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# Playing the Game: The Impact of No Pass/No Play Sanctions on High School Athletes, A Youth Development Approach

Jennifer A. Oliphant

University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, OLIPH1@gmail.com

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PLAYING THE GAME

PLAYING THE GAME:

The Impact of No Pass/No Play Sanctions on High School Athletes, A Youth  
Development Approach

Jennifer A. Oliphant

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Department of Education in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education in Educational  
Leadership

University of St. Thomas

St. Paul, Minnesota

June 2011

PLAYING THE GAME

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, MINNESOTA

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The Impact of No Pass/No Play Sanctions on High School Athletes, A Youth  
Development Approach

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

Dissertation Committee

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Bruce H. Kramer, Ph.D., Committee Chair

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Robert J Brown, Ph.D., Committee Member

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Cindy A Lavorato, J.D., Committee Member

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Final Approval Date

## PLAYING THE GAME

### **Acknowledgements**

*Whenever one finishes a dissertation, there is always a need to thank the academics who helped the student succeed. In my case, I would like to thank Bruce H. Kramer, Robert Brown, and Cindy Lavorato who comprised my committee and supported my defense of the dissertation. There were others, though, who I must acknowledge because they were invaluable in facilitating my progress and propelling me to finish. To this end, I thank Beth Hewett, William Waters, Sonja Foss, Erica Roy-Nyline, Nancy Leland, Michael Resnick, Kevin Sauter, Grit Youngquist, and Norman Graff.*

### **Dedication**

*This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Solvej Paxton Oliphant Graff, who in the beginning stages of my research and in the early stages of her life developed a condition that impeded her development and kept us both struggling to find answers about how to “make it better.” From this, Solvej and I both learned the power of perseverance and how to ask for help. It is also dedicated to Letty Faller who was there week after week, year after year, to see that Solvej got well enough so I could finish my dissertation.*

### **Abstract**

An abstract of the dissertation of Jennifer A. Oliphant for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership: presented June 8, 2011.

Title: Playing the Game: The Impact of No Pass/No Play Sanctions on High School Athletes, A Youth Development Approach

In the original “No Pass/No Play” legislation (enacted by Texas State Legislature in 1985), students had to pass all classes with at least a 70% average to participate in sports or extracurricular activities. Since then, no pass/no play regulations have been enacted across the nation with little evidence regarding their effectiveness. Questions necessarily arise: What effects do sanctions have on athletes’ social, emotional, and physical development? Specifically, how do imposed no pass/no play sanctions affect the youth development of high school athletes?

Using the framework of youth development, this study aimed to describe the impacts of no pass/no play on sanctioned youths. It was grounded in Giesela Konopka’s (1973) authoritative theories of the essential characteristics of positive and negative youth development, including her nine tenets describing requirements for healthy adolescent youth development.

This study used a qualitative, interview-based, grounded theory methodology. Data from 15 cases were categorized into factors that facilitated or impeded youth development. Within these two groups, participant responses were categorized by Konopka’s tenets as reported most often (High), in the midrange (Moderate), and rarely

(Minimal). Analysis yielded a combined 387 comments (157 that facilitate and 230 that impede).

The results indicated how sanctions impacted the participants in terms of their youth development as athletes. Those comments indicating that positive youth development had been facilitated were outnumbered by those indicating it had been impeded by nearly 30%. Since the “highly impedes” and “moderately impedes” categories represented the majority of all the data, these findings suggest that no pass/no play sanctions may negatively impact the youth development of athletes more often than not. Less commonly, participants identified how the sanctions may have facilitated their youth development.

This study concluded that stakeholders implementing no pass/no play policies should develop sanctions that focus particularly on activities that propel youths toward citizenship, self reflection, and accountability. Further research may alter the course of sanction implementation or, minimally, provide better tools to facilitate, rather than hinder, athletes’ positive youth development.



