supportive of this behaviour as it is perceived by them to help them be better and improve their skills. As parents have been shown to hold such positions of influence over children playing sport (Woolger & Power, 1993), it is understandable that children would want to please them. From the favourable way in which the children spoke about their parents' comments this practice of praising and rewarding is possibly more powerful and effective than the punitive behaviours exhibited by coaches and parents in relation to the exercise of power. The children are aware that playing badly (in ways that are not conducive to winning) is equated with punishment, and playing well is associated with praise and rewards. The praise is in itself a form of discipline.

Coaches who appear to be firmly positioned within the competitive discourse also draw upon a system of punishment and reward to support coaching practices that clash with the guidelines and resources provided for them by their sporting bodies. For children aged between 6 and 11 years (and especially so for the younger children aged 6 to 8 years), these guidelines (the online coaching resources provided by New Zealand Football (2010a) is one example) stated that: children should be given equal game time;

shouting at children is not appropriate; they should get experience playing in different positions; children should not be punished for making mistakes; and the experience of sport for all children should be positive and most importantly enjoyable. A number of children mentioned coaching practices that did not adhere to coaching guidelines:

> Jake (age 9-11 years): In league the slower kids get put off and the fast ones stay on.
>
> SW: So if you're fast you play more than the slower kids do you?
>
> Jake: Yeah, because they are the best.

Here, Jake is referring to coaching practices that resulted in the more skilled, or physically developed children getting more game time than other children. If the children play well they are rewarded with more game time; if they play badly, they are punished with less game time. The coach's practices would appear to be driven by a desire to win the game, which is achieved by keeping the best players on longer.

This win-at-all-costs attitude also surfaces with evidence of practices that do not expose children to the experience of trying out new positions. The children commonly talked about how they were not exposed to different positions on the field/court.

> John (age 6-8 years): In soccer I was always in defence, it was really boring.
>
> SW: Would you like to play different positions?
>
> A number of children: YES
>
> SW: Put your hands up if would like to play a position you've never played before.
>
> SW: That's everybody here!!
>
> Danny: Last season in tackle rugby I actually asked my coach can I please be winger and he said "we'll see".

The children in all groups talked about how some coaches played players in certain positions because that is where their skills were. Rather than focusing on broader and longer term skill development, the coach's focus would appear to be on using the players as effectively as possible to win the game. The power imbalance between coach and child is apparent here. Danny and John would prefer to play in different positions, but their coach keeps them in the same position each week; the one in which they are deemed to be most effective. This power imbalance is reinforced through the exercise of a number of techniques of power, one of which is surveillance.

Surveillance as a disciplinary technique of power.

In her study of competitive youth swimmers in the UK, Lang (2010) drew upon Foucault's notion of disciplinary power and surveillance to analyse how swimmers conformed to the normative behaviours required to be 'successful' in their sport. Ongoing participation in sport at an elite level requires significant commitment, hardship, and training for athletes (Lang, 2010; Mewett, 2003). To be successful, athletes need to themselves regulate their behaviour. In explaining his theories on how bodies become compliant and regulate their own behaviours, Foucault (1975/1995) referred to how surveillance can be a technique of power. He drew a parallel with Bentham's design of a prison - a panopticon - in eighteenth century England, the circular design of which allowed prison guards to be able to observe prisoners at any time. The prisoners did not know if they were actually being observed at any specific time, but were aware that they could be observed. As a result, prisoners started to regulate their own behaviour. Surveillance can be seen as an important mechanism of control, as it "automatizes and disindividualizes power" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 202).

Lang (2010) drew upon Foucault's notion of surveillance as a technique of power to explain how youth swimmers became highly self-disciplined and complied to

the demands of their coaches. According to Lang, direct surveillance took the form of coaches at pool side monitoring the training performance of swimmers, issuing instructions and pacing the side of the pool. Examples of indirect surveillance included: the monitoring of athletic performance to ensure individual training regimes set by the coach were being adhered to; regular weigh-ins ensuring that nutritional and exercise guidelines were being followed; and the regular maintenance of training logs by athletes allowed coaches to check up on athletes' commitment to training in their own time. Lang found that successful swimmers conformed to the normative behaviours expected of them. Although Lang's study related to an individual sport, this compliance by athletes has been supported by findings in other studies related to team sports, such as Chase's (2006) study on female rugby union players in the US. Chase found that the women rugby players in her study readily adopted the disciplinary processes associated with their sport.

While acknowledging that it is difficult to quantify, a number of authors of international studies have noted that over the last two decades the time spent in free play for increasing numbers of children is declining. Further, the only exposure for many children to physical activity is through highly regulated, adult controlled, structured versions of sport (Clements, 2004; Elkind, 2008; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Skår & Krogh, 2009). Children now play organised sport in highly visible enclosed areas (pitches or courts) under the constant surveillance of coaches and parents. The children interviewed in this phase of the thesis revealed an awareness of being under surveillance:

> Josh (age 6-8 years): I don't like how they [the coaches] do it [yell] because then you feel like if you did something wrong they always shout at you and say "Don't do that, don't do that" but sometimes it makes you score goals and stuff.

Josh here revealed that when he plays his sport that he is aware he is being monitored and observed. He knows that any mistake will result in the coach "always" shouting at him. The children are constantly being observed and do not like being shouted at. However, they have worked out what behaviours will appease their coaches and parents:

> Mark (age 9-11 years): Sometimes [in touch rugby] when you are running really fast and you don't want to get touched and you run sideways they [the parents] yell [...] and you try to get away from the sideline.
>
> SW: Because they are telling you what to do?
>
> Mark: Then you score the try and then they are quiet.

Mark here is explaining how he dislikes being shouted at, it forces him to try and get away from the sideline, and indicates that the only way to stop the parents from yelling is to be successful and score. As evidenced in the observation of coaches detailed in Chapter 5, children are subjected to a relatively constant flow of instruction, praise, and scolding. On a pitch during a game there is nowhere for the children to hide. They are being observed, or at least feel that they are being observed, the whole game. As such these children are very aware of behaviours that would please or displease their coach/parent.

> SW: So what's a good thing to shout?
>
> Kath (age 9-11 years): Like good job, that was nice, good timing. They're not putting you down or anything and then if you do that and they say it's good, you're going to do it again and they're going to be really proud of you. So it's good yeah.

It was significant to Kath that her parents would be proud of her if she played well. The studies by Lang (2010) and Chase (2006) showed that in order to continue playing competitive sport, youth and adult athletes need to conform and adopt the normative practices associated with their sports. For these older athletes, they have made a choice to continue playing sport and it is not compulsory. But even at the young ages of children in this thesis (ages 6 to 11 years) it is already apparent that these children are under pressure to begin the journey of accepting the normative behaviours associated with competitive sport. This acceptance would appear to be a logical outcome of the constant surveillance that they are under playing their sport, which is supported by a punishment-gratification system that is an accompanying disciplinary practice.

Pockets of Resistance

Although there is a clear power imbalance, children should not be viewed as powerless. The notion of individual agency is one that has been acknowledged by Foucault (Lang, 2010), and in any power relationship there is the possibility that individuals are free to resist (Grosz, 1994; Lang, 2010). This idea of individual agency is useful when analysing how individuals both resist and conform to existing practices in their power relationships in sport.

Foucault (1980) noted that no relations of power exist without resistance; power is dynamic and as such it can be resisted. When studying relationships of power it is important to acknowledge that this resistance is a part of how power is exercised and how it works (Kendall & Wickham, 1999).

> We should admit [...] that power produces knowledge [...]; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does

not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 27)

Discourse governs and influences how we can talk about a topic and how the objects of our knowledge are constructed (Hall, 2004). Through knowledge, groups can claim a "truth". However, this claim on the truth by a dominant power can be contested by those holding less power (McNay, 1992).

In relation to children's sport, there is a complex web of competing discourses and relationships of power. The New Zealand government, through SPARC, have developed guidelines for organisations that run sport programmes for children and young people (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2007). These guidelines circulate and promote knowledge that reinforces the progressive-developmental discourse. In providing rationale for improving the experiences of children playing sport, SPARC also draw upon the health promotion discourse. The government are keen to promote physical activity and any behaviour which adversely impacts upon a child's proclivity to engage in physical activity is frowned upon. Similarly, the coaching literature produced by the national and regional sporting organisations for each of the team sports involved in this study are again visible representations of the progressive-developmental discourse. Coach behaviours, as evidenced by the words of the children in this study, are clearly influenced by two competing discourses: the progressive-developmental and competitive discourses. The "truth" for many coaches would appear to be that sport is about winning, and their practices as presented by the children are a visible representation of this belief. It is evident then that these coaches carry out practices of resistance. Coaches would seem to be openly contradicting and contravening the guidelines laid down for them by their sports organisations. For the children interviewed in this study, two radically different versions of sport emerge, very much dependent

upon which discourse influences their coach. Within the competitive discourse, much of the coach behaviour is focused on improving performance to win the game. However, the effect of these behaviours on the children can have the opposite effect to that desired:

> Marcus (age 6-8 years): [in touch rugby] I had the ball and was about to score a try. I'm like running as fast as I can, then he [my coach shouts] puts me off and I look backwards and slow down and then I get touched and I get really peeved off.
>
> SW: So you don't score the try?
>
> Marcus: Yeah.
>
> Josh: I was playing soccer and I was running with the ball and [my soccer coach] he was like yelling at me and I was trying to concentrate, then I got this song stuck in my head with all this yelling and then I couldn't concentrate. So I couldn't keep the ball.

As shown in the above example, rather than eliciting behaviours that lead to winning, the coaches' comments have the potential to distract and deter.

Looked at simplistically, it would be easy to assume that coaches hold total power over the children in their teams. As adults (and as coaches) they hold a position of authority and children are expected to follow their instructions. Although there is a power imbalance here between adult and child, children do offer resistance and display often creative strategies to cope and deal with what they perceive to be inappropriate coach behaviour.

> Samantha (age 9-11 years): The one thing I don't like about the boy coach we have [in touch rugby], when he's talking – well when he's yelling, he spits. [...] so I try and stay away from him. That's why I say "I'm not going on the wing." Because like I stay in the middle

Ben: Yeah, it's really annoying [when the adults yell]. Sometimes I ignore them.

Kath: I ignore our coach.

SW: You ignore your coach. How many people ignore their coach?

Megan: Sometimes

Jake: Sometimes

SW: OK, that's 6 of you [out of 9].

Again, the impact of the coaches' behaviour would appear to have the opposite effect to what the coach wants. By resisting, children are exerting their own power. They often choose to ignore the coach, or in Samantha's instance, get as far away from the coach as possible during the game.

There is evidence that children in New Zealand, as elsewhere, are withdrawing from organised sports as they move into adolescence (Thomson, 2000). Much of the literature and guidelines produced by government agencies is driven by a desire to attract children to, and maintain an interest in playing sport into adulthood. If children continue to perceive their sporting experiences in a negative light, then they will continue to wield the most powerful tool in their armoury; totally withdrawing and disengaging from sport.

SW: Why did you stop playing cricket Alec?

Alec (age 9-11 years): It just didn't appeal to me anymore, that's all.

SW: OK.

Alec: But I also began to play soccer because I had a better coach than cricket. I thought it would be a better way to spend my time [...]

SW: So why is your coach better at soccer do you think?

Alec: Because he always treats us as his equals [...] but the coaches I don't really like is they only care about winning. They don't care about how the team feels [...] or they don't care about how other people feel.

SW: So if your soccer coach was your cricket coach…..

Alec: I'd still be doing cricket.

The available evidence would appear to indicate that children, as they move into adolescence, take one of two paths open to them. The first path is to withdraw from organised sport, which Alec (at the age of 9 years) has already done in the case of cricket. The second path is to conform to the dominant competitive discourse, where children settle for a power structure influenced by the competitive discourse, and accept and internalise the normative practices required to be ongoing participants in competitive sport (Johns & Johns, 2000).

Limitations

This phase of the thesis makes no attempt at finding a representative sample, producing strictly generalisable findings, nor explores potentially important cultural differences where different stories might emerge. However, the consistency in the statements that emerged across the different focus groups, and across the age groups, lends some weight to the generalisability of these findings. Further work with different (ethnic and regional) children is required to establish this assertion. Nonetheless, these findings suggest that children are able to offer a valuable insight and perspective into organised sport practices.

There has been a perception in the past that children are not competent to provide reliable data (Morrow & Richards, 1996). Morrow and Richards challenged this perception and urged sociologists to take children more seriously and to view children as important social actors in their own right. The findings of this phase of the thesis support the stance taken by Morrow and Richards in that these children are able to reveal important insights into current coaching practices and behaviours. It would

appear that children value being given the opportunity to have their opinions taken seriously by an adult.

When working in a focus group setting with children, it was difficult to explore certain ideas as the children, especially the younger group, jumped quite quickly from idea to idea. After the initial focus group meetings with each group the data were reviewed and areas of interest were identified and followed up in the second interviews. However, analysis of the second group meetings revealed a number of important issues that were raised but that in the heat of the moment during the interview were not explored further. In the focus group meeting with the administrators (see Chapter 4) it was possible to follow up and clarify areas of interest or confusion with subsequent telephone or e-mail conversations with participants. This was not possible with participants who were children. In particular, a number of references to 'boy coach' and 'girl coach' were topics that could have been explored further. The comments that revealed coaching practices that gave boys more game time than girls is also an area that would be interesting to study. There is considerable scope here for potential future study that could examine children's perceptions of the role gender plays as a determinant of coach behaviour. Although difficult logistically, it is recommended that researchers considering focus group work with children consider ways of conducting a follow-up interview to enable emergent themes to be explored in more depth.

One of the arguments presented by family services organisations to Campbell (2008) against his study with participants who were children was that children's views and opinions may be unreliable. It was argued that to accept a child's statements without question could have the potential to give children an unrealistic level of power. These focus group discussions with children supported findings from other studies conducted with children (Aubrey & Dahl, 2006; Burrows, 2010; Haubl & Liebsch,

2009), in that children are able to provide insightful, clear and sometimes sophisticated views about a range of topics. The responses of children in the 6 to 8 years age group were shorter and required more prompting to keep them on topic, but the insight shown by all children to issues around their sport was impressive.

Summary

Children playing sport have to navigate between several competing discourses. The experience of working with children in this phase of the thesis suggests that children can provide valuable insight into issues that directly relate to them. Their stories would appear to shed considerable light on current coaching and parenting practices in relation to their sport. It is interesting to note that their opinions on sport closely relate to recommendations laid out in coaching literature – for examples see Light (2004) and Kidman (2005) - which advocates a more child or athlete-centred approach to coaching. What children appear to want is a version of sport that is constructed from a progressive-developmental and fun perspective, but that allows opportunity for competition. A strong sense of fair play emerges, coaching practices that focus primarily on winning, and that result in children being treated unequally, have a major impact. It is quite simply not what these children want from sport.

Many coaches would appear to employ disciplinary measures that support an over-riding focus on winning. The sports field is an arena where children remain under constant surveillance and these children would appear to be very aware that their actions on the field of play are likely to be subjected to either praise or criticism. However, all of these children love playing sport. Children enjoy sport for the same reasons they did in the 1970s (Orlick & Botterill, 1975). It is exciting, exhilarating, and a source of enjoyment. Many children clearly had coaches who nurtured this experience of sport. In return, these coaches were held in exceedingly high esteem by the children. Alarmingly

there also appeared to be significant evidence from the children's perspective, of coaching practices that constructed a version of sport for them that was over-competitive, and that resulted in children being treated unequally. As a consequence the children were extremely critical of some of their coaches. For many children, the construction of sport would appear to serve the needs more of coaches and parents than the needs of the children themselves. There is pressure on children, both through punitive measures and a system of rewards, to conform to the normative behaviours associated with a dominant competitive discourse in sport. It would seem that as these children get older, in order to continue participating in sport, they will need to become compliant and buy in to the normative expectations associated with the pre-eminent competitive discourse.

Chapter 8: Referees and Coaches

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of an electronic survey that was administered to coaches and referees/umpires (hereafter referred to as referees). The overall aim of this component of the thesis was to elicit the views of these two specific groups of people closely involved in the administration of children's sport. Due to the anecdotal nature of much of the evidence to date relating to coach and parent behaviour, it was important that the views of coaches and referees were taken into account.

As discussed in Chapter 5, coaches have long been identified as playing an important role in nurturing a child's enjoyment of sport (Smoll & Smith, 2006), and it is therefore important that any study examining sideline behaviour should take into account the perspective of coaches. A number of studies have examined the perspectives of coaches in relation to children's sport. For example, Gould et al. (2006) examined junior tennis coaches' perspectives of parental influences on junior tennis players, and Wiersma and Sherman (2005) explored volunteer youth team sport coaches' perspectives on coach education and parental codes of conduct. However, there is no evidence in the peer reviewed academic literature of studies that have drawn upon the views of referees involved specifically in children's sport. This is hardly surprising, as the volunteer role of referee in children's team sports is often shared by coaches and/or parents. As sports organisations commonly express concern about the verbal and sometimes physical abuse that is aimed at referees (supported by the findings of this study in Chapter 4) by coaches, spectators and parents (English Football Association, 2010), it seems important that the perspective of volunteer referees should also be considered. Those studies that have examined the role of referees - for examples

see Anshel and Delaney (2001), and Rainey, Santilli, and Fallon (1992) - have tended to focus primarily on the perspectives of athletes, coaches or parents. The studies that have drawn upon referees' perspectives, have focused more on elite or higher level sport as opposed to children's sport (Kaissidis-Rodafinos, Anshel, & Sideridis, 1998; Kellett & Shilbury, 2007; Wolfson & Neave, 2007).

Being in the centre of the action, referees are ideally placed to comment on sideline behaviour and abuse of officials has been identified as a key cause of stress for referees (Kaissidis & Anshel, 1993). The study by Kaissidis and Anshel compared the perspectives of adolescent and adult basketball referees on their perceived sources of acute stress. Among the sources of stress that ranked highest was verbal abuse by coaches (which further emphasises the significance of the coach), with verbal abuse by spectators being ranked as one of the lowest sources of stress. Adolescent referees were also found to be significantly more susceptible to stress than their adult counterparts. Due to the lack of perspective from referees in previous research, and considering the suggestion from the available evidence that sideline behaviour is a major cause of stress for referees, it was clearly important that the voices of referees were taken into account in this phase of the thesis.

There were three specific objectives of this component of the thesis: first, to get a further perspective on the nature and prevalence of different sideline behaviours; second, to get an insight into the perspective of coaches on the effects of these behaviours; and third, to get an insight into the perspective of referees on the effects of these behaviours.

Methods

This component of the thesis was a two stage cross-sectional descriptive study that utilised an electronic survey software package, SelectSurveyASP Advanced version

8.1.5 (ClassAppsCom ©2004). The survey was designed to be relevant to both coaches and referees. A similar approach to the design of the questionnaire used for parents and their children (see Chapter 6) was adopted, with the questionnaire containing both closed and open-ended questions and drawing upon quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. The target population were coaches and referees of children's (ages 6 to 11 years) four team sports: rugby union, touch rugby, netball, and soccer. The setting was two districts of Greater Auckland. In the two-stage cross-sectional descriptive study, the first stage selected sports organisations representative of the four team sports and the second stage invited all eligible coaches and referees to participate.

Participants

Sports organisations.

A method of purposive sampling was adopted to identify four sports organisations responsible for the coordination and organisation of the four team sports that were the focus of this thesis (netball, rugby union, touch rugby, and soccer). Inclusion criterion for sports organisations was that they held contact details of volunteer referees and coaches involved in children's sport.

Coaches and referees.

The second stage was to sample all eligible coaches and referees whose names were held on the sports organisations' databases. The inclusion criteria for participation were that: participants should be 16 years of age or over; and they had coached or refereed one of the four team sports for children aged between 6 and 11 years.

Instrument

Development and design.

Preliminary conversations with sports organisations revealed that e-mail addresses were the only contact details a number of these organisations had for their coaches and referees, which effectively ruled out the use of a postal questionnaire. Within the constraints of this phase of the thesis, an electronic survey was the most convenient, practical and cheapest method. There has been an increasing tendency to use online surveying in recent years (Nulty, 2008) and there are a number of advantages associated with using electronic surveys. They can be cheaper than postal questionnaires, and the data is easily collected and collated, with no need for transcribing. However, Nulty noted that the response rates of online surveys tended to be lower than response rates to paper surveys.

The design of the online survey was again informed by recommendations made by Dillman (2000). These recommendations related to: length of questionnaire (as brief as possible); the types of questions included; the language used in question design (simple, short and specific); the clarity of instructions provided for respondents (taking into account a range of respondent computer skills); and restricting use of colour to maintain clarity and readability. The online survey was designed to be one web page only, so respondents could clearly see how long the survey would take to complete without having to progress through multiple screens. The number of questions was limited to ten (refer to Appendix F for survey details), with eight compulsory closed questions, and two optional open-ended questions.

In line with recommendations made by Neumann (2006) a ranking scale system was utilised (the X-point Likert scale – where X gives the number of response options), allowing respondents to choose among alternative answers to closed questions. The two

open-ended questions were included in the survey to elicit coach and referee perceptions relating to sideline behaviour.

E-mail invitations to participate were to be distributed by the sporting organisations to their coaches and referees. Participant information was included in the e-mail (see Appendix F) and coaches and referees who wished to participate were directed to the internet-based survey. The design of the survey ensured that completion of the survey was anonymous.

Data storage and security.

Participants entered their data directly into a structured query language (SQL) database, via the SelectSurveyASP website. Participants' personal information was limited to age range (16-20 years, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61 and over), gender, role (coach or referee), and sport. The information held on the database was accessible only to the principal researcher. Multiple submissions by one respondent have been identified as an area of concern for researchers using online surveys (Yun & Trumbo, 2000). As a consequence, the software package utilised retained the IP address of the computer that the user submitted from, thereby preventing users from resubmitting the survey from the same computer. This limits (but does not eliminate) the potential for multiple submissions of the survey by the same user.

Piloting.

To enhance the reliability of the online survey, a pilot study was conducted in June 2009 to test both the survey and the procedures for the main study (Dillman, 2000). An e-mail with the embedded link to the survey was sent out to a convenience sample of ten sports coaches and administrators known to the researcher. Feedback from the participants involved in the pilot was extremely positive and only one minor wording change was deemed to be necessary to the overall design of the survey. The

online survey was also user-tested by the participants to test the robustness of the instrument and the associated procedures: easy access to online survey web link; response time; non-completion of compulsory questions; and multiple submissions of the survey. The data generated by the pilot sample was then tested to ensure the storage of data, data export features, and reporting features of the package were working correctly. The pilot test revealed that the software appeared to be robust and reliable.

Procedure

In May and June 2009, four regional sports associations were approached by an initial phone call and follow-up e-mail inviting them to participate. Representatives from all four organisations expressed an interest in their organisation participating. Representatives from two of the four sporting organisations (rugby union and netball) expressed concerns over adult behaviour at children's games and were keen to be involved in, and see the results of, this phase of the thesis. Each of the organisations held coach and referee contact information on a database, however, the regional touch rugby organisation only held a limited number of contacts on their database. Subsequently, in June 2009, a charitable sports trust that coordinated season long competitions for touch rugby and soccer for children was also invited to participate. Refer to Table 19 for an overview of the participating organisations.

Table 19: *Participating Sports Organisations*

Type	Sports Co-ordinated
RSO	Rugby
RSO	Netball
RSO	Touch
RSO	Soccer
Charitable Sports Trust	Touch and Soccer

E-mail invitations to complete the online survey were distributed by these organisations to coaches and referees (aged 16 years or over) whose e-mail addresses were held on their databases. The e-mail included an invitation to participate, participant information, and an embedded link to the electronic survey (URL). Table 20 provides an overview of the participants, by sport.

Table 20: *Potential Participants by Sport*

Sport	Coaches	Referees	Combined [a]	Total
Rugby	330	148	0	478
Soccer	350	150	0	500
Touch	0	0	104	104
Netball	0	0	98	98
Total	680	298	202	1180

[a] Three of the organisations held all volunteer contact information together, with no means of differentiating between roles.

The survey was launched in mid-August 2009 and closed at the beginning of October. Completion and submission of the online survey denoted informed consent to participate. An initial follow–up email was sent by each organisation at the end of August, and a final reminder that the survey was about to close was sent out at the end of September.

Preliminary analysis of the data was conducted in November-December 2009, and a preliminary summary report (see Appendix I) of the findings was sent to each of the participating organisations at the end of December.

Data Analysis

The data was exported from the survey software package into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Quantitative data analysis of the closed questions was descriptive and utilised cross-tabulations between groups of interest. Fisher's exact test was used to

determine associations between cross-tabulated categorical variables. These analyses were performed using Stata version 10.0 (StataCorp, College Station, TX, USA) and a level of 5% was used to define statistical significance.

There were two open-ended questions included in the survey. Analysis of the qualitative data was basic qualitative descriptive (Sandelowski, 2000) and a qualitative data analysis software tool, Weft QDA (Fenton, 2006), was utilised to sort the qualitative data into key categories and sub-categories. The analytical approach of the qualitative data mirrored the approach adopted in the analysis of the data from the surveys completed by parents and children (refer Chapter 6). The data was repeatedly read to ensure that all categories and sub-categories had been identified.

Results

Response Rates

A total of 1,180 e-mails were sent to coaches and referees inviting them to complete the online survey. A total of 287 surveys were completed – a response rate of 24.3%.

Gender and Age Groups

Table 21 provides a breakdown of the respondents' age groups and gender. Of the 287 respondents, 67.9% (n=195) were male, 32.0% (n=92) were female. The majority of respondents were aged between 31 and 50 years old (85.7%, n=246), with 52.3% (n=150) of the respondents aged between 41 and 50 years. A significant difference was identified in the age distribution by gender (Fishers' exact test, p=0.010). There was a relatively even distribution of female respondents between the 31 to 40 years age range (40.2%) and the 41 to 50 years age range (45.6%). However, for males, there was a noticeable increase from the 31-40 years age range bracket (30.2%) to the older 41-50 years age range bracket (55.4%).

Table 21: *Respondents by Age Group and Gender*

Age	Female		Male		Total	
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*
16-20	7	*(7.6)*	4	*(2.0)*	11	*(3.8)*
21-30	4	*(4.3)*	4	*(2.0)*	8	*(2.8)*
31-40	37	*(40.2)*	59	*(30.2)*	96	*(33.4)*
41-50	42	*(45.6)*	108	*(55.4)*	150	*(52.3)*
51-60	2	*(2.2)*	17	*(8.7)*	19	*(6.6)*
61+	0	*(0)*	3	*(1.5)*	3	*(1.0)*
Total	92	*(100)*	195	*(100)*	287	*(100)*

Role Played in Children's Sport

Of the 287 respondents, 49.5% (n=142) were coaches, 15.3% (n=44) were referees, 29.6% (n=85) performed both roles, and 5.6% (n=16) were not currently coaching or refereeing.

Sport Involvement

Figure 2 graphically depicts an overview of respondents' specific sport involvement. A number of respondents (n=68) were involved as coaches or referees in more than one sport, which reflects the high commitment of many volunteers involved in the administration of children's sport. Sports reflected in the 'other' category response included: diving (n=1), underwater hockey (n=1), surf lifesaving (n=2), swimming (n=1), athletics (n=2), flippa ball (n=2), and tennis (n=1). While the sport involvement question specifically asked about involvement in team sports only, a small number of respondents (n=5) included individual sports.
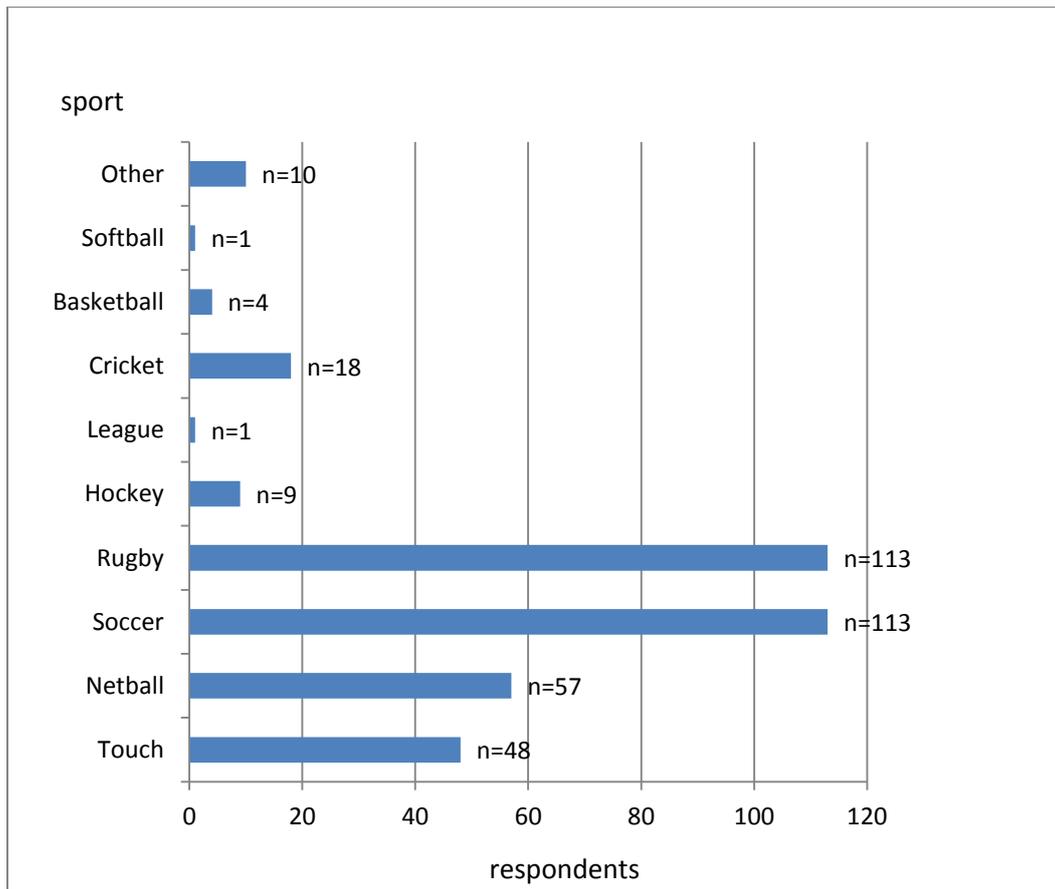
Figure 2: *The Sports Respondents Coached or Refereed*

Commitment to Coaching and Refereeing

To establish if the respondents were regularly involved in their sport(s), the number of years they had been involved and the frequency of their coaching/refereeing was determined (see Table 22). The level of involvement for the majority of respondents was high; with 80.8% (n=232) having coached or refereed for at least two years or more, and 90.9% (n=261) being regularly involved in their sport (most weeks or more).

Table 22: *Number of Years and Frequency of Coaching or Refereeing*

Number of Years Coaching / Refereeing	n	(%)	Coaching / Refereeing frequency	n	(%)
0-1	55	(19.2)	More than once a week	141	(49.1)
2-3	96	(33.4)	Every or most weeks	120	(41.8)
4-5	57	(19.9)	Sometimes	17	(5.9)
6 or more	79	(27.5)	Not very often	9	(3.1)
Total	287	(100)	Total	287	(100)

Frequency of Inappropriate Parental Behaviour Observed

To establish coaches and referees' perceptions of the frequency of inappropriate behaviours, respondents were asked how regularly they witnessed inappropriate parental behaviour at children's sporting events. Of the 287 respondents, 180 (62.7%) stated that they had witnessed inappropriate behaviour at least once or twice a season, with 22 (7.7%) of these respondents regularly witnessing this type of behaviour. However, 107 (37.3%) respondents stated that they had only witnessed inappropriate behaviour once or twice ever, or had never witnessed any inappropriate parental behaviour. Figure 3 presents a bar-chart of the distribution of responses to this question.
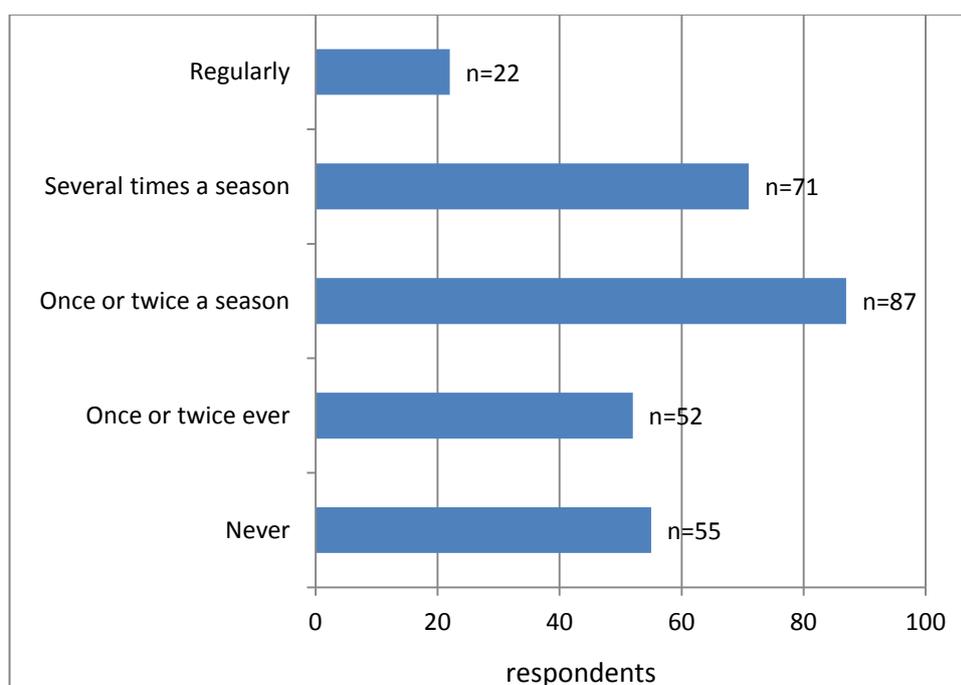
Figure 3: *Frequency of Inappropriate Parental Behaviour Observed by Respondents*

Testing the effects of gender, role, and sport on reporting of frequency of inappropriate parental behaviour.

An overview of the reported frequencies of inappropriate parental behaviour observed cross-tabulated with respondent gender, role and sport is presented in Table 23.

A significant difference was identified in the reporting of the frequency of these behaviours by respondent gender (Fishers' exact test, $p=0.013$). Proportionally more males than females reported witnessing higher frequencies of inappropriate parental behaviour, with 67.7% of males (n=132) reporting they had witnessed these behaviours at least once or twice a season; whereas only 52.2% of female respondents (n=48) reported observations of similar frequencies.

Table 23: *Frequency of Inappropriate Parental Behaviour Observed by Respondent Gender, Role, and Sport*

	Regularly observed		Several times a season		Once or twice a season		Once or twice ever		Never		Total	
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*
Gender												
Male	14	*(7.2)*	54	*(27.7)*	64	*(32.8)*	25	*(12.8)*	38	*(19.5)*	195	*(100)*
Female	8	*(8.7)*	17	*(18.5)*	23	*(25.0)*	27	*(29.3)*	17	*(18.5)*	92	*(100)*
Role												
Coach	6	*(4.2)*	24	*(16.9)*	48	*(33.8)*	32	*(22.5)*	32	*(22.5)*	142	*(100)*
Referee	6	*(13.6)*	14	*(31.8)*	10	*(22.7)*	5	*(11.4)*	9	*(20.4)*	44	*(100)*
Both	10	*(11.8)*	29	*(34.1)*	24	*(28.2)*	12	*(14.1)*	10	*(11.8)*	85	*(100)*
None currently	0	*(0.0)*	4	*(25.0)*	5	*(31.2)*	3	*(18.7)*	4	*(25.0)*	16	*(100)*
Sport [a]												
Netball	3	*(7.0)*	8	*(18.6)*	10	*(23.2)*	12	*(27.9)*	10	*(23.2)*	43	*(100)*
Touch	1	*(12.5)*	3	*(37.5)*	2	*(25.0)*	2	*(25.0)*	0	*(0.0)*	8	*(100)*
Rugby	6	*(8.1)*	23	*(31.1)*	19	*(25.7)*	9	*(12.2)*	17	*(22.3)*	74	*(100)*
Soccer	4	*(4.6)*	21	*(24.4)*	26	*(30.2)*	15	*(17.4)*	20	*(23.2)*	86	*(100)*

[a] A number of respondents (n=76) coached or refereed more than one sport. The data in this section of the table represents respondents who identified with one sport only.

A further significant difference (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.025$) was identified in the reporting of these behaviours by respondent role. Respondents who identified that they performed the role of referee reported observing higher frequencies of inappropriate behaviours than those respondents who identified as coaches only. Of the respondents who were referees only, 74.1% (n=63) reported observing inappropriate parental behaviour at least once or twice a season, compared to 68.2% (n=30) of those who identified as coaches and referees, and 54.9% (n=78) of respondents who were coaches only. This finding suggested that referees have a different perception of what is considered to be inappropriate parental behaviour.

Further analysis revealed no differences in the reporting of the frequency of inappropriate parental behaviour between sports (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.638$).

Nature of Inappropriate Behaviour Observed

Respondents were asked to provide details of any inappropriate behaviour that they witnessed. This question was open-ended and responses were analysed to identify the key and dominant themes. For the 231 (80.5%) respondents to this question, the key themes that emerged were:

- *Abusive behaviour:* 83.5% of these respondents (n=193) referred to incidents of abusive verbal behaviour they had witnessed, 63.2% (n=146) referred to verbal abuse directed at children, and 62.7% (n=145) referred to incidents of verbal abuse aimed at referees.

- *Inappropriate coaching:* 29% (n=67) cited examples of inappropriate coach behaviour. This included verbal abuse and scolding directed at players, referees and other coaches.

- *Biased refereeing/umpiring:* 15.5% (n=36) felt that a number of referees were biased towards their own teams, and made blatant decisions favouring their team.

- *Physical confrontation:* Ten respondents stated that they had witnessed actual violence and/or physical confrontations involving parents/coaches during children's sports games.

Ongoing Concerns with Parental Behaviour

Respondents were asked if they had concerns about inappropriate parental behaviour at children's sporting events: 60.3% (n=173) of respondents stated that they did have concerns; and 39.7% (n=114) of respondents stated they had no concerns.

Testing the effects of gender, role, and sport on reporting of ongoing concerns with parental behaviour.

The reporting of ongoing concerns with parental behaviour cross-tabulated with respondents' gender, role, and sport is presented in Table 24.

Analysis revealed no association between either the gender of the respondent and ongoing concerns with parental behaviour (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.898$), or the respondent's sport and reporting of ongoing concerns (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.794$). However, a significant association was identified between reporting of ongoing concerns and respondent's role (Fisher's exact test, $p=0.023$), with 70.6% (n=60) of those who identified as coaches and referees, and 68.2% (n=30) of referees stating they had ongoing concerns with parental behaviour at children's sporting events. In comparison, only 53.5% (n=76) of coaches expressed similar concerns. Again, these findings suggest that perspectives of inappropriate parental behaviour differ between coaches and those who have performed the role of referee.

Table 24: *Ongoing Concern with Parental Behaviour by Respondent Gender, Role, and Sport*

	Have Concerns		No Concerns		Total	
	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*	n	*(%)*
Gender						
Male	117	*(60.0)*	78	*(40.0)*	195	*(100)*
Female	56	*(60.9)*	36	*(39.1)*	92	*(100)*
Role						
Coach	76	*(53.5)*	66	*(46.5)*	142	*(100)*
Referee	30	*(68.2)*	14	*(31.8)*	44	*(100)*
Both	60	*(70.6)*	25	*(29.4)*	85	*(100)*
None currently	7	*(43.7)*	9	*(56.2)*	16	*(100)*
Sport [a]						
Netball	24	*(55.8)*	19	*(44.2)*	43	*(100)*
Touch	6	*(75.0)*	2	*(25.0)*	8	*(100)*
Rugby	45	*(60.8)*	29	*(39.2)*	74	*(100)*
Soccer	50	*(58.1)*	36	*(41.9)*	86	*(100)*

[a] A number of respondents (n=76) coached or refereed more than one sport. The data in this section of the table represents respondents who identified with one sport only.

Steps to improve parental behaviour.

Respondents were asked to identify steps that they believed could be taken to improve parental behaviour, with 66.2% (n=190) of respondents answering this open-ended question. The key themes that emerged were:

- *Education:* 42.6% (n=81) of respondents to this question believed that education was the key to improving behaviour. Examples included providing codes of conduct for coaches and parents; and sporting organisations and clubs actively promoting fair play guidelines.

- *Punitive action:* 38.4% (n=73) felt that more punitive steps needed to be taken by sports organisations, including touchline bans for serial

offenders. A number of respondents noted however, that this could result in children being unfairly punished for their parent's behaviour.

- *Sporting organisations to take more responsibility:* 20% (n=38) of respondents believed that their sporting organisations needed to take more responsibility in relation to this issue. Ideas put forward included officials randomly attending games to monitor behaviour, providing more support for clubs, and offering clearer guidelines around codes of conduct. A number of respondents cited the sport of netball as an example of good practice in this regard.

- *Coaches taking responsibility:* 13.6% (n=26) believed that coaches were best placed to enforce parental behaviour guidelines. Recommendations included the conducting of coach-parent meetings at the start of the season where clear guidelines around parental behaviour were to be established.

- *Improving refereeing standards:* 8.9% (n=17) felt that poor refereeing was often the trigger for inappropriate coach and parental behaviour. They believed that better support should be offered for younger referees/umpires in particular, and that existing refereeing/umpiring courses should cover issues such as how to deal with abusive parents.

Discussion

The findings of this phase of the thesis are drawn from the perspectives of volunteer coaches and referees. In New Zealand, as elsewhere, community sport relies heavily on the commitment of volunteers (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010e). In Australia, for example, approximately 1.6 million volunteers form the backbone of community sport with 904,400 of these volunteers being associated with school or junior sport (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). In New Zealand, it has been

estimated that there are over 500,000 volunteers involved in sport (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010a). As children's sport relies so heavily on volunteer support, it was fundamentally important that the views of these volunteers were taken into consideration.

The coaches and referees who responded to this survey were predominantly male (67.9%, n=195) with 52.3% (n=150) of respondents being aged between 41 and 50 years. This age and gender distribution is similar to the findings of a SPARC commissioned survey of 1,000 volunteers involved in New Zealand sport (Kazakov & Johnson, 2008). Although Kazakov and Johnson's study focused on all volunteers, not only those involved in children's sport, they found that a total of 60% of the 1,000 volunteers were male. In addition, the most highly represented age range of volunteers (36%) was that of 40 to 49-year olds.

In this current study the distribution of the sample across sports and volunteer roles was constrained by the contact information held by the participating organisations. This is discussed further in the limitations section of this chapter, but one impact was that more coaches than referees were invited to participate. However, the role of coach was found to be the most common role for volunteers (39%) in the SPARC commissioned New Zealand wide survey, with only 6% of all volunteers who responded to the survey being referees (Kazakov & Johnson, 2008). In this current study, although the majority of respondents were coaches (79.1%, n=227), referees were also well represented (44.9%, n=129). A number of respondents (29.6%, n=85) were able to offer perspective from both roles – referee and coach.

Another constraint of the sample in this study was the distribution of respondents across the four team sports. As seen in Figure 2, soccer and rugby union were the most highly represented sports (each with 113 respondents), with netball

(n=57) and touch rugby (n=48) less well represented. However, analysis did not reveal any important or significant differences or patterns of inappropriate behaviour between sports – and so the inequitable sport representation is unlikely to have yielded major biases in the presented findings.

In order to gain a reasonably informed perspective in relation to parental behaviour, it was important to establish the respondents' level of involvement as volunteers. Respondents were asked how long they had been performing their role in children's sport, and 80.8% (n=232) had been involved for two years or more, with 27.5% (n=79) having been involved for six or more years. On a weekly basis, 90.9% (n=261) stated that they were involved as referees or coaches at least most weeks, with 49.1% (n=141) being involved more than once a week. The respondents, therefore, were regularly involved in children's sport and as such were well placed to comment on issues related to sideline behaviour.

In relation to the frequency of inappropriate parental behaviour observed by coaches and referees, a significant difference was found in the reporting of the frequency of these behaviours by gender, with male respondents reporting that they had observed more frequent occurrences of inappropriate behaviour than females. As respondents who were involved with rugby union only were predominantly male (93.3%, n=70), and respondents who were involved with netball only were predominantly female (95.3%, n=41), it was pertinent to examine the differences in frequency of reporting between sports. However, no significant difference was found in the frequencies of reported inappropriate behaviour by sport.

The gender differences identified here are of interest. As no significant differences were identified in the reporting of inappropriate behaviour by sport, it is possible that the presence of a female coach or referee may have an impact on the types

of behaviours that are occurring on the sidelines. Although there is no evidence to currently support this hypothesis, this is certainly an area worthy of consideration for future research. A number of studies have suggested that the field of sport is traditionally viewed as the domain predominantly of males (Stevens, Osborne, & Robbins, 2002). It has been suggested that the presence of women in sports that have been traditionally male-dominated can be perceived as threatening to masculine identity and as such sport can potentially be a site of considerable gender conflict (Meân, 2001). Although not directly related to children's sport, the study by Meân found significant differences in the nature of comments made by male soccer referees when they refereed all-male games as opposed to all-female games. It is possible that the presence of females may act as a mediating factor on aggressive behaviours exhibited by male coaches and spectators at children's sporting events.

A further interesting difference emerged in the perception of inappropriate behaviour frequency between referees and coaches. Of those respondents who performed the sole role of referee, 74.1% (n=63) reported that they observed inappropriate behaviour at least once or twice a season. This was compared to 54.9% (n=78) of those who only coached. In addition, 68.2% (n=30) of respondents who performed a dual role of coach and referee reported observations of a similar frequency. These findings suggest that referees, who are potentially the recipients of verbal abuse, have quite different views to coaches on the frequency of inappropriate behaviours. In accounting details of the inappropriate behaviour observed 67.7% (n=132) of all respondents reported witnessing verbal abuse aimed at referees. Given the relatively high volume of negative comments made by coaches seen in the coach observation phase of this thesis, it is possible that coaches are either unaware, or normalise language that non-coaches are more likely to see as abusive.

The perception of referees that inappropriate parental behaviour was more common than recognised by coaches was also apparent in the responses to the question that asked if respondents had concerns about parental behaviour in children's sport. A total of 60.3% (n=173) of all respondents stated that they did have concerns. No difference was found in responses by gender or by sport, although a significant difference emerged in relation to the responses from referees and coaches. Of those respondents who performed the dual role of coach and referee, 70.6% (n=60) expressed concerns; 68.2% (n=30) of referees had concerns; and only 53.5% (n=76) of coaches expressed a concern.

It has been noted that open-ended questions in electronic surveys generate longer responses than those generated in mail surveys (Kiesler & Sproull, 1986; Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). The two open-ended questions in this survey were designed to encourage responses of a subjective nature, and the questions generated a range of lengthy responses. The interpretation of the term 'inappropriate' allowed for a degree of subjectivity from the respondents and revealed their positions on what was acceptable and unacceptable in relation to adult behaviour in children's sport.

The reports of verbal abuse that targeted referees suggested that this practice was relatively commonplace and normalised.

Coach and referee (Soccer): Criticising referees' decisions openly and offensively, even if it's one of their mates reffing. Abusing the ref in soccer is so accepted that one coach who gave me a gobful [verbal abuse] didn't even realise he was doing it ("did I say that out loud?").

It was clear that this respondent's role as a referee gave him a personal insight into instances of verbal abuse that occurred. He refers to the normalisation of this

practice in that it is now "so accepted" that individuals are not aware of their own behaviour and even abuse their own friends.

It was interesting to note, however, that from the perspective of a number of respondents, referees brought the verbal criticism upon themselves:

Coach (Soccer): There are often parents remarking about the umpiring and usually it's only negative when the call goes against their team. However this is not helped when the umpiring is appalling as I have also witnessed. I know we are desperate to get umpires but there must be a better way such as a buddy up system or something until umpires are good enough to go it alone. How can they not though [verbally abuse an umpire] when some umpires are so bad!!

Again, this respondent refers to the normalised practice of abusing referees, but excuses the abusive behaviour if it is perceived to be warranted. Although this respondent has identified this behaviour as being inappropriate, it is seemingly acceptable to abuse referees in children's sport if the referee is perceived to be making decisions that go against your team.

The abuse of referees has been identified as a source of stress and a cause of burnout for referees in a range of sports (Anshel & Weinberg, 1995; Rainey, 1995). However, there is no evidence in the peer reviewed literature of studies that have studied referees specifically involved with children's sport. The evidence from the findings of this study suggest that the abuse which commonly occurs in adult competitive sport is also common in children's sport, even for children up to the age of 7 years:

Referee (Touch): The coach became too emotional and forgot that these kids were only about 6 or 7 years old and became quite scared when he began

swearing. He was quite intimidating to a junior referee that was also going through training as well.

and

Coach (Netball): A male parent hassled the decisions of another dad who was umpiring 5 and 6-year olds' netball.

Behaviour that is driven by an over-riding focus on winning is apparently occurring in sport for children as young as 5 years of age. Although of interest, the main focus of this study was on the impact of adult behaviour on children themselves. This over-competitive behaviour by parents and coaches also results in verbal abuse that is directed at children. Of the respondents who detailed reports of inappropriate behaviour, 63.2% (n=146) referred to verbal abuse that targeted children.

Coach (Rugby): Parents verbally abusing their own child and others on the field. Parents mocking other children in front of another child's parents. Parents arguing amongst themselves.

A number of children would appear to be regularly subjected to verbal abuse by parents exhibiting over-competitive behaviour. The findings here support claims that aggressive sports-related spectator behaviour which has traditionally been associated with professional sport is now a regular feature of children's sport (Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2008). For children who are the victims of such behaviour, there is evidence that this has an effect of lowering a child's self-esteem (Solomon & Serres, 1999), and has been associated with children withdrawing from competitive sport as they move into adolescence (Shields et al., 2005). In addition, as discussed in Chapter 6, there is evidence to suggest that there can be emotional harm for children simply witnessing instances of background anger (Cummings, 1987; Omli & La Voi, 2009). With

respondents referring to the abuse of referees, and the abuse of children being a normalised occurrence in children's sport, then regular exposure to background anger is an area of concern.

The most extreme examples of inappropriate behaviour identified related to acts of physical aggression. There were ten accounts of behaviour that related to acts of violence, aggression or physical threats.

> Rugby (Coach and referee): I had to separate the coaches who had a stand-off during a J8 game (5-year olds).

> Rugby (Coach): [During an 11-year olds rugby game] the referee called the game off about half way through the second half. He had by this stage already warned both the coach and the parents on the touch line to control the vitriol and abusive foul language that was clearly audible around the field and in this case around the local residential area. After asking the coach to leave the area of the rugby fields (which was ignored) he [the coach] and his supporting parents began to edge onto the field at which point, fearing for his physical safety, he [the referee] abandoned the game.

Although the number of respondents who related accounts of extreme behaviour were relatively small (3.5% of all 287 respondents), ten occurrences of physical aggression would suggest that this type of behaviour is not uncommon. The influences of background anger can be upsetting for any children who witness these events, but especially so for a child who sees their own parent involved (Omli & La Voi, 2009).

In relation to ongoing concerns about parental behaviour in children's sport, 60.3% (n=173) of respondents stated they did have concerns. When asked what steps could be taken to improve behaviour the key themes to emerge related to education and to more punitive action.

Referee (Rugby): No easy fix given the wide range of social and education backgrounds of parents and supporters. Many supporters treat junior sport as if it were an international when the objectives are participation, learning, enjoyment and development as players and people. Sporting bodies must have the power to exclude undesirable participants from their sporting codes.

This referee's response was typical of many respondents' attitudes. The behaviour is identified as being inappropriate and perceived to be due to parents' displaying an attitude to children's sport more akin to professional sport. A number of respondents went on to compare these attitudes to what the children actually want:

Coach (netball): I don't really have the answer as I think parents, in particular, come with different expectations out of a game sometimes than those of the children playing.

This coach's perspective is supported by the children's stories discussed in Chapter 7. The children certainly did not talk about sport in the way that some of these coaches did, a way that positioned competition and winning as pre-eminent:

Coach (Netball): [I am] unsure [about what could be done] but it certainly is not the answer to stop playing competitive sport. I think people need to acknowledge people want to win and we need to stop ignoring this fact. Instead adjust sport to cater more to its competitive nature.

In this study, the claim that children want to win would appear to be made on their behalf by parents and coaches, and not by the children themselves.

A population of interest who emerged in this phase of the thesis were the relatively large numbers of coaches and referees (n=55, 19.2%) who stated that they had never witnessed inappropriate parental behaviour in children's sports, and those who

stated that they did not have concerns about sideline behaviour (n=114, 39.7%). Due to the subjective nature relating to the interpretation of what is and what is not inappropriate behaviour, this population would be of interest for further study. Although some of the respondents stated they had no ongoing concerns with inappropriate behaviour, they still took the opportunity to respond to the question which asked what steps could be taken to address this behaviour. Some of these responses were quite revealing:

> Coach (Soccer): I believe there is too much PC-ness amongst children's sporting games. It needs to be like the old days and kids just get to play sport. It is surveys like this that make too many rules for parents and in the end it will turn parents off putting their kids into sports, because of the PC rules attached to it. There is no need to create any more PC rules for parents to adhere to. Thank you.

This coach's view was one that the rugby union administrator referred to (see Chapter 4), where any action by his regional rugby organisation to address over-competitive behaviour was regularly met with a response that these actions were "politically correct", and sport was about winning. Parents shouting on the touchline is not only normalised, but it is perceived by many to be acceptable behaviour. Another coach who did not have concerns felt it was just natural parental behaviour:

> Coach (Rugby): I think it is natural that parents are competitive for their kids and protective of their kids and their success - hence the feelings and actions that come out of junior sport sidelines - probably has always been like this and at least we are showing our kids passion and a desire to win....in the very junior grades we must however remember that there is no prize/competition on the line so most aggressive support is futile with respect to results

This was a particularly interesting perspective. The coach asserts that sport is about competition and winning. However, although he acknowledges that "aggressive support" is not appropriate for the younger children, the concerns he expressed would not appear to be about the effect of this behaviour on the child, rather they appear to be more that there is simply no benefit associated with this behaviour. The implication of this is that if the structure of sport for these younger children was more competitive, then the behaviour would be justified.

The complexity of the problem is probably best summed up by a respondent who did express concerns about ongoing behaviour. When asked what steps could be taken to improve this behaviour:

> Referee (Soccer): Get everybody to live in an ideal world! Crikey is there enough room here to describe how to change the world, because it is too easily accepted that referee/coach/player abuse/criticism is ok.

A sense of helplessness emerges here which was echoed in the perspectives of sport administrators (see Chapter 4). There is a perception that the behaviour is so embedded and normalised that it is almost impossible to confront.

Limitations

Online surveys have tended to attract lower response rates than paper ones (Nulty, 2008) and as such, the 24.3% response rate in this study was not surprising. This phase of the study relied very much on the support of the RSOs responsible for the provision and administration of the four team sports that were the focus of this study. The delivery of sport in New Zealand is the responsibility of the individual NSOs, and is from there filtered down through RSOs and then to affiliated clubs. As separate organisations, each RSO had different modes of communication with their coaches and

referees. Some of the RSOs had contact details for all coaches and referees, others had contact details for representative level coaches and referees only, and others grouped all volunteers together with no identifiable role. The Sport Trust was invited to participate to supplement a lack of potential coach and referee participants in certain sports. As such, the sample drawn upon in this study was entirely dependent on the details held by these sporting organisations. However, with only 6% of all volunteers who responded to the SPARC commissioned survey of volunteers in New Zealand sport being referees (Kazakov & Johnson, 2008), a reasonable representation of coaches and referees across the four sports was still achieved in this study (63.2% of respondents were coaches, 44.9% were referees).

The views of referees and coaches provide only one of a range of perspectives in the overall study. As stated in relation to the survey findings from parents and children (refer Chapter 6), it is reasonable to abstract, rather than generalise, the findings from this sample to the target population of coaches and referees involved in the delivery of children's team sports in New Zealand (Rothman & Greenland, 1998).

Summary

This chapter has presented findings from an electronic survey conducted with coaches and referees. The findings present further evidence relating to the perceived inappropriate sideline behaviours associated with children's sport. Although 39.7% of respondents stated that they did not have ongoing concerns with sideline behaviour in children's sport, the majority of respondents did express concerns and evidence of the normalisation and acceptance of verbally abusive behaviours emerged. This gives cause for concern for those children who are regularly exposed to background anger. A significant finding was that there was a difference relating to the perception of the nature and frequency of inappropriate sideline behaviour between referees and coaches.

The results indicated that referees reported more frequent occurrences, and greater concern with inappropriate sideline behaviour. With little evidence of studies that have taken into account the perspective of referees involved in children's sport, this is a potentially important finding. It is recommended that the views of referees should be considered in future research, and should also be considered when developing policy and interventions directed at improving sideline behaviour.

Chapter 9: Bringing it all Together

Introduction

As outlined in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), the major purpose of combining methods in this thesis was that of complementarity (Greene et al., 1989), where the use of different methods is utilised to highlight different aspects of the same phenomenon. This approach also offered the opportunity to draw upon Elias's ideas of figurations, by studying an aspect of social life through an examination of human interdependencies and relationships (Morrow, 2009). The rationale behind using a variety of methods to collect data was to explore the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives. In adopting a Foucauldian notion of discourse analysis, there is no attempt to seek a universal cause for aspects of social life (McHoul & Grace, 1998). The aim of this overall discussion is to draw upon the findings of each component to build a more complete picture of children's sport, and enhance the understanding of factors influencing adult behaviour at children's sporting events. In so doing, excerpts from the focus group interviews and from the responses to the open-ended questions in the surveys are drawn upon to help elucidate the findings of the quantitative components.

As outlined in Chapter 3, this thesis employed a multi-methodological component design, where methods are discrete and independent throughout the study and integration occurs at the level of interpretation (Greene, 2007). The original design intent was that the systematic observation instrument (POISE - described in Chapter 5) would be used to observe the touchline behaviour of randomly selected parents. However, this design approach was adapted slightly once the first phase of the thesis was completed because analysis of the focus group interview conducted with sport administrators revealed a greater concern with inappropriate coach behaviour than with

parent behaviour. Consequently, the focus of the study design shifted slightly, with coaches being observed as opposed to parents. As noted by the administrators, coaches in children's sport are normally parents whose children are actively involved in that sport. Although the findings of one phase of the thesis (administrators' focus group) informed a shift of focus in a subsequent phase (the systematic observation), each study component remained discrete. The findings of each component are of interest in its own right, and integration of the findings of each phase of the thesis facilitates a more complete understanding of the complexities relating to sideline behaviour at children's sporting events.

To provide a framework for this discussion chapter, the four key aims of the thesis will each be dealt with in turn. These aims were to:

- identify the nature of adult behaviour at children's sporting events;

- establish the prevalence of these behaviours at children's sporting events;

- examine the effect of these sideline behaviours on the key stakeholders involved in children's sport; and

- explore the impact of these sideline behaviours on children's enjoyment of sport.

This chapter then concludes with a discussion related to Foucault's notion of discourse and how this is applied to the study of issues relating to children's sport.

The Nature of Sideline Behaviour at Children's Sporting Events

The paucity of studies that have examined adult behaviour at children's sporting events, both in New Zealand and elsewhere, has resulted in an awareness of the true extent of the issue being predominantly constructed either through personal experiences or through media coverage. The media naturally tend to focus on the more sensationalist examples that may occur. For example, in 2008 the front page of the New Zealand

Herald, a national newspaper, led with a number of stories relating to over-competitive parental behaviour at children's sporting events. One story related to an Auckland father being banned from attending his daughter's netball matches after swearing, physically confronting a teacher-coach, and reducing a teenage umpire to tears (McKenzie-Minifie, 2008). The nature of stories presented through New Zealand media coverage would appear to mirror the types of media accounts related elsewhere. For example, in the UK, the Sunday Telegraph ran a feature length article entitled "Mum, the football hooligan" which provided a number of accounts of extreme adult behaviour at children's soccer matches. One account described events at a 9 year-old boys' soccer game:

> The referee signals a foul. An argument breaks out and, less than a minute later, the playing field echoes to the sickening sound of human head on human nose. The head-butt was delivered not by one of the young footballers but by an adult: the strapping thirtysomething father of the bigger boy who took offence when a fouled player's father complained about the tackle. The attacker, still hurling abuse at his target [the father of the fouled player], is pulled away by other parents. (Harrison, 2007, p. 25)

It is these examples of extremely negative aspects of parental behaviour that are consistently portrayed in the media. It was therefore important in this thesis to determine the nature of adult behaviour. Through the classification of behaviours in the observation phase, it was possible to establish the nature of coaching behaviours exhibited. The highest percentage of verbal comments recorded fell into the neutral category (43%), with 35.4% of comments being classified as positive, and 21.6% as negative. The nature of verbal behaviours observed clearly followed a pattern of regular instruction, with children being praised if they executed a skill well, and scolded if they did not. Spectator parental behaviours were not directly observed, but evidence relating

to both positive and negative parental behaviours was forthcoming from all other components of this thesis.

Although the focus group interviews with administrators and children revealed a number of areas of concern with adult behaviour, this thesis also produced evidence of a range of positive behaviours exhibited by both coaches and parents. The use of systematic observation revealed that coaches made a greater percentage of positive comments (35.4%) than negative comments (21.6%). The positive aspects of children's sport were also visible in the findings of the surveys conducted with parents, coaches and referees. Although 60.3% of coaches and referees expressed ongoing concerns with adult behaviour at children's sporting events, many coaches/referees (39.7%) stated they had no concerns whatsoever. Of the parents surveyed, only 19.8% believed that adults had adversely impacted upon their child's enjoyment of sport. The focus group interviews with both administrators and children revealed a number of wonderful stories about positive behaviours exhibited, in particular by coaches:

> Soccer administrator: We've got a coach from [name omitted] University who is doing some work for us and you get him on that field and you see those kids take off. It doesn't matter if it's a parent or a qualified coach, if they've got that affinity and that ability to talk to those kids on the sideline, it's just so powerful.

The following excerpt is from one of the children's focus groups:

> Boy (age 6-8 years): My touch coach chooses the right decisions. He's really good and people like, really bad players, who started this year have just improved so much. You don't have to just pick the good players. So the more times the bad players go on, the more they learn about positions.

These positive stories reinforced the fact that there are a number of coaches exhibiting extremely supportive behaviours.

Establishing the nature of inappropriate behaviours was more problematic. One of the problems posed in this thesis related to the necessarily subjective nature of the interpretation of the term 'inappropriate behaviour'. It would seem clear that very few people would condone the types of excessive behaviour as described by Harrison (2007), but the term 'inappropriate behaviour' relates to any behaviour exhibited by adults which is deemed to have the potential to cause distress or harm to children. Randall and McKenzie (1987) noted that this type of behaviour can be viewed from two perspectives. The first perspective relates to the harmful psychological effects of aggressive adult behaviour on children. The second perspective is related to behaviour that can adversely affect the learning environment for children. It is reasonable to assume that adult behaviour such as swearing or yelling at children would be almost universally accepted as being inappropriate. However, constant criticism of children has also: been linked with children's lack of enjoyment of sport (Petlichkoff, 1993); associated with children dropping out of competitive sport (Gould & Petlichkoff, 1988; Thomson, 2000); and said to adversely impact upon a child's motor skill development (Randall & McKenzie, 1987). While the results of this thesis appear to indicate that participants involved in all phases do not condone the extreme types of behaviour as described in Harrison's (2007) example of the violent father, there is evidence to suggest from the findings of the surveys conducted with parents, and with coaches and referees, that constant criticism of children and referees by coaches and parents has become a normalised and accepted part of children's sport:

> Rugby Referee: Parents get loud but that's all. Parents just get unhappy with the way referees referee the game.

This opinion expressed by a female rugby union referee was a fairly typical response to the question that asked what inappropriate behaviour they had observed.

The terms "only loud parents", or "only parents being competitive", were ways often used by participants to condone the behaviour described. This justification for the inappropriate behaviour observed revealed a perception that these behaviours were a normalised and accepted aspect of children's sport.

Defining what is, and what is not, inappropriate behaviour has also been problematic for researchers who have conducted studies in this area. The review of observational studies in Chapter 2 described the inconsistent approach to the categorisation of adult verbal behaviours. In adapting the original classification system utilised in observational studies, Kidman et al. (1999) and Blom and Drane (2008) categorised instructional and correcting comments as negative. Negative comments had originally been confined to those comments that were derogatory in nature and involved shouting or scolding (Graham et al., 1982; Randall & McKenzie, 1987; Walley et al., 1982). Blom and Drane (2008) acknowledged that "correcting or instructing a child during a sporting event is debatably an undesirable behaviour". However, as noted by Smoll and Smith (2006), instruction, if conducted in a supportive way, can be positive. As a consequence, for the use of systematic observation in this thesis, it was decided to revert to the rationale adopted by Randall and McKenzie, and instructional comments were re-classified and categorised as neutral. The lack of a consistent approach by researchers highlights the problematic nature of research on adult involvement in children's sport. However, for the purpose of this thesis, negative comments were classified as those that involved scolding or were derogatory in some way to the child. The impact of instructional comments on a child's learning and enjoyment of sport is obviously of interest however, and is discussed later in this chapter.

The varying subjective interpretations applied by participants to what is, and what is not, inappropriate adult behaviour at children's sporting events, offered unique

insights into attitudes related to issues around sideline behaviour. The following excerpt from a survey response by a female soccer coach is an example of the complexity of the debate emerging in relation to children's sport:

> I think we have become a nation of 'you don't have to win you just have to have fun', which is rubbish. It's a far better feeling coming first than it is coming second. We have to toughen our children up to take some knocks, to play hard but fair to go out there to win and be competitive. Parents need to know that they are not the players, they are just the spectators. To be fair in the "cheer" but not so carried away that intensity rubs off wrongly on their children.

It is not clear from this account where exactly the line would be drawn between appropriate adult behaviour, which would help "toughen up" the child, and inappropriate behaviour, where the adult gets "carried away". It was interesting to note that in the surveys completed by parents, when asked to recount details of negative experiences at their children's sporting events, 45.5% of parents either did not respond to the question, or specified that they had never experienced any negative aspects. In the responses to the surveys completed by coaches and referees, 19.2% of the participants stated that they had never witnessed inappropriate behaviour at children's sporting events, and 18.1% stated that they had only once or twice ever witnessed inappropriate behaviour. One such participant stated that:

> Some parents get too aggressive on the sidelines and yell inappropriate things but nothing too serious.

There would appear to be two interpretations emerging in relation to the nature of adult behaviour at children's sporting events. The first scenario is one where little or no inappropriate adult behaviour is occurring, and children's sport is played out in a

predominantly supportive and positive environment. The second scenario is that the behaviour that is occurring has become normalised and accepted. The findings from POISE and from the focus group interviews conducted with both the sport administrators and the children suggested that inappropriate behaviours were more common than acknowledged by many parents, coaches and referees.

The administrators interviewed in the focus group expressed concerns about over-competitive behaviours exhibited by both parents and coaches at children's sports events. In saying that, it was acknowledged by these administrators, that without volunteers and parents, sport for children would cease to exist. There were some stories related to the positive aspects of parental behaviour, but as one participant acknowledged, the negative stories tended to get noticed more than the positive ones:

> Netball Administrator: It's obviously easier to remember the negatives than it is the positives. We've had a couple of flare ups this season already about parents next to the court and how it actually impacts on more than just the child but on the whole team.

> Soccer Administrator: There are a lot of really neat people around, but I feel as if probably the negative complaining people sort of outweigh the positive, helping people.

One of the roles of an administrator was dealing with complaints, and as these administrators implied, the negative complaining people tend to have a greater impact, but as the rugby union administrator noted:

> I think it's kind of 80-20. It's the 20% of bad eggs that spoil it for the rest, and you only ever hear the complaints. You never get people ringing up to say the referee was really good at the weekend.

A far greater concern was expressed by the administrators about inappropriate coach behaviour than with parental behaviour. The previous study by Kidman et al. (1999) which expressed more of a concern with parental behaviour at children's sporting events in New Zealand, found that while most comments made by parents were positive in nature (47.2%), the relatively high percentage of negative comments (34.5%) gave cause for concern. However, as discussed, Kidman et al. had adopted an approach that advocated an athlete-centred approach to coaching, and instructional comments were classified as correcting and therefore negative. In their study, the majority of negative comments were accounted for by comments that fell into the instructional or correcting category (26.8%) and scolding comments accounted for only 5.3% of all comments. Kidman et al.'s study at least provided a benchmark for the nature of touchline parental behaviours exhibited. A similar distribution in the percentages of negative comments made by parents was found in the subsequent study conducted by Blom and Drane (2008), with the majority of negative comments (28.1%) again being classified as correcting (instructional), and only 3.4% of all comments being classified as scolding. In the current investigation, 14.2% (n=1,520) of all comments made by coaches were classified as scolding. In drawing a direct comparison with previous studies (Blom & Drane, 2008; Kidman et al., 1999), coaches scold children more frequently than spectator parents do.

In all phases of this thesis, there was evidence of extreme incidents of behaviour by both coaches and parents. One Saturday morning, I observed three rugby union matches. The first match involved 7 to 8-year olds who were predominantly boys. The coach recorded in a notebook the names of children who missed tackles or did not tackle using what the coach perceived to be correct technique, referring to them as "jersey pullers". The coach consistently ridiculed these children:

Rugby Coach: He ran straight through you there, mate, you didn't even try. Jersey puller, jersey puller! How many jersey pullers do we have out there today?

The second match observed that morning was made up of 6 and 7-year old boys. This game ended about ten minutes early as one of the coaches marched onto the field and verbally abused the referee. An official from the RSO was observing the game and came onto the field to try and placate the coach. This was not possible and the coach marched his team off the field and the game was abandoned. The argument between coach, referee, and official continued for at least 15 minutes after the game ended, with the children looking on and listening the whole time.

The third game observed that morning was for 9 and 10-year old boys and involved an exceptionally competitive coach, who got increasingly agitated as the game neared its climax:

Rugby Coach: Kick it to the corner! Kick it to the corner! Aw fuck's sake! If they score now they will win it. Aw fuck's sake, you turned it over again!

Through systematic observation, as seen in Chapter 5, it was possible to establish the nature of the behaviour exhibited by coaches. The nature of the extreme examples of behaviour witnessed in three separate games that morning left a lasting impression and indicated that inappropriate coaching behaviour, in rugby union at least, was certainly not uncommon.

Inappropriate behaviour was described in all phases of this thesis. Examples include the following from the parent surveys:

Mother: Parents always squabbling on sideline. In one [soccer] incident a parent threatened to assault another parent.

From referees:

Rugby referee: It's mainly aggressive parents yelling at the referee. I have also witnessed foul language directed at players and coaches.

From coaches:

Netball coach: There is a win at all costs mentality, where it appears the children (ages 5 to 7 years) have been encouraged to win even if it means pushing and grabbing the opposition. Another example was an opposition coach constantly berating our umpire for what they saw as an incorrect call.

And from the interviews with children:

Boy (age 9-11 years): Our coach in touch yells at us – he goes, "Come on, you've got to go straight," and all that sort of stuff. Like on the sidelines he's like yelling all of the time.

The use of different methods to study parental influences on a child's experience of playing organized sport introduces the concept of triangulation. In relation to this thesis, each component or sub-study addresses a specific aim. However, the combination of different methods enables different viewpoints of an aspect of social reality to emerge. These viewpoints may or may not specifically validate each other, but can enable a more complete and fuller understanding of the phenomena under study to emerge (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003). The examples of coaching and parental behaviours provided by children, parents, coaches, and referees, aligned with the observations of

coaching behaviour witnessed, provide evidence from a range of sources that there is a range of inappropriate adult behaviours occurring in all four team sports that are the focus of this thesis. In order to establish the extent of the problem, it was important to determine the prevalence and frequency of these identified behaviours.

The Prevalence of Identified Behaviours at Children's Sporting Events

The reliance on media reports for information relating to adult behaviour at children's sporting events in New Zealand made it fundamentally important to provide evidence relating to the prevalence and frequency of sideline behaviours exhibited by adults. The use of systematic observation was a key component in addressing this research aim. Kidman et al.'s (1999) study had provided initial evidence relating to sideline parent behaviour. This thesis was able to add to this body of knowledge by recording the nature, target and frequency of coach behaviours.

The precise breakdown of the coach comments recorded was provided and discussed in Chapter 5. The original studies that observed adult spectator behaviour found that parents spent considerable time silently watching their children playing sport (Randall & McKenzie, 1987; Walley et al., 1982). Coaches, not surprisingly, would appear to be considerably more vocal. The average rate of comments per minute made by coaches across all four sports was 3.71, with rugby union coaches making significantly more comments per minute (a rate of 4.38) than coaches from the other three sports. Coaches made regular verbal comments throughout all of the 72 games observed.

In drawing comparisons of coach behaviour between the four team sports, interesting differences emerged. Rugby union coaches did not compare favourably with coaches from the other three sports in a range of aspects. Rugby union coaches made the lowest percentage of positive comments (26.5%), and the highest percentage of negative

comments (23%). Rugby union coaches also recorded the highest rate of negative comments that targeted referees. The evidence that indicated that rugby union coaches were less positive than coaches from other sports was of interest. The rugby union administrator interviewed in the focus group had been critical of the competitive structures of children's sport put in place by other sports. He believed that the over-competitive behaviour exhibited by parents and coaches logically reflected the competitive structures that were in place:

> Rugby administrator: From an outsider's view we have of say of games like soccer and basketball, they get very elite very quickly. And so the pressure goes on kids so quickly that is why so many kids change sport at roughly the ages of 11, 12, and 13. That's why [one soccer club I know] has something like 2,000 junior members and coming to the age of 15 and over the age of 15 they've got about 200. So we are very much supportive that under the age of 12 [rugby] is all participation based.

A number of strategies had been introduced by the RSO that this sports administrator represented. Rugby union for children was meant to be non-competitive, in the sense that the RSO did not record the scores, and no league tables were maintained. The construction of sport by the RSO was primarily aimed at long term skill development, and in creating an environment that was conducive to children continuing to play rugby union into adolescence. All other sports included in this thesis had quite different competition structures in place. Although there was a difference between sports as to the age when the maintenance of league tables was introduced for children, scores of individual games were recorded for teams at all ages. In spite of these efforts by the RSO to create a non-competitive environment, the observation findings suggest that the most competitive behaviours were exhibited by rugby union coaches.

Findings from the observations also indicated that coaches from all sports made significantly less positive comments if their team was losing. This suggests that the primary focus for many coaches was on winning, as opposed to athlete development, and praise equated to success through winning. This seemingly competitive focus by coaches was also apparent in the practice of scolding children for making mistakes. In all of the 72 games observed children were told off for not executing a skill correctly, or making what the coach perceived to be poor decisions.

The survey administered to coaches and referees also provided information in relation to the prevalence and frequency of inappropriate coach and parent behaviour at children's sporting events. Although it needs to be acknowledged that the answers represented the necessarily subjective interpretation of the participants, 62.7% of coaches and referees reported that they observed inappropriate parental or coach behaviour at least once or twice a season. As discussed in Chapter 8, the perception of referees was significantly different to that of coaches, with 74.1% of those who performed the sole role of referee stating that they witnessed this type of behaviour at least once or twice a season, compared to 54.9% of coaches.

For many, it would appear that shouting at children is an acceptable part of sport. Although illuminating, the opinions of coaches, referees, and parents expressed in the survey responses do not establish the prevalence of different behaviours, rather they illustrate more the quite diverse meanings these adult participants attribute to children's sport. The findings of the observations, however, establish the prevalence of both positive and negative behaviours for coaches, and indicate that the coaching style adopted by the majority of coaches is predominantly instructional in nature.

The Effect of Sideline Behaviours on the Key Stakeholders involved in

Children's Sport

During the design phase of this thesis, the key stakeholders were identified as being sport administrators, coaches, referees, parents, and the children themselves. A strong sense of frustration with inappropriate adult behaviour, especially with over-competitive coach behaviour, emerged from the interview with sport administrators. Many of the administrators expressed a sense of helplessness in dealing with this behaviour.

> Soccer Administrator: You always hear a lot of parents will have positive things to say about the coaches regardless, you know, "well done", "they are giving up their time", "great that they put their hand up". But the big issue I have is that they can do a lot of damage if they are not the right people. This is primarily an issue for the kids, and because they are such critical mentors to those kids, not just in their game but in their whole lives. [...]We need to have a better filtering system for assigning coaches and giving them the support.

Children's sport has a heavy reliance on volunteer parent involvement, but the statement that "we need to have a better filtering system" indicates the frustration that, this administrator at least, had with the type of parent who volunteered as a coach. There was no evidence of any measures put in place by the soccer organisation to ensure volunteers were prepared in some way to coach children. The absence of any effective strategies to deal with issues related to over-competitive coaching behaviour appeared to frustrate the administrators. The complexity of this issue was highlighted by a parent who responded to the surveys completed by parents and children:

> Mother: When my 6 year old son played soccer last year. I was the only parent present at the beginning and ended up having to coach.

The impact of the volunteer issue for parents was apparent here in that many parents themselves did not feel adequately prepared or qualified to coach. The rugby union administrator noted that rugby, especially, was perceived to be a very difficult sport to coach for a number of reasons. In spite of the fact that rugby union had compulsory introductory coaching courses for new volunteers, they still found it difficult to attract coaches:

> Rugby administrator: We have compulsory coaching courses. We try and take that intimidation factor out of it from a volunteer's point of view. And it's a really big one, because rugby can be intimidating to coach or be involved in for a number of reasons obviously. It's a male dominated sport so many females don't feel they have the necessary knowledge or even credibility to be involved in the sport. And then also because the game is apparently so technical, even players that have played up until recently, say that the game has changed since they played, they can't coach it. You know, "I'd rather just watch", that sort of thing. So we try and make it as simple as possible to get people involved.

The soccer administrator was frustrated with the type of person who volunteered as a coach, believing that they were generally parents of the more talented children, who wanted their children to be successful, and were therefore very competitive. The rugby union administrator similarly believed that there was an issue with the type of parent who was more than happy to volunteer:

> Rugby administrator: But then you get the other side which I am sure you are aware of, and that's the person that says I have played rugby for 30 years and you can't tell them anything, they are going to coach it their way.

This frustration with inappropriate coaches was also expressed by coaches themselves:

Rugby coach: It should be the coaches' responsibility to control the parents. However, most coaches don't have the skills to do this. Make the coaches responsible! Have strict guidelines that the coaches must enforce otherwise they pay the consequences. Then there must be a huge push to educate coaches on how to manage and run a team properly. At the moment there is a shortage of coaches and therefore we are getting whoever puts their hand up. The people putting their hands up are unfortunately not able to cope with the challenges that are being put in front of them as they don't have the skills.

The major impact on the administrators appeared to be frustration with coach behaviour when there were no strategies (soccer and touch rugby) in place to deal with issues, or frustration with the resistance from coaches and parents to the strategies that were in place (rugby union and netball). The rugby union administrator was consistently faced with accusations that any strategies his organisation put in place to deal with over-competitive behaviour were perceived to be "politically correct" (PC). This conflict over the competitive nature of sport revealed itself also in the responses to the surveys (see Chapter 8) completed by coaches and referees. Although some believed children's sport should be about winning and anything that contradicted this was branded as PC, the following response by another participant reflected the often diverse views that were presented:

Rugby referee and coach: We need to reduce tolerance to people who describe it [the strategies put in place] as "PC rubbish" We need to increase ease of reporting [incidents] and have firmer penalties.

Similarly to the administrators, many parents, referees, and coaches expressed frustration with the types of adult behaviour that they witnessed. However, a major

source of frustration for them was the seeming inability of the sporting organisations to deal with the problem.

The issue of refereeing was a recurring theme throughout the thesis. The impact of sideline behaviour on referees was apparent from a range of sources. Findings from the observations showed that the majority of the negative comments made by coaches were aimed at the team or individual players, but indicated that the percentage of negative comments targeting referees was greater for touch rugby and rugby union coaches than netball and soccer coaches. Concerns have been expressed elsewhere about the negative effects of sideline abuse on referees (Anshel & Weinberg, 1995; Rainey, 1995). The English Football Association (FA) has launched a programme, entitled *Respect*, aimed at improving sideline behaviour in soccer. The FA stated that:

> On average, thousands of referees quit football every year because of the abuse they receive from players and from the sidelines. Lots of children also pack it in because of the attitude and actions of over-enthusiastic and pushy parents. (English Football Association, 2010)

In this thesis, concern with abuse directed at referees was expressed by a range of participants. In the findings of the surveys completed by parents, 16.1% of incidents of verbal abuse reported were targeted at referees; 62.7% of the inappropriate behaviours reported by coaches and referees related to verbal abuse aimed at referees; and the sports administrators talked about abuse at referees being normalised practices in their sports:

> Touch administrator: It's been incredible - the abuse to referees about how they are not refereeing properly.

However, the behaviour of referees was also perceived to have an impact on parents and coaches. Of the reports of inappropriate behaviours observed by referees and coaches, 15.5% of the respondents complained about biased refereeing. When asked what could be done to improve adult behaviour at children's sports, 8.9% of respondents stated that a major step forward would be improving the standard of refereeing.

> Rugby coach (and referee): Clubs and Unions (talking specifically rugby here) spend a lot of time training up referees, but I think it is important that for crucial games (rep games) the quality of referees managing the games is high. There is nothing more frustrating having a poor referee for an important game. This is where a lot of the frustration from the sideline comes in.

Although the regional rugby union organisation involved in this thesis had initiated a non-competitive structure, at the end of the season, representative teams were selected for each area in the district. These representative teams were made up of the best players from each club and participated in an end of season competition. This rugby union coach alluded to the serious nature of these games by referring to them as "crucial" or "important" games. The perception that referees were incompetent, or even biased towards their own teams, was cited as a major trigger and even justification for much of the inappropriate behaviour witnessed.

The rugby union administrator interviewed in the focus group stated that many of the complaints he dealt with related to complaints about poor or perceived sub-standard refereeing. His response to these complaints was insightful and possibly gave these complainants a perspective they had not considered:

> Rugby administrator: When I get a complaint I go back to them and say the referee will make mistakes. And the first thing I kind of say is "Well if the All

Blacks are the best team in New Zealand, where would your team rank? And therefore if you are getting a referee at what level do you expect the referee to be? Would you expect him to be an All Black referee or at your level?" And that tends to kind of slow it down a little bit.

As can be seen, the effect of sideline behaviour, particularly of the inappropriate kind, is felt by a range of stakeholders involved in children's sport. In dealing with complaints, the administrators tended to more regularly deal with negative aspects. Administrators were frustrated with the types of people who tended to volunteer as coaches and were concerned with their behaviour. Parents, on the other hand, tended to feel that they were inadequately prepared to coach. Along with the children, referees were the targets of verbal sideline abuse and not surprisingly referees were found to be more aware of inappropriate behaviour than coaches. A feeling emerged from the coaches also that poor refereeing was a causal factor for much of the sideline abuse that occurred. However, the majority of the inappropriate behaviour observed by parents, coaches, and referees related to behaviours that adversely impacted upon children's enjoyment of sport. A major impact on many adults was a concern for children participating in sport. In examining the effect of adult behaviour on all stakeholders, one of the key stakeholders is thus obviously the children themselves who participate in sport. The next section examines how these sideline behaviours affect children's enjoyment of sport.

The Impact of Sideline Behaviours on Children's Enjoyment of Sport.

Enjoyment of sport has been identified as a key motivator for children's commitment to sport (Scanlan et al., 1993), and a lack of enjoyment has been strongly linked with children withdrawing from competitive sport (Gould & Horn, 1984). The

role of the coach was closely identified with enjoyment by the children interviewed in the focus groups:

> SW: So what's more fun, play station or playing sport?
>
> Josh (age 9-11 years): Playing sport if you've got a good coach but I'd say play station if you don't.

All phases of this thesis revealed evidence of coaching practices and adult behaviour that could potentially adversely impact upon a child's enjoyment of sport. These practices included: verbal abuse directed at children by both coaches and parents; over-competitive coaching behaviours that resulted in children getting unequal game-time and not being exposed to different playing positions; children being punished for making mistakes or for losing; and aggressive altercations between adults which have a damaging effect on any children witnessing this type of behaviour.

Verbal Abuse: "My coach yells at me"

Of the parents who reported that they had witnessed incidents of verbal abuse, 77.4% of these parents' reports related to abuse that targeted children. Similarly, 63.2% of the coaches and referees who had witnessed inappropriate behaviour referred to examples of verbal abuse directed at children. This concern for children was echoed by the sport administrators:

> Soccer Administrator: In [my child's] team we've got four parents all screaming trying to give them the half time talk and it's like some of it is really negative, terrible. It's really, really sad. It makes you feel sick.

Negative adult behaviours have been identified as a source of stress and anxiety for children participating in competitive sport (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984) and performance anxiety has been associated with reduced enjoyment of sport for both

adults and children (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Smith & Smoll, 1990). The observations in this thesis found that over one in five comments made by coaches were negative. The impact of negative comments and criticism on children was apparent in the way the children interviewed in the focus groups indicated that a major dislike for them was being shouted at.

> Janelle (age 6-8 years): When I was playing netball this lady, because she was one of my coaches, and she always used to shout when you did a mistake or something she always said, "Janelle you lost the ball," or something like that.
>
> SW: So how did that make you feel when she said that?
>
> Janelle: Sort of sad.

The impact of negative coaching behaviours is compounded for young children, as they often do not have the emotional resources and resilience needed to deal with criticism and negative feedback (McCarthy & Jones, 2007). The children interviewed indicated that the main effect of being yelled at was that it distracted them from the game and affected their concentration. Many of the children talked about avoidance strategies they had to help them negate the negative comments aimed at them. These strategies included ignoring the coaches or parents who shouted at them, moving further away from the coach, or in the case of one child (age 6 to 8 years): "I got this song stuck in my head with all this yelling".

The impact of shouting at a child would appear to have the opposite effect to that desired by the coach. Coaches are clearly shouting at the children as they are either making mistakes or not trying hard enough. The outcome, however, would not appear to be performance enhancement. In line with claims made in much of the coaching literature (Kidman, 2005; Martens, 2004), criticism of young athletes tends to have the

opposite effect, and results in anxiety, stress, fear of failure, and has an adverse impact on both performance and enjoyment.

McCarthy and Jones (2007) referred to the ages of between 7 and 12 years as the sampling years, when children are experiencing new sports. Children's experiences during these formative years have been found to strongly influence their ongoing participation in sport as they move on to what McCarthy and Jones called the specialising ages (13 to 16 years). The children, aged 6 to 11 years, who were interviewed in this thesis, were already relating stories about withdrawing from certain sports, as in the case of Alec, who had already stopped playing cricket because of the behaviour exhibited by his coach. The impact of excessive coach behaviour on a child's desire to continue with sport was also evidenced in the survey responses by parents:

> Mother of 8-year old girl: A teenage [touch rugby] coach - took things way too seriously and treated 7-year olds like teenagers. My daughter wanted to quit but she didn't.
>
> Mother of 10-year old boy: Very negative coach one year just about put him off playing the next season (rugby).

The children interviewed understandably did not like being shouted at, it upset them, and adversely impacted upon their enjoyment of sport. This was a group of children who at this stage in their development appeared to quite simply love playing sport. For them sport was primarily a source of fun, exhilaration, and joy. That some coaches could so adversely affect this innate enthusiasm and enjoyment to the extent that a child like Alec had already dropped out of one sport before the age of 11 years, and that other children had considered giving up sport, should be a major cause of concern for sporting organisations.

Over-competitive Coaching Behaviours: "Most of the time the boys are usually on for the longest"

The focus group conducted with sport administrators revealed a concern that a number of coaches were adopting practices that were driven by a win-at-all costs attitude which were to the detriment of a child's all round development as a player. These practices were at odds with the recommendations included in the coaching literature produced by the National and Regional Sporting Organisations, and contravened guidelines laid down for coaches in the compulsory coaching courses in both netball and rugby union. The findings of the focus group interviews with children reinforced the administrators' concerns, revealing that a number of coaching practices which focused on the short term goal of winning each game were not uncommon. These practices included instances of more skilled players getting longer game time, boys getting more game time than girls, and children not being exposed to different positions on the field of play.

The two strongest themes to emerge from the children's focus group interviews were that sport should be fun, and that it should be fair. It has been seen that coaches shouting at children and scolding them had affected the children's enjoyment of sport, but there was also a strong reaction from the children to coaching practices that were perceived to be unfair. Although winning was identified as a source of enjoyment for many children, the children interviewed clearly felt that this should not be achieved at the expense of children being treated fairly. In one example, Ben (age 9 to 11 years) talked about his rugby union experiences:

> Ben: They keep on the really fast ones, they put the fast ones on for 5 minutes then they take them off and then they put them on again.
>
> SW: So if you're fast do you play more than the slower kids?
>
> Ben: Yeah, because they are the best.

The children did not like being treated differently. Probably the worst example of discrimination was recounted by Annie (age 6 to 8 years), who perceived that boys were given longer game time than girls in her mixed touch rugby team (see Chapter 7). Being treated fairly was important and the children didn't mind being on the sideline if it was their turn:

> Mark (age 9-11 years): I don't really mind being on the sideline, because it's fair because everyone gets a turn off.
>
> SW: Which sport is that?
>
> Mark: Mini ball and touch. We all get turns off so it's not like it's really unfair because one person is off for ages then others for short turns and stuff. It's always fair.

The importance to children of coaching practices that are characterised by a sense of fair play and equality are also highlighted in a study by Weiss and Fretwell (2005). Weiss and Fretwell conducted focus group interviews with parent coaches, their sons, and team-mates involved in under-12 boys' soccer. Both the sons and the team-mates identified coaching behaviours that provided equal game-time opportunities for all children as positive, and behaviours that gave a coach's child more game-time were referred to as being negative. A number of the team-mates interviewed also praised coaches who allowed players to try different positions on the field.

In this thesis, many of the children interviewed wished to try different positions, and the children were supportive of coaches who rotated their positions. But there was evidence, especially for the older age group interviewed (9 to 11 years), that a number of coaches kept players in the same position:

> SW: What about positions, do you play in the same positions all of the time?

Dave (age 9-11 years): Mostly I'm a winger.

Jan: This year in netball we have our own positions. We just stay in the same positions.

Joe: My team changes every half time.

SW: Does the coach change your positions?

Joe: Yeah.

SW: So what do you think is the best, do you think it's best to stay in one position or try different positions?

Joe: It's good to try being different positions. We don't get bored.

A number of researchers have been critical of coaches who focus more on competition than on the development of young players' skills, which should be nurtured in a fun filled environment, offering challenge, excitement and variety (Brady, 2004). Coakley (1986) has suggested that children do not fully develop an understanding of the competitive process until 12 years of age, yet in this thesis evidence emerged that coaches of children under the ages of 12 consistently engaged in outcome driven practices. Brady (2004) and Tofler and Butterbaugh (2005) highlighted the importance of variety for young children and recommended the regular rotation of positions, with Tofler and Butterbaugh also noting that children temporarily on the sideline should constantly be reassured that they would be getting regular game time.

Punishment: "It was your fault for the goal"

Evidence emerged in this thesis that children were punished for making mistakes, or even for losing. This punishment took the form of being scolded, coaches using exercise as punishment for poor performances, and players being given less game time if they were perceived by the coach to be not as strong as other players. During the observations, there was also evidence on occasion of children being taken off the field

of play after making a mistake. The actions of a soccer coach of a 9-year old boys' team who had just conceded a goal are recounted below:

> Coach (to other parent): God – let's get him off - did you see that - he wasn't marking. That was Bob's fault. Let's get him off.
>
> Coach (to player): Bob, Bob come off.
>
> (Player comes off the field).
>
> Coach: Bob, come here, you see you've got to mark up - you can't leave a man unmarked.
>
> Bob: Am I going back on?
>
> Coach: We'll see, we'll see. We've got a bit of time yet.

A couple of minutes later the coach called Bob over again to explain to him why he had been taken off:

> Coach: You see that goal, that was because you weren't marking. It's not your fault - you are still learning. But it was your fault for the goal. The thing is Bob, you are good going forward. But in a game like this, you've got to watch your man. You are still learning, you are still improving. You'll get more time in other games, but I can't put you back on in a game like this. You might cost us a goal. Is that ok? Do you understand? Good lad.

The coach continued watching the game, seemingly happy that he had done the right thing by explaining to his player the reasons he had taken him off. The young boy wandered over to his mother with tears in his eyes.

Children's perception of their level of competence in a physical activity affects their ongoing interest in that activity (Harter, 1987). The coach's actions here would have done little to contribute to the child's perception relating to his own ability. Critical feedback from coaches has been associated with a fear of failure and

performance anxiety (Smith et al., 2007). Smith et al. noted that coaches are able to strongly influence the motivational climate for young athletes through their communication of goal priorities (for example skill development or winning and losing). In the instance observed, the coach was communicating that the most important goal was winning, which was of such importance that this athlete would play no further part in that day's game.

Examples of exercise being used as a means of punishment were also forthcoming in the interviews conducted with children, with one child providing an example of a team being forced to run laps of the field if they lost a game. The use of physical activity as punishment has long been associated with the creation of a negative environment that can influence children's feelings of confidence and self-esteem (Woolger & Power, 1993), and has been related to long-term avoidance of these activities (DeMarco & Sidney, 1989).

As discussed in Chapter 7, discipline would appear to be most effective (from the perspective of those holding power) when operated in a dual system of reward and punishment (Foucault, 1975/1995). For children to truly value an activity, it has been claimed that they should not rely on rewards to continue but rather it needs to be intrinsically motivated (Shaffer, 2004). A system which provides external rewards, such as praise or material goods, can result in children being more extrinsically motivated. The use of rewards as a motivator is complex, as there are benefits and negative effects, which depend to a great extent on the perception of the child (Woolger & Power, 1993). The children interviewed in this thesis disliked being scolded, but liked being praised. It would seem logical that if the goal of coaches was to improve performance, they would be more effective if they offered praise more often. A desire to please a coach, or a parent, however, results in a greater likelihood that children's sense of enjoyment of

their sport becomes more extrinsically motivated, and would not reflect an approach to coaching that is predominantly athlete-centred.

Background Anger

As discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 the effect of witnessing incidents of background anger can be distressing for children (Cummings, 1987; Omli & La Voi, 2009). All aspects of this thesis revealed evidence of aggressive adult behaviours that would be witnessed by children. During an observation of a coach at a 10-year old boys' rugby union game, an argument broke out between the coach and a touch judge (another parent) over a decision the touch judge had made. The two groups of forwards were by this stage standing next to the touch judge waiting for a line-out to resume the game. A heated argument followed between the coach and touch judge, during which time the touch judge repeatedly swore at the coach. The altercation finally ended when a young player eventually told the touch judge to "leave it out mate". Omli and La Voi noted that the witnessing of aggressive behaviour that occurs between two adults, especially between males, has the potential to be significantly distressing for young children.

The children themselves also provided accounts of coach behaviour they had observed, normally related to the behaviour of coaches of their opposing teams:

> Alec (age 9-11 years): We played a team whose coach was really bad. The team was really good but I think their morale kind of broke under the coach because of them trying to understand why she yelled so much. She was like, "Get your butt over there. Do this. Do that." I think their morale got broken and they were really upset and angry that their coach was treating them so unfairly and they had really good skills, but I think the only way we won against them is because they basically had zero morale.
>
> SW: How would that make you feel if you had a coach like that?
>
> Alec: I'd actually quit sport or try to get onto another team.

A number of the children, like Alec, believed that their own coaches were extremely supportive, but they reported that they apparently regularly observed adults shouting at either children or referees.

> SW: Have you ever seen people shouting on the touchlines?
>
> Kath (age 6-8 years): I've heard it heaps.
>
> SW: You've heard it heaps have you?
>
> Kath: Because when we're playing against good players for the finals or the semis, they shout really hard.
>
> SW: So when it gets to a final or semi-final do they shout more?
>
> Kath: Yeah.
>
> SW: Why do you think they want to do that?
>
> Kath: Because so we can get more confident and they get scared more.
>
> SW: How does it make you feel when you hear them shouting?
>
> Kath: Nervous.

Although under 9 years of age, Kath already feels that shouting is a regular occurrence in her sport. She also alludes to the competitive nature of the behaviour as she claims that the finals of the competitions are characterised by even greater degrees of shouting. The comment that the behaviour is designed to scare opponents offers an insight into the perspective young children have about some adult behaviour on the touchlines. The perspective, that their behaviour is frightening to children, would appear to be one that has not been considered by adults engaging in these behaviours. A male soccer coach who responded to the surveys offered a similar insight into inappropriate behaviour he had observed:

> Parents from one side intimidating the opposition verbally - cheering mis-kicks, applauding nightmare goalie stuff-ups. Would they do this if these same 7 year olds were round playing at their house? No. I think the parents simply transfer

their own fear of failure onto the kids, and so to protect their own child from defeat or humiliation they will resort to anything, including unconsciously bullying small children of the same age. If a kid in your garden is in goal and he gets upset after a ball goes through his legs 90% of adults would go and give him a hug; on a Saturday morning the same people will cheer as he dissolves in tears.

This coach also implied that parents had not considered the impact of their behaviour. As noted by Cummings (1987) and Omli and La Voi (2009), this type of behaviour not only impacts on the recipient, but has the potential to adversely affect all children who witness it. Omli and La Voi found that spectator comments were often characterised by anger, and that the effects of ongoing exposure to this behaviour can become increasingly upsetting for children.

Athlete-centred Coaching

The term 'athlete-centred coaching' has been adopted in recent years to outline a coaching approach that is humanistic, and is designed to encourage athletes to be involved in, and take more ownership of their learning (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). This coaching approach opens up a debate on the role of instruction in coaching. Kidman and Lombardo advocate an approach that encourages coaches to move away from instruction and use more questions to encourage athletes to problem-solve and to not become coach-dependent performers. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, the role of instruction has been identified as having positive effects on athlete learning and performance, if delivered in a positive and reinforcing manner (Smoll & Smith, 2006). In acknowledging this debate, the approach taken in this thesis was to adapt the observation instrument developed by Kidman et al. (1999), and categorise instructional comments as 'neutral'. It was apparent from the systematic observation, that the coaches observed offered considerable instruction to the children during their games, with

41.5% of all recorded comments being instructional. Instruction is a form of augmented feedback, that is, feedback that is outside the individual's own feedback system, and it has been argued that this type of feedback can be beneficial to learning (Blom & Drane, 2008). However, if this feedback is offered during play it can have a negative impact on learning, can be confusing to children especially, and interferes with decision-making processes and skill development (Blom & Drane, 2008; Kidman et al., 1999).

With the majority of comments made by the coaches observed being instructional in nature, coaches in all sports predominantly adopted a command style of coaching. Martens (2004) has defined a command style of coaching as one where all decisions are made by the coach.

> The role of the athlete is to respond to the coach's commands. The assumption underlying this approach is that because the coach has knowledge and experience, it is the coach's role to tell the athlete what to do. The athlete's role is to listen, to absorb, and to comply. (Martens, 2004, p. 30)

It has been argued that this command style of coaching is predominantly coach-centred as opposed to being athlete or child-centred. An athlete-centred approach to coaching is a style that encourages and empowers players to become autonomous decision makers (de Souza & Oslin, 2008; Kidman et al., 1999). A similar approach has been advocated in the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) model designed by Bunker and Thorpe (1982), and its Australian variant Game Sense (Light, 2004). One of the driving forces behind the development of TGfU was a concern that children were being developed as coach dependent performers (Bunker & Thorpe, 1986). Coaches adopting a TGfU or Game Sense approach use questions to stimulate problem solving and thinking as opposed to simply instructing players to follow a command. Claims relating to the benefits of an athlete-centred approach to coaching include an increase in

player engagement; increased competence; and increased motivation (de Souza & Oslin, 2008; Kidman, 2005).

Although patterns and frequencies of comments made varied, all 72 of the coaches observed adopted a command style of coaching. As they played, children were consistently told what to do, and praised if they did well, and told off if they made a mistake. During 6-year olds' soccer, both teams' coaches are allowed on the field of play, and allowed to coach on the field. One soccer coach of a mixed 6-year olds' team got so frustrated with one of his players who was not moving into the correct position that he picked the player up and physically carried him forward about 20 metres into the 'correct' position. The following excerpt represents a fairly typical sequence of coach comments during a 10-year old boys' rugby union game:

> Coach: Support him, support him. Support him, support him. Harry, get up there and support him. Come on Harry! Tackle [team name]. Round the legs, round the legs. COME ON! That's it. Good tackle Tony. That's more like it. Turn it, turn it. Awww, come on. You have to tackle low, around the legs.

This coach, as with many coaches observed, instructed the children throughout the game, offering praise and criticism whenever he felt it was warranted. The impact of this type of behaviour on children's enjoyment of sport was revealed in the findings of the focus group interviews conducted with children. The children stated that if they tried to listen to either the coach or parents, they tended to get confused, which often led them to make mistakes. They also noticed the effect these instructional adult behaviours had on other children:

> Kath (age 9-11 years): I was playing touch and it was a girl's first time and she didn't know which way to run and her parents kept on yelling at her. She ran backwards and then she ran sideways and then she ran forwards.

SW: How old was she then when she was playing?

Kath: She was my age, I'm 9. It was her first time.

It is important to acknowledge the claims by Smoll and Smith (2006) that instruction, if delivered in a supportive and informative manner, can have benefits for athletes. However, the high levels of instruction recorded using the observation instrument (see Chapter 5), and the impact this instruction appeared to have on children (discussed in Chapter 8), would appear to support the concerns expressed about instruction by Kidman and Lombardo (2010). The effect of instruction on children during play did not appear to have the effect of improving performance. The strategies employed by children to dealing with a constant flow of comments from the sideline ranged from examples of them ignoring the comments completely, to strategically positioning themselves as far away from the coach as possible. If the children had no effective strategies to deal with this behaviour, this resulted in them feeling angry or upset. The results from the focus groups conducted with children here would appear to support claims that an instructional or command style of coaching does not create an optimal learning environment for children (de Souza & Oslin, 2008; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010; Martens, 2004). Little evidence emerged that children enjoyed being constantly told what to do.

Foucauldian Notions of Discourse

It has been noted that although systematic observation is useful in recording and describing coaching behaviours that are observed, it does not help increase our understanding of why coaches behave the way they do (Potrac et al., 2000). Foucault's (1969/2002) ideas relating to discourse provide a useful lens to facilitate our understanding of adult behaviour related to children's sport. In Chapter 4, the ways that administrators talked about sport revealed three dominating discourses: a competitive

discourse; a progressive-developmental discourse; and a discourse relating to a version of sport that is predominantly fun and a source of enjoyment for children. Each discourse gave rise to particular behaviours and discursive practices. The way that participants from all phases of this thesis often speak about sport reveals the clash between these discourses and the tensions that emerge. In the way the participants spoke about inappropriate behaviour they had observed, their perceptions revealed major differences about what was, and what was not, inappropriate behaviour.

The difference in perspective is illuminating, as it serves to highlight that the perceptions that exist about inappropriate sideline behaviour are very much dependent upon the subject positions adults adopt in relation to the discourses that surround children's sport. The following responses to the question that asked participants to recount details of inappropriate behaviour they had witnessed illustrate the range of different perspectives that emerged. One comment is from a netball coach, the other from a netball umpire:

> Netball Coach: Just loud negative talk, but not to the point where it is a worry.
>
> Netball Umpire: Parents or coaches hassling other umpires or commenting behind your back as you umpire. Coaches listening to children's "it's not fair" against learner umpires. Older umpires criticising newer ones. Negative feedback to players. Parents over-shouting the coach.

Both these participants were involved as volunteers in netball in the same region, worked with children of the same ages, and were based at the same netball centre. The coach who had been coaching for between two and three years, stated that she had only witnessed inappropriate behaviour once or twice ever, and had no ongoing concerns about adult behaviour at netball. The umpire had been involved with the sport for a longer period (four to five years), and stated that she observed incidents of

inappropriate behaviour several times a season, and had major concerns with adult behaviour. Although both these participants were involved with the same groups of children, they had quite different perceptions about the behaviours that were occurring. It would appear that adults influenced by the competitive discourse seem to have few concerns about shouting from the touchline. Similar conflicting interpretations relating to inappropriate behaviour emerged from the surveys completed by parents. For many adults, shouting at children and referees is a normalised part of the game and as such should not be a worry.

Some participants did not approve of the negative behaviours they witnessed, but revealed the tensions that exist between the dominant discourses. A mother of a 10-year old touch rugby and rugby union playing boy spoke about the inappropriate behaviour she witnessed:

> Bad sportsmanship from other teams, in-house niggling between parents. Most sports now are set up to cater for the 'slowest' in the team and kids are not encouraged to strive to win, succeed.

This excerpt revealed the complexity of issues around children's sport. The mother had concerns about over-competitive behaviours, but was adopting a position firmly influenced by the competitive discourse. It was important that children should be encouraged to strive to win, to be competitive, but there appeared to be little recognition that this focus on winning could possibly influence the over-competitive behaviours she was so concerned about. Sport was a source of competition, with no focus on a child's enjoyment of sport and fun emerging.

In this thesis, the dominance of the competitive discourse emerged from the initial group interview with administrators. Although the initial focus of this thesis was

on parental behaviour, what emerged from the administrators was an over-riding concern with coaching behaviour. This concern related to what were perceived to be over-competitive behaviours from coaches who were primarily concerned with winning. Although the administrators acknowledged that there were many wonderful coaches there was a perception that the negative behaviours seemed to outweigh the positive aspects. The behaviours that administrators were concerned with emanated from coaches who were subjects of the competitive discourse.

This concern is probably justifiable as coaches have been identified as having significant influence over a child's experience of sport (Petlichkoff, 1993; Smoll & Smith, 2006). Coaches who adopted a supportive approach to their coaching were admired and looked up to by the children interviewed (see Chapter 7), as evidenced when Alec (age 9-11 years) talked about his soccer coach:

> Alec: You're all treated fairly and that's what I like about it. Our coach always treats us all fairly.

However, one of the main concerns expressed by administrators was attracting what they perceived to be the right sort of people to these influential coaching positions. The over-competitive behaviours they were so concerned about were partly because of the profile of the type of person who volunteered to coach. These were predominantly competitive coaches, subjects of the competitive discourse, who tended to be parents of children who were strong players. Kendall and Wickham (1999) noted that subjects are produced through discourse, and provide the bodies through which discourse becomes visible. Kendall and Wickham stressed that Foucault did not imply that people are completely powerless subjects. Rather, the concept of agency is allowed for in the sense that subjects are active in producing themselves as subjects of a discourse. These adult

coaches had a choice about the coaching philosophy they would adopt in their coaching, but many had decided that sport was about winning. The rugby union and netball organisations had beginner training courses for their coaches, where coaches were encouraged to adopt a developmental approach to their coaching. However, as the rugby union administrator acknowledged, he faced regular resistance from coaches who firmly believed that sport was primarily about winning. In examining the dynamics of power, the sports organisations relied heavily on parental support to administer their sport. Although the organisations tried to influence what they perceived to be positive coaching practices and behaviours, they had in effect very little power or control over the behaviour of adults involved in children's sport.

The child, however, is subjected to the clash between the dominant discourses and the child's body is the very visible site of this contest. The evidence of over-competitive behaviours that emerged from this thesis indicated that the competitive discourse legitimised certain practices and behaviours. These included shouting at children, punishing children for making mistakes, rewarding them for success, and favouring the more skilled athletes. These coaching practices are in effect mechanisms of power which "exercise a power of normalization" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 308). Throughout this thesis, many adult participants (parents, coaches and referees), indicated that shouting at children was not only a regular occurrence, but that it appeared to be an acceptable and normalised feature of children's sport. There was evidence also, that the children interviewed, although they did not like these behaviours, had started to accept them.

It was interesting to note that coaches themselves appeared to have less of a concern with inappropriate behaviour. In the surveys completed by coaches and referees (see Chapter 8), coaches expressed significantly less concern with issues relating to

sideline behaviour than did referees. If the administrators are correct in their assertion that the role of coach is predominantly taken on by over-competitive parents, this could partially explain the findings from the coaches/referees surveys. A coach who is firmly positioned as a subject of the competitive discourse is likely to view the aggressive over-competitive behaviours the administrators are concerned about as normalised and acceptable behaviour.

In a study of high performance 20-year old athletes conducted by Johns and Johns (2000), the subjects interviewed alluded to how athletes, who wish to be successful, need to accept what is, in effect, normalised abusive coach behaviour. The following extract from a gymnast being one example:

> Gymnast: I know at this level there is a lot of abuse but at the same time there are certain performance standards to be achieved if you are going to call yourself an athlete. So what is the alternative? I think we (athletes) have to be treated with more respect but at the same time we need to realize that we have to be responsible for our own performance outcome (Johns & Johns, 2000, p. 230)

This extract is particularly illuminating as it reveals not only how athletes conform to the disciplinary processes associated with their sport, but also how they adopt these disciplinary processes themselves and in effect become productive and docile bodies (Heikkala, 1993). A number of other studies (Chase, 2006; Lang, 2010) have examined how athletes readily conform to what are sometimes excessive and punishing disciplinary processes, which in any other aspect of social life would be considered as abusive. The majority of studies conducted to date have focused on the elite or high performance older athlete. However, in the focus group interviews conducted with children in this thesis, there was evidence that children were already accepting verbally abusive behaviour from coaches as a normalised occurrence

associated with their sport. As with the extract from the elite gymnast above, the behaviour becomes justified if it is associated with positive outcomes. These positive outcomes are shaped by the competitive discourse, and include winning, scoring, and contributing to the success of a team. The following excerpt is from one of the focus group interviews with children aged 6 to 8 years. Tane had already expressed that he did not like being shouted at by his coach and had talked about how his coach balanced the rugby union team out with 5 "bad" players and 5 "good" players:

> SW: So how do you know if you're a bad player or a good player?
>
> Tane: I do. He's only shouted at me twice.
>
> SW: Does he just shout at the bad players?
>
> Tane: Yeah
>
> SW: Does that make them play better?
>
> Tane: No.
>
> SW: So if you were a coach would you shout at the bad players?
>
> Tane: Only if they do bad things.
>
> SW: Yeah, what's a bad thing?
>
> Tane: If someone passes to you and it's a really good pass and you drop it. That's a bad thing.

As with the case of the elite gymnast in the study by Johns and Johns (2000), the children interviewed in this thesis are already indicating that there is an acceptance of what is in effect abusive coach behaviour. It is acceptable to shout at "bad" players if they make mistakes.

The children play sport on pitches or courts that are generally smaller than adult sized pitches. As such, they are at all times close to the coaches and parents who are watching them. Foucault (1975/1995) referred to how surveillance can be used as a technique of power (refer to discussion of surveillance in Chapter 7). As evidenced by

the observations in this thesis, the children are subjected to a constant stream of instructions, praise, and criticism from their coaches on the sideline. The children interviewed in the focus groups seemed very aware that they were being observed and this had the effect of putting them under pressure to perform. Ben (aged 9 to 11 years) talked about how being constantly told what to do made him feel pressured:

> Ben: Just sometimes when they are telling you what to do, every time you come off the court or something, or off the field. It sort of gets a bit like, all the pressure starts to get on you but then he tells other people and it's not like it's just you.

Alongside the pressure they felt, the children also referred to how being shouted at also had the effect of embarrassing them, or confusing them. A range of coaching literature advocates an approach that allows children to express themselves freely on the field of play, to have the opportunity to learn through experimentation, and to be able to learn through making mistakes (Brady, 2004; Kidman, 2005; Light, 2003; Martens, 2004). There was little evidence throughout this thesis, of children being allowed to do this. Even the predominantly supportive coaches observed offered a consistent stream of instruction to the children playing for them.

The tensions arising from the competing discourses play themselves out in the children's experiences of sport. In relation to power dynamics, Parker (1992) has suggested that there are two key questions that should be asked. The first question is who benefits from the use of a discourse? The second asks who would want the discourse advanced or dissipated. From the perspective of the administrators, they do not perceive that they benefit from the excesses of behaviour embodied by the competitive discourse, and do not wish to see it advanced. They are the representatives of their sporting organisations, whose guidelines also would appear to be at odds with

the competitive discourse. However, it is these very organisations that put competitive structures in place. Even when the rugby union organisation introduces what they refer to as "non-competitive rugby", they are faced with major resistance from both parents and coaches who are subjects of the competitive discourse. The children, themselves, appear to be resistant to coaching practices that are focused on winning. If, as suggested, the competitive discourse is the predominant discourse prevailing in children's organised sport, it would appear to embody and advance the interests of those coaches who see the function of sport as primarily being that of competition, and specifically being about winning.

In drawing upon Foucault's notions of discipline and punishment (Foucault, 1975/1995), it would appear that the only bodies subjected to discipline are the children themselves. The RSOs, to lesser and greater degrees, attempt to educate coaches but the administrators expressed a sense of helplessness in their efforts to deal with cases of inappropriate behaviour. There was no evidence of any consistent approach between the sports organisations in dealing with examples of excessive adult behaviour. The power held by coaches as a consequence, is considerable, and children are subjects of what are sometimes the excesses of coaching behaviours that appear to emerge.

Sadly, the main clash that occurs appears to be between adults who are either influenced by the progressive-developmental discourse, or more commonly, the competitive discourse. The only phase of this thesis where the significance of the sport as fun discourse was pre-eminent was with the children themselves. They play sport primarily because it is enjoyable, a source of fun. The sports administrators acknowledged this, but viewed sport primarily as a vehicle for the long term development of players. Many parents, coaches and referees however, would appear to

view children's sport as a competitive activity, where winning is fundamentally the most important aspect.

The Implications for Children's Health

One of the motivating reasons for conducting this research was a concern that children were withdrawing from organised, competitive sport as they moved into adolescence (Thomson, 2000). At a time in New Zealand when concerns are being expressed about the activity levels of young people (Kolt et al., 2005), this apparent trend towards greater inactivity has implications for children's health.

The benefits of physical activity to long term health are well recorded; these include benefits to psychosocial health, general quality of life, and cardiovascular health (Allender et al., 2006; Kolt et al., 2005). Physical activity has also been shown to reduce the risk of conditions such as obesity and diabetes (Allender et al., 2006). In their review of UK based qualitative studies that had explored factors related to participation in physical activity, Allender et al, found that barriers to participation in physical activity for children included being exposed to over-competitive sporting environments and highly structured activities. For teenagers, young women, and adults, barriers included negative experiences when young. The common motivational factors, identified through Allender et al.'s review, for participating in physical activity included fun, enjoyment, and social support.

The findings of this thesis suggest that this is also what the children want from their sport. They play sport primarily for fun, to enjoy it, and to be with their friends. They appear to reject adult behaviours that are over-competitive. Based on the review findings of Allender et al. (2006), it is reasonable to assume that the more negative experiences these children are exposed to, the more likely it is that many of them will withdraw from physical activity as they move into their teenage years.

However, by withdrawing from organised sport, children may be preserving their feelings of self-esteem and alleviating potential negative impacts on their psycho-social health. They will no longer be exposed to coaches who shout at them, be criticised for making mistakes, and not be put under pressure to conform to the normative behaviours associated with competitive sport participation. For the children who continue to participate, it would appear that as they get older they will need to conform, to accept, and to regulate their own behaviours to embody the normative standards of competitive sport (Lang, 2010).

Summary

This chapter has attempted to bring together and coherently present the main issues that arose out of all phases of this thesis. There is evidence that over-competitive behaviours exhibited by coaches and parents are not uncommon. Evidence indicated that inappropriate behaviour is perceived to be driven by an over-competitive focus from both parents and coaches. The children interviewed were strongly supportive of coaches who they perceived to be fair, and who did not embody a win-at-all costs attitude. There would appear to be no benefit, even for those influenced by the competitive discourse, in the excessive behaviours demonstrated by some coaches and parents. In examining the power relationships, it is apparent that the balance of power appears to be held by coaches, who hold positions of considerable influence over children participating in sport. More worryingly, evidence emerges that children, already at the early ages of 6 to 11 years, are starting to conform to, and accept the normalised competitive behaviours associated with their sport.

Chapter 10: Conclusions and Future Directions

During this thesis, it has struck me how this topic seems to resonate with so many people. On discovering the nature of this study, almost everybody has a story to tell about the inappropriate verbal behaviour of parents or coaches they have witnessed at children's sports games. A number of people asked questions which went beyond the scope of what could be covered within the constraints of a doctoral study. For example I was often asked if I had discovered differences between ethnicities, or between individual and team sports. Although many of these questions were relevant and of interest, at this point in time, we do not yet know enough about behaviour patterns in the general population. Also, recent media reports in New Zealand have tended to highlight examples of excessive adult behaviour witnessed at children's team sports. Hence, the purpose of this thesis was first, to provide an evidence base related to the nature of adult behaviour at children's organised sporting events in New Zealand, and second, to explore the impact of this behaviour on key stakeholders.

The sports administrators interviewed expressed greater concerns with coaching behaviours than with the behaviour of parents. What also emerged from these interviews was a sense of helplessness. Although administrators theoretically are in a position of power to influence the experiences of children participating in their sport, they appeared to feel, to a certain degree, helpless when dealing with examples of inappropriate coaching behaviour.

The observations of coaches revealed evidence of a number of coaching practices that did not adhere to the guidelines for coaches laid down by their sporting organisations. Although more positive comments (35.4%) than negative comments (21.6%) were recorded, the rate of negative comments gives cause for concern. The

greatest number of comments recorded were instructional in nature (41.5%), indicating that coaches very much adopted a directive approach that Martens (2004) has referred to as a command style of coaching.

Survey responses from parents, coaches and referees all revealed concerns with inappropriate behaviours exhibited by both coaches and parents. In comparing the responses of coaches and referees, it was interesting to note that the perceptions of participants about inappropriate behaviour significantly differed between coaches and referees, with referees reporting greater concerns with sideline behaviour.

The most powerful data came from the children interviewed in this thesis, who reinforced the significant influence coaches can have on children's enjoyment of sport. Their stories revealed that inappropriate coaching practices were not uncommon. Coaches whose behaviour was perceived as over-competitive were viewed unfavourably by the children, whereas coaches who treated children equally, and were supportive, appeared to have a major positive impact on these children's enjoyment of sport.

There were a number of positive aspects of children's sport that emerged. Children would appear to participate in organised sport for much the same reasons they did in the 1970s (Orlick & Botterill, 1975). They play sport primarily because it is fun, they like being with their friends, and they like learning new skills. Competition for some of the children in this thesis was important and they enjoyed winning. However, they appeared to put winning into perspective and did not look favourably upon coaching behaviours that gave winning a pre-eminent position. Survey responses from many parents, coaches, and referees also re-affirmed the positive aspects of children's sport, and it is clear that parents and volunteers invest a considerable amount of their time and energy in children's sport. However, the perceptions of the benefits of sport

differed between children, who play predominantly for fun, and adults, where the competitive discourse dominated.

Drawing upon Foucault's notions of discourse (Foucault, 1969/2002), and particularly upon his ideas relating to discipline and the dynamics of power (Foucault, 1975/1995), the findings of this thesis suggest that this competitive discourse dominates the world of children's sport. The behaviour of many coaches reflects a win-at-all-costs attitude that adversely impacts upon the experiences of children. The disciplinary processes employed by coaches, both through punishment and reward, reinforce the dominance of this competitive discourse. Although the sporting organisations advocate practices which are influenced by a developmental discourse, the structures of the games the majority of organisations facilitate are still predominantly competitive. As a consequence, even in these early childhood years, children are already showing signs of conforming to the normative practices associated with competitive sport. The construction of sport primarily as a source of enjoyment and fun would appear to be a major concern only for children, not for adults.

As I was nearing the completion of the writing-up phase of this thesis, another media story emerged related to excessive adult behaviour at a New Zealand children's sporting event (Otago Daily Times, 2010). A father was convicted of assault for punching another man at a junior (under 10 years) boys' rugby union match. The father expressed regret but stated he had punched the man because of his insistent use of foul and abusive language. This incident, understandably, received wide media coverage. What was interesting to note in the media coverage was that although the actions of the convicted man were quite rightly condemned, no real discussion emerged about the behaviour of the man who was swearing on the touchline. Swearing, being abusive to

children and officials, and yelling at children, although never condoned, would appear to be a normalised occurrence in children's sport.

The normalised acceptance of children's sport as a highly competitive, structured activity which mirrors the adult sport model is a societal issue that has been debated in a number of countries. In the Scandinavian countries, for example, there has been considerable debate for a number of years about the role and function of children's sport, especially in relation to the role of competition (Støckel, Strandbu, Solenes, Jørgensen, & Fransson, 2010). Støckel et al. noted that the Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian governments have all invested heavily in projects and initiatives focusing on the promotion of children's sport. All three governments have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the Norwegian government drawing up regulations for children's sport based on the Convention. This wider societal debate about the role of competition in children's sport is one that does not appear to be happening to the same level in New Zealand. One of SPARC's stated priorities is to get young people (aged 0 to 18 years) to engage in sporting activities and develop a life-long love of sport (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010g). If this is so, the current sporting arrangements seem at odds with the findings of this thesis. Initiatives need to not only promote this engagement with the children themselves, but also to bring focus on the systemic issues of sport itself, and examine the function of how sport is played.

The outcomes of these systemic issues, unfortunately, are played out in the lives of children through the visible clash that occurs between the competitive, developmental and fun discourses. It is the focus on competition that would appear to drive adult behaviours at children's sporting events. In New Zealand, there is no evidence of the same level of governmental concern, investment, and involvement that has been demonstrated, for example, in Scandinavia. Although offered guidelines, sporting

organisations are very much left to their own devices. The RSO for netball in the region where this thesis was situated had implemented some strategies to attempt to improve spectator behaviour. Members of a task-force patrolled the netball centre where the coach observations were conducted, monitoring sideline behaviour. The RSO responsible for the organisation of rugby union in the same region has also implemented a number of strategies to try and address issues related to over-competitive coaching and parental behaviour. They have introduced what they refer to as *non-competitive* sport, with no official recording of results, no points awarded for winning, and no league tables maintained. The three other sports that were the focus of this thesis all had competitive structures in place. In spite of this, the observation of coaches across all sports revealed that rugby union coaches recorded significantly lower percentages of positive comments and the highest percentage of negative comments. The percentage of negative comments directed at referees was also significantly higher in rugby union and touch rugby than in netball and soccer.

It is important to acknowledge that there are wider societal reasons that could be explored to examine why adult behavioural issues would appear to be more prevalent in rugby union than in other sports. Irrespective of whether people reject or celebrate the sport, rugby union is commonly regarded to be of social significance in New Zealand, widely acknowledged as New Zealand's national sport, has been related to New Zealand males' sense of manliness, and dominates sports coverage in the media (Pringle, 2001; Pringle & Markula, 2005). The significant role that rugby union plays in the life of many New Zealand males is a further factor that needs to be taken into consideration when future studies examine adult behaviour at children's (predominantly boys) rugby union games. While important to acknowledge, this consideration is outside of the scope of this thesis. However, it is interesting to note that of the four sports that were the focus of this thesis, the rugby union organisation would appear to have taken

more steps to address sideline behaviour issues. In addition to the non-competitive structure introduced, they also were the only organisation with compulsory coach training programmes for all adults coaching children's rugby.

The findings of this thesis confirm some of the media concerns that have been expressed about adult behaviour at children's organised sport in New Zealand. Observations of coaches and the interviews with children revealed evidence of a number of coaching and parental practices and behaviours that give cause for concern. It is now almost thirty years since Thomson (1984) voiced concerns over young children's experiences in organised sport when he delivered a keynote address at a national coaching conference. It is fifteen years since Kidman and McKenzie's (1996) study highlighted the excesses of parental behaviour at children's sporting events. The findings of this thesis do nothing to suggest that in 2011 these behaviours, and as a consequence the sporting experiences of children, are any different. This research builds on the findings of Kidman and colleagues (Kidman & McKenzie, 1996; Kidman et al., 1999) and there is now an evidence base to show a need for strategies that target the behaviours of both coaches and parents.

Limitations

Mixed methods research has emerged in recent years as an increasingly popular research approach. As identified in Chapter 3, the mixed methods approach adopted in this thesis drew heavily upon the work of Giddings (2006), specifically in relation to the philosophical underpinning of the study; and upon the work of both Creswell (2003) and Greene (2007), in relation to the specific design of the mixed method approach adopted. This study was designed in 2007, and the approach adopted is informed by the literature available at that time. It is recommended that those considering adopting a mixed methods approach refer, as a starting point, to the more recent work of Creswell

(2011) who provides a concise overview of the controversies and ongoing debate about mixed methods research.

Future Directions

A fundamental problem with children's sport is its reliance on largely untrained volunteers. Jones (2007) has highlighted the complex pedagogical nature of coaching. How can we realistically expect volunteers to be good coaches with very little or no training? The analysis of the dynamics of power relationships in children's sport in this thesis supports previous research that indicates the powerful influences coaches can have on children participating in organised sport (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006). However, coaching interventions have shown that the behaviour of coaches can be changed (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Smith & Smoll, 1997). With an estimated 93% of primary school aged children being exposed at some stage to organised sport in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 1997), it would appear to be fundamentally important that sporting organisations provide better support for coaches. Coaches are not only ideally placed to directly influence children's sporting experiences, their behaviour has also been perceived to set the tone, and influence the behaviour of parent spectators (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). An often cited recommendation for coaches is that they conduct parent meetings at the onset of the season, to establish codes of acceptable behaviour (Martens, 2004). Again, this would appear to put significant onus on the largely untrained, volunteer coach.

As in the US (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996), the delivery of primary school-aged children's sport in New Zealand is predominantly the responsibility of non-school based organisations. Although the Ministry of Health regularly states that raising physical activity levels is a health priority (Ministry of Health, 2010a), and SPARC issues guidelines for coaching to have a more child-centred approach (Sport and Recreation

New Zealand, 2007), the responsibility for the delivery and implementation of coach education is left to the sporting organisations themselves.

During the time period of this doctoral study, there have been a number of initiatives introduced that are designed to promote greater awareness of child-centred coaching practices. There is now a national resource framework (the Coach Development Framework), which is designed to provide guidance for NSOs to assist them in the development of their coach education programmes (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006). A CoachForce programme has been initiated by SPARC to provide a mechanism to aid the delivery of the New Zealand Coaching Strategy across a range of sports (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2011). A number of resources have been provided to help NSOs in this area. The NZ CoachApproach is an example of one such resource (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2010c). The philosophical underpinning of the NZ CoachApproach is athlete-centred and supports the New Zealand Coaching Strategy and Coach Development Framework, with the overall aim of developing athletes who are independent, self-motivated learners. An NZ CoachApproach DVD designed to be used in coaching workshops was distributed to NSOs and other organisations (such as tertiary institutes) involved in sport and coach education. While recognising that this work is ongoing, the findings of this thesis would suggest that, at this point in time, many of the volunteer coaches involved in primary school-aged children's organised team sports have still not been exposed to these coach education initiatives. More worryingly, if they have been exposed there is little evidence that these initiatives are having the desired effect.

There is considerable scope for further adult behaviour studies which could examine differences between, for example, ethnicities, gender, socio-economic status, or between individual and team sports. The use of POISE was valuable in establishing a

reliable benchmark of coaching behaviours. During the data collection phase of POISE, a considerable amount of time was spent on the touchlines of children's games observing behaviour. This experience, spread over two seasons, enabled the researcher to gain considerable insight into the nature of adult behaviour at sports games. However, only data related to the POISE instrument was collected and analysed. Future researchers studying adult behaviour at children's sports games may wish to consider the value of an ethnographic approach, which may have the potential to provide considerable further insight into this phenomenon.

Although there is considerable scope for future study in this area, in building upon the previous work conducted by Kidman et al. (1999) and Pope and Grant (2001), this thesis provides sufficient evidence to indicate that much adult sideline behaviour is an area of immediate concern. The findings of this thesis are currently being used by a Sideline Behaviour working group involving representatives from five RSOs, three RSTs, GACU, and two educational institutes. The purpose of the group is to generate increased awareness of the effects of over-competitive sideline behaviours and this data is being used to provide an evidence base to inform the current development of interventions designed to enhance the enjoyment for children participating in organised team sports.

It seems unlikely that many sporting organisations themselves have sufficient resources to implement large scale coaching interventions. Additionally, any interventions implemented under the current organisational structure are likely to be inconsistently applied across different sports, and even across different regions within the same sports. SPARC, as the Crown Entity responsible for sport and recreation, would appear to be the only organisation capable of insisting upon the implementation of athlete-centred coaching initiatives. Although the athlete-centred language used in

their strategy documents (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2004, 2006) is commendable, the focus has been on building sport-specific coach development programmes. While this approach has merits in that it advocates a focus on the ongoing development of coaches at all levels, and on the needs of athletes, there is little evidence from the observed behaviour that this approach has filtered down to volunteer coaches of young children.

The competitive discourse dominates the world of children's sport. Although much of the language used by policy-makers, and by sporting organisations themselves, reflects an athlete-centred developmental approach to children's sport, many of the structures in place reflect a competitive structure. As the rugby union administrator interviewed noted:

> [...] our biggest problem throughout it all is that we as adults, and our volunteers and parents, superimpose adult structures and competition structures on the kids.

There are many wonderful coaches involved in children's sport. They voluntarily donate considerable time and energy to ensure that children are provided the opportunity to engage in sport. However, coaches of young children need to be regularly exposed to coach education that can at least enhance their awareness of some of the issues related to working with young children. This will not be easy. There are many challenges and obstacles associated with the implementation of coach education programmes to a group predominantly made up of volunteers (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Coach education, although important, will not act as a simple 'silver bullet' for this issue. The feeling that children's sport is fundamentally an activity focused primarily on winning is deeply entrenched. Children's sport is adult-controlled; for

many involved adults, sport is primarily about competition, as was reflected in the adult behaviour witnessed in this thesis.

Until the experiences of children participating in sport becomes a priority, as opposed to a concern, children will continue to be exposed to what would appear to be the normalised adult behaviours driven by a win-at-all-costs mentality. These are just young children who predominantly want to have fun, actively participate, and be treated equally.

> John (aged 6 to 8 years): It's like I never get anything, because I like, never do. It's like I'm trying my best all the time but I never get anything.
>
> SW (Interviewer): What do you mean you never get anything?
>
> John: There's always like three players of the day. They get a prize like a Subway voucher, a Video voucher, or a food voucher. I try my hardest but I get nothing.

Sorry John, but trying hard just doesn't cut it.

References

Allen, J. B., & Hodge, K. (2006). Fostering a learning environment: Coaches and the motivational climate. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching, 1*, 260-277. doi:10.1260/174795406778604564

Allen, J. B., & Howe, B. L. (1998). Player ability, coach feedback, and female adolescent athletes' perceived competence and satisfaction. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 20*, 280-299. Retrieved from http://hk.humankinetics.com/jsep

Allender, S., Cowburn, G., & Fraser, C. (2006). Understanding participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults: A review of qualitative studies. *Health Education Research, 21*, 826-835. doi:10.1093/her/cy1063

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2001). Organized sports for children and preadolescents. *Pediatrics, 107*, 1459-1462. Advance online publication. 4623178 Retrieved from http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/

Amorose, A. J., & Weiss, M. R. (1998). Coaching feedback as a source of information about perceptions of ability: A developmental examination. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 20*, 395-420. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Anshel, M. H., & Delaney, J. (2001). Sources of acute stress, cognitive appraisals, and coping strategies of male and female child athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 24*, 329-333. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Anshel, M. H., & Weinberg, R. S. (1995). Sources of acute stress in American and Australian basketball referees. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 7*, 11-22. doi:10.1080/10413209508406297

Arthur-Banning, S., Wells, M. S., Baker, B. L., & Hegreness, R. (2009). Parents behaving badly? The relationship between the sportsmanship behaviors of adults and athletes in youth basketball games. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 32*, 3-18. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Aubrey, C., & Dahl, S. (2006). Children's voices: The views of vulnerable children on their service providers and the relevance of services they receive. *British Journal of Social Work, 36*, 21-39. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bch249

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee. (2006). *Ethics and research involving human participants*. Retrieved June 7th, 2006, from http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Involvement in organised sport and physical activity* (Cat. No. 6285.0). Canberra, Australia. Retrieved from http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6285.0

Babkes, M. L., & Weiss, M. R. (1999). Parental influence on cognitive and affective responses in children's competitive soccer participation. *Pediatric Exercise Science, 11*, 44-62. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/pes

Barber, H., Sukhi, H., & White, S. A. (1999). The influence of parent-coaches on participant motivation and competitive anxiety in youth sport participants. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 22*, 162-180. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Baxter-Jones, A. D. G., & Maffulli, N. (2003). Parental influence on sport participation in elite young athletes. *The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness, 43*, 250-255. Retrieved from http://www.minervamedica.it/en/journals/sports-med-physical-fitness/index.php

Biddle, S. (1999). Attrition and dissatisfaction in youth sports. In R. M. Malina & M. A. Clark (Chair), *Coaches Choice.* Youth sports - perspectives for a new century, Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Michigan State University.

Blom, L. C., & Drane, D. (2008). Parents' sideline comments: Exploring the reality of a growing issue. *Athletic Insight: The Online Journal of Sport Psychology, 10*(3). Retrieved from http://www.athleticinsight.com

Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (2001). *Focus groups in social research*. London, England: Sage.

Bowker, A., Boekhoven, B., Nolan, A., Bauhaus, S., Glover, P., Powell, T., & Taylor, S. (2009). Naturalistic observations of spectator behavior at youth hockey games. *Sport Psychologist, 23*, 301-316. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/tsp

Brackenridge, C., Bringer, J. D., Cockburn, C., Nutt, G., Pitchford, A., Russell, K., & Pawlaczek, Z. (2004). The Football Association's child protection in football research project 2002-2006: Rationale, design and first year results. *Managing Leisure, 9*, 30-46. doi:10.1080/1360671042000182943

Brady, F. (2004). Children's organised sports: A developmental perspective. *The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 75*(2), 35-42. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/publications/journals/joperd/index.cfm

Bredemeier, B. J., & Shields, D. L. (1984). The utility of moral stage analysis in the investigation of athletic aggression. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 1*, 138-149. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/ssj

Brenner, J. S. (2007). Overuse injuries, overtraining, and burnout in child and adolescent athletes. *Pediatrics, 119*, 1242-1245. Retrieved from http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/

Brustad, R. J. (1988). Affective outcomes in competitive youth sport: the influence of intrapersonal and socialization factors. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 10*, 307-321. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Bunker, D., & Thorpe, R. (1982). A model for the teaching of games in secondary schools. *Bulletin of Physical Education, 18*, 5-8.

Bunker, D., & Thorpe, R. (1986). The curriculum model. In R. Thorpe, D. Bunker & L. Almond (Eds.), *Rethinking games teaching*. Loughborough, England: University of Technology, Loughborough.

Burrows, L. (2010). 'Kiwi kids are Weet-Bix™ Kids'-body matters in childhood. *Sport, Education and Society, 15*, 235-251. doi:10.1080/13573321003683919

Butcher, J., Lindner, K. J., & Johns, D. P. (2002). Withdrawal from competitive youth sport: A retrospective ten-year study. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 25*, 145-164. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Campbell, A. (2008). For their own good: Recruiting children for research. *Childhood, 15*, 30-49. doi:10.1177/0907568207086834

Cassidy, T., & Kidman, L. (2010). Initiating a national coaching curriculum: A paradigmatic shift? *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 15*, 307-322. doi:10.1080/17408980903409907

Chase, L. (2006). (Un)disciplined bodies: A Foucauldian analysis of women's rugby. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 23*, 229-247. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/ssj

Cheek, J. (2000). *Postmodern and poststructural approaches to nursing research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Clark, W. (2008). Kids' sports. *Canadian Social Trends, Summer*(85), 54-61. Retrieved from http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/Statcan/11-008-XIE/11-008-XIE.html

Clements, R. (2004). An investigation of the status of outdoor play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 5*, 68-80. Retrieved from http://www.wwwords.co.uk/ciec/

Coakley, J. (1986). When should young people be competing? A sociological perspective. In M. R. Weiss & D. Gould (Eds.), *Sport for children and youths* (pp. 59-63). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Coakley, J. (1992). Burnout among adolescent athletes: A personal failure or social problem? *Sociology of Sport Journal 18*, 219-239. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/ssj

Coakley, J. (2001). *Sport in society: Issues and controversies* (7th ed.). Toronto, Canada: McGraw Hill.

Coakley, J., Hallinan, C., Jackson, S. J., & Mewett, P. (2009). *Sports in society : Issues and controversies in Australia and New Zealand*. North Ryde, Australia: McGraw-Hill.

Collins, K., & Barber, H. (2005). Female athletes' perceptions of parental influences. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 28*, 295-314. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Conroy, D. E. (2001). Fear of failure: an exemplar for social development research in sport. *Quest, 53*(2), 165-183. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/quest

Conroy, D. E., & Coatsworth, J. D. (2004). The effects of coach training on fear of failure in youth swimmers: A latent growth curve analysis from a randomized, controlled trial. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 25*, 193-214. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2004.02.007

Conroy, D. E., & Coatsworth, J. D. (2006). Coach training as a strategy for promoting youth social development. *Sport Psychologist, 20*, 128-144. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/tsp

Conroy, D. E., & Coatsworth, J. D. (2007). Assessing autonomy-supportive coaching strategies in youth sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 8*, 671-684. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2006.12.001

Conroy, D. E., Coatsworth, J. D., & Kaye, M. P. (2007). Consistency of fear of failure score meanings among 8- to 18-year old female athletes. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 67*, 300-310. doi:10.1177/0013164406288174

Côté, J. (1999). The influence of the family in the development of talent in sport. *Sport Psychologist, 13*, 395-417. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/tsp

Côté, J., Horton, S., MacDonald, D., & Wilkes, S. (2009). The benefits of sampling sports during childhood. *Physical and Health Education, 74*(4), 6-11. Retrieved from Proquest Central Database

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2011). Controversies in mixed methods research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 269-284). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Crowe, M. (1998). The power of the word: Some post-structural considerations of qualitative approaches in nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 28*, 339-344. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1998.00780.x

Crowe, M. (2005). Discourse analysis: towards an understanding of its place in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 51*, 55-63. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03461.x

Cumming, S. P., Smoll, F. L., Smith, R. E., & Grossbard, J. R. (2007). Is winning everything? The relative contributions of motivational climate and won-lost percentage in youth sports. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 19*, 322-336. doi:10.1080/10413200701342640

Cummings, E. M. (1987). Coping with background anger in early childhood. *Child Development, 58*, 976-984. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.ep8588748

Davidson, C., & Tolich, M. (2003a). Charting research and design. In C. Davidson & M. Tolich (Eds.), *Social science research in New Zealand: Many paths to understanding* (2nd ed., pp. 102-120). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education.

Davidson, C., & Tolich, M. (2003b). Competing traditions. In C. Davidson & M. Tolich (Eds.), *Social science research in New Zealand: Many paths to understanding* (2nd ed., pp. 23-38). Auckland: Pearson Education.

de Souza, A., & Oslin, J. (2008). A player-centered approach to coaching. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 79*(6), 24-30. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/publications/journals/joperd/index.cfm

de Vaus, D. (2002). *Surveys in social research* (5th ed.). St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum.

DeMarco, T., & Sidney, K. (1989). Enhancing children's participation in physical activity. *Journal of School Health, 59*, 337-340. Retrieved from http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpl/josh

Department of Health, P. A., Health Improvement and Prevention,. (2004). *At least five a week. Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health. A report from the Chief Medical Officer*. London, England: Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Prevention. Retrieved from http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

Devereux, E. C. (1976). Backyard versus Little League baseball: The impoverishment of children's games. In D. M. Landers (Ed.), *Social problems in athletics: Essays in the sociology of sport* (pp. 37-56). Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Dollman, J., & Lewis, N. R. (2010). The impact of socioeconomic position on sport participation among South Australian youth. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport, 13*, 318-322. doi:10.1016/j.jsams.2009.04.007

Donnelly, P., Darnell, S., Wells, S., & Coakley, J. (2007). *The use of sport to foster child and youth development and education. Literature reviews on sport for development and peace. Commissioned by Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, Secretariat Toronto, Canada*. University of Toronto: Faculty of Physical Education and Health.

Dubuc, N. G., Schinke, R. J., Eys, M. A., Battochio, R., & Zaichkowsky, L. (2010). Experiences of burnout among adolescent female gymnasts: Three case studies. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 4*, 1-18. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jcsp

Dunn, J. S., Kinney, D. A., & Hofferth, S. L. (2003). Parental ideologies and children's after-school activities. *American Behavioral Scientist, 46*, 1359-1386. Retrieved from http://abs.sagepub.com/

Eckmanns, T., Bessert, J., Behnke, M., Gastmeier, P., & Rüden, H. (2006). Compliance with antiseptic hand rub use in intensive care units: The Hawthorne effect. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, 27*, 931-934. Retrieved from http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/ICHE/home.html

Elias, N. (2000). *The civilizing process: Sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigations* (E. Jephcott, Trans. Rev. ed.). Oxford, England: Blackwell. (Original work published 1939)

Elkind, D. (2008). The power of play: Learning what comes naturally *American Journal of Play, 1*, 1-6. Retrieved from http://www.journalofplay.org/

Engh, F. (1999). *Why Johnny hates sports? Why organized youth sports are failing our children and what we can do about it: Putting the fun back in sports for boys and girls.* New York: NY: Avery.

English Football Association. (2010). *Welcome to respect*. Retrieved 11th August, 2010, from http://www.thefa.com/RESPECT

Ericsson, K. A. (2003). Development of elite performance and deliberate practice: An update from the perspective of the expert performance approach. In J. Starkes & K. A. Ericsson (Eds.), *Expert performance in sports: Advances in research on sport expertise* (pp. 49-81). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Erzberger, C., & Kelle, U. (2003). Making inferences in mixed methods: The rules of integration. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 457-488). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ewing, M. E., & Seefeldt, V. (1996). Patterns of participation and attrition in American agency-sponsored youth sports. In F. L. Smoll & R. E. Smith (Eds.), *Children and youth in sport: A biopsychosocial perspective* (pp. 31-45). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Fenton, A. (2006). Weft QDA (Version 1.0). Retrieved from http://www.pressure.to/qda/

Fields, S. K., Collins, C. L., & Comstock, R. D. (2007). Conflict on the courts: A review of sports-related violence literature. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse, 8*, 359-369. doi:10.1177/1524838007307293

Fine, M. (1992). *Disruptive voices: The possibilities for feminist research*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Fiore, D. K. (2003). Parental rage and violence in youth sports: How can we prevent "Soccer Moms" and "Hockey Dads" from interfering in youth sports and causing games to end in fistfights rather than handshakes? *Villanova Sports and Entertainment Law Journal, 10*, 103-129. Retrieved from http://www.law.villanova.edu/Academics/Journals/Villanova%20Sports%20and%20Entertainment%20Law%20Journal.aspx

Foucault, M. (1980). Power and strategies. (C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham & S. K., Trans.). In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977* (pp. 134-145). Brighton, England: John Spiers.

Foucault, M. (1981). *The history of sexuality. Volume one: An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books. (Original work published 1976)

Foucault, M. (1994). Prisons et asiles dans le mécanisme du pouvoir. In D. Defert & F. Ewald (Eds.), *Dits et ecrits II, 1976-1988* (pp. 523-524). Paris, France: Gallimard. (Original work published 1974)

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. M. Sheridan, Trans. 2nd ed.). New York, NY: Random House. (Original work published 1975)

Foucault, M. (2002). *The archaeology of knowledge* [L'archeologie du savoir] (A.M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). London, England: Routledge Classics. (Original work published 1969)

Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2002). Children's competence and value beliefs from childhood through adolescence: Growth trajectories in two male-sex-typed domains. *Developmental Psychology, 38*, 519-533. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.38.4.519

Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2005). Family socialization, gender, and sport motivation and involvement. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 27*, 3-31. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Gerrard, D. F. (1993). Overuse injury and growing bones: the young athlete at risk. *British Journal of Sports Medicine, 27*, 14-18. doi:10.1136/bjsm.27.1.14

Giddings, L. (2006). Mixed-methods: Positivism dressed in drag? *Journal of Research in Nursing, 11*, 195-203. doi:10.1177/1744987106064635

Goldstein, J. D., & Iso-Ahola, S. E. (2008). Determinants of parents' sideline-rage emotions and behaviors at youth soccer games. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 38*, 1442-1462. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2008.00355.x

Gould, D. (2007). Understanding attrition in children's sport. In D. Smith & M. Bar-Eli (Eds.), *Essential readings in sport and exercise psychology* (pp. 401-411). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. (Original work published 1987)

Gould, D. (2010). Goal setting for peak performance. In J. M. Williams (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Gould, D., & Horn, T. (1984). Participation motivation in young athletes. In J. M. Silva & R. S. Weinberg (Eds.), *Psychological foundations of sport* (pp. 359-370). Champaign. IL: Human Kinetics.

Gould, D., Lauer, L., Rolo, C., Jannes, C., & Pennisi, N. (2006). Understanding the role parents play in tennis success: a national survey of junior tennis coaches. *British Journal of Sports Medicine, 40*, 632-636. doi:10.1136/bjsm.2005.024927

Gould, D., & Petlichkoff, L. (1988). Psychological stress and the age-group wrestler. In E. W. Brown & C. F. Branta (Eds.), *Competitive sports for children and youth: An overview of research and issues*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Gracey, B. (2010). Are we having fun yet? Children's adult-organized recreational basketball as a site of discipline. *Ethnologies, Spring*, 133-156. Retrieved from http://www.thefreelibrary.com

Graham, G., Ratliffe, T., Faucette, N., Salter, W., & Walley, P. (1982). *Adult spectator verbal behavior at youth sport games: A descriptive analysis*. Paper presented at the Association Internationale des Ecoles Superieres d'education Physique, Boston, MA

Grant, B. C., & Pope, C. (2004). *What's all the fuss about sideline behaviour at kids sport?* Paper presented at the Young People, Sport and Physical Activity: Healthy Futures Conference, Hamilton, New Zealand

Grant, B. M. (2005). Fighting for space in supervision: Fantasies, fairytales, fictions and fallacies. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 18*, 337-354. doi:10.1080/09518390500082483

Grant, B. M., & Giddings, L. S. (2002). Making sense of methodologies: A paradigm framework for the novice researcher. *Contemporary Nurse, 13*, 10-28. Retrieved from http://www.contemporarynurse.com/

Greendorfer, S. L. (1977). Role of socializing agents in female sport involvement. *The Research Quarterly, 48*, 305-310.

Greendorfer, S. L., & Lewko, J. H. (1978). Role of family members in sport socialization of children. *The Research Quarterly, 49*, 146-152.

Greene, J. C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Greene, J. C. (2008). Is mixed methods social inquiry a distinctive methodology? *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 2*, 7-22. doi:10.1177/1558689807309969

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11*, 255-274. doi:10.3102/01623737011003255

Grieg, A., & Taylor, J. (1999). *Doing research with children*. London, England: Sage.

Grosz, E. (1994). *Volatile bodies: Toward a corporeal feminism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Haines, L. (2002, June 1). Ugly parent syndrome. *Dominion Post*.

Hall, S. (2004). Foucault and discourse. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Social research methods: A reader* (pp. 345-349). London, England: Routledge.

Hamstra, K. L., Cherubini, J. M., & Swanik, C. B. (2002). Athletic injury and parental pressure in youth sports. *Athletic Therapy Today, 7*(6), 36-43. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/att

Hardin, P. K. (2001). Theory and language: Locating agency between free will and discursive marionettes. *Nursing Inquiry, 8*, 11-18. doi:10.1046/j.1440-1800.2001.00084.x

Hardy, L. L., Kelly, B., Chapman, K., King, L., & Farrell, L. (2010). Parental perceptions of barriers to children's participation in organised sport in Australia. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health, 46*, 197-203. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1754.2009.01661.x

Harris, B. (2006, October 22). Parents know best? You must be kidding. *Sunday Star Times*.

Harrison, D. (2007, December 2). Mum, the football hooligan. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 25.

Harter, S. (1981). The development of competence motivation in the mastery of cognitive and physical skills: Is there still a place for joy? In G. C. Roberts & D. M. Landers (Eds.), *Psychology of motor behavior and sport-1980* (pp. 3-29). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Harter, S. (1987). The determinants and mediational role of global self-worth in children. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Contemporary topics in developmental psychology* (pp. 219-242). New York: NY: Wiley.

Harter, S. (1999). *The construction of the self*. London, England: Guildford Press.

Haubl, R., & Liebsch, K. (2009). "My mother thinks that this is the case, and so does my teacher. I, for my part, do not notice any difference": Methodological reflections on intersubjectivity in the research process with children. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 23*, 229-241. doi:10.1080/02650530902923890

Heikkala, J. (1993). Discipline and excel: Techniques of the self and body and the logic of competing. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 10*, 397-412. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/ssj

Helsen, W. E., Hodges, N. J., Van Winckel, J., & Starkes, J. L. (2001). The role of talent, physical precocity and practice in the development of soccer expertise. *Journal of Sports Sciences, 18*, 727-736. doi:10.1080/02640410050120104

Helsen, W. F., Starkes, J. L., & Hodges, N. J. (1998). Team sports and the theory of deliberate practice. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 20*, 12-34. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Herbst, D. (2000). Child's play? Youth sports - it should be a piece of cake, right? *Referee, 25*(4), 32-36.

Herson, M., & Barlow, D. H. (1984). *Single case experimental designs.* Elmsford, NY: Pergamon.

Hesketh, K., Waters, E., Green, J., Salmon, L., & Williams, J. (2005). Healthy eating, activity and obesity prevention: a qualitative study of parent and child

perceptions in Australia. *Health Promotion International, 20*, 19-26. doi:10.1093/heapro/dah503

Higginbottom, G. (2004). Sampling issues in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher, 12*(1), 7-19.

Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport. (1998). *KiwiSport: Sport the way kids want it*. Wellington, New Zealand: Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure.

Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport. (2000). *KiwiDex*. Wellington, New Zealand: Hillary Commission.

Hobson, A. J. (2006). Guilt, betrayal and utilitarian ethics: Research participants' experiences of covert participant observation. In B. Kozuh, R. Kahn, A. Kozlowski & P. Krope (Eds.), *Description and Explanation in Educational and Social Research* (pp. 51-65). Warsaw, Poland: Rodn "WOM" Publishers.

Hofferth, S. L., & Sandberg, J. F. (2001). Changes in American children's time, 1981-1997. *Advances in Life Course Research, 6*, 193-229. doi:10.1016/S1040-2608(01)80011-3

Hopper, C., & Jeffries, S. (1990). Coach-parent relations in youth sport. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 61*(4), 18-22. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/publications/journals/joperd/index.cfm

Horn, T. S., Lox, C. L., & Labrador, F. (2006). The self-fulfilling prophecy theory: When coaches' expectations become reality. In J. Williams (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (5th ed., pp. 82-108). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Horn, T. S., & Weiss, M. R. (1991). A developmental analysis of children's self-ability judgements in the physical domain *Pediatric Exercise Science, 3*, 310-326. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/pes

Hoyle, R. H., & Leff, S. S. (1997). The role of parental involvement in youth sport participation and performance. *Adolescence, 32*(125), 233-243. Retrieved from Proquest Central Database

Hunter, A., & Brewer, J. (2003). Multimethod research in sociology. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research* (pp. 577-594). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ihaka, J. (2007, May 23). Rugby dad may face court for punching boy after loss. *New Zealand Herald*.

Jago, R., Fox, K. R., Page, A. S., Brockman, R., & Thompson, J. L. (2010). Parent and child physical activity and sedentary time: Do active parents foster active children? *BMC Public Health, 10*, 194-202. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-10-194

Johns, D., & Johns, J. (2000). Surveillance, subjectivism and technologies of power. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 35*, 219-234. doi:10.1177/101269000035002006

Jones, R. L. (2007). Coaching redefined: an everyday pedagogical endeavour *Sport, Education and Society, 12*, 159-173. doi:10.1080/13573320701287486

Jones, R. L. (2009). Coaching as caring (the smiling gallery): Accessing hidden knowledge. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 14*, 377-390. doi:10.1080/17408980801976551

Jowett, S., & Cramer, D. (2010). The prediction of young athletes' physical self from perceptions of relationships with parents and coaches. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 11*, 140-147. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2009.10.001

Kaissidis-Rodafinos, A., Anshel, M. H., & Sideridis, G. (1998). Sources, intensity, and responses to stress in Greek and Australian basketball referees. *International Journal of Sport Psychology, 29*, 303-323. Retrieved from http://www.ijsp-online.com/

Kaissidis, A., & Anshel, M. (1993). Sources and intensity of acute stress in adolescent and adult Australian basketball referees: A preliminary study. *Australian Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport, 25*(3), 97-103.

Kazakov, D., & Johnson, M. (2008). *Volunteers: The heart of sport* (Report No. #3605): Research New Zealand. Retrieved from http://www.sparc.org.nz/Documents/sport%20development/Volunteers_the_Heart_of_Sport.pdf

Keegan, R. J., Harwood, C. G., Spray, C. M., & Lavallee, D. E. (2009). A qualitative investigation exploring the motivational climate in early career sports participants: Coach, parent and peer influences on sport motivation. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 10*, 361-372. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2008.12.003

Kellett, P., & Shilbury, D. (2007). Umpire participation: Is abuse really the issue? *Sport Management Review, 10*, 209-229. Retrieved from http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/716936/description#description

Kendall, G., & Wickham, G. (1999). *Using Foucault's methods*. London, England: Sage.

Kidman, L. (Ed.). (2005). *Athlete-centered coaching: Developing inspired and inspiring people*. Christchurch, New Zealand: Innovative.

Kidman, L., & Lombardo, B. J. (Eds.). (2010). *Athlete-centred coaching: Developing decision makers* (2nd ed.). Worcester, England: IPC Print Resources.

Kidman, L., & McKenzie, A. (1996). Parents' verbal comments at sporting events. In *First Children's Issues Centre Conference on "Investing in Children"* (pp. 344-353). Dunedin, New Zealand

Kidman, L., McKenzie, A., & McKenzie, B. (1999). The nature and target of parents' comments during youth sport competitions. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 22*, 54-68. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Kiesler, S., & Sproull, L. S. (1986). Response effects in the electronic survey. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 50*, 402-413. doi:10.1086/268992

Kolt, G. S., Schofield, G. M., McLachlan, C., Oliver, M., Lucas, P., Maddison, R., & Walters, S. (2005). *Active movement scoping exercise and programme evaluation - Report to Sport and Recreation New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology.

Kraus, R. V. (2006). Youth sports hold a lesson for leaders. *Leadership in Action, 26*(2), 19-20. doi:10.1002/lia.1157

Kremer-Sadlik, T., & Kim, J. L. (2007). Lessons from sports: children's socialization to values through family interaction during sports activities. *Discourse and Society, 18*, 35-52. doi:10.1177/0957926507069456

Lang, M. (2010). Surveillance and conformity in competitive youth swimming. *Sport, Education and Society, 15*, 19-37. doi:10.1080/13573320903461152

Lauer, L., Gould, D., Roman, N., & Pierce, M. (2010). Parental behaviors that affect junior tennis player development. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 11*, 487-496. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2010.06.008

Light, R. (2003). The joy of learning: Emotion and learning in games through TGfU. *Journal of Physical Education New Zealand, 36*, 93-108. Retrieved from SportDiscus Database

Light, R. (2004). Coaches' experience of Game Sense: Opportunities and challenges. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 9*, 115-131. doi:10.1080/1740898042000294949

MacNamara, A., Button, A., & Collins, D. (2010). The role of psychological characteristics in facilitating the pathway to elite performance Part 1: Identifying

mental skills and behaviors. *Sport Psychologist, 24*, 52-73. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/tsp

Mageau, G. A., & Vallerand, R. J. (2003). The coach–athlete relationship: A motivational model. *Journal of Sports Sciences, 21*, 883-904. doi:10.1080/0264041031000140374

Malina, R. M. (2002). The young athlete: Biological growth and maturation in a biocultural context. In F. L. Smoll & R. E. Smith (Eds.), *Children and youth in sport: A biopsychosocial perspective* (2nd ed., pp. 261-292). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Mangione-Smith, R., Elliot, M. N., McDonald, L., & McGlynn, E. A. (2002). An observational study of antibiotic prescribing behavior and the Hawthorne effect. *Health Services Research, 37*, 1603-1623. doi:10.1111/1475-6773.10482

Martens, R. (2004). *Successful coaching* (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Maxwell, J. A. (2009). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman & D. Rog (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

McCallister, S. G., Blinde, E. M., & Kolenbrander, B. (2000). Problematic aspects of the role of youth sport coach. *International Sports Journal, 4*, 9-26.

McCallister, S. G., Blinde, E. M., & Weiss, W. M. (2000). Teaching values and implementing philosophies: Dilemmas of the coach. *Physical Educator, 57*, 35-45. Retrieved from Academic Search Premier Database

McCarthy, P. J., & Jones, M. V. (2007). A qualitative study of sport enjoyment in the sampling years. *Sport Psychologist, 21*, 400-416. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/tsp

McElroy, M. (1982). Consequences of perceived parental pressure on the self-esteem of youth sport participants. *American Corrective Therapy Journal, 36*, 164-167.

McHoul, A., & Grace, W. (1998). *A Foucault primer: Discourse, power and the subject*. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press.

McKenzie-Minifie, M. (2008, July 21). Netball girl's abusive father sent off. *New Zealand Herald,* p. A1.

McNay, L. (1992). *Foucault and feminism: Power, gender and the self*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Meân, L. J. (2001). Identity and discursive practice: Doing gender on the football pitch. *Discourse and Society, 12*, 789-815. doi:10.1177/0957926501012006004

Mewett, P. G. (2003). Conspiring to run: Women, their bodies and athletics training. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 38*, 331-349. doi:10.1177/10126902030383005

Mills, S. (1997). *Discourse*. London, England: Routledge.

Ministerial Taskforce on Sport Fitness and Leisure. (2001). *Getting set for an active nation*. Wellington, New Zealand: Sport and Recreation New Zealand.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *Deciles information*. Retrieved 8th August, 2010, from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/SchoolOpe rations/Resourcing/OperationalFunding/Deciles/DecilesInformation.aspx

Ministry of Education. (2009). *Year levels*. Retrieved 8th August, 2010, from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/SchoolOpe rations/ENROLAndEnrolment/InformationSchoolUsers/SchoolUserFAQs/Year LevelsFAQs.aspx

Ministry of Health. (2005). *Statement of intent: 2005 to 2006*. Retrieved from http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/4772/$File/statementofintent200506. pdf

Ministry of Health. (2006). *Statement of intent: 2006 to 2009*. Retrieved from http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/4773/$File/statement-of-intent-2006-09.pdf

Ministry of Health. (2010a). *Physical Activity*. Retrieved 20th December, 2010, from http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/physicalactivity

Ministry of Health. (2010b). *Statement of intent: 2010 to 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/10104/$File/soi1013.pdf

Moola, F., Faulkner, G. E., Kirsh, J. A., & Kilburn, J. (2008). Physical activity and sport participation in youth with congenital heart disease: Perceptions of children and parents. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 25*, 49-70. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/apaq

Morrow, R. A. (2009). Norbert Elias and figurational sociology: The comeback of the century. *Contemporary Sociology, 38*, 215-219. doi:10.1177/009430610903800301

Morrow, V., & Richards, M. (1996). The ethics of social research with children: An overview. *Children and Society, 10*, 90-105. Retrieved from http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0951-0605&site=1

Netball New Zealand. (2008). *Junior netball policy*. Retrieved 6th August, 2008, from http://www.netballnz.co.nz/default.aspx?s=kids

Netball New Zealand. (2010). *Taking off into netball coaching: A starter pack for new coaches*. Retrieved 4th February, 2010, from http://www.mynetball.co.nz/netball-nz/43/202.html

Neumann, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

New Zealand Football. (2010a). *Small White online coaching toolkit*. Retrieved 2nd September, 2010, from http://www.smallwhites.co.nz/bin/index.html

New Zealand Football. (2010b). *Small Whites*. Retrieved 4th February, 2010, from http://www.smallwhites.co.nz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=7&Style=For_Coaches

New Zealand Rugby Union. (2007). *Small Blacks*. Retrieved 4th February, 2010, from http://www.nzrugby.co.nz/SmallBlacks/tabid/933/Default.aspx

Nicholls, D. A. (2008). *Body politics: A Foucauldian discourse analysis of physiotherapy practice*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). School of Health Sciences, University of South Australia.

Nohr, E. A., Frydenberg, M., Henriksen, T. B., & Olsen, J. (2006). Does low participation in cohort studies induce bias? *Epidemiology, 17* 413-418. doi:10.1097/01.ede.0000220549.14177.60

North Harbour Sport. (2010). *KiwiSport*. Retrieved 13th December, 2010, from http://www.harboursport.co.nz/Information/KiwiSport.html

Nulty, D. D. (2008). The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: What can be done? *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education 33*, 301-314. doi:10.1080/02602930701293231

Omli, J., & La Voi, N. (2009). Background anger in youth sport: A perfect storm? *Journal of Sport Behavior, 32*, 242-260. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Orlick, T. D. (1973). Children's sport - A revolution is coming. *Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Journal, January-February*, 12-14.

Orlick, T. D. (1974). The athletic dropout - A high price of inefficiency. *Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Journal, November-December*, 21-27.

Orlick, T. D., & Botterill, C. (1975). *Every kid can win*. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

Otago Daily Times. (2010). *Dad regrets punch at under-10 rugby game*. Retrieved 22nd November, 2010, from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10688595

Parker, I. (1992). *Discourse dynamics: Critical analysis for social and individual psychology*. London, England: Routledge.

Payne, D. (2002). *The elderly primigravida: Contest and complexity. A Foucauldian analysis of maternal age in relation to pregnancy and birth*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand.

Petchlikoff, L. M. (1995). The dropout dilemma in youth sports. In O. Bar-Or (Ed.), *The child and adolescent athlete* (pp. 418-430). Oxford, England: Blackwell Science.

Petlichkoff, L. M. (1993). Coaching children: Understanding their motivational process. *Sport Science Review, 2*(2), 48-67.

Pfeiffer, R. P. (2002). Theme introduction. *Athletic Therapy Today, 7*(6), 5. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/att

Pope, C. (2005). *Sideline behaviour management*. Paper presented at the Activate Secondary School Sports Conference, Auckland, New Zealand

Pope, C. (2006). Affect in New Zealand junior sport: The forgotten dynamic. *Change: Transformations in Education, 9*, 17-25. Retrieved from http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/research/publications/change.shtml

Pope, C., & Grant, B. C. (2001). *Comments from the sideline in junior sport. Report commissioned by Sport Waikato*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Sport Waikato.

Porcellato, L., Dughill, L., & Springett, J. (2002). Using focus groups to explore children's perceptions of smoking: reflections on practice. *Health Education, 102*, 310-320. Retrieved from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0965-4283

Potrac, P., Brewer, C., Jones, R., Armour, K., & Hoff, J. (2000). Toward an holistic understanding of the coaching process. *Quest, 52*, 186-199. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/quest

Potter, J. (2004). Discourse analysis. In M. Hardy & A. Bryman (Eds.), *Handbook of data analysis* (pp. 607-624). London, England: Sage.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology*. London, England: Sage.

Potter, W. J. (1996). *An analysis of thinking and research about qualitative methods*. Mawah, NJ: Lawrence Erlblaum Associates.

Power, T. G., & Woolger, C. (1994). Parenting practices and age-group swimming: A correlational study. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 65*, 59-66. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/rc/publications/rqes/

Powers, P. (2001). *The methodology of discourse analysis*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

Pringle, R. (2001). Competing discourses: narratives of a fragmented self, manliness and rugby union. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 36*, 425-439. doi:10.1177/101269001036004004

Pringle, R., & Markula, P. (2005). No pain is sane after all: A Foucauldian analysis of masculinities and men's experiences in rugby. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 22*, 472. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/ssj

Rainey, D. W. (1995). Sources of stress among baseball and softball umpires. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 7*, 1-10. doi:10.1080/10413209508406296

Rainey, D. W., & Granito, V. (2010). Normative rules for trash talk among college athletes: An exploratory study. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 33*, 276-294. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Rainey, D. W., Santilli, N. R., & Fallon, K. (1992). Development of athletes conceptions of sport officials authority. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 14*, 392-404. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Randall, L. (1992). *The student teacher's handbook for physical education*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Randall, L., & McKenzie, T. L. (1987). Spectator verbal behavior in organized youth soccer: A descriptive analysis. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 10*, 200-211. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Rattue, C. (2006, June 7). Let's not sideline our future Rufers. *New Zealand Herald,* p. C15.

Riley, R. G., & Manias, E. (2004). The uses of photography in clinical nursing practice and research: A literature review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 48*, 397-405. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03208.x

Roberts, K., & Taylor, B. (2002). *Nursing research processes: An Australian perspective* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne, Australia: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Robertson, G. (2009, August 10). Junior rugby child's play no more. *New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved from http://www.nzherald.co.nz

Roth, D., & Rimmerman, A. (2009). Perceptions of middle-class mothers of their children with special needs participating in motor and sport programs. *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 32*, 356-359. doi:10.1097/MRR.0b013e32832bb11e

Rothman, K. J., & Greenland, S. (1998). Precision and validity in epidemiological studies. In K. J. Rothman & S. Greenland (Eds.), *Modern epidemiology* (2nd ed., pp. 115-134). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott-Raven.

Sam, M. P., & Jackson, S. J. (2004). Sport policy development in New Zealand: Paradoxes of an integrative paradigm. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 39*, 205-222. doi:10.1177/1012690204043463

Samuel, H. (1999). *The development of sociology in Indonesia: The production of knowledge, state formation, and economic change*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Swinburne Institution of Technology. Retrieved from http://adt.lib.swin.edu.au

Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods: Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing and Health, 23*, 334-340. doi:10.1002/1098-240X(200008)

Sapp, M., & Haubenstricker, J. (1978. *Motivation for joining and reasons for not continuing in youth sport programs in Michigan*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, Kansas City, MO.

Sarrazin, P., Vallerand, R., Guillet, E., Pelletier, L., & Cury, F. (2002). Motivation and dropout in female handballers: A 21-month prospective study. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 32*, 395-418. doi:10.1002/ejsp.98

Scanlan, T. K., Carpenter, P. J., Schmidt, G. W., Simons, J. P., & Keeler, B. (1993). An Introduction to the Sport Commitment Model. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 15*, 1-15. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Scanlan, T. K., & Lewthwaite, R. (1984). Social psychological aspects of competition for male youth sport participants: I. Predictors of competitive stress. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 6*, 208-226. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Scanlan, T. K., & Lewthwaite, R. (1986). Social psychological aspects of competition for male youth sport participants: IV. Predictors of enjoyment. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 8*, 25-35. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Scanlan, T. K., & Lewthwaite, R. (1988). From stress to enjoyment: Parental and coach influences on young participants. In E. W. Brown & C. F. Banta (Eds.), *Competitive sports for children and youth: An overview of research and issues*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Scanlan, T. K., & Simons, J. P. (1992). The construct of sport enjoyment. In G. C. Roberts (Ed.), *Motivation in sport and exercise* (pp. 199-215). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Scanlan, T. K., Stein, G. L., & Ravizza, K. (1991). An in-depth study of former elite figure skaters: III. Sources of stress. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 13*, 103-120. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Schaefer, D. R., & Dillman, D. A. (1998). Development of a standard e-mail methodology: Results from an experiment. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 62*, 378-397. doi:10.1086/297851

Schuette, J. R. (2001). Adolescent sports violence - when prosecutors play referee. Making criminals out of child athletes, but are they the real culprits? *Northern Illinois University Law Review, 21*, 515-540. Retrieved from http://www.niu.edu/law/organizations/law_review/index.shtml

Seefeldt, V. (1992). Coaching certification: An essential step for the revival of a faltering profession. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 63*, 29-30. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/publications/journals/joperd/index.cfm

Shaffer, D. R. (2004). *Social and personality development* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Shields, D., Bredemeier, B., LaVoi, N., & Power, F. C. (2005). The sport behavior of youth, parents, and coaches: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Journal of Research in Character Education, 3*, 43-59. Retrieved from http://www.infoagepub.com/research-in-character-education.html

Shields, D., LaVoi, N., Bredemeier, B., & Power, F. C. (2007). Predictors of poor sportspersonship in youth sports: Personal attitudes and social influences. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 29*, 747-762. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Shields, E. W. (1999). Intimidation and violence by males in high school athletics. *Adolescence, 34*(135), 503-521. Retrieved from Proquest Central Database

Shogan, D. (1999). *The making of high-performance athletes: Discipline, diversity and ethics*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Siedentop, D. (1991). *Developing teaching skills in Physical Education* (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.

Siegenthaler, K. L., & Gonzalez, G. L. (1997). Youth sports as serious leisure: A critique. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 21*, 298-314. doi:10.1177/019372397021003006

Simpkins, S. D., Vest, A. E., Dawes, N. P., & Neuman, K. I. (2010). Dynamic relations between parents' behaviors and children's motivational beliefs in sports and music. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 10*, 97 - 118. doi:10.1080/15295190903212638

Skår, M., & Krogh, E. (2009). Changes in children's nature-based experiences near home: From spontaneous play to adult-controlled, planned and organised activities. *Children's Geographies, 7*, 339-354. doi:10.1080/14733280903024506

Smith, D. (1999). "The civilizing process" and "The history of sexuality": Comparing Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault. *Theory and Society, 28*, 79-100. Retrieved from http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/journal/11186

Smith, J. K., & Heshusius, L. (1986). Closing down the conversation: The end of the qualitative-quantitative debate among educational inquirers. *Educational Researcher, 15*, 4-12. doi:10.3102/0013189X015001004

Smith, R. E., Cumming, S. P., & Smoll, F. L. (2008). Development and validation of the motivational climate scale for youth sports. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 20*, 116-136. doi:10.1080/10413200701790558

Smith, R. E., & Smoll, F. L. (1990). Sport performance anxiety. In H. Leitenberg (Ed.), *Handbook of social and evaluation anxiety* (pp. 417-454). New York, NY: Plenum.

Smith, R. E., & Smoll, F. L. (1997). Coaching the coaches: Youth sports as a scientific and applied behavioral setting. *Current Directions in Psychological Science 6*, 16-21. doi:10.1111/1467-8721.ep11512606

Smith, R. E., Smoll, F. L., & Cumming, S. P. (2007). Effects of a motivational climate intervention for coaches on young athletes' sport performance anxiety. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 29*, 39-59. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Smoll, F. L., & Cumming, S. P. (2006). Enhancing coach-parent relationships in youth sports: Increasing harmony and minimizing hassle. In J. M. Williams (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance.* (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Smoll, F. L., & Smith, R. E. (1988). Reducing stress in youth sport: Theory and application. In F. L. Smoll, R. A. Magill & M. J. Ash (Eds.), *Children in sport* (pp. 229-249). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Smoll, F. L., & Smith, R. E. (2006). Enhancing coach-athlete relationships: Cognitive-behavioral principles and procedures. In J. Dosil (Ed.), *The sport psychologist's handbook: A guide for sport-specific performance enhancement* (pp. 19-38). Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Snyder, E. E., & Spreitzer, E. (1999). Family influences and involvement in sport. *The Research Quarterly, 44*, 249-255.

Solomon, C. R., & Serres, F. (1999). Effects of parental verbal aggression on children's self-esteem and school marks. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 23*, 339-351. doi:10.1016/S0145-2134(99)00006-X

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2003, Winter 2003). Curbing the sideline abuse. *Up with the play: A SPARC Newsletter for Sports Officials* (3)*,* 1-5.

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2004). *The New Zealand coaching strategy: Taking coaching into the future. For coaches, by coaches*. Retrieved from http://www.sparc.org.nz/Documents/Communities%20and%20Clubs/Coaching/5721_Coaching_Strategy_web.pdf

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2005). *SPARC facts '97-'01*. Retrieved 30th November, 2005, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/research-policy/research-/sparc-facts-97-01

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2006). *Coach development framework*. Retrieved from http://www.sparc.org.nz/Documents/Communities%20and%20Clubs/Coaching/coach-dev-framework.pdf

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2007). *It's all about children and young people: Implementing a child/young person centred philosophy in sport and recreation* Wellington, New Zealand: Sport and Recreation New Zealand. Retrieved from http://www.sparc.org.nz/Documents/Young%20People/Its_all_about_children_V2.pdf

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2010a). *How volunteers contribute to sport*. Retrieved 31st August, 2010, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Volunteers-The-Heart-of-Sport/How-Volunteers-contribute-to-Sport/

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2010b). *Kia ora and welcome to SPARC*. Retrieved 20th June, 2010, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2010c). *NZ CoachApproach*. Retrieved 21st December, 2010, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/NZ-CoachApproach/

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2010d). *SPARC facts 1997-2001*. Retrieved from http://www.activenzsurvey.org.nz/Documents/sparc-facts-1997-2001.pdf

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2010e). *Volunteers: the heart of sport*. Retrieved 3rd September, 2010, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/sport/how-volunteers-heart-of-sport

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2010f). *Who we are and what we do*. Retrieved 20th June, 2010, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/About-SPARC/Who-we-are/

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2010g). *Young people*. Retrieved 21st December, 2010, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/young-people/

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2011). *CoachForce*. Retrieved 20th January, 2011, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/CoachForce/

Sport Southland. (2008). *Annual Report*. Invercargill, New Zealand: Sport Southland.

Sportnet NZ. (2010). *Welcome to Sportnet NZ and the Regional Sports Trust Network*. Retrieved 10th December, 2010, from http://www.sportnet.co.nz/

Statistics New Zealand. (1997). *Hillary Commission: 1997 Sport and Physical Activity Survey*. Retrieved 14th December, 2010, from http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/nzstories.nsf/0/479c4ffcbb884149cc256b1f00001198?OpenDocument

Stein, G. L., Raedeke, T. D., & Glenn, S. D. (1999). Children's perceptions of parent sport involvement: It's not how much, but to what degree that's important. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 22*, 591-601. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Stevens, D. E., Osborne, B., & Robbins, J. (2002). Psychosocial issues and the female athlete. In J. M. Silva III & D. E. Stevens (Eds.), *Psychological foundations of sport* (pp. 411-427). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Støckel, J. T., Strandbu, A., Solenes, O., Jørgensen, P., & Fransson, K. (2010). Sport for children and youth in the Scandinavian countries. *Sport in Society, 13*, 625-642. doi:10.1080/17430431003616332

Szakolczai, A. (1995). Sects and sociology. *Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation 4*, 9-13. Retrieved from http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/ND_newsletter/Figurations04.pdf

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixing methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Taylor, W. C., Blair, S. N., Cummings, S. S., Wun, C. C., & Malina, R. M. (1999). Childhood and adolescent physical activity patterns and adult physical activity. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise, 31*, 118-123. Retrieved from http://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/pages/default.aspx

Theeboom, M., De Knop, P., & Weiss, M. R. (1995). Motivational climate, psychological responses, and motor skill development in children's sport: A field-based intervention study. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 17*, 294-311. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Thompson, S. (1988). Challenging the hegemony: New Zealand women's opposition to rugby and the reproduction of capitalist patriarchy. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 23*, 205-223. doi:10.1177/101269028802300303

Thomson, R. W. (1984). *Children's sport: A sociological perspective.* Junior Sport - Coaching New Zealand Conference Proceedings. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Recreation and Sport.

Thomson, R. W. (1993). *Youth sport involvement: Sociological implications*. Paper presented at the Coaching New Zealand Conference, Wellington, New Zealand

Thomson, R. W. (1996a). *High-level sporting competition for adolescents: Ethical and medical considerations*. Paper presented at the International Congress for the 50th Anniversary of the Chechoslovak and Slovak Societies of Sports Medicine, Spa Trencianske Teplice, Slovakia

Thomson, R. W. (1996b). Youth sport involvement in New Zealand: Issues, images and initiatives. *FIEP-Bulletin, 66*(1), 22-34.

Thomson, R. W. (2000). Physical activity through sport and leisure: Traditional versus non-competitive activities. *Journal of Physical Education New Zealand, 33*(1), 34-39. Retrieved from Proquest Central Database

Tofler, I. R., & Butterbaugh, G. J. (2005). Developmental overview of child and youth sports for the Twenty-first Century. *Clinics in Sports Medicine, 24*, 783-804. doi:10.1016/j.csm.2005.05.006

Topor, D., & Gill, D. L. (2008). Behavioral approaches. In D. L. Gill & L. Williams (Eds.), *Psychological dynamics of sport and exercise* (3rd ed., pp. 99-115). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Touch NZ. (2009). *Coaching tips*. Retrieved 4th February, 2010, from http://www.touchnz.co.nz/index.php?id=85

Ugly Parent Syndrome. (2002). *The AusSport Post*. Retrieved from http://www.aussport.com.au

Ullrich-French, S., & Smith, A. L. (2006). Perceptions of relationships with parents and peers in youth sport: Independent and combined prediction of motivational outcomes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 7*, 193-214. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2005.08.006

US Department of Health and Human Services. (1996). *Physical activity and health: A report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, Georgia: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Vaz, E. W. (1974). What price victory? An analysis of minor hockey league players' attitude towards winning. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 9*, 33-56. doi:10.1177/101269027400900202

Walley, P. B., Graham, G. M., & Forehand, R. (1982). Assessment and treatment of adult observer verbalizations at youth league baseball games. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 4*, 254-266. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsep

Walters, S., Payne, D., Schluter, P., & Thomson, R. (2010). It's all about winning isn't it? Competing discourses in children's sport in New Zealand. *European Journal of Sport and Society, 7*(2), 105-116.

Walters, S. R., Schluter, P. J., Thomson, R. W., & Payne, D. (Under submission). The nature and target of coaches' comments at children's team sports events in New Zealand. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*.

Weiss, M. R. (2000). Motivating kids in physical activity. *SO - President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest, 3*(11).

Weiss, M. R. (2008). 2007 C. H. McCloy Lecture: "Field of dreams:" Sport as a context for youth development. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 79*, 434-449. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/rc/publications/rqes/

Weiss, M. R., & Amorose, A. J. (2008). Motivational orientations and sport behavior. In T. S. Horn (Ed.), *Advances in sport psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 115-154). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Weiss, M. R., & Fretwell, S. D. (2005). The parent-coach/child-athlete relationship in youth sport: Cordial, contentious, or conundrum? *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 76*, 286-305. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/rc/publications/rqes/

Weiss, M. R., & Williams, L. (2004). The why of youth sport involvement: A developmental perspective on motivational processes. In M. R. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 223-268). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.

Wiersma, L. D., & Sherman, C. P. (2005). Volunteer youth sport coaches' perspectives of coaching education/certification and parental codes of conduct. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 76*, 324-338. Retrieved from http://www.aahperd.org/rc/publications/rqes/

Williams, L. R. T. (1974). Viewpoint: The child and competitive sport. *Education 23*(7), 17-18.

Woitalla, M. (2009). *The delight of coaching your own child: AYSO volunteers discover the magic of soccer through their child's eyes*. Retrieved April 13, 2010, from http://www.ayso.org/coaches_referees/coaches/delight_of_coaching.aspx

Wolfson, S., & Neave, N. (2007). Coping under pressure: Cognitive strategies for maintaining confidence among soccer referees. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 30*(2), 232-247. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

Woolger, C., & Power, T. G. (1993). Parent and sport socialization: Views from the achievement literature. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 16*, 171-190. Retrieved from http://www.southalabama.edu/psychology/journal.html

World Health Organization. (2010). *Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health*. Retrieved 14th December, 2010, from http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_benefits/en/index.html

Yun, G. W., & Trumbo, C. W. (2000). Comparative response to a survey executed by post, mail and web form. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 6*(1). doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2000.tb00112.x

Appendices

Appendix A: AUTEC approval for study

MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To:	Philip Schluter	
From:	**Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC	
Date:	20 June 2007	
Subject:	Ethics Application Number 07/29 **Touchline parents: a study of parental involvement in children's sports.**	

Dear Philip

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 12 March 2007 and that the Chair and I as the Executive Secretary of AUTEC approved your ethics application on 30 April 2007. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 9 July 2007.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 20 April 2010.

AUTEC advises that ethics approval is required for pilot studies and that any data collected as a result of a pilot study that has not had ethics approval may not be used for the main study.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit to AUTEC the following:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given using form EA2, which is available online through *http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics*, including when necessary a request for extension of the approval one month prior to its expiry on 30 April 2010;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through *http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics*. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 30 April 2010 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is also a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence and that AUTEC approval is sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to the participant documents involved.

You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that any research undertaken under this approval is carried out within the parameters approved for your application. Any change to the research outside the parameters of this approval must be submitted to AUTEC for approval before that change is implemented.

Please note that AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the Committee and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Simon Walters simon.walters@aut.ac .nz

Appendix B: Administrator Focus Group Ethics Documentation

Touchline Parents: A study of parental involvement in children's sports.

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced

19 July 2007

An invitation

Hi, my name is Simon Walters I would like to invite you to participate in an important study I am conducting at AUT University. My study is exploring the influences parents have (both positive and negative) on children's (ages 6-11) experiences in team sports.

The team sports focused on in this study are Touch, Soccer, Rugby union, and Netball. These team sports were selected because of their popularity and high participation rates for both females (netball, soccer, touch) and males (rugby union, touch, soccer).

As an administrator actively involved in the organisation and running of your sport in your region, you are ideally placed to offer an insight into aspects of parental involvement in your sport. It would be great if you would agree to be part of a focus group comprised of 8 sporting administrators. Your decision to participate in this research is entirely voluntary and you may decide to withdraw at any time without penalty.

If you would prefer to receive information relating to this study in Te Reo Māori please contact me (refer below for contact details).

How was I chosen for this invitation?

Your sport is one of the team sports I am focusing on in my study. I am interested in working with administrators involved in these sports who are based in your area of Auckland. As a consequence I have invited 8 key administrators to be involved in this study – two from each of the team sports identified above.

What will happen in this research?

This aspect of my study involves interviewing 8 administrators through the use of a small Focus Group. These interviews will be conducted at a mutually agreed time and place, convenient to all parties.

In order to minimise any disruption to your schedules there will be one, or at the very most, two focus group meetings. A second meeting will only be required if there is clear indication by all parties that it would be beneficial to convene a subsequent meeting.

I will facilitate your discussion which will last for between 60 to (at the absolute most) 90 minutes. These focus group meetings will be audio tape recorded and transcribed. All information from these focus groups will be entered into a secure and anonymous database. All published results in academic journals or reports will ensure that no one person, group, or organisation will be identifiable.

There will be an attendance allowance for out-of-pocket expenses of $50.

What are the benefits?

Concerns have been voiced in a number of countries, including New Zealand, about the effects of excessive parental involvement in children's sports. To date there has been little research into the effect of parental behaviour on key stakeholders involved in children's sport. Although parental behaviour has been observed there is no evidence of published studies in New Zealand that have explored the actual impact of this behaviour. In this context, a study of the influence of parental behaviour will add to the body of knowledge which may help adults better understand the critical roles they play in children's sporting experiences. Ideally this will lead to interventions and policy designed to enhance sporting experiences for all concerned, especially children.

Are there any risks?

The identity of all participants will at all times remain anonymous. The identity of the participants will in no circumstances become public. Any information relating to the participants will be stored on a secure and anonymous database and will be protected by a password known only to myself. All recordings of focus groups will be stored in a locked cabinet within a secure room for 6 years as per ethical guidelines. You may withdraw your consent at any time before or during the study. If you decide to withdraw your consent all information provided by you will not be used. The AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has strict guidelines relating to research and they have looked closely at my study and have approved the methods I am adopting.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

A consent form has been enclosed for you with this information sheet. A signed consent form received on 22 August denotes agreement to participate in this research.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like copies of any reports please indicate this on the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Philip Schluter, philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7700. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz* , (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please feel free to contact me to clarify or discuss further any aspect of this research. Simon Walters, simon.walters@aut.ac.nz 09 921 9999 ext 7022.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30 April 2007, AUTEC Reference number 07/29.

Participant Consent Form

Project title: **Touchline parents: A study of parental involvement in children's sports.**

Researcher: **Simon Walters**

Project **Professor Philip Schluter**

supervisors: **Professor Rex Thomson**

Please tick all the circles

○   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 19 July 2007.

○   I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○   I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.

○   I understand that the focus group will be audio-taped and transcribed.

○   I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

○   If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.

○   I agree to take part in this research.

○   I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):

Yes ○   No ○

Please Turn Over   →

Participant's signature:	*Date*:

Participant's name:

Participant's contact details ::

This research project has been approved by the Auckland

University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/04/2007 AUTEC

Reference number 07/29

Please retain a copy of this form for your records

Appendix C: Letter to sports organisations requesting permission to conduct coach observations and to administer questionnaires to coaches and referees

AUT
UNIVERSITY
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

Private Bag 92006

Auckland 1142

Date

Dear *contact name,*

I would like to thank you for expressing an initial interest in being involved with and participating in my PhD study. As you are aware my study is looking into children's (ages 6-11) perceptions of their experiences in organised team sports. In particular, the study will focus on how parent and coach influences influence a child's enjoyment and ongoing participation in sport.

This study is important because there are major concerns over physical activity levels of both children and adults in New Zealand. As you are aware there is a clear link between sport and physical activity. Negative experiences in childhood physical or sporting activities have been identified in a number of studies as barriers to adult physical activities. However, relatively little is known about young children's perceptions of sport. The aim of this study is to explore the influences on children's sporting experiences.

It is hoped that publication of the findings will promote a greater awareness of this subject. This study will increase our understanding of children's enjoyment of sport and parents' positive and negative experiences of their child's sport. Results will form part of the evidence used to inform policy and practice. The benefits of this study are to raise awareness of the importance of sport as a means of enjoyment, and emotional and physical development for children.

There are a number of aspects to my study. I am interested in sending out invitations to referees/umpires to participate in an online survey. I understand you hold a database containing contact details. I would be grateful if your organisation would consider mailing out this invitation to all coaches and referees/umpires utilised by you.

As we discussed I am also interested in observing and recording coach behaviour and comments on the touchline during sporting events organised by you. An observation instrument

has been designed and implemented by researchers at Otago University in Dunedin and has been used already in two previous studies. In the past permission has not been sought to utilise these instruments and has been 'covert' in nature. However, as a matter of courtesy I would like your organisation's permission to observe and record comments at matches which fall under your jurisdiction.

I would like to stress that the identity of all participants involved in this study will at all times remain anonymous. All information will be stored on a secure database which only I will have access to, and will be destroyed after a period of 6 years.

Your agreement to participate in this study would be greatly appreciated. I understand your Board holds regular meetings and I would really welcome the opportunity to visit your meeting and talk to you in more detail about this study.

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Philip Schluter <u>Philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz</u> 09 921 9999 extn 7700. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Thank you very much for your time and help in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please do not hesitate to contact me.

Warmest regards

Simon Walters

Project Supervisor

Professor Philip Schluter

Phone: 09 921 9999 extn 7700   Email: Philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz

Principal Researcher

Simon Walters

Phone: 09 921 9999 extn 7022   Email: simon.walters@aut.ac.nz

This research project has been approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics

Committee on 30/04/2007 AUTEC Reference number 07/29

Appendix D: Documentation related to parent/child questionnaires

Private Bag 92006

Auckland 1142

6th November, 2007.

Dear Principal

My name is Simon Walters and I am currently undertaking a PhD study at AUT University in Auckland. My study is looking into children's (ages 6-11) perceptions of their experiences in organised team sports. In particular, the study will focus on how parental and coach influences influence a child's enjoyment and ongoing participation in sport. I am inviting six primary schools to participate in this study. These schools have been drawn from a range of urban, rural, and decile ratings.

This study is important because there are major concerns over physical activity levels of both children and adults in New Zealand. As you are aware the Ministry of Education has expressed their concern over the physical activity levels of children. One indication of this is the addition of a new clause to their National Administration Guidelines related to the development and implementation of physical activity programmes specifically aimed at children in Years 1-6. There is a clear link between sport and physical activity. Negative experiences in childhood physical or sporting activities have been identified in a number of studies as barriers to adult physical activities. However, relatively little is known about young children's perceptions of sport. The aim of this study is to explore the influences on children's sporting experiences.

It is hoped that publication of the findings will promote a greater awareness of this subject. This study will increase our understanding of children's enjoyment of sport and parents' positive and negative experiences of their child's sport. Results will form part of the evidence used to inform policy and practice. The benefits of this study are to raise awareness of the importance of sport as a means of enjoyment, and emotional and physical development for children.

I would like to invite your school to take part in this study. The initial phase of the study would simply involve the distribution of a questionnaire to all children in Years 2-6. The questionnaire

is to be completed by both child and parent/caregiver and returned to the classroom teacher by a designated date. The identity of the schools and participants involved in the study will at all times be known only to this researcher. All information will be stored on a secure database which only I will have access to, and will be destroyed after a period of 6 years.

Your agreement to participate in this study would be greatly appreciated. I would really welcome the opportunity to visit the school and talk to you in more detail about this study.
Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Philip Schluter Philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz 09 921 9999 extn 7700. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Thank you very much for your time and help in making this evaluation possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please do not hesitate to contact me.

Warmest regards

Simon Walters

Project Supervisor

Professor Philip Schluter

Phone: 09 921 9999 extn 7700   Email: Philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz

Principal Researcher

Simon Walters

Phone: 09 921 9999 extn 7022   Email: simon.walters@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30th

April 2007, AUTEC Reference number 07/29.

Children and their sport

Information Sheet for children

Hi

This letter tells you about some important work that I am doing with children of your age who live in Auckland and who play sport. Your mum/dad or caregiver will also get a letter about this.

What is the study about?

I am interested in finding out about what you like and don't like about sport. This is important to know because we don't know very much about what children enjoy about their sport.

What is involved?

You and your mum/dad or caregiver will fill out a form and bring it back to school.

All of your answers will be kept secret and will not be given to any other children, teachers, parents, or adults.

There are two forms for you to fill in. One form tells me that you are happy for me to look at your answers. This is called an Assent Form. The other form has some questions about sport that I would like you to answer.

You do not have to fill in these forms if you don't want to. If you are worried about anything or have any questions ask your mum/dad or caregiver to phone us.

My work and your school are happy for you to fill in this form. But if you have any worries about this please ask your mum/dad or caregiver to contact me, Simon Walters, simon.walters@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7022, or the Project Supervisor, Professor Philip Schluter, philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7700 or the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz*, (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

Thank you very much for your help!

Children and their sport

Child's Assent Form

Project title: **Children and their sport**

Researcher: **Simon Walters**

Project supervisors: **Professor Philip Schluter**

Professor Rex Thomson

To be completed by the child (with assistance if necessary from parent/caregiver)

Please tick all the circles

O   I have read and understood the sheet telling me what will happen in this study and why it is important.

O   I understand that while the information is being collected, I can stop being part of this study whenever I want and that is fine.

O   If I stop being part of the study, I understand that all information about me will be destroyed.

O   I agree to take part in this study.

Child's signature:

Child's name:

Date:

Children and their sport

Information Sheet for parents/guardians

An invitation

My name is Simon Walters and I am currently undertaking a PhD study at AUT University looking into children's (ages 6-11) perceptions of their experiences in sport. I have had permission from your child's school to distribute and collect questionnaires through selected classroom teachers. Physical activity levels of both children and adults in New Zealand have become a public health and educational priority. However, relatively little is known about young children's perceptions of sport. The aim of this study is to explore the influences on children's sporting experiences so that parents, teachers, administrators and educationalists can improve children's sports involvement. If you would prefer to receive information relating to this study in Te Reo Māori please contact me (refer below for contact details).

How was I chosen for this invitation?

Six selected primary schools in your area of Auckland have agreed to be involved in this study. Questionnaires are being distributed to all Year 2 to 6 children in these schools.

What will happen in this research?

All information from these questionnaires will be entered into a secure and anonymous database. The results will be aggregated. All published results in academic journals or reports will ensure that no one person or particular groups of people will be identifiable.

Are there any risks?

The identity of all participants will at all times remain anonymous. The identity of the participants or schools will in no circumstances become public. Any information relating to the participants will be stored on a secure and anonymous database and will be protected by a password known only to myself. All questionnaire hardcopies will be stored in a locked cabinet within a secure room for 6 years as per ethical guidelines. You may withdraw your consent at any time before or during the study. If you decide to withdraw your consent all information provided by you will be destroyed. The AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has strict guidelines relating to research involving children and they have looked closely at my study and have approved the methods I am adopting.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

A consent form has been enclosed for you with this information sheet. An assent form has also been included for your child. A returned and completed questionnaire, a signed parent consent form, and signed child assent form denote agreement to participate in this research.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like copies of any reports please indicate this on the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Philip Schluter, philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7700. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz* , (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Simon Walters, simon.walters@aut.ac.nz   09 921 9999 ext 7022.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30th April 2007, AUTEC Reference number 07/29.

Children and their sport:

Parent/Guardian's Consent Form

Project title: **Children and their sport**

Researcher: **Simon Walters**

Project supervisors: **Professor Philip Schluter**

Professor Rex Thomson

To be completed by the parent/caregiver

Please tick all the circles

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet.

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I understand that I may withdraw my child/children or any information that we have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

○ If my child/children withdraw(s), I understand that all relevant information will be destroyed.

○   I agree to my child/children taking part in this research.

Child's name:	
Parent/Guardian's signature:	*Date*:
Parent/Guardian's name:	

If you wish to receive a copy of any report from the research please write your preferred contact details below (i.e. email, postal address):

Parent/Guardian's contact details:

This research project has been approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/04/2007 AUTEC Reference number 07/29

Children and their sport: A questionnaire

PART 1:

To be filled out by the child (with help if you need it from your parent/caregiver)

Your name: _____   **Your school:** _____

How old are you: _____   **What is your School year:** _____

Please put a circle around the right answer to each question below

Are you a boy or girl?

Boy   Girl

Which team sports do you play? (Circle all the sports you play)

Touch	Netball	Soccer	Rugby	Hockey
League	Cricket	Basketball	Other	I don't play sport

When you play your team games, how often do you play?

Every or most weeks   Sometimes   Not very often

How much do you enjoy playing team sports?

A lot   Quite a lot   It's ok   I don't like it much   I don't like it at all

Thank you for your important answers.

Your mum or dad/caregiver will complete the other side of this form.

PART 2: *To be completed by the parent/caregiver*

What is your relationship to the child?
_____

Please put a circle around the answer to each question

If your child participates in organised team sport:

Do you attend your child's training sessions?

Always   Most times   Sometimes   Rarely

Do you attend your child's matches/competitions?

Always   Most times   Sometimes   Rarely

Do you think participating in sport is important for your child?

Yes   No   I'm not sure

What positive experiences have you ever had with your child's organised sport?

_____

_____

_____

What negative experiences have you ever had with your child's organised sport?

_____

_____

_____

Have other parents ever negatively affected your child's enjoyment of their sport?

Yes   No

If yes, in what way?

_____

_____

_____

There will be a follow-up study briefly interviewing small groups of children about their experience of sport. If your child is eligible for this study, would you like to receive more information about it?

If so, can you please include your name and preferred method of contact below (i.e. email/telephone/postal address) or contact the lead researcher Simon Walters directly (telephone: (09) 921 9999 extension 7022, email: simon.walters@aut.ac.nz)?

Name:
_____
Contact details:
_____

_____

That's great! Thanks for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. Please ask your child to bring it back to school with the completed Assent and Consent forms within 2 weeks.

Appendix E: Ethics documentation related to children focus group interviews

Children and their sport

Information Sheet for children

Hi

Thanks for sending me your completed questionnaire. In the forms you sent back to me your mum/dad said you were interested in receiving some more information about some more work I will be doing. I was really interested in the answers you gave to my questions. If it is OK with you I would like very much to ask you some more questions. Your mum/dad/caregiver has also received a letter about this.

What is the study about?

I am interested in finding out some more about what you like and don't like about sport. This is important to know because we don't know very much about what children enjoy about their sport. Some of your answers were really interesting and I would like to find out more about how you feel about your sport.

What is involved?

If you are happy to answer some more questions then I will arrange for you to join with a group of your schoolmates. We call these groups Focus Groups. We will have two meetings at your school. These meetings will take place during school time. These meetings will last for about 30 minutes. During these meetings you will get a chance to answer some more questions about what you like and don't like about sport. There will be 2 adults at the meeting – myself and one female primary school teacher.

All of your answers will be kept secret and will not be given to any other children, teachers, parents, or adults.

Have a chat with your mum/dad. If you decide you would like to be part of this group at your school there is a form that you need to fill in. This form tells me that you are happy for me to ask you some more questions in a group. This is called an Assent Form.

If you have any questions please ask your mum/dad to phone us.

My work and your school are happy for you to fill in this form. But if you have any worries about this please ask your mum/dad to contact me, Simon Walters, simon.walters@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7022, or the Project Supervisor, Professor Philip Schluter, philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7700 or the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz*, (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

Thank you very much for your help!

Children and their sport
Child's Assent Form

AUT
UNIVERSITY
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

Project title: **Children and their sport**

Researcher: **Simon Walters**

Project   **Professor Philip Schluter**

supervisors: **Professor Rex Thomson**

To be completed by the child (with assistance if necessary from parent/caregiver)

Please tick all the circles

○   I have read and understood the sheet telling me what will happen in this study and why it is important.

○   I understand that while the information is being collected, I can stop being part of this study whenever I want and that is fine.

○   If I stop being part of the study, I understand that all information about me will not be used.

○   I agree to take part in this study.

Child's signature:

_____

Child's name:

_____

Date:

_____

This research project has been approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/04/2007 AUTEC Reference number 07/29

Children and their sport

Information Sheet for parents/caregivers

An invitation

I would like to thank you and your child for completing the questionnaire which was the first stage of my PhD study at AUT University looking into children's (ages 6-11) perceptions of their experiences in sport. I have enclosed a preliminary summary report of my findings for your interest.

You indicated on the questionnaire that you would like to receive some information about a follow-up study I am conducting. The answers supplied by your child have proved to be of great interest and consequently your child is eligible for inclusion in this follow-up study. It would be great if your child could volunteer for inclusion in this next phase of my study. The aims of this study are to explore in a little more depth the influences on children's sporting experiences so that parents, teachers, administrators and educationalists can enhance children's sporting experiences. Your child's school is happy for me to conduct this follow-up study at the school. Your child's participation is entirely voluntary and they may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

Children from six selected primary schools in your area of Auckland completed and returned the questionnaires I issued. After analysing the data from all returned questionnaires one school was selected for inclusion in the second phase of this study. Based on the questionnaire responses 16 children from your school have been asked if they would like to be included. Your child is one of the 16 children from your school.

What will happen in this research?

This second phase involves interviewing children through the use of small Focus Groups. As agreed with your child's school, these interviews will be conducted on the school premises. There will be two focus groups – one group comprised of children aged 6-8, the second group consisting of children aged 9-11. The children eligible for inclusion in this study will have all provided informed assent and parental consent to be included in this study.

In order to minimise any disruption to your child's normal daily school routine this phase of the study will involve no more than two 30-35 minute meetings per focus group. A qualified female primary school teacher will be present at all times during the interview stage.

There are few studies that have traditionally given children a 'voice' in social science research. This study will attempt to develop an approach best suited to the participants. Accordingly, all assenting child participants in this study will:

- be interviewed in familiar surroundings (the school);
- have had parental permission to be interviewed;
- clearly understand the purpose of the interview, agree to participate, and have the right to stop the interview process at any stage;
- remain anonymous with their identity known only to the researchers;
- be safe. At least one qualified practicing primary school teacher will be in attendance at the interview. This is important as current practicing teachers will have undergone the prerequisite legal checks relating to child safety legislation.

These focus group meetings will be audio tape recorded and transcribed. All information from these focus groups will be entered into a secure and anonymous database. All published results in academic journals or reports will ensure that no one person, school or particular group of people will be identifiable.

Are there any risks?

The questions asked within the Focus Group setting have been formulated through consultation with a trained primary school educator. A fully qualified and practicing female primary school teacher will be present during the focus group meetings. These meetings will take place with full permission from your child's school and will be conducted on school premises during school hours.

The identity of all participants will at all times remain anonymous. The identity of the participants or schools will in no circumstances become public. Any information relating to the participants will be stored on a secure and anonymous database and will be protected by a password known only to myself. All recordings of focus groups will be stored in a locked cabinet within a secure room for 6 years as per ethical guidelines. You may withdraw your consent at any time before or during the study. If you decide to withdraw your consent all information provided by your child will be destroyed. The AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has strict guidelines relating to research involving children and they have looked closely at my study and have approved the methods I am adopting.

In the unlikely event that your child became upset, AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing have confirmed that they are able to offer confidential counselling support for the participants in this research project. The free counselling will be provided by professional counsellors for a maximum of three sessions and must be in relation to issues arising from participating in this research project. If AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing are unable to provide appropriate support for the children who are participating in these focus groups they will discuss suitable referrals in the community.

If you do require use of these services you can:

- Drop into our AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 09 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment
- You will need to let the receptionist know that they are a research participant

- You will need to provide my contact details (see below) to confirm this
- You can find out more information about our counsellors and the option on online counselling on our website
http://www.aut.ac.nz/students/student_services/health_counselling_and_wellbeing

How do I agree to participate in this research?

A consent form has been enclosed for you with this information sheet. As assent form has also been included for your child. A stamped addressed envelope has been included for your convenience. A returned and signed parent consent form, and signed child assent form denote agreement to participate in this research.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like copies of any reports please indicate this on the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Philip Schluter, philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7700. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz*, (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

I would be really happy to clarify or discuss further any aspect of this research. Please feel free to contact me. Simon Walters, simon.walters@aut.ac.nz 09 921 9999 ext 7022.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

on 30/04/2007, AUTEC Reference number 07/29.

Children and their sport

Parent/Guardian's Consent Form

Project title: **Children and their sport**

Researcher: **Simon Walters**

Project **Professor Philip Schluter**

supervisors: **Professor Rex Thomson**

To be completed by the parent/caregiver

Please tick all the circles

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet.

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I understand that I may withdraw my child/children or any information that we have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

○ If my child withdraws, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which my child was a part, the

relevant information about my child including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.

○   I agree to my child/children taking part in this research.

Child's name:

Parent/Guardian's signature: *Date*:

Parent/Guardian's name:

If you wish to receive a copy of any report from the research please write your preferred contact details below (i.e. email, postal address):

Parent/Guardian's contact details:

This research project has been approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/04/2007 AUTEC Reference number 07/29

Appendix F: Documentation related to referee/umpire online surveys

Hi

My name is Simon Walters, and as part of my PhD study I am doing some research with your sports organisation and we are interested on your thoughts about touchline parental (or parent-coach) behaviour.

This is a chance for you to **have your say** on what is currently a very topical issue.

If you are 16 years of age or over and you are or have been a coach/referee/umpire involved in primary aged children's team sport please click on the link below:

http://www.sportsurvey.co.nz/survey/TakeSurvey.asp?SurveyID=30I8p30I5761G

THIS 1-PAGE FORM WILL ONLY TAKE 2 TO 3 MINUTES OF YOUR TIME!!

This is an important study which we hope will provide evidence and inform policy for children's sport in New Zealand in the future. Your response is vital to the success of this study. Your responses are anonymous (no name or personal identifiers will be collected) and at no stage will any identifying information be reported in any form.

For more information about my study, your rights and anonymity or if you have any concerns about this research please read on below.

_____

A study of adult involvement in children's sports.

Participant Information Sheet

An invitation

I would like to invite you to participate in an important study I am conducting at AUT University exploring the influences parents have on children's (ages 6-11) experiences in team sports.

As a referee and/or coach actively involved in the organisation and running of your sport you are ideally placed to offer an insight into aspects of adult involvement in your sport. It would be great if you would take the time to complete the short anonymous online questionnaire.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

Your sport is one of the team sports I am focusing on in my study. I have been working with organisations involved with the administration of your sport in your area of Auckland and they have given me permission to approach you with this questionnaire.

What will happen in this research

Once this survey is completed, all answers will be collated and analysed and will form the basis of reports, papers and presentations. You will notice that the information recorded on the questionnaire is anonymous.

What are the benefits?

Concerns have been voiced in a number of countries, including New Zealand, about the effects of excessive parental involvement in children's sports. To date there has been little research into the effect of parental and coach behaviour on key stakeholders involved in children's sport. Although parental behaviour has been observed there is no evidence of published studies in New Zealand that have explored the actual impact of this behaviour. In this context, a study of the influence of parental and coach behaviour will add to the body of knowledge which may help adults better understand the critical roles they play in children's sporting experiences. Ideally this will lead to interventions and policy designed to enhance sporting experiences for all concerned, especially children.

Are there any risks?

All information provided by you is totally anonymous. The AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has strict guidelines relating to research and they have looked closely at my study and have approved the methods I am adopting.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

By simply completing the survey.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Philip Schluter, <u>philip.schluter@aut.ac.nz</u>, (09) 921 9999 ext 7700. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz* , (09) 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please feel free to contact me, Simon Walters by e-mail or on 09 921 9999 ext 7022.

Whom do I contact if I wish to receive a copy of the report from this research

You should also contact me - contact details as above.

This research project has been approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/04/2007 AUTEC Reference number 07/29

Thanks for your time!

Simon Walters

Senior Lecturer

School of Sport & Recreation

Auckland University of Technology

Private Bag 92006

Auckland 1020

09 921 9999 ext 7022

Online survey

Children and sport Survey - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.sportsurvey.co.nz/survey/TakeSurvey.asp?PageNumber=1&SurveyID=650993036725G

Live Search

Children and sport Survey

Page ▾ Tools ▾

Children and sport

Page 1 of 1

1. Are you male or female?*
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

2. What is your age?*
   - ☐ 16-20
   - ☐ 21-30
   - ☐ 31-40
   - ☐ 41-50
   - ☐ 51-60
   - ☐ 60+

3. Are you a coach or referee/umpire?
   - ☐ Coach
   - ☐ Referee/Umpire
   - ☐ Both

4. Which children's (ages 6-11) team sports do you coach/referee?*
   Select at least 1 response.
   - ☐ Touch ☐ Netball ☐ Soccer ☐ Rugby ☐ Hockey ☐ League ☐ Cricket ☐ Basketball ☐ Softball
   - ☐ Other, please specify

5. How many years coaching/refereeing experience do you have?*
   ☐ 0 - 1
   ☐ 2 - 3
   ☐ 4 - 5
   ☐ 6 or more

6. During the season, how often do you coach or referee?*
   ☐ More than once a week
   ☐ Every or most weeks
   ☐ Sometimes
   ☐ Not very often

7. Have you ever witnessed what you consider to be inappropriate parental or parent-coach touchline behaviour?*
   ☐ Never
   ☐ Once or twice ever
   ☐ Once or twice a season
   ☐ Several times a season
   ☐ Regularly

8. If yes, in what way?

   [text box]

   [Next]   [Cancel]

Children and sport

Page 2 of 2

Children and Sport

9. Do you have concerns about parental behaviour at children's sporting events?*
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

10. If yes, what steps do you think could be taken to improve parental behaviour?

Back   Done   Cancel

Appendix G: Preliminary findings of POISE: Report submitted to sports organisations

The Nature and Target of Coaches' Comments at Children's Sporting Events.

Simon Walters, Auckland University of Technology.

Overview

This preliminary report summarises the findings of a study designed to determine the prevalence and nature of coaches' verbal behaviour during children's (boys and girls ages 6-11) sporting events. The study utilised a systematic observation instrument, the Parents' Observation Instrument at Sports Events (POISE), to record coach behaviour at soccer, rugby union, touch rugby, and netball games in two districts in the Greater Auckland area. The term 'instrument' in this context, refers to a method of recording and coding comments made by coaches.

This report represents the findings of one component of a wider study, which aims to examine the influences of parents, sports referees/umpires, coaches, and administrators on children participating in organised team sports. The sports included in this study - netball, soccer, touch and rugby - were selected because of their high participation rates among New Zealand children for both females (netball, soccer, touch) and males (rugby union, touch, soccer) (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2005). The structured (or systematic) observation instrument employed is an instrument that was initially designed by Walley, Graham and Forehand (1982) and was adopted by Randall and McKenzie (1987) to record adult spectator behaviour at youth soccer games. The POISE was adapted from these earlier instruments by Kidman and McKenzie (1996) to record and analyse the nature of parents' comments at children's sport competitions in the Dunedin area.

An aspect of structured observation that arouses much debate relates to the fact that it is covert. Indeed, the use of POISE in the past has been fully covert and as such raises a number of issues. To address some of these issues, this study was conducted only after permission was gained from the sporting organisations responsible for the administration of the games observed.

A key strength of structured observation is that it enables behaviour to be directly observed, rather than inferred through participants reporting of their own behaviour. All covert observation of children's games was conducted in areas completely open to members of the public. At the beginning of each game observed, a coach was selected for observation. At no time before, during, or after the observation was the identity of the coach observed recorded by the researchers. In addition no potentially identifying information (such as age, ethnicity, appearance or mannerisms) was collected. The instrument was used solely to record the prevalence, nature and target of comments made by each subject under study. No audio or video recording of the subject occurred whatsoever. Full ethical approval was gained from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) prior to the onset of data collection.

Observation Instrument

During data collection every comment made by the coach under observation was recorded, as well as the target (e.g. player, referee etc.) of the comment and the event (e.g. ball in play, penalty etc.). The nature of the comment was recorded as *Positive* (e.g. Great tackle, good lad), *Negative* (e.g. Come on don't just look at him, tackle him)*, or *Neutral* (e.g. push up in a line)*.

The principal researcher and a research assistant were trained in the use of POISE. The researchers subsequently attended selected games for the 4 sports and recorded the verbal comments made by a targeted coach. To ensure comments were being recorded in a consistent manner and to establish inter-observer reliability, the researchers recorded comments for the same coach at 2 different games. The recorded results were then compared and inter-observer reliability was established at 92%, which is an acceptable and impressively high level of agreement for an observation instrument (Herson & Barlow, 1984).

Results

Games observed

A total of 72 matches and coaches were observed. The observations resulted in the recording of a total of 10,697 coach comments. As can be seen from Table 1 the number of comments recorded for rugby coaches (4,033) is significantly greater than for any of the other sports observed. However, due to the different length in time of games in each sport, it is more meaningful to calculate the total number of minutes spent observing each sport in order to get a more accurate reflection of the number of comments made.

Table 1

Number of games observed and comments recorded.

	Netball	Rugby	Soccer	Touch	Total
Games observed	19	18	17	18	72
Comments recorded	2656	4033	2169	839	10697
Total number of minutes observed	760	920	660	540	2880
Rate of comments per minute	3.4	4.3	3.2	3.4	3.7

As can be seen in Table 1, the rugby coaches observed were the most vocal, averaging 4.3 comments per minute of game time. The rate of comments per minute for netball, touch and soccer were similar, averaging just over 3 comments per minute.

Table 2 represents a breakdown of the nature of comments made by coaches. The nature of comments made is broken down into sub-categories as follows:

Positive

- *Reinforcing:* A supportive comment such as "well done".

- *Hustle:* A motivating comment such as "go, go go".

Negative

- *Correcting:* A comment made which establishes that a specific action was not satisfactory and should be altered, such as "You need to shoot earlier".
- *Scolding:* Where a player is told off.
- *Witticism:* A comment often involving sarcasm or ridicule, such as "Oh great shot" when the shot has been anything but.
- *Contradicting:* A comment that may vary from positive to negative, and may be confusing for a player, e.g. "Tackle, that's it, no you committed yourself too early".

Neutral

- *Instructional:* telling the player what to do e.g. "play it forward".
- *Direct Question:* e.g. "Do you want to come off?"
- *Indirect Question:* A question aimed at a player but not relating to this event e.g. "Who will be at training next week?"
- *Rhetorical Question*: A question requiring no answer e.g. "Where's the passing today?"
- *Social:* any comment not related to the event e.g. "Let's get a coffee after".
- *Other:* any comment that does not fit into any other category.

In the games we observed, the most common type of comment made was neutral (43.0%) predominantly made up of instructional comments (n=4437). Positive comments accounted for 35.4% of total comments made, and negative comments accounted for 21.6% of the overall total.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Different Types of Coaches' Comments

Nature	Verbal Behaviours	Number of Comments	Total Comments
Positive			3785 (35.4%)
	Reinforcing	1984	
	Hustle	1801	
Negative			2310 (21.6%)
	Correcting	744	
	Scolding	1520	
	Witticism	37	
	Contradicting	9	
Neutral			4602 (43.0%)
	Instruction	4437	
	Direct Question	88	
	Indirect Question	0	
	Rhetorical Question	6	
	Social	2	
	Other	69	
Total		10697	10697

Table 3 further breaks down these comments by sport. Rugby coaches recorded the lowest percentage of positive comments (26.5%) and the highest percentage of negative comments (23%). However, the rates of negative comments were reasonably similar across all 4 sports. There was a significant difference between the percentages of positive comments recorded, with soccer the highest (46.8%) compared to the lowest (Rugby: 26.5%).

Table 3

Number and Percentage of Coaches' Comments by Sport

Sport	Positive Comments	Negative Comments	Neutral Comments	Total
Netball	1037 (39%)	540 (20.3%)	1079 (40.6%)	2656
Rugby	1069 (26.5%)	926 (23%)	2038 (50.5%)	4033
Soccer	1016 (46.8%)	429 (19.8%)	724 (33.4%)	2169
Touch	663 (36%)	415 (22.6%)	761 (41.4%)	1839
Total	3785 (35.4%)	2310 (21.6%)	4602 (43%)	10697

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the target of negative comments. Negative comments are predominantly aimed at the team as opposed to individual players in all 4 sports. The percentage of negative comments aimed at referees and officials, however, was significantly higher in Touch (8.7%) and in Rugby (7.3%) than in Netball and Soccer.

Table 4

Target of Coaches' Negative Comments by Sport

Target	Netball	Rugby	Soccer	Touch	Totals
Team	312 (57.8%)	482 (52.1%)	262 (61.1%)	307 (74.0%)	1363
Player	218 (40.4%)	372 (40.2%)	158 (36.8%)	71 (17.1%)	819
Umpire	7 (1.3%)	51 (5.5%)	9 (2.1%)	36 (8.7%)	103
Official	0	17 (1.8%)	0	0	17
Opposition	0	4 (0.4%)	0	0	4
Other	3 (0.5%)	0	0	1 (0.2%)	4
Total	540	926	429	415	2310

A further breakdown of negative comments also revealed some interesting variations across the 4 sports. An analysis of individual games indicated that officials' decisions were challenged or criticised by coaches in 12 out of 18 of the games of rugby observed, and 11 out of 18 of the games observed in touch (refer Table 5).

Table 5

Number of Games in which Officials were the Target of Negative Comments.

Sport	Total Games Observed	Number of Games where Officials were Target of Negative Comments
Netball	19	4 (21%)
Rugby	18	12 (67%)
Soccer	17	2 (12%)
Touch	18	11 (61%)
Total	72	29 (40%)

Further analysis of negative and positive comments targeting individual players showed that in the majority of games observed, **at least** one individual player was on the receiving end of **only** negative comments (see Table 6).

Table 6

Number of Games in which at least one Player was the Target of Negative Comments only.

Sport	Total Games Observed	Number of Games where Players were Target of Negative Comments only
Netball	19	15 (79%)
Rugby	18	12 (67%)
Soccer	17	9 (53%)
Touch	18	7 (39%)
Total	72	43 (60%)

Discussion

Although the results revealed that the majority of comments made by coaches were classified as positive (see Tables 2 and 3) at least 1 in 5 comments made by coaches in all sports were negative. In the games observed, negative comments aimed at the referee/umpire more commonly occurred in rugby and in touch. A number of sports encourage and use relatively young referees/umpires with many of the officials observed appearing to be young teenagers. Although not recorded, it was apparent that in games where young officials were overtly

criticised or challenged, this appeared to have a visible effect on their confidence and decision making. Some typical comments recorded were "Open your eyes ref" (rugby) and "Come on ref we're not playing rugby here" (soccer). In 3 of the rugby games observed, the referee had to speak to the coach to ask them to curb their comments. In one of the rugby games an argument ensued between the coach and the referee which resulted in the coach walking his team off the field before the end of the game (this was in a J5 game – predominantly 7 year olds). In another rugby game observed an argument broke out between a coach and a touch judge (another parent) over a call the touch judge had made. This resulted in the touch judge swearing a number of times at the coach during a heated argument with a young player eventually telling the touch judge to "leave it out mate".

The analysis of negative comments targeting individual players was also illuminating. As seen in Table 6, the only comments that certain individual child players had directed at them in many games were negative in nature. As a consequence, a child's experience of a game in many instances was of solely being told off or scolded. This was the case even in a number of games where a coach was predominantly extremely positive and supportive. When analysing and comparing the positive and negative comments targeting individual players in any game it was common for the names of players receiving positive comments to be quite different from the names of players being continually told off. This was most common in netball, where certain individual players received only negative comments in 15 out of the 19 games observed. In the netball centre where the observations took place, there is a Task Force operating who patrol the courts to monitor the behaviour of spectators and coaches. This would appear to have some impact on the negative comments aimed at umpires (only 7 comments recorded from the 19 games observed) but little effect on the nature of comments targeting teams and players.

There were 4 recorded instances (3 rugby and 1 soccer) of children being taken off and substituted after making mistakes. In the soccer match observed (9 year olds) the player substituted was told by the coach that his mistake had cost the team a goal and he wouldn't be going on again in this game as he was likely to "cost them the game". He was assured that he would get plenty more game time in "easier games in the future".

Athlete-centred coaching

Our results indicated that the highest number of comments recorded fell into the neutral category (refer Table 1); with 41.5% (n=4437) of all comments made classified as instructional. In a previous study using POISE in New Zealand this category of comment (instructional) was classified as negative, as from an athlete-centred coaching perspective telling children what to do takes away from the athlete's decision-making process (Kidman, McKenzie & McKenzie, 1999). Kidman et al. argued that when a child is simply told what to do learning is inhibited. However, this 1999 study focused on the comments made by parents as opposed to coaches. The authors' rationale for targeting parents was that while coaches have some influence on children's enjoyment and ongoing participation in sport, previous research had indicated that parents hold the greatest influence (Smoll & Smith as cited in Kidman et al.). Our rationale for targeting coaches, not parents, is based on the findings of other research we are conducting as part of a wider study. Group interviews with sports administrators and children have indicated that there is a perceived greater concern with inappropriate parent-coach behaviour than with touchline parents (Walters, Payne, Schluter, & Thomson, 2009). If we view our results from a coaching perspective that is athlete-centred, and categorise instructional comments as negative, as Kidman et al. did, some interesting results emerge (see Table 7).

Table 7

Coaches' Comments incorporating Instructional Comments as Negative

Nature	Total Number of Coach Comments
Positive	3785 (35.4%)
Negative	6747 (63.1%)
Neutral	165 (1.5%)
Total	10697

The behaviour exhibited by coaches clearly represents a directional and instructional approach to coaching. It seems clear from the results of the current study that the coaches

observed do not adopt a coaching approach that encourages experiential learning and the development of decision-making ability.

Conclusion

The behaviour of the coaches observed would appear to follow a pattern of instruction to both team and individual players. If the player and/or team performs the instruction correctly they are praised, if the outcome of the action is unsatisfactory to the coach, they are scolded. Bearing in mind the age of the children involved in the games observed (6-11) it should be noted that in ALL of the 72 games observed, at least one child was told off for not following instructions correctly or for making a mistake. A clear pattern also emerged indicating that certain players are continually praised, while others are continually told off during games. Some extreme examples of adult behaviour were observed in at least 3 games which visibly upset a number of children. There would also appear to be an accepted practice in certain sports for coaches to argue with and to challenge referees/umpires over decisions made. This was most visible in rugby and in touch. There would appear to be a clear need for sports organisations to develop and implement further interventions designed to educate coaches around developmentally appropriate coaching behaviours.

Acknowledgements

References

Herson, M., & Barlow, D.H. (1984). *Single case experimental designs.* Elmsford, New York: Pergamon.

Kidman, L., & McKenzie, A. (1996). *Parents' verbal comments at sporting events.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the first Children's Issues Centre Conference on "Investing in Children", Dunedin, New Zealand.

Kidman, L., McKenzie, A., & McKenzie, B. (1999). The nature and target of parents' comments during youth sport competitions. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 22*(1), 54.

Randall, L., & McKenzie, T. L. (1987). Spectator verbal behaviour in organized youth soccer: a descriptive analysis. *Journal of Sport Behaviour, 10*(4), 200-211.

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2005). SPARC facts '97-'01.   Retrieved 30th November, 2005, from http://www.sparc.org.nz/research-policy/research-/sparc-facts-97-01

Walley, P. B., Graham, G. M., & Forehand, R. (1982). Assessment and treatment of adult observer verbalizations at youth league baseball games. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 4*, 254-266.

Walters, S., Payne, D., Schluter, P., & Thomson, R. (2009). It's all about winning isn't it? Competing discourses in children's sport in New Zealand. In *Sports, Bodies and Identities: 6th European Association of Sociology of Sport Conference. Book of Abstracts.* Rome, Italy: Lancilloto e Nausica.

Appendix H: Preliminary findings report submitted to primary schools

Children and their sport
Preliminary findings

1   Overview

This report outlines the preliminary findings from the questionnaires that were distributed and collected at four schools in two districts of Greater Auckland between August 2007 and August 2008. These questionnaires make up one component of a PhD study I am currently undertaking at AUT University looking into children's (ages 6-11) perceptions of their experiences in sport. The aim of the wider study is to explore the influences on children's sporting experiences so that parents, teachers, administrators and educationalists can improve children's sports involvement.

2 Aims

There were three immediate aims of this component of the study:

•   to get a preliminary idea of children's sense of enjoyment of the team sports they participate in;

•   to gain an insight into parents' perceptions of the positive and negative experiences associated with their children's sport; and

•   to identify children interested in participating in a follow-up study.

3   Response rates

A total of 1,204 questionnaires were distributed to children (ages 6 to 11) via the schools. The questionnaires were completed by children and their parents. 366 completed questionnaires were returned (183 girls and 180 boys with 3 spoilt returns), a response rate of 30.39%.

4 Findings

4.1 Children's perceptions of their sport

4.1.1 Team sports played

Figure 1 provides an overview of the team sports that these children play. By far the most popular sports are soccer and touch, followed by the general catch-all 'other' category. The focus of this study was specifically on team sports, and it appears from some of the answers provided in the survey that many respondents have included individual sports such as tennis, gymnastics, swimming etc. in the 'other' category. This would partially explain the relatively high number of children who participate in 'other' sports.

National participation statistics suggest that the most popular sports for children in New Zealand are touch, soccer, netball and rugby. The figures for soccer and touch from these schools reflect the popularity of these sports nationally. Participation rates for netball and rugby are significantly lower, which is partially explained by the fact that netball is played by girls only, and rugby is played predominantly by boys only.
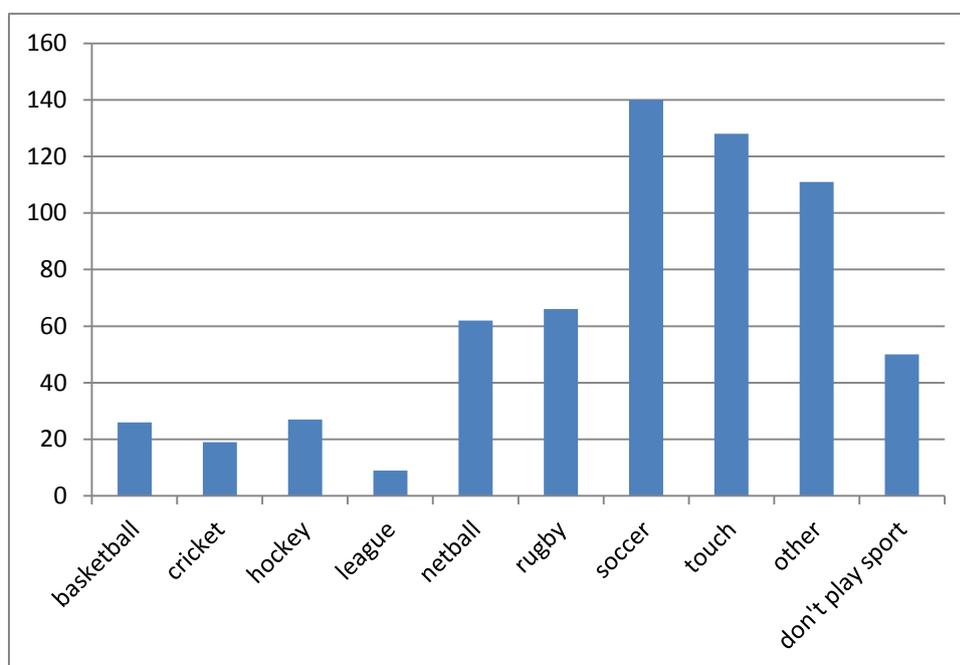

Figure 1: Sports children play

4.1.2 The number of sports children play

Figure 2 reflects the number of team sports played by these children. One hundred and thirty seven children play one team sport, one hundred and two children play two sports, forty eight children play three sports and twenty six children play four or more sports. Fifty children play no team sports whatsoever.
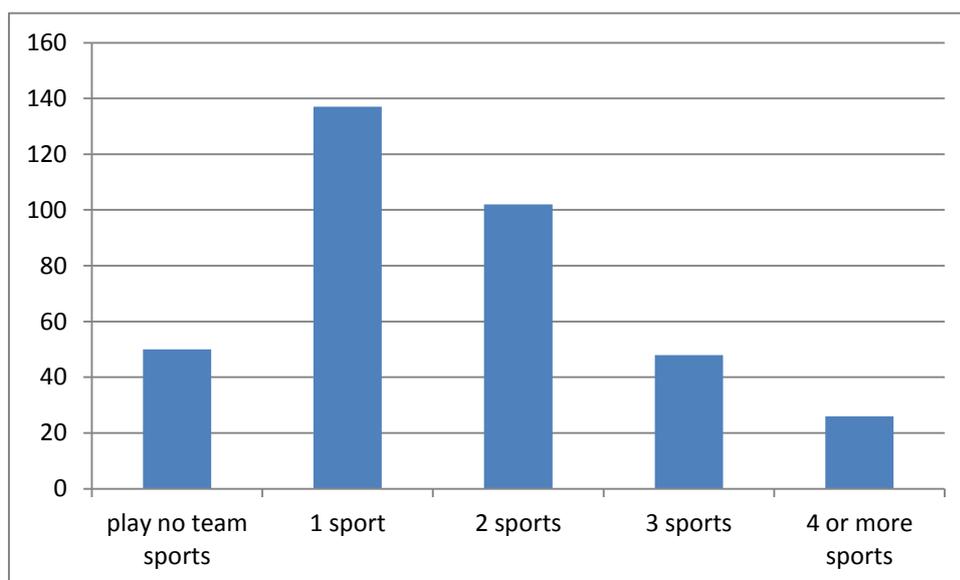

Figure 2: The number of team sports children play

4.1.3 Level of enjoyment

Of the 313 children who participate in team sport, their rate of enjoyment was expressed as follows:

A lot	Quite a lot	It's ok	Don't like it much	Don't like it at all	Did not respond
220	63	25	1	2	2

4.2 Parents perceptions of children's sport

4.2.1 The importance of sport participation

The vast majority of parents felt that participating in sport was important for their child:

Is important	Not important	Not sure	Did not respond
348	7	5	3

4.2.2 Positive experiences associated with their children's organised sport

Three hundred and eight parents (84.8%) identified positive experiences they have had with their child's organised sport. The key themes that emerged for these parents were:

- seeing their child playing in a team and learning about the importance of teamwork (37.6% of these parents referred to this);
- social aspect: meeting new friends (parents and children) (34%);
- seeing their child enjoy themselves and have fun (27.2%);
- their child learning new skills (20.7%);
- winning and being successful (20.1%);
- witnessing increased confidence and self esteem in their child (18.8%);
- improved health or physical fitness (13.9%);
- the development of broader social skills (12.3%);
- it is quality family time (10%);
- good sportsmanship – learning how to win and how to lose (6.4%);
- getting involved in coaching/management (5.8%).

4.2.3 Negative experiences associated with their children's team sport

One hundred and ninety eight parents (54.5%) identified negative experiences they have had with their child's sport. The major themes that emerged for these parents were:

- over-competitive or inappropriate parent behaviour (35.8% of these parents referred to this);
- over-competitive or inappropriate coaching (27.2%);
- poor organisation (19.6%);
- bad sportsmanship from other children (13.6%);
- time constraints and financial cost associated with participation in organised team sport; (10.1%);
- unreliability of other parents (8%).

4.2.4 Other parents negatively affecting a child's enjoyment of sport

Seventy one parents (19.5%) believed that other parents had negatively impacted upon their child's enjoyment of sport at some time.

- over-competitive or inappropriate parent behaviour (70.4% of these parents referred to this);
- over-competitive or inappropriate coaching (40.8%).

5 Further study

58.1% (211) of the respondents expressed an interest in their child being involved in a follow-up interview study.

Appendix I: Preliminary findings report of coach/referees surveys submitted to participating sporting organisations

Children and Team Sports

Preliminary findings

1   Overview

This report outlines the preliminary findings from the online survey that was distributed to coaches and referees/umpires involved in children's (ages 6-11) team sports in two districts in the Greater Auckland area. This survey makes up one component of a PhD study I am currently undertaking at AUT University looking into adult influences on children participating in organised team sport. The team sports included in this study are netball, rugby union, soccer, and touch. These sports were selected because of their high participation rates among New Zealand children for both females (netball, soccer, touch) and males (rugby union, touch, soccer) (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2005).

The online survey was distributed (as a link embedded with an e-mail) on our behalf by your Regional Sporting Organisation.

2   Aims

There has been considerable media interest in recent years that has focused on inappropriate parental and excessive coach behaviour at children's sporting events. However, much of the evidence to date has been anecdotal with the media tending to focus on the more extreme incidents of parental behaviour that arise. One aim of the overall wider study is to establish the actual nature and prevalence of adult sideline behaviours at children's team sporting events in New Zealand. The specific aim of this online survey component of the study was to elicit the views of two specific groups of people closely involved in the administration of children's sport: coaches and referees/umpires. Due to the anecdotal nature of evidence to date, we believe that more exact evidence is vital to help understand relationships between stakeholders in children's sport and to inform policy for administrators and education agencies.

3   Response rates

A total of 1,180 e-mails were sent to coaches and referees/umpires inviting them to complete the online survey. The survey was launched on 13th August 2009, and was closed on 5th October 2009. 287 surveys were completed – a response rate of 24.3% (see Table 1). Available evidence indicates that response rates for online surveys are decreasing. In the current research climate, 24.3% is a reasonable response rate for an online survey.

Table 1: Invitations to participants and responses.

	Rugby	**Soccer**	**Touch**	**Netball**	**Totals**	**Responses**	**Response Rate**
Refs	148	150	0	0	298		
Coaches	330	350	104	98	882		
Totals	478	500	104	98	1180	287	24.3%

4 Findings

4.1 Gender

Of the 287 respondents to this question, 67.9% (n=195) were male, 32.1% (n=92) were female.

4.2 Age

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the ages of the coaches and referees. 85.7% (n=246) of the respondents are aged between 31 and 50, with 52.3% (n=150) aged between 41 and 50.
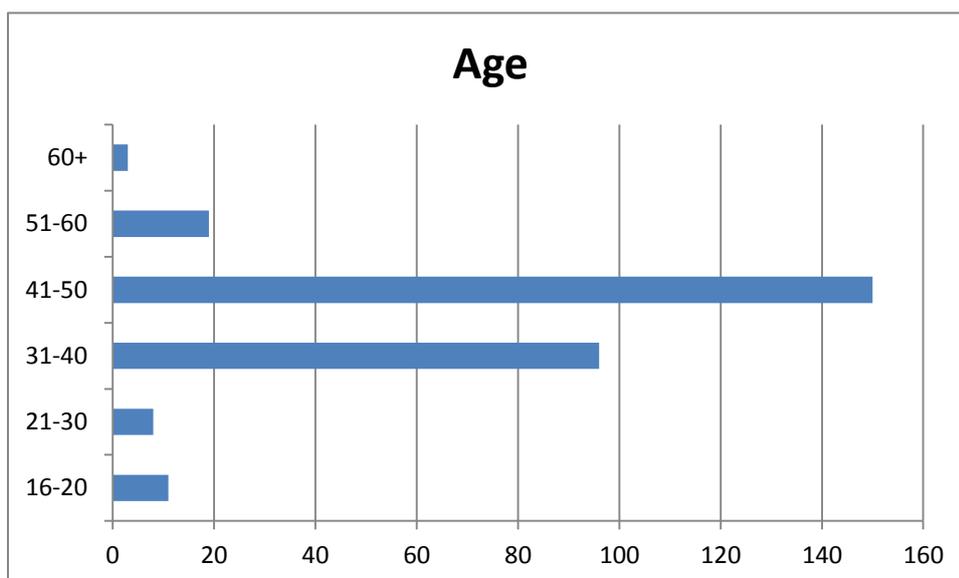
Figure 1: Age

4.3 Role in children's sport

271 people responded to this question. 52.4% (n=142) of respondents were coaches, 16.2% (n=44) were referees/umpires and 31.4% (n=85) performed both roles.
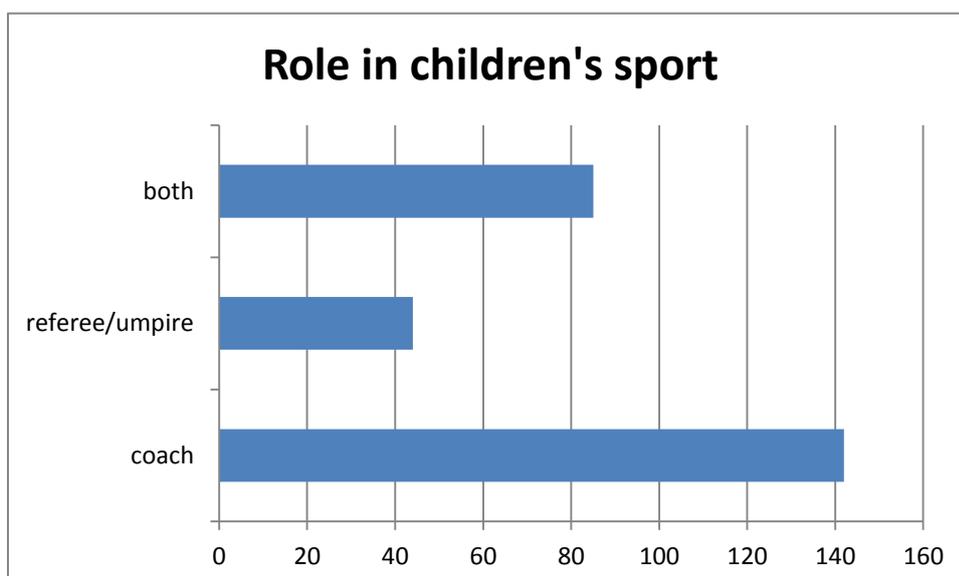

Figure 2: Role in children's sport

4.4 Sports respondents are actively involved in

287 people responded to this question. A number of respondents (n=68) were involved in more than one sport, which reflects the high commitment of many volunteers involved in the administration of children's sport. Sports reflected in the 'other' category response included: diving (1), underwater hockey (1), surf lifesaving (2), swimming (1), athletics (2), flippa ball (2), and tennis (1). (The question however, asked for team sports only).
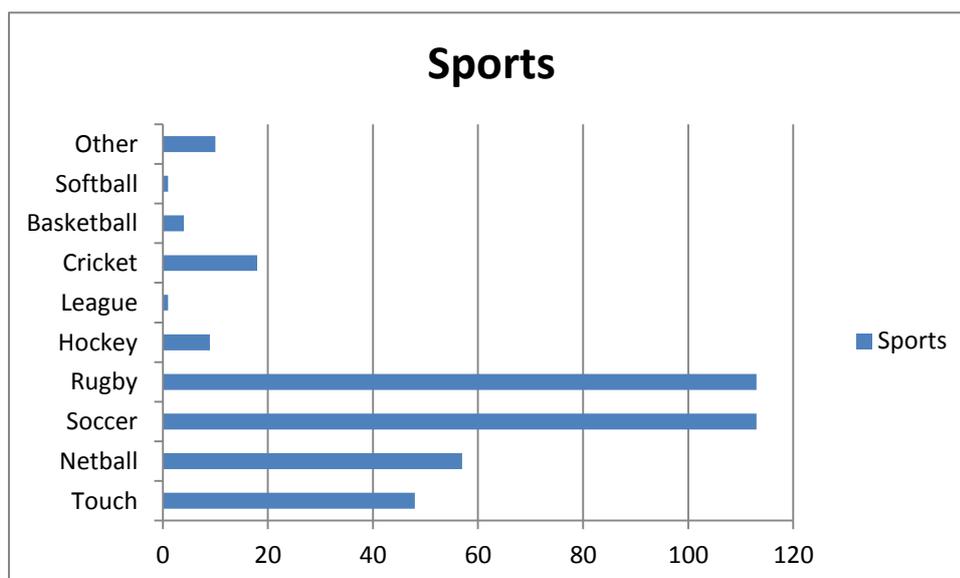

Figure 3: Sports people coach or referee/umpire

4.5 Number of years coaching experience

Figure 4 provides an overview of the number of years our respondents have been actively coaching or refereeing/umpiring.
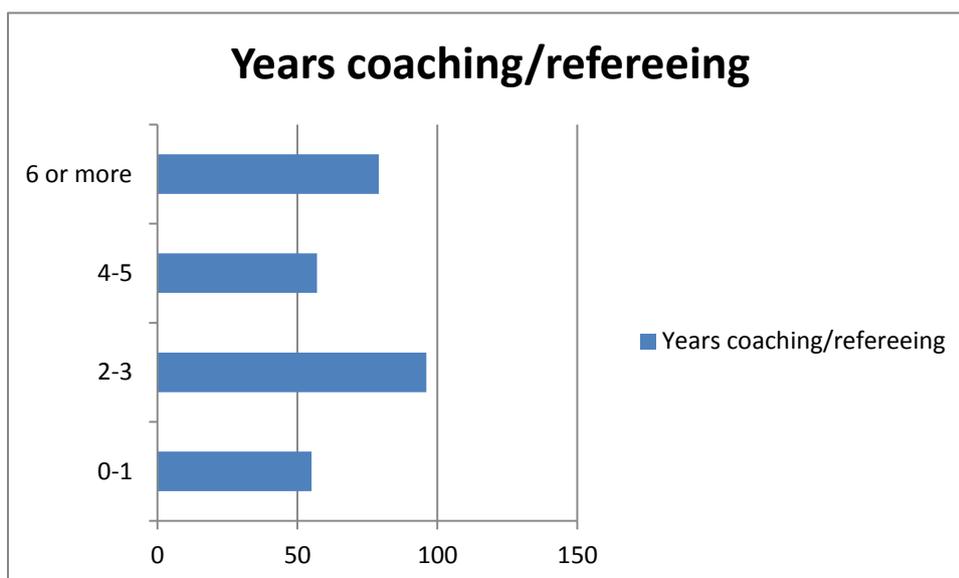
Figure 4: Number of years coaching or refereeing/umpiring

4.4 Sporting commitment

We were interested in seeing how involved respondents were in their sports. To gain a better understanding of parental behaviour it was important to have a sample of participants who were regularly involved in the coaching or refereeing/umpiring of their sport. 287 people responded to this question. 90.9% of respondents (n=261) were heavily involved in their sport (most weeks or more).
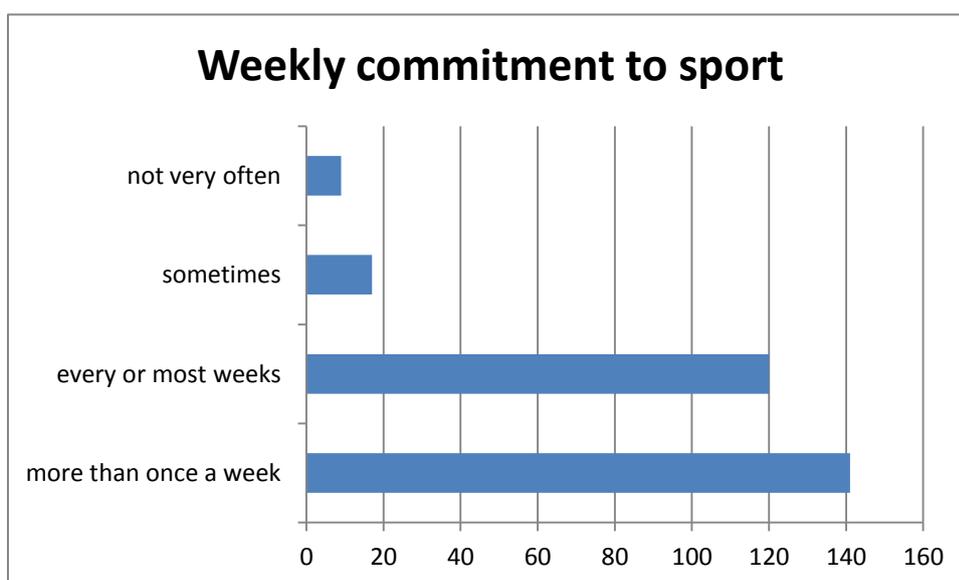

Figure 5: Weekly commitment to coaching or refereeing/umpiring

4.5 Inappropriate parental behaviour

We were interested in establishing the prevalence of what coaches or referees perceived to be inappropriate parental behaviour at children's sports. 287 people responded to this question. 30.3% (n=87) of respondents stated that they witnessed inappropriate behaviour once or twice a season. 24.7% (n=71) stated they witnessed this behaviour several times a season, and 8% (n=22) stated that they witnessed this behaviour regularly.

18.1% (n=52) stated that they had witnessed inappropriate behaviour only once or twice ever, and 19.2% (n=55) stated that they had never witnessed any inappropriate parental behaviour.
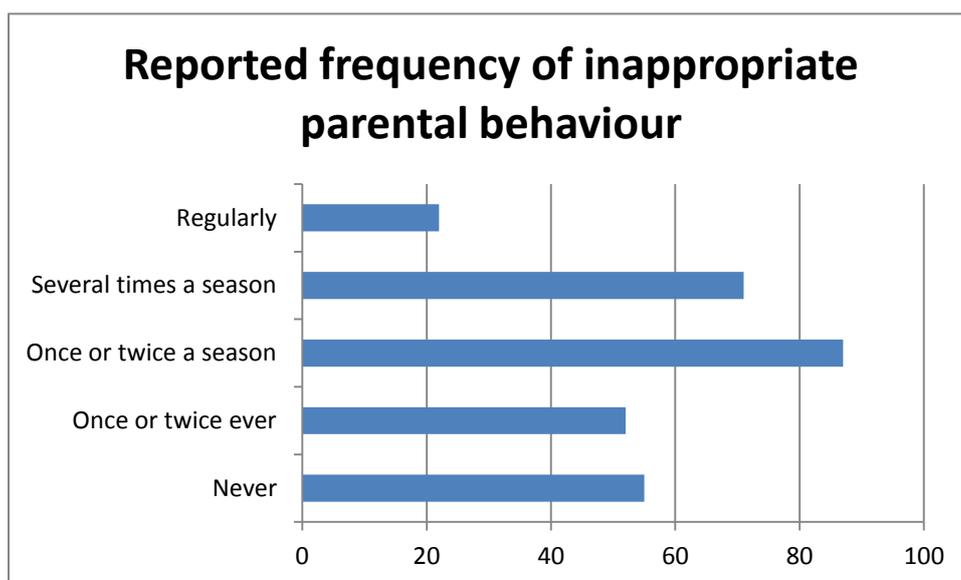

Figure 5: Frequency of inappropriate parental behaviour

4.6 Details of inappropriate behaviour

Respondents were asked to provide details of any inappropriate behaviour that they witnessed. This question was open-ended and responses were analysed to identify the key and dominant themes. 231 people (80.5%) responded to this question. The **key themes** that emerged for these coaches and referees/umpires were:

- *Abusive behaviour:* 83.5% of these respondents (n=193) referred to incidents of abusive verbal behaviour they had witnessed. 63.2% (n=146) referred to verbal use directed at children and 62.7% (n=145) referred to incidents of verbal abuse aimed at referees and umpires.

- *Inappropriate coaching:* 29% (n=67) cited examples of inappropriate coach behaviour. This included verbal abuse and put downs directed at players, referees/umpires and other coaches.

- *Biased refereeing/umpiring:* 15.5% (n=36) felt that a number of referees and umpires were biased towards their own teams, and made blatant decisions favouring their team.

- *Physical confrontation:* Ten respondents stated that they had witnessed actual violence and physical confrontations involving parents/coaches during children's sports games.

4.7 Ongoing concerns about parental behaviour

Respondents were asked if they had concerns about inappropriate parental behaviour at children's sporting events. 60.3% of respondents (n=173) stated that they did have concerns. 39.7% of respondents (n=114) stated they had no concerns.

Those that expressed ongoing concerns were asked to identify steps that they believe could be taken to improve parental behaviour. 66.2% (n=190) of respondents answered this open-ended question. The key themes that emerged were:

- *Education:* 42.6% (n=81) of respondents to this question believed that education was key to improving behaviour. Examples included providing codes of conduct for coaches and parents; and sporting organisations and clubs actively promoting fair play guidelines.

- *Punitive action:* 38.4% (n=73) felt that more punitive steps needed to be taken by sports organisations, including touchline bans for serial offenders. A number of respondents noted however, that children could be unfairly punished for their parent's behaviour.

- *Sporting organisations to take more responsibility:* 20% (n=38) of respondents believed that their sporting organisations needed to take more responsibility in relation to this issue. Ideas put forward included officials randomly attending games to monitor behaviour, providing more support for clubs, and offering clearer guidelines around codes of conduct. A number of respondents cited Netball as an example of good practice in this regard.

- *Coaches taking responsibility:* 13.6% (n=26) believed that coaches were best placed to enforce parental behaviour guidelines. Recommendations included the conducting of coach-parent meetings at the start of the season where clear guidelines around parental behaviour were to be established.

- *Improving refereeing standards:* 8.9% (n=17) felt that poor refereeing was often the trigger for inappropriate coach and parental behaviour. They believed that better support should be offered for younger referees/umpires in particular, and that existing refereeing/umpiring courses should cover issues such as how to deal with abusive parents.

5 Survey responses

The following are some examples from the survey responses:

Have you ever witnessed what you consider to be inappropriate parent or parent-coach touchline behaviour? If yes, in what way?

Rugby

"Ref abuse from parents, child abuse from the coach and parent abuse of their own kids. Abuse is a very strong word to use, so if I was to put it into context. Ref abuse: Normally when the ref gets a call wrong or doesn't see something, words are yelled at the ref. It is more of an intimidation yelling. If you yell "oh come on Ref what about the 'knock on'' then it is likely that a young ref will actually call the infringement even if it is not sighted by the ref. When you have a more experienced ref, calls like that are normally overlooked, which in some cases can infuriate the parent and potentially lead to more instances of yelling stronger and more derogatory things. I have seen parents

swear at their kids: example, a coach to his own son: "if you don't pass the ball out I will pull you off the bloody field." This was said to a half back who admittedly was a little greedy! However it was the wrong thing to say, especially from the coach."

Soccer:

"Parents (with a coach's tacit involvement) encouraging older children to chant the score at much younger children (aged 5 to 6 years) from the sidelines. This upset the younger children and the parents and older children continued to chant".

Touch

"The coach became too emotional & forget that these kids were only about 6/7 years old & they became quite scared when he began swearing. He was quite intimidating to a junior referee that was also going through training as well."

Netball

"Parents criticise young umpires verbally. Other umpires including myself (shame on me!) question umpire's calls, in my mind and sometimes aloud. Passionate supporters harass umpires during game."

And finally....

A number of respondents felt that sport is about winning, is competitive in nature and the children need to learn that lesson. Any contrasting view is PC.

"I believe there is too much PC ness amongst children's sporting games. It needs to be like the old days and kids just get to play sport. It is surveys like this that make too many rules for parents and in the end it will turn parents off putting their kids into sports, because of the PC rules attached to it. There is no need to create anymore PC rules for parents to adhere to. Thank you"

References

Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2005). *SPARC facts '97-'01.* Retrieved 30th November, 2005, from http://www.sparc.org,nz/research-policy/research-/sparc-facts-97-01