Sport Management Review 16 (2013) 211–225

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr

More than basketball: Determining the sport components that lead to long-term benefits for African-American girls

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 6 May 2011
Received in revised form 12 July 2012
Accepted 17 July 2012

Keywords:
Sport-for-development
Sport participation
African-Americans
Academic achievement
Holistic development
Program evaluation

ABSTRACT

Sport participation has the capacity to enhance the athletic and academic performance of adolescents. However, African-American participants have not enjoyed the positive academic benefits that are common among other populations. Sport is a popular developmental intervention for African-American youth, yet sport programs do not always render the intended benefits (Coalter, 2007). The purpose of this study was to determine the components of school-based sport programs that create long-term benefits for African-American girls. A high school basketball program based on positive youth development served as the program site. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with current and former players and program stakeholders. Four key values underpin the success of the program: family, education, discipline, and civic engagement. The results indicate that successful programs need flexible—not standard—design commitment to program values, and consistency in mission and implementation. Implications for the design and implementation of sport programs to improve the athletic and academic performance of African-American girls are discussed.

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African-American girls are disappearing from the classroom and the basketball court. While the opportunities for women to pursue higher education through sport have increased, both the college graduation and sport participation rates of African-American women remain under 50% (Pate, Trost, Levin, & Dowda, 2000; The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2010). Structural barriers have hindered access to academic achievement and fostered a culture that perpetually disengages these students from the formal education process (Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Noguera, 2003). Sport has been seen as a viable method for redressing these barriers given its cultural recognition and potential to promote larger social goals, yet the educational effects of sport participation have been mixed (Hartmann, 2001; Hellison, Martinek, & Walsh, 2007; Jordan, 1999).

In some cases, sport has been shown to be a part of larger academic and social developmental processes that have rendered positive effects for the participants and the community (e.g., Jones & Jones, 2002; Vail, 2007). In other cases, sport has been detrimental, with too much focus on talent development, over-identification with athletics, and/or engagement in risky behaviors (Miller & Hoffman, 2009; Pate et al., 2000). Though programs that claim to use sport as a social intervention are increasingly prevalent, few of these programs have been empirically examined to determine their effectiveness. The limited empirical analysis of these programs available is often contradictory and rarely considers the long-term educational benefits of participation. The purpose of this research is to determine the program elements that participants believe impacted their academic success during program participation and beyond.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2012.07.002

1. Educational disparities facing African-Americans

Educational disparities facing African-Americans stem from a history of institutional forces that have a created a culture that can disengage students from school. African-American students' ability to succeed academically is hindered due to structural barriers that create a lack of parental involvement, low expectations from teachers, and lack of access to educational resources (Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Steptoe, 2004). Any viable solution to redressing these educational disparities must allow the participants to develop a wholesome, functional view of their potential success both academically and athletically (Ennis, 1999). Some scholars point to structural inequalities in education, employment, and policy as the cause of African-Americans' poor academic performance (Tabb, 1970; Wilson, 1978, 1987). While research supports the validity of this claim, solutions based on this reasoning alone suggest that African-Americans can only be as good as their environment will allow, denying the agency of individuals in these communities to use their social position as a challenge they can overcome on the path to success. Conversely, culturalists would argue that the disparities observed in African-American communities are a product of deviant norms, beliefs, and actions, and that the solution lies in changing the culture to value more socially acceptable behaviors (Anderson, 1990). This stance also denies the agency of this community in suggesting that educational solutions require a (mal)adaption to norms outside their culture as opposed to recognizing their culture as a strength and a point of leverage for creating more beneficial educational environments. While both schools of thought offer plausible suggestions for the ways in which sport might address deficiencies in the education of African-American students, neither is sufficient on its own and both can reinforce the hegemonic idea of African-American inferiority that is a root cause of the initial disparities. Sport is posited as an ideal solution as it creates a medium for empowering African-Americans culturally while providing resources to build the infrastructure of their communities. The use of sport for this purpose suggests that social interventions must not only provide this population with the resources to pursue a quality education but the mindset to let them know they can.

2. Sport and African-American culture

Academic resilience refers to the ability to overcome challenges hindering academic achievement (Hawkins & Mulkey, 2005). In the case of African-Americans, sport programs have been offered as a means of overcoming the structural and cultural barriers to formal education as sport is culturally valued by African-American students. In fact, athleticism is valued highly among African-American high school girls, second only to being seen as smart (Kennedy, 1995). Sport, one of the only forms of expression historically provided for African-Americans, has served as a channel for values transmission and has promoted African-American athletes as the exemplars of these values. Certain sports have been so engrained in the culture that participation in these sports is tied to African-American racial identity (Harrison, Harrison, & Moore, 2002). Given that sport has provided opportunities for success that have been denied in other realms of African-Americans' lives (Eitle & Eitle, 2002), it continues to provide a culturally appropriate means for African-Americans to engage in personal and community development (Hanlon & Coleman, 2006). The entrenched nature of sport in African-American culture is salient at the individual, community, and societal levels, and provides a lens to an often obscured view into the effects of racism, sexism, and classism on the daily lives of African-American girls.

Sport also provides a cultural and structural context amenable to promoting personal development and larger social goals. Participation can foster values, such as discipline, respect, and teamwork. Time specific seasons promote discipline as participants are given the same amount of time to improve their skills to achieve the same end goal. Over the course of a season, individual games offer opportunities for players to learn from mistakes, try new skills, and evaluate one's improvement over a specified time period (Hawkins & Mulkey, 2005). In team settings, players can learn interpersonal skills including communication and leadership that can be transferred to other settings including the player's home, school, and work. In addition to promoting physical activity, sport can promote salubrious socialization and preparation for higher education and career development (Chalip, 2006).

While the relative emphasis on sport varies by program, there is an underlying assumption that sport can (and does) assist in the academic development of African-African girls. Given the history of African-American interscholastic sport participation, sport programs provide a powerful tool in examining the socio-historical factors that shape African-American women's educational pathways (cf. Hardy, 1986), and an opportunity to apply that knowledge to create more empowering social structures.

3. Conflicting outcomes of sport as an intervention

The effects of interscholastic sport participation on academic and athletic performance have shown conflicting outcomes for African-American girls, particularly those girls who reside in urban communities (Coleman, 1961; Jones & Jones, 2002; Le Menestrel & Perkins, 2007; McHale et al., 2005; Zarrett et al., 2009). In some cases, sport has been shown to provide positive benefits to these participants on and off the playing field. Girls engaged in sport have been shown to be less likely to get pregnant, to engage in risky behavior, or to be absent from class (Jones & Jones, 2002; Sabo, Merrill, & Vanfossen, 1989). At the collegiate level, sport participation and academic achievement have shown synergistic effects; African-American female athletes have a 30% higher graduation rate than African-American female students in general (Rishe, 2003).

Yet a deeper investigation into these studies uncovers a weaker, and sometimes, negative correlation between academic achievement and sport participation for African-Americans (Pate et al., 2000; Wells & Picou, 1980). Sport can sometimes be detrimental to overall development when there are few educational resources and a high dependence on sport for survival, subsequently leading to poor academic performance and a "toxic jock syndrome" (Eitle & Eitle, 2002). Negative outcomes have been attributed to poor recruitment methods, lack of culturally appropriate programming, and lack of adherence to the prescribed program. Participants in sport-based interventions report a disconnect between the programs offered and the values central to their everyday life; therefore, these programs have failed to foster the motivation to pursue and continue participation and consequently reap the benefit of do so.

Given these conflicting results, research is needed to understand the mechanisms that underpin, as well as those that interfere with, positive program outcomes. Therefore, more research is needed to determine the ways in which sport-for-development programs employ these concepts to create a more sustainable program, and consequently, more long-term effects for their participants. Examples of effective sport-for-development programs among African-American girls (e.g., Dishman et al., 2006; Jones & Jones, 2002; Pate et al., 2000) suggest that sport can be utilized effectively to improve educational efficacy and performance for African-American girls. The question is, how?

4. Method

An interpretive case study approach was pursued to allow participants to define the program, its components, and the benefits they received in their own words, with no preconceived framework guiding the process (Willis, 2007, p. 243). The Westinghouse High School girls' basketball program was chosen as the case study site for its long history of success in using sport to encourage pro-social behaviors and to enhance the educational attainment of African-American girls from economically disadvantaged urban environments. Although sport-for-development programs typically occur outside of the school system, this program has overcome many of the contingencies that potentially interfere with positive youth development (e.g., team selection and access) thus it offers an appealing blend of traditional sport and sport-for-development.

4.1. Context

The context of this case study is a function of the program itself and the environment in which it is situated. Identifying both is critical to analyzing the response of study participants.

4.1.1. The environment

Westinghouse High School has a legacy of athletic and academic excellence. Located in a major metropolitan city in the northeast U.S., this once prosperous neighborhood has been devastated by business divestment and gentrification. The consequent effects have caused the school to suffer losses in enrollment, staff retention, and funding. Like students in other economically disadvantaged urban environments, young women at Westinghouse High face limited curricular and extracurricular choices. For example, budget limitations reduce career-oriented coursework options to culinary arts and cosmetology. Extracurricular opportunities are available. However, school sponsored transportation is limited, thus girls must often find their own way home through unsafe environments if they wish to participate. These young women have limited family support. It is common for them to live in households with only one parent or to be in the care of elderly relatives. Some have primary responsibility for siblings and/or their own children. The graduation rate for African-American girls in this school district is 68%, second lowest only to African-American boys. Unsurprisingly, these students have little interaction with college-educated adults and have few family members with firsthand knowledge of the higher education process. In short, these girls face significant structural and social barriers to educational attainment.

4.1.2. The program

In response to the challenges facing the young women of Westinghouse High, the girls' basketball coach designed a program to help the girls overcome these challenges and obtain a college education. Under the coach's leadership, this program has demonstrated success on and off the court. She uses the cultural value of basketball to attract young women to the program with the mission of achieving academic success (cf., Green, 2008; Jones & Jones, 2002). The four critical components of the program are (1) a structured focus on academic achievement, (2) group activities for bonding and social support, (3) athletic skill development and achievement, and (4) personal mentoring and counseling (Jones & Jones, 2002). These parts work synergistically to provide benefits for the participants. The program's 20 plus winning seasons and numerous championship titles serve as motivation for the participants on the court and are leveraged to promote success off the court. The success of combining sport and non-sport components is evident in the academic achievement of program participants. One hundred percent of participants graduate from high school; over 90% of them attend college, many receiving full academic and/or athletic scholarships to universities around the country. The program operates within a complex social environment encompassing the coach, program participants, and the larger community. Consequently, it serves as a lens in examining the intersection of race, gender, socioeconomics, and sport. By identifying the benefits provided by this program, this research seeks to determine the components necessary to create sustainable sport programs to assist African-American girls in overcoming structural and social barriers to educational attainment. We took a critical social

science approach by giving voice to the participants to define the benefits valued and determine the ways in which the sport program components best provide these benefits.

4.2. Participants

After IRB approval was granted, the coach gave permission for researchers to attend team events, and provided access to key informants. Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants with a rich understanding of the program until a complete picture of the program components and the benefits they provided could be actualized. Primary data collection occurred over the 3-day period surrounding the girls' basketball championship tournament, with follow-up interviews completed by phone and in the months following. This time was opportune as it provided an opportunity to interact with former players who came back to the area to support the team. However, it is likely that respondents recruited in this way will be positively disposed toward the program. In an attempt to reduce the impact of this bias, participants' comments were triangulated with graduation records, athletic records, local newspaper articles, research articles on the program, and informal interviews with school administrators, community members, and parents, along with the direct observation by the researchers. Research participants were obtained from the school, local community center, basketball games, and the coach's home. In total, over 12 former players, 4 parents, 7 school administrators including the coach, the coach's family, 4 of the players' mentees, the current team and team managers along with numerous Westinghouse students and community members were interviewed. Participants reported program involvement ranging from 1 to 25 of the program's 25 years. Respondents are identified via pseudonym and affiliation with the program throughout the text.

4.3. Procedures and instrument

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted over the three-day period leading up to the city championships. Interviews were conducted at the school, in the gym, or in a local community space at the convenience of the respondents. Individual interviews lasted from 17 to 50 min; group interviews were conducted at respondents' request and lasted 44–180 min. Each participant was made aware of the purpose of the interview and gave permission to be audio recorded. To begin, participants were asked to identify themselves and their role with the program. The interview guide was used to lead the discussion and to ensure that each participant provided details on the identified topics. A conversational approach was used to elicit detailed responses to the questions posed and to provide opportunities for the participants to comment and elaborate on topics not mentioned by the researcher, as the goal was to obtain the most complete understanding of the program and its benefits. This approach was also crucial in gaining the trust of participants so they would feel free to express their thoughts and experiences, and would refer other informants. Questions were designed to obtain background data (e.g., "How many years have you been in the program?") and information specific to the participant's experience (e.g., "What parts of the program do you think affected your current success?"). Sub-questions (e.g., "How did your role in the program change throughout the years?") and probes (e.g., "Who were you before the program and how would you describe yourself now?") were used to obtain a deeper understanding of the participant's experiences.

4.4. Analysis

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by the research team. Open coding identified 26 initial categories. The researchers then submitted the data to axial coding procedures. Four overarching themes were identified and agreed upon by all three researchers: Family, Education, Discipline, and Civic Engagement. These themes represent the core underlying values of the program. Categories within each theme represent either structural components of the program or the benefits derived. It is through these that the underlying values are communicated and reinforced.

5. Results and integrated discussion

The participants' responses suggested that the program as-a-whole, rather than individual components, was responsible for the benefits the participants received. Specific components of the program were identified as delivering the benefits, but the capacity of the components to provide the benefits derived from the core values underpinning the program. To illustrate this relationship, Sara, Westinghouse alumna, parent of a former participant, and team volunteer expressed:

> Lady Bulldogs' spirit first and foremost represents excellence, honor, and integrity. It's a spirit of, the best word I would say is tenacity because like a Bulldog when you get a hold of something, you don't let go. You sink your [teeth] in and you hang on for the long haul. That's the essence of the Bulldog spirit and the essence of Westinghouse High School.

That essence is built on the core values underpinning the program: Family, Education, Discipline, and Civic Engagement (see Table 1). While no value is more important than any other, they are presented below to show how they seem to build upon one another. Family is discussed first as it is vital to the recruitment and retention of the participants. Education is discussed next given its centrality to the program structure and intended benefits. Discipline was instrumental in fostering an environment that provided the sport and educational benefits. Finally, Civic Engagement reinforced the core values, and helped move the program outside its sport boundaries. Each value is discussed below.

Table 1
Coding structure: program values, components, and outcomes.

Structural component	Outcomes
Program value: family	
Open enrollment	Safety net; provision of constructive coping mechanism (practice)
Gym as second home	Sense of belonging; development opportunities; feeling of worth; recognition of others' worth
Coach as mother figure	Role model values; discipline; spiritual guidance; guidance in being an A-A woman; source of comfort; accountability
Bonding activities	Athletic development; sisterhood/community; personal development; accountability; stronger sense of faith; commitment to program
Former players' support	Tradition of sisterhood; accountability; professional and educational network
Program value: education	
Stated expectations	Accountability; source of achievement; sense of purpose; educational priorities
Study hall	Academic enhancement (support); discipline; scholarships; college admission
Summer enrichment program	Personal and professional skill development
Former players as mentors	Knowledge/ability to navigate college (academic and athletic systems); guidance
College visits	Exposure to college; atmosphere
Tournament play	Exposure to college scouts; scholarships
Program value: discipline	
Tradition	Accountability to self and team; dedication to superordinate goal
Structured time	Productive time management; mental toughness; importance of continued improvement
Sing-in sheets	Accountability to self and others; evaluation of progress
Conditioning	Work ethic; dedication; success in other sports; sense of achievement
Bulldogs	Reinforcement of academic and athletic goals; physical conditioning
Program value: Civic Engagement	
Community service	Desire to give back; community support; recognition; accountability
Mentoring local youth	Open mindedness (selflessness); interest in program from younger girls; accountability; character development; source of achievement; sense of purpose
Team leadership	Strategic empowerment; desire to give back; leadership skills; group facilitation skills; accountability
Peer mentoring	Desire to support future teams; accountability

5.1. Family

Participants noted how the team served as a family by virtue of the amount and quality of time they spent with one another. The bonds created in the program supplemented the social support received at home or made up for a lack of familial support. Tradition also played a role in creating a sense of family; the support of former participants and their reinforcement of program values motivated and created a sense of belonging for current participants, which encouraged them to continue supporting the program even after they graduated. Familial terms were used in describing the relationship between the coach and players (''mother''), and among the players (''sisterhood''). In defining the Family aspect of the program, Sara stated:

> . . .the family piece, the nurturing piece, providing security, providing friendship, providing parenthood- the girls they are able to fellowship with one another in way I don't think other programs allow . . . they are able to connect on another level besides practice and games. It's a wide, wide spectrum that ends up into a big hug.

The core value of Family was supported by five structural components of the program. These began with open enrollment as a basis for acceptance, and were further sustained by the gym as a second home, the coach's role as a mother figure, as well as internal bonding activities and former player's support of the program.

5.1.1. Open enrollment

Open enrollment referred to the program's policy to accept all willing participants rather than selecting based on talent or basketball skills. Girls who could benefit from the program were allowed, and often invited, to participate regardless of playing capabilities. Girls who had quit or left for personal or academic reasons were allowed to return and provided resources (e.g., tutoring, personal counseling) to help them do so. As Jo (Alumna) explained:

> We believe in them. Coach's program shows we believe everybody that walks through this door can do something. They can help us in some kind of way. And we never give up . . . There ain't no ''you're not good enough.'' . . . They may be throwing temper tantrums on the court, they may be breaking all the rules. ''Nope. We'll see you tomorrow in practice.''

Reinforced by the bonding activities, the open enrollment policy fostered holistic development in two ways. First, it empowered girls who felt they did not have the skills to play by opening opportunities to participate. Second, it allowed each participant to appreciate the value of each person on the team. As Sade (Alumna) stated:

> Everybody had a role. If your role was to make sure you are sitting on the bench clapping your heart out 'cause you ain't getting in this game, Coach made you feel good about it- because we needed that person because if we didn't have that, we wouldn't be motivated to make that layup.

Given the differences in participants' ability, the coaches took a skill development approach to practices, which the participants felt helped them hone their skills and explore more complex skills and plays. This approach was also beneficial off the court as it motivated participants to see their academic weaknesses as challenges they could develop skills to meet.

5.1.2. Gym as a second home

Gym access, as a privilege of participation, provided a physical and emotional safe place for participants. The physical security of the gym structure (and safe transportation to and from) kept the participants physically separated from detrimental activities in their community. As Mr. Williams, a school administrator, explained:

> There was a time not long ago that unless you looked straight up to the sky leaving the doors of this building you were going to see something illegal happen 24 hours a day, 7 days week within a block in either direction.

Participants also stated that having the gym, and particularly, the activities it facilitated, was vital to their emotional support, as they lacked outlets to express themselves safely in other arenas (e.g., issues at home or school, negative peer pressure). As Sade said,

> There were times when at home, my life was crazy for me; basketball was an outlet. I was getting out of the house regardless but it's like this is a place I can go for peace of mind and someone to talk to.

The participants described the program as a safety net where they were kept away from troubled environments, but more importantly, given access to resources and to people who encouraged their academic and social development.

5.1.3. Coach as mother figure

Participants often described the coach as a mother figure given her authority over the participants and her holistic consideration of their well-being. The coach served as a model for the values she promoted in the program, a trusted mentor, and a counselor. In describing the coach's commitment, Sara (parent of a former player and team volunteer) stated, "You can't do it for the paycheck and you can't put a time period on when you are going coach." The coach was also a disciplinarian who set rules, monitored behavior consistently, and ensured compliance with program values. Revered as the program's spiritual leader, the coach incorporated Christian values into the program's mission through inspirational talks, allotted time for spiritual devotion, and reinforced value-congruent behaviors.

These values were made more salient to the participants as the coach, being an African-American female, served as their role model. The coach, a woman with a career and family, provided guidance in navigating their transitions into womanhood. The coach's example also created a sense of accountability that empowered the girls to achieve their academic and athletic goals as well as aspire to careers fields through which they could have similar impacts on young girls. The coach also taught participants discipline and respect for authority. This respect for authorities transferred into respect for college coaches and professors and later into authorities in career settings.

The participants felt they were able to focus on team improvement as they were united by spiritual values. The coach's spirituality was noted as a source of motivation and strength in implementing the program and translated into the lessons the participants learned, and subsequently, the moral and character development they gained from participation. These values promoted sportsmanship, seeing their adversary as someone to be respected rather than hated, allowing the girls to avoid being emotionally driven by other teams' taunting thereby losing focus on the program's goal.

5.1.4. Lady Bulldogs Weekend/bonding activities

Bonding activities included informal and formal team events (e.g., practices, college visits, sleepovers, teen camp) geared towards building social support in achieving program goals. The most notable activity, Lady Bulldogs Weekend, was a weekend designed to refocus the team at the end of the regular season in preparation for the city and state championships. During this weekend, the players spent time reviewing the season's statistics and engaging in sponsored social activities. These activities were viewed as quality time, similar to what a traditional family might have. These activities allowed them to understand that the program was more than just basketball; it was about their development as young women. The bonding aspect revolved around the safe space created by the various focused activities and the emergent knowledge that many teammates were facing similar situations that the program was helping them overcome.

Bonding activities created a sense of belonging not only to the team but also to all those affiliated with the program and its goals and values. Participants noted belonging to a "sisterhood" in which they felt intimately connected to former and current players to the point of being able to call on them if anything was needed. Team cohesion also reinforced a sense of accountability as it allowed the players to recognize how their behavior affected the well-being of their teammates and the success of the team. Some bonding activities, such as attending church together, strengthened the family atmosphere as players invited their families and the community to join. The team's attendance at local churches created program awareness and generated the reciprocity of the church members to support the team.

5.1.5. Former player support

Program alumnae maintained program participation in various capacities. Former players are asked to come back after graduation and speak to current players about college, mentor them on personal issues, and assist with skill development. Their experience with the program helped to create bonds among players and reinforce the program's values. The

participants referred to the program as a sisterhood, a team of girls, united for life, by a greater purpose than basketball for which each individual's contribution is vital. This sisterhood provided a connection to current and former participants, served as a mechanism for recruitment and retention, and created a sense of community for current and former players. Richelle (Alumna) expressed it this way:

> To be acknowledged like that, like "Oh somebody still remembers me." I mean I [graduated] in '05... It was a good feeling at the time and it's a good feeling afterwards. Seriously, you still involved.

5.1.6. Summary discussion of family

The stability and security offered by one's family have been linked to students' academic and social development (California Newsreel, 2008). Where the biological (legal) family was unable to meet the basic needs of the student, any program seeking to improve the quality of life for these participants must be able to provide and secure basic needs in order to allow the athletes to focus on the goals of the program. Safety, for example, was a fundamental element of initial and sustained program participation.

Spirituality was vital to reinforcing participants' life purpose and their ability to redress the challenges of their physical environment. Faith-based values and morals served as coping mechanisms for the challenges participants faced in their families and the injustices felt from the larger society, as it strengthened a values framework with which the participants were already familiar. These values guided recognition and correction of self-destructive behaviors, engagement in more constructive habits, improvement of self-concept and sense of purpose, and desire to help others succeed. As Jo (Alumna) explained:

> I think Coach takes more pride in our accomplishments after basketball because a lot of us, our lives are different because we participated in basketball; our lives are so different afterwards. We are not rich and famous but we have so much more morals and values.

Sport administrators can be proactive in assisting participants in overcoming the social, physiological, and educational barriers by having resources (e.g., food, hygiene items, and mentors), being flexible as issues in participants' lives arise, and providing a sense of belonging and stability. As Lauren (Alumna) said, "If you can't get to the child mentally before the game even happens, a game is not going to happen. So basketball was the easy part of it." Students consistently noted how they were a part of a family, recognized their mutual need for one another on and off court, and therefore held themselves accountable to their teammates and the program's reputation. For students in contexts where safety and security cannot be taken for granted, sport can be carefully designed to deliver the critical sense of family that underpins continued participation and, consequently, all the other program benefits, beginning with education.

5.2. Education

Education, as defined by the respondents, referred to the pursuit of a college degree through academic achievement, community service, and discipline. This pursuit included high scholastic expectations and knowledge about one's self that required conduct conducive to learning. High school was viewed as preparation for the academic, social, and athletic rigors of college. College was viewed as the door to more economic and socially enriching opportunities later in life. The participants noted the program's emphasis on going to college as one of the coach's primary goals for their participation. This goal was reinforced with time, resources, and activities dedicated to assisting the participants with their academics.

Speaking to the effects of the program's capacity to assist participants in gaining college admissions, Mr. Williams, a school administrator, offered:

> I am going to say at least 10 of the 17 went ... I would say most of them were offered to go to somebody's school through scholarship or through something ... I can't say all of them would have had the opportunity if it had not been for this program.

Six structural components were critical to the delivery of educational benefits. First were the stated expectations of the program, which provided a foundation for program activities. Then, study hall and the summer enrichment program provided practical support for academic enhancement. Finally, mentoring by former players, college visits, and tournament play provided exposure to the college environment and supported the expectation that program participants could achieve a college education.

5.2.1. Stated expectations

Participants stated that the coaches verbally and nonverbally expressed their expectations of players to receive good grades, supported the participants in a meaningful way to achieve them, and discouraged behavior detrimental to academic performance. These expectations were made clear through the coaches' actions and words, leaders on the team, parent meetings at the beginning of the season, and former players.

The stated expectations gave the participants certain standards they would continually strive to achieve and a sense of accountability to fulfill their individual goals as these were tied to the team's success. As Shervaun highlighted, "I was president of NHS (National Honor Society), I played tennis also, and when I graduated I was valedictorian of my class because ... being a Lady Bulldog you have to have a 3.5 or 4.0 and I kept a 4.0. It wasn't any exception." As milestones were reached,

participants gained a sense of achievement from accomplishing personal and team goals. The legacy of the former graduates made clear the expectation that every graduate of the program was expected to go to college and was capable of receiving a scholarship. These expectations signaled to participants that pursuing higher education is more than having the grades and the credentials that make one viable for admission; it is also knowing you can go and having the desire to do so. As Lauren (Alumna) explained:

> It was always about the grades, her best basketball players, you know even from [the class of 1989] on down, grades were never an issue. We were making honor roll. There wasn't that trying to make that 2.0. Grades are not just, you know, just to be eligible for this basketball; you need to be ready for college.

5.2.2. Study hall

Study hall was an organized time after school in which participants were required to focus on academic work and were provided resources to assist them (e.g., tutors, mentors, extra academic work). Discipline was emphasized in the structure of study hall as participants were guided to focus on their academics for 2 h. As Richelle (Alumna) explained, study hall was just as much about instilling discipline as it was about assisting students in completing academic assignments:

> There were times where we were in study hall where we were learning about other things than basketball, you know, mental toughness and all that other type stuff; getting you ready for the real world . . . she like letting you know what's out there, not holding back anything . . . Things weren't just going to be given to you. You were going to have to work for things.

The benefits of this structure included an increased desire to continue one's education and the discipline needed to succeed at the college level.

5.2.3. Summer enrichment program

To keep the students engaged in their academics year-round, players were asked to participate in a local academic enhancement program. The program required the girls to become certified as a mentor and to be mentored, participate in research presentations and professional development, and shadow local professionals.

Participants stated that the program assisted them in developing their personal and professional skills as they were paid based on their performance in the program. Students were also able to see a positive correlation between performing well academically and achieving success (intrinsically and extrinsically). Access to adult mentors furthered students' interest in different career paths and provided tangible resources and motivation to assist them in pursuing those careers. Overall, students were encouraged to believe in their ability to succeed, and to understand the importance of education in that success.

5.2.4. Former players as mentors

Former players gave instrumental and emotional support to players through practices, one-on-one conversations, and/or group discussions. The coach was proscriptive in choosing which players would mentor current players and in guiding the former players to direct the younger players in fulfilling program goals.

Mentoring was structurally integral to the program. It instilled educational values by leveraging the academic and athletic success of former program participants to reinforce the importance of education and sharing that knowledge with future players. Former players came back, whether asked by the coach or on their own accord, to serve as assistant coaches, trainers, academic mentors, and motivational speakers to prepare the girls for the rigors of the season and school.

Having former players as mentors reinforced a sense of accountability to the current players as alumnae reminded and guided them towards the program's goal of going to college. Since they were able to recommend current players to their college coaches, the alumnae also provided access to college admissions and scholarships. Lauren (Alumna) recounted a story about a young lady whom she helped get into college:

> [College scouts] came up and she gets a full scholarship. Now that doesn't happen if [program alumnae] are not in place, if [that program] wasn't in place and got that young lady ready and she has graduated from Norfolk State . . .. What happened is when I got there I became the Black College Connection.

The participants also noted that the support of former players created a feeling of being a part of something larger than themselves and felt better about themselves as a result.

5.2.5. College visits

The participants in the program visited local colleges as well as colleges where former players were now attending. These visits provided participants with a firsthand view of what would be expected at the collegiate level through access to female collegiate basketball players, coaches, and college environments.

Exposure to college helped the students overcome the anxiety of going to college and provided the girls with the knowledge of what they need to succeed at this level, both academically and athletically. As Lauren (Alumna) expressed, the exposure gained from these visits gave her . . . "the confidence to go because nobody in my family went to college . . . I didn't have anybody close to me that wanted to play a sport in college. I just knew what I saw on TV, that's all I really, to be honest,

that's all I knew." In visiting colleges to see former players perform, Sade (Alumna) expressed how good it felt to have the current team support her at her college games. Vanessa (Alumna) stated that it made her feel good to know that when she attends college she will have the support of her high school team in her endeavors.

5.2.6. Tournament play

Exposure received by players through participation in tournaments in and out of their metropolitan area provided access to college recruiters that would not otherwise have seen them. Shervaun (Alumna) noted that athletic success "played a big part in the Lady Bulldogs as far as just getting our name out there and helping us get recruited to different colleges." Tournament competition also allowed the participants to play against top players from around the country and hone their skills as they prepared for competition in their own league.

The prospect of gaining scholarships through exposure garnered at tournaments not only served as confirmation to the players that they can exceed at the next level, athletically and/or academically, but also provided a sustained opportunity for students to do so financially. Obtaining scholarships motivated participants to excel both in the classroom and on the court.

5.2.7. Summary discussion of education

The program ensured that students' grades and extracurricular activities made them competitive for college admission through year-round structured time dedicated to preparing them for the social and academic demands of higher education. Four of the seven program participants (3 former players, 1 current at the time of data collection) graduated as valedictorian or salutatorian of their respective class with, as one participant stated, "a page full of community service"(Lauren, Alumna). The time spent in the program did not seem to hinder participation in other school activities, which college admission boards seek when admitting well-rounded applicants. Program participants reported multiple activities such as leadership in school activities, engagement in ongoing community service (mentoring, community development projects, church groups), and participation in other interscholastic and club sports. Most importantly, the coach personally ensured that students fulfilled their requirements for graduation by checking what each girl needed to graduate and providing resources (tutors, study hall) to accomplish those tasks. This dedication led to a 100% graduation rate of program participants in a school district with a 68% for African-American girls. Beyond graduation, 90% have gained college admissions and many have received scholarships to schools (D1, D2, and D3) around the country. On the surface, scholarships were linked to tournament exposure; however, it was the interconnectedness of all program components that created the *capacity* to obtain (and qualify for) these scholarships.

The literature suggests that teachers' low expectations (e.g., I do not think you will do well academically; therefore, I will not push you to excel in class) are related to African-American students' low performance, even in cases where students have a high academic self-concept (Noguera, 2003). African-American students exposed to these beliefs not only have recognized this ideology, they have internalized it (e.g., not much is expected of me and therefore why try). To reengage students in their own education, program administrators (e.g., coaches) must present education in a manner that relates to the participants in their current situation and provide a means of getting them to where they want to be (e.g., using basketball to obtain the financial and social stability available through a college degree), hence the importance of mentoring.

Mentoring from the coach, the former players, and specifically peer-to-peer mentoring within this environment meets a need to affect the player holistically, meeting basic needs by providing meals during study halls, incentives for academic success, and funding of group activities. The social and economic barriers that also keep education, particularly at the college level, elusive to African-American girls in these contexts, must be addressed as well. Three issues raised by the participants were: knowledge of how to get to college, what is expected at that level, and funding for college. Funding is the major reason African-American students do not return to college for their second year (Matthews, 2010), but many do not apply to college because they lack knowledge of the admissions process and confidence in their ability to succeed at that level. Mentoring, particularly via the pathways to education that it opens up, provides students with the social support (emotional and instrumental) needed to pursue college admission and the resources needed to obtain a degree.

At the high school level, the inability to meet students' basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter have caused increased absences and caused students to shift priorities to responsibilities (e.g., working, caring for their children) that meet immediate needs. Sport administrators and educators must recognize how these social conditions can hinder students' ability to focus on their schoolwork and should create an environment that addresses those immediate and persistent social barriers. The goals of the programs we implement should measure students' academic performance on their (potential) ability to learn rather than punish them for the conditions that have kept them from reaching pre-set standards. One way that this program helped support the ultimate core value of education was through instilling the value of discipline on and off the playing court.

5.3. Discipline

In the program studied, discipline referred to the concentrated mental and physical effort needed to complete one's task(s) in a specific amount of time. Discipline was enforced via punishments (e.g., running drills) and rewards (e.g., championships, scholarships) and was embodied in the rigidity of the program's schedule and expectations of the coaches.

When asked what allows the program to provide academic and athletic benefits to the participants, Shervaun (Alumna) responded:

> . . . just discipline and that it's structured. So many things in their lives are wishy washy and flip floppy; nothing is ever concrete. Their family lives are never concrete, you know. . . People go in and out their lives. . . .but this is concrete.

Discipline was woven into the traditions of the program, which, like the stated expectations for education, established a culture of accountability and dedication to the program and its goals. This culture of discipline was reinforced by academic program components such as structured time and sign-in sheets. It was supported on the court by components such as pre-season conditioning and "Bulldogs."

5.3.1. Tradition

Participants noted the legacy of the school and eventually that of the team, as academic and athletic powerhouse as a motivating factor to adhere to the program's tenets. As illustrated by Jo (Alumna):

> We came into a historical program so when you came in, you realized what was going on. It's like you took that pride of being, that 'I'm not going to be that one to mess it up! Not me, not while I'm here, heck no!' And we all kind of just bought into the system.

Tradition was reinforced by the support of former players, school administrators, and community members, through verbal and visual reminders of the team's past success, and social support of the current team's endeavors (e.g., attendance at games and practices).

The benefits of having this tradition included the sense of community the participants felt. Knowing that they were a part of a larger program that was well recognized and respected provided the participants recognition in basketball circles and in the local community. The resulting pride was key in motivating the players and holding them accountable to their actions on the court, in the classroom, and in the community. The participants recognized that their success was dependent on the efforts of the other participants who came before them; and the success of those who follow them is dependent on their actions and success in the program. Awareness of the previous legacy created a sense of urgency and responsibility to uphold the tradition and not to fall below the expectations of the team (i.e., The Bulldog Tradition).

5.3.2. Structured time (schedule)

The program schedule began immediately after the school day concluded and was tightly scheduled to include study hall, weight conditioning, community service, and basketball practice. Adhering to the schedule required the girls to always be aware of where they need to be and ready to be engaged during the scheduled activity. This rigid time schedule was an extension of the discipline promoted to teach participants how to effectively hone their academic and athletic skills in the time provided (e.g., school year, season, high school) to meet the expectations set for them.

The volume of structured time decreased the time the girls had to plan for themselves, which led them to choose more productive activities to engage in when they had free time. The girls realized that each day provided developmental opportunities off and on the court upon which they should seek to capitalize. As Jo (Alumna) expressed:

> We knew what to do with our time, like we used it wisely instead of going out. Like [friends outside the program] said 'ok y'all ain't allowed to do this, allowed to do that but most of the time they were getting in trouble, getting in this, getting in that, so while we were in here safe and everything, doing something productive with ourselves, . . . [they] were just out there, out there on the street, for what?

5.3.3. Sign-in sheets

After issues with academic ineligibility, sign-in sheets were instituted as a way of tracking students' behavior and assignments on a daily basis. The sign-in sheet required students to fill out their assignments for each class and have their teachers comment on their behavior and sign the form. Unsatisfactory comments from the teachers about one's grades and/or behavior would result in running Bulldogs or other disciplinary action such as reduced playing time.

The sign-in sheets gave participants a sense of accountability to themselves and the team, an opportunity to identify the academic areas in which they needed assistance, reinforced expectations for achievement, and provided a sense of accomplishment when expectations were met. With an improved self-concept and better academic performance, many opportunities were opened up to these students on the court, in the classroom, and as community leaders.

5.3.4. Pre-season conditioning

During the preseason, the girls participated with the cross-country team in their practices and competitions. Running was a significant part of the program, which notably served as a deterrent for continued participation for those who were not committed to program values. As Jo (Alumna) commented, "She has a way of weeding out the weak; that [preseason] conditioning will make you quit." One participant admitted quitting due to the preseason conditioning, but coming back after evaluating the role of conditioning in the individuals' and team's success and the sense of accomplishment to be gained by completing the program.

In particular, membership on the cross-country, volleyball, and/or track team was a critical venue for sustaining the girls' activity level and success beyond the basketball season. It also provided an avenue for players to develop personal relationships with each other, and helped the players to gain a sense of time management and commitment year-round.

While the school benefitted from the success of the cross country team, the girls' participation in this sport provided both a means of training for basketball and recognition through their competitive success.

5.3.5. Bulldogs (punishment)

Commonly known as "suicides," Bulldogs were drills employed to discourage behaviors considered detrimental to students' success, including tardiness to practice and disruptive classroom behavior. Sade (Alumna) explained them this way:

> Academically, a lot of the kids aren't necessarily strong naturally, but [coach] pushes them. There are sign-in sheets. . .it says "yes or no" you were on time or "how was your behavior?" Good is not good enough. . . if you have a negative comment on your sign in sheet you're running.

Running Bulldogs reinforced the academic and personal standards the participants agreed to follow and also enhanced their physical conditioning.

5.3.6. Summary discussion of discipline

Discipline was critical to the buy-in and retention of participants and supported and reinforced educational goals/values. Participants noted that it was the discipline that first brought them to the program because it was something they were lacking in other areas of their lives. While the rigidness of the program did serve as a deterrent for some potential participants, those who persisted stated that the discipline embodied in the program was needed to shield them from antisocial behaviors.

The discipline needed to endure the trials and triumphs of a season can transfer to other aspects of one's life as well. The structure of the program, alongside the nature of competitive sport, provides an apt environment for teaching participants discipline as the participant can use the context of sport (e.g., everyone trying to succeed by the same rules in a limited amount of time) to inform their academic pursuits (Hawkins & Mulkey, 2005). These participants explicitly noted a need and an implicit desire for structure. Respondents also implied that the aberrant behavior observed by students in this environment may not be a result of rebellion against structure but rather, a reaction to a lack of it. Therefore, discipline was vital in creating a context that provided benefits to the participants and was also transferable to their success at the college level and in their future lives.

Understanding that the benefits received in this program needed to extend beyond the educational environment (both high school and college), a final core value of this program was Civic Engagement. Reaching back to support the program as well as the surrounding neighborhood community served to solidify and reinforce the program values of Family, Education, and Discipline. It also enhanced the girls' out-of-school environment and created a strong, positive link to the broader community.

5.4. Civic Engagement

According to program participants, the purpose of Civic Engagement was to provide services to alleviate social problems facing the community while promoting team cohesion, pride, and accountability among the participants. The goal was to allow the girls to develop as individuals while understanding the role of giving back to the community in their own development.

Participants were required to participate in community service events as part of their college preparation and coach's desire to instill accountability to the community. As Vanessa (Alumna) stated:

> It's like we are more than just a basketball team. We're interested in the community, too. You want to give back. You want to help lead young children to the right path and like that, for us, like everyone, it was giving us like a leadership role.

The specific program components that supported and reinforced the value of Civic Engagement were community service, local youth mentoring, peer mentoring, and team leadership. Interestingly, service to the community and local youth appeared to enhance personal development, and ultimately served as a motive and a training ground for giving back to the program/family both as a current team leader and as a future mentor.

5.4.1. Community service

Program participants were required to organize and participate in service projects in the local community. These ranged from maintaining community gardens to hosting basketball camps for middle and elementary school girls. One of the coach's daughters who grew up being involved with the team, said:

> These girls come from disadvantaged areas and they are still giving back to help younger kids and say, "Listen there is a alternative way to get out of this low SES community, there are ways that you can still be better than the things you have been around."

Participation in local community projects had the dual benefit of personal development for players and increased support for the program from the community. The community, the girls' churches, camp participants and their families, and Westinghouse supported the girls and the program at games and team functions. The community has also been a source of

defense in times of criticism of the coach and program. The pride and respect in the Lady Bulldogs were well known and generally the community looked out for the safety of the Lady Bulldogs and their coach. The participants enjoyed the social support of the community while on the team and as they pursued other endeavors. They cited that support as instrumental in increasing their sense of accomplishment and motivation to seek continued success.

5.4.2. Mentoring

Through formal programs established by the coach and local elementary school administrators, the basketball participants mentored local adolescent girls for academic and life skills. As alumnae, the participants gained character values including patience and open-mindedness and a continued desire to give back to their community. Alumnae noted how these skills transferred into college and later, their careers. In particular, participants noted that they learned to think more of others to the point of putting team before self. As Jo (Alumna) explained:

> Before I came here, you couldn't tell me nothing, I wasn't trying to listen to nobody. I didn't even hear what you said. Whatever, bye . . . [now] I' m more attentive to other people's feelings and needs and so forth now. I'm just more kind hearted like for real, for real.

Players also recognized their ability to provide younger children with resources to develop holistically and encouragement to give back, regardless of their social background. Vanessa (Alumna) explained:

> Seeing things from another angle, it gives you a bigger perspective of things when you have to be a role model for somebody else. . . .it makes you be on your P's and Q's about lot of things and realize the stuff you do wrong and . . . how much you can influence somebody else. They really look up to us.

The benefits of community service were the increased sense of accountability the players had to the community, particularly to young African-American girls. This accountability transferred to the team context as respondents noted that having to care for others' needs gave them more empathy with their teammates and helped them be more in tune with them during the game. Mentoring others inspired the participants to meet the expectations set for them in the program and encouraged current teammates and future participants to do the same. They also began to see themselves as willing and able to provide leadership to young people as well as to their teammates.

5.4.3. Team leadership

Participants were given strategic positions and assignments on the team according to their personal strengths and athletic development. Training for these positions was continuous. Leadership roles varied year-to-year and changed based on the needs of the team and the individual. Each participant had a role on the team; the coach and older players stressed the importance of all roles to the program's success. As Lauren (Alumna) explained:

> Coach was strategic in that too because there have definitely been times where she's like 'L, you need to look out for so and so' and she'll tell you little things that are going on but she was subtle with it so that it didn't become a big deal. It kind of handles itself.

The opportunities to lead transferred to group facilitation skills that participants utilized on the court and beyond. The experience gained from these leadership roles helped participants to identify strengths they could hone as well as weaknesses on which they could improve, while providing a safe and nurturing environment for them to develop. Girls noted they were more confident in themselves as a result of being a part of the program. They attributed this confidence to the opportunities to lead, to their tradition, and to success experienced through the program and structured leadership roles.

5.4.4. Future mentoring

Community engagement did not stop with current players. Former players were asked to give back after they graduated by mentoring current players. Former players were given the opportunity to mentor current players one-on-one, helping them with academics and in coping with personal issues. Former players were also asked to come back as assistant coaches to aid players in their athletic development and prepare them for competition at the collegiate level. These players commented on the sense of accomplishment they felt in being able to give back to the program and see their efforts lead to the continued success of the team. The directive to come back as a mentors also made them accountable to program values after they graduated by doing well in school, improving their athletic skills, and engaging in community service.

5.4.5. Summary discussion of Civic Engagement

Through civic engagement, the girls recognized the importance and interrelationship of team members, the community, and themselves, to the success of the team. They attributed the program to teaching them that: (1) they have abilities and skills to positively affect others, (2) those skills are needed, desired, and appreciated by the community and younger players, and (3) they can help others develop the same skills. The leadership experience translated into peer and teacher recognition in the school and community, enhancing their self-concepts in ways that affected their engagement in a variety of social environments (i.e., college, career, community).

The link between civic engagement and sport is relevant for African-Americans as it restores part of the initial capacity of sport to create centers for communal and self expression, to teach younger generations cultural traditions and values, and to

serve as a tool for community development. Civic engagement also reinforces the concept of accountability and interrelatedness that is required for personal and team success in sport. Working with and for others allowed participants to feel part of something greater than themselves, and motivated them to persevere and to encourage others to do the same. The impact of this commitment to self and others is summed up by Shervaun:

> I took that part of that Lady Bulldog knowledge that I learned and still applied it to college and it worked out great. Here I am now... (a) Wellness Director. Who would have known in a million years I would be in charge of a full fitness facility ...all because I played basketball at Westinghouse.

6. Implications and conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the link between sport components and the benefits they provide in promoting African-American girls' social and educational development in structurally challenging environments. The results indicated that when programs are intentionally tailored to help participants overcome structural barriers to educational achievement, then sport can be used effectively to reach participants in challenging social settings and improve their capacity for educational attainment. In these instances, sport becomes more than just a hook, but an integral part of delivering the social support and services needed to address the problems for which the intervention was created. The respondents uniformly reported positive outcomes of program participation. However, it is important to note that the sampling method used was unlikely to identify participants with negative experiences of the program. Consequently, it is somewhat unclear whether the overwhelmingly positive responses were wholly a function of the program, hindsight bias, or selective sampling. Nevertheless, what is primary in measuring program success is the ways in which participants perceived the program components and the benefits derived from participation. Future research should explore programs that have had more limited success in affecting the lives of their athletes. Although a difficult sample to identify and recruit, program drop-outs would provide a complementary view of the program elements and their potential to impact participants' lives.

Sport as a hook employs the popularity and cultural acceptance of sport to attract participants into programs that offer social services (Hellison et al., 2007). Yet, these programs tend to downplay the capacity of sport itself to develop youth, instead relegating sport strictly for recruitment and retention purposes (Hartmann, 2003; Spaaij, 2009). When used to its potential, sport can offer an opportunity for participants to develop at their own pace and a way to measure their success based on their own progress, unlike other areas of life where success is harder to attain or where they are constantly compared to others.

Sport is a malleable tool that provides flexibility in achieving program goals. Coaches and sport administrators can incorporate positive character development in the real life context of being on a team and enjoy the recruiting advantage of the attractiveness of sport (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979). The Lady Bulldogs program successfully uses basketball as a way of drawing in young women from the school and community to gain the academic and social skills necessary to seek and gain college admission. These accomplishments provide a rich context for understanding the importance of sport administrators, particularly the coach, in structuring sport programs, and subsequently, the experiences and benefits which come from participation. Team practices offer contextual settings through which participants engage with the underlying values of the program through direct instruction and application. Basketball was an effective medium for transmitting these values as it required significant interdependence among participants for competitive success: interdependence that can be simply translated to other aspects of the participants' lives.

The resonance between the program structure and the benefits reported by participants illustrates that intentionality, rather than the mere provision of sport in and of itself, is needed to provide educational and personal development benefits to program participants. In providing these benefits, sport administrators should focus more attention on the values guiding the program's implementation. The data clearly showed that although specific program structures changed over time, the changes were helpful to maintain the emphasis on the program's values. Hence, flexibility in program structure is a key component of sport-for-development programs like the one studied here.

Coaches are central to the implementation of programs and their ability to reach intended goals. They must have competence in the sport to facilitate students' trust in them as experts. This status can then be transferred into other aspects of the program (education and character development) to increase participants' receptivity to program values. These individuals must be supportive of and dedicated to the holistic development of players. Participants can tell if someone cares about them through their words and actions and will act accordingly. Key to the buy-in of the program's goals is for students to feel the people in the program are acting in their best interest. Thus, authenticity is critical to the success of programs using sport as a social intervention tool. This suggests an alternative structure for evaluating coaches' performance that is less focused on athletic success and more focused on players' holistic development.

The participants' experiences provided valuable insight into the ways in which sport-for-development programs can be structured to provide the intended benefits for which they were created. Three overarching lessons for successful sport-for-development emerge from this study: fidelity to values, organic structure, and consistency over standardization.

Designing programs to elicit positive results must be done intentionally, with core values, and a fidelity to those values, serving as the foundation. Values lead to consistency (e.g., tradition and legacy which serve as marketing, recruitment, and resource development tools) and long-term commitment (cf. Nakata & Sivakumar, 2001). Sport can be a viable medium for

teaching life skills, and promoting the continuous development of a program's ongoing support systems (Jones & Jones, 2002). It can assist to develop human capacity as a means of creating sustainable resources (cf. Jackson, 2002). Importantly, program structures are *necessary*, but *insufficient* to provide benefits without maintaining fidelity to core values. In fact, program structures can (and probably should) evolve to meet changing needs. Change is inevitable and helps to maintain the relevance of the program and the interest of the population served. However, changes to program elements should be in service to the underlying values, not at their expense.

The focus on values provides the flexibility in program structure to fit the needs of the participants rather than fitting the participants into the specifications of a predetermined structure. An organic structure does not imply that there is no structure in place, but that the resources available are allocated where they are needed to fulfill the desired goal. Thus, the focus moves from the coordination of limited resources to the creation of new ones. Despite the dynamic nature of an organic structure, the values and goals anchoring the implementation lead to a program's consistency.

Program expansion and replication are key to expanding the impact of sport for redressing the social and educational disparities plaguing the African-American community. Yet, difficulty lies in replicating a program's staff and the structures built around them. Consequently, we commonly copy program structures, adopting a "Cargo Cult[1]" science in building holistic sport programs that mimic the structures of successful programs without recognizing the context specific values that have made that structure successful. Thus, these programs fail to produce the successes of the very programs they mimic. Programs need to embrace the core values they intend to support. Once these are anchored, the program elements should be examined and modified where necessary to support the core values. In this way, programs such as the one studied here can be modified to meet the needs of African-Americans as well as students in other contexts facing similar challenges. This study suggests that the key to replication is consistency in goals and in the values guiding the process; program structure is contingent on those two principles. Value driven implementation allows administrators to focus on the methods *in relation to* goals and values. Program replication would need to be context specific, geared towards resource development (e.g., human and other sustainable resources), long-term (>3 years) development, and continuous monitoring of value consistency. Researchers should continue to discern program specific practices from more universal ones that may translate to other settings.

Sport is an effective intervention tool as sport is attractive to youth participants, especially those who have had limited opportunities for success in other areas of their life (Hellison et al., 2007). For African-American girls, basketball is prominent due to its cultural value and the access to the sport at an early age (cf. Hartmann, 2001). Yet, the value-oriented approach used in implementing the Westinghouse basketball program provides room for further investigation of the ways in which a particular sport contributes to the effectiveness of a program, noting the increasing interest of African–Americans in sports like tennis, golf, and soccer. The program's ability to assist girls in reaching personal and academic goals stems from its ability to tailor the structural components to meet the needs of its participants. This suggests that sport interventions do not have to be limited to a specific sport but should provide meaningful activities with low barriers to entry, elements that engage participants, a context that supports meaningful and authentic interactions with others (including adults and mentors), and opportunities for participants to progress toward stated goals.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge Coach Phyllis Jones for her graciousness in opening her program to the researchers and facilitating access to past and present participants.

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[1] Cargo Cult is a metaphor for the superficial replication of an ideal or program without an understanding of how it operates or the materials and efforts to make it functional (cf. Achebe, 1984; Feynman, 1974).

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