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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Impetus for the Study**

This grounded theory study into students' experiences of "no pass/no play" arose from my many encounters with this rule over two decades of coaching high school gymnastics. Throughout those years, I was often forced to ask student gymnasts to sit out or leave the team because they violated a school, district, or state high school league rule. Most of the time, girls were "benched" or ultimately declared ineligible for participation because of poor academic performance or attendance. Less often, gymnasts were removed for alcohol or other drug violations. When these students lost their opportunities to participate in organized school sports, I wondered what the impact was on the athletes' development as youths, or "youth development."

My experience of no pass/no play largely has been negative in that this punitive approach may sever athletes from the one activity that keeps them coming to school, penalizes the team for the transgressions of one or a few, and puts coaches in an acrimonious position with their athletes and often with the administration. While underage drinking, poor attendance, or school failure cannot be condoned, I have often thought that more effective methods than no pass/no play must exist for addressing athletes' misbehavior. As a coach, I yearned for policies that acknowledged an athlete's transgression but that also reinforced that youth as a "responsible citizen" rather than as a "troubled child." I asked myself: Could effective youth-development policies be adopted instead of strictly punitive approaches?

As coach, I frequently second guessed myself as to whether to enforce the rules for particular situations and whether these sanctions were effective. Often they seemed counter-productive because although the athletes were kept from working out with their team, they rarely seemed to learn any positive lesson from the sanction. The schools required no apology and no restitution. In addition, athletes were not allowed at practice, so I could not supervise their time after school. Instead of being in a productive practice place and supervised by caring adult coaches, the sanctioned students were left to their own devices. Moreover, no remedial help was available to improve their grades when poor grades were the reason for the sanction. This was the case for one athlete who had what appeared to be an undiagnosed learning disability. In spite of 11 telephone calls that I made to try to find her help, there was none to be found. She was removed from the team for poor grades, but the local system did not present any way to provide additional academic support or tutoring.

Additionally, as a varsity coach, there were many times that I personally knew of or heard about other types of violations from athletes on other teams where sanctions were not enforced by their coaches. There were no universal standards for what to do if coaches heard about a violation, but did not actually witness it themselves.

Interestingly, the stricter I became with enforcement, the more challenges I had from athletes and parents. I left professional coaching after a season that ended with a hate letter from one athlete who had been caught drinking and a problem with another athlete's mother who protested up the chain-of-command because I refused to "letter" her daughter after she falsified a note using my name and signature to skip school. In spite of both these athletes clearly having transgressed, in what seemed to be a capricious

decision to not use the sanction, the school administration did not allow me to follow through using sanctions in the latter case, and in the former case the athlete left the sport, never to return.

An example of the apparent ineffectiveness of the no pass/no play rule is provided anecdotally by the case of Mary, a freshman member of my gymnastics team who was removed because of a state high school league policy. This policy specified that an athlete caught drinking alcohol could not participate in her sport for two weeks or two contests, whichever was longer. Thus, after she was caught drinking, as her coach, I had to remove her from the team for the specified period of time. In this case, the infraction occurred late in the season when two contests were a month apart and thus effectively ended her season. What were the consequences?

1. Mary went home to an empty house instead of participating in a healthy after-school activity.
2. The team suffered, as Mary was a top athlete.
3. As the coach, I was placed in the position of enforcing a punishment that had no clear positive effect as the lesson.
4. The removal from the team disconnected Mary from school and its benefits.
5. Mary was not held accountable in any other way by the school or our team for her inappropriate behavior.
6. Mary went without assessment for her drinking as such assessment was not a requirement of the no pass/no play rule. Other than possibly her parents, involved adults were left wondering whether Mary's infraction represented a one-time drinking incident or a real, ongoing problem.

To me, the punishment seemed to create more problems than it solved.

This example and countless experiences with other athletes on my teams left me asking: “What are the effects of imposed no pass/no play sanctions on the youth development of high school athletes?” Do they make the athlete into a better citizen and produce moral character, or do they disconnect him or her from others? I also wondered what the short- and long-term developmental impacts of these sanctions on youths might be. Do they propel athletes toward being more thoughtful, productive persons, or do they demoralize them and disconnect them socially? Because these no pass/no play sanctions seemed contrary to literature on school connectedness, academic achievement, and youth development as well as opposite to common sense, I believed the best way to find out was to hear from those youths, such as the young people interviewed for this dissertation, who had experienced no pass/no play sanctions.

### **Background of the Study**

There are mixed views in scholarly literature about the possibility of sports participation as a protective factor in adolescents’ lives (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005; Eccles, 1999; Eccles, et al., 2003; Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Sabo, & Farrell, 2007; Certo, Cauley, & Chafin, 2003; Mahooney, 2000; and Jenkins, 1996.) Many reports indicate the protective nature of athletics (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Marsh, 1993; Burnett, 2001; Mahoney, 2000; and Flores-Gonzalez, 2000.) For example, a report on athletic participation of young females from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports stated: “Sports are an educational asset in girls’ lives” (1997, p. 15). The report continued: “Research findings show that many high school female athletes report higher grades and higher standardized test scores and lower dropout rates, and are more likely to

go to college than their non-athletic counterparts (p. 15).” The report concluded: “Recognition of physical activity and sport as an effective and money-saving public health asset is growing among researchers and policy makers” (p. 15). Clearly, this report found positive benefits of sports for student athletes.

However, equally compelling arguments present sports participation as merely a mythologized construct in terms of its efficacy as a strategy for developing young people’s moral character (Miracle & Reese, 1994). In addition, a review by Miracle and Reese (1994) pointed toward sports as an outmoded strategy to produce an industrial worker no longer needed in the contemporary technological economy. Finally, other researchers (Faulkner et al., 2007; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Miller et al., 2007) found that sports participation was directly and negatively linked to higher risk taking, especially among adolescent athletes and alcohol consumption (Eccles & Baker, 1999).

The widely mixed views of the benefits of high school sports on the athletes who play them combined with the unanswered questions about no pass/no play together led to this study of the effects of no pass/no play on youth development. To that end, the field of youth development, where youths are considered persons to develop rather than problems to solve, is pertinent to the study. Those who study youth development define it as a:

process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. It addresses the broader developmental need of youth in contrast to deficit models, which focus



solely on youth problems. (National Collaboration for Youth Members, 1998, p. 1)

Konopka (1973) is recognized as the founder of youth development. According to the National Association of Social Work (NASW, 2004), Konopka:

was widely recognized as a researcher, educator, and spokesman for “justice with compassion, justice at heart” especially for youth. Her work with emotionally troubled adolescents has indeed contributed to better understanding to both human development and ways of intervening in the life of troubled youth. (NASW Social Work Pioneers)

Thus, this study relied upon Konopka’s authoritative theories of youth development for grounding principles regarding the essential characteristics of potentially positive and negative youth development.

Among those principles are Konopka’s (1973) nine tenets that describe the requirements for healthy youth development for adolescents. These tenets have served as the foundation of later youth development frameworks (Konopka, 1973; Resnick, 2000), and, therefore, became the conceptual framework for this study. The tenets suggest that youths need the following kinds of opportunities to develop in positive ways:

1. Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers, and as responsible members of society;
2. Gain experience in decision-making;
3. Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging;
4. Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward;

5. Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system;
6. Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships/try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably;
7. Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals;
8. Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life; and
9. Participate in physical activity and expression of art.

The students interviewed for this study ranged from 14 to 18 years old at the time of their athletic no pass/no play sanction. Some of the key developmental strengths and challenges facing this group included the need for more independence from parents, the reality of increased influence from peers, the need to develop positive self-identity, and the need to develop connections with others. Because no pass/no play sanctions were created in response to academic challenges, they were not purposefully conceived of in terms of their impact on youth development and the challenges and strengths of high school athletes. Nonetheless, it is possible that specific interventions, grounded in youth development, incorporate relationship-based work into all aspects of programming to promote healthy attachments among young people, school staff, parents, and the community. Effective youth development policies would reasonably focus on fostering healthy relationships between students (athletes) and their peers and among caring adults, including teachers, administrators, and coaches. Indeed, close interactions with caring adults may provide athletes with opportunities to build trusting and caring relationships, thus fulfilling several of the nine tenets of youth development.

Through in-person interviews, data were collected from 15 college-attending young adults: eight males and seven females. All were between the ages of 18 and 22 at the time of interview and all had received a no pass/no play athletic sanction during their high school years. While no pass/no play originated to specifically address athletes' failing grades (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 186), interviewees' transgressions in this study also included a broad spectrum of events, such as violations of state high school league rules regarding substance use and sexual harassment. Data from the 15 cases in this study fell into two groups: (1) factors that facilitated youth development and (2) factors that impeded youth development. Within each of these two factors, Konopka's (1973) tenets were grouped into High (tenets that athletes reported most often); Intermediate (tenets reported in the midrange) and Low (tenets that were rarely reported). In other words, the data were sorted for their robustness at either propelling an athlete towards healthy youth development or impeding it as judged by the participants. Results indicated that sanctions most often positively propelled athletes in three areas—citizenship, self-reflection, and accountability—and most impeded youth development in four areas—(dichotomously) citizenship, interaction with peers, (dichotomously) accountability, and cultivating a capacity to enjoy life.

### **Significance of the Study**

While this dissertation focused on high school athletes from the Midwest, no-pass/no play policies affect youths across the United States. No pass/no play was formalized into state statute first in Texas in 1984, when businessman Ross Perot was asked by former Governor Mark White to serve on the Select Committee on Public

Education (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 186). The committee's task was to reform the Texas school system. No pass/no play became Perot's most famous reform.

The no pass/no play policy specified that public school students who participate in extracurricular activities must achieve a passing grade (of 70% or higher) each six-week grading period to qualify to continue participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics, band, and orchestra. If a student receives a failing grade on his or her report card during a given six-week grading period, that student is ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities until the failing grade or grades have been improved to passing levels. No pass/no play currently affects all students involved in extracurricular activities in all Texas school districts. Several other states have followed Texas's example by instituting their own versions of no pass/no play to improve student academic performance. (Miracle & Rees, 1994, pp. 186-187) Additionally, many states have extended the sanctions to non-academic issues that include alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use; swearing and foul language; sexual harassment; poor attendance, and others. Often these rules are defined by the state's athletic board or league, such as the Minnesota State High School League or the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association.

While the notion of no pass/no play is nearly universal in the United States and nearly every school district has eligibility requirements, the requirements for eligibility and the punishment for breaking the rules vary widely. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) recommended that all states have statutes that require athletes to sit out an entire marking period if they do not pass four "core" courses. (<http://www.nfhs.org>, retrieved March 2010). However, the NFHS has no authority to

enforce this recommendation. Because each district has its own rules and no universal system exists for reporting infractions, it is impossible to know how many athletes have had no pass/no play penalties imposed on them.

As statutes of no pass/no play have swept the country, parents have begun to question their legality. However, on February 24, 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected claims that no pass/no play rules violated students' constitutional rights and, in essence, the Court reinforced earlier decisions by the Fifth U.S. Court of Appeals (May 1985) by finding that participation in interscholastic athletics is not a constitutional right (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 192; Shannon, 1987; Sawyer, 1995). Following those rulings, the concept of no pass/no play has been easily adopted as an expected policy in districts across the country. Few reports have focused on the effectiveness of the no pass/no play sanctions (O'Riley, 1992; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Knutson, 2001; Tauber, 1988), and no research has examined the impact the sanctions have on the youth development of the high school athletes themselves. Most commonly, the discussion of no pass/no play has focused on the legalities of the measure, the implementation of it, and the debate about to whom it should apply (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Shannon, 1987; Coakley, 1997 pg. 432).

Therefore, while this dissertation reflects the stories of Mary and 14 additional athletes who experienced imposed no pass/no play sanctions, their stories and the aftermath probably could be told by countless other high school athletes who also have experienced a no pass/no play sanction. I believe their plight and the impact of these sanctions show how the search for solutions can create simplistic, punitive policies that,

rather than advancing positive change in youth, hinder the development of those whom the policies seek to improve.

Ultimately, I hope this dissertation will lead to changes in the way coaches, school administrators, and sports-governing bodies honor the importance of youth development, especially as it relates to athletes. I also hope that it will lead to the revision of such policies into youth-enhancing, youth-developing policies.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

Chapter 2 of this dissertation reviews pertinent literature about positive youth development, defining features of youth development as expressed by Konopka (1973) as the one widely accepted developer of youth development and the impact of no pass/no play on high school athletes. This review illustrates the complexities of both youth development and its interaction with the youth development of athletes subject to no pass/no play sanctions. Chapter 3 outlines the methods employed in this dissertation's primary study of 15 college students who had received no pass/no play sanctions in their high school years. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data analyzed and synthesized to understand the experiences of the students in the study. Finally, Chapter 5 explores the complex outcomes of imposed no pass/no play sanctions on athletes and suggests coaching and administrative considerations when implementing or abiding by existing no pass no/play regulations, as well as necessary future research regarding the effects of no pass/no play on positive youth development.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

#### Positive Youth Development

All children have talents, strengths, and interests that offer them the potential for a bright future. The field of *positive youth development* focuses on the nature of children's unique strengths and interests and how these apply to their potential as adults (Damon, 2004, p. 13). For the purposes of this dissertation, "children" primarily are discussed as adolescents of secondary school age.

The work of Giesela Konopka (1973) informed the primary definitions of youth development from the adolescent perspective. Both Resnick (2005) and Bernat and Resnick (2006), leaders in the current youth development field, have argued that Konopka (1973) should be considered the mother of youth development. Specifically, while Pittman (1991) clarified many youth development constructs ("problem-free is not fully prepared"), her work reflected the much earlier work of Konopka (1973), who was the first to articulate that promoting youth development involves the development of skills and competencies, not just preventing negative outcomes. Konopka's work with the concept of youth development began in 1971. At that time, the Office of Child Development of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare asked Konopka, a Social Worker and head of the Center for Youth Development and Research at the University of Minnesota, to develop an articulation of the nature of "normal adolescence" and the possible impediments to healthy adolescent development. The government viewed this articulation as a potential basis for national policy at the time (Konopka, 1973, p. 1). Through an intricate process that involved combining years of practice and

research with hours of discussion with colleagues from across disciplines, she developed a statement that included key concepts and qualities of positive adolescent development, a set of conditions for healthy development of adolescent youth, and a list of obstacles to progress of normal development for adolescents. From this statement, nine fundamental requirements, or tenets, for healthy youth development<sup>1</sup> emerged (Konopka, 1973, pp. 8-15):

1. *Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers, and as responsible members of society.*

The first tenet was that children need to participate as citizens, members of a household, and responsible members of society:

A pluralistic society with egalitarianism as an ideal demands participation of people. Therefore, it is quite clear that creation of conciliations that facilitate healthy adolescent development begin with the encouragement of equal and responsible *participation* by youth in the family or other societal units. (Konopka, 1973, p. 12)

That is, adolescents must move beyond being passive members of families and other institutions to become full and true participants, where their actions and input are sought, acknowledged, and celebrated. Such youth participation in family and societal units might look like adolescent family members are consulted on events that affect family such as moves or chores or events that affect their peers as well as themselves such as having a say in the day-to-day activities of a sports team in which they participate.

Konopka continued:

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<sup>1</sup> “Positive youth development” is alternatively called “healthy adolescent development” and “healthy youth development” by researchers. In this dissertation, such alternatives are to be understood as variations of “positive youth development” and are substituted for that term as considered helpful.



Since experimentation is essential to learning, adolescents should have the opportunity to discover their own strengths and weaknesses in a host of different situations, to experience success and also learn to cope with adversity and defeat. These skills are usually acquired through active participation. Therefore adolescents should have a genuine chance to participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers-in general, as responsible members of society. (p. 12)

2. *Gain experience in decision-making.*

To help develop these participatory experiences and to become functional members of society, Konopka suggested a second tenet, which is that children need opportunities to gain experience in decision-making. Doing so is important in part because of the kind of society in which she studied youth development. She stated:

Because we are living in a complex society, *choice-making* becomes increasingly important. It cannot be based on instinct. Therefore youth must develop the capacity to make decisions in many areas: school interests, work interests, use of discretionary time, and the kind of friends they want to cultivate and so on. Practical learning opportunities are essential. (p. 12)

Konopka believed that adolescents needed instruction and practice in decision-making as well as room for “soft landings” when their imperfections in this area were noticed. She promoted activities and experiences that placed the youths in positions as the driving force of decision maker. To this end, decision and choice making require intentional

instruction and room for making errors or the redirection of one's choice with the guidance of adults.

*3. Interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging.*

Konopka's third tenet for healthy youth development was that youths need opportunities to interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging. She stated: "As the protections normally associated with childhood are withdrawn and adolescents move toward wider interdependence, particularly with their peers, they need to have a sense of *belonging* to their own age groups and to adults as well" (p. 12). By this, she meant that young people need to feel a connection to their peer group as well as know they have an adult to turn to. Isolation and ostracism are a risky combination for youth. Konopka believed that adolescents need age-appropriate interaction with many peers as well as adults so that they can develop themselves socially and emotionally. Much research since then has shown that a sense of belonging is a super-protective factor in the youths' lives (Resnick, 2000, p. 158; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; McNeely & Blanchard, 2009, p. 34; Capps, 2003, p. 85).

*4. Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward.*

To interact with peers in a way that inspires interdependence, adolescents need time to reflect on themselves in relation to others and to discover the self by looking outward as well as inward. Doing so comprised Konopka's fourth tenet for healthy youth development. The adolescent brain is intrinsically inward facing. Growth requires that they both move beyond only having bonds with their parents and into relationships that include peers and other adults. Examples of such new bonds would be youths connecting

to a coach, a teacher, a camp counselor, teammates, workmates, and friends beyond their immediate social circle. Experiences that provide opportunities for reflection between self and others in adolescents propels the development of an external self and its relationship to community.

5. *Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system.*

Youths also need to discuss conflicting values as they arise and to formulate their own value system, which is Konopka's fifth tenet. She elaborated on this idea:

Because of the conflicting values adolescents encounter in a rapidly changing world, they should have the opportunity to thrash out their reactions, consider the pluses and minuses and try to determine where they themselves stand so they will be better able to deal with all the shades...those working and living with youth can foster healthy value formation by encouraging open *discussion* and refraining from trying to superimpose their values upon them. (pp. 12-13)

Adolescence is a time of *sturm und drang*, or storm and stress. Values clarification is an essential task of moral development. Konopka proposed that youths must have the opportunity to inquire, discuss, and debate their values with peers or adults in order to clarify them, and eventually act in accordance with their beliefs. Such value development might look like taking the teen's point of view into account when enforcing rules or having team members develop the team's core expectations by which they all would abide.

6. *Experiment with one's own identity within relationships.*

Konopka's sixth tenet of healthy adolescent development was that youths need to experiment with their own identities and with relationships with other people by trying out various roles without having to commit themselves irrevocably. She stated:

The search for identity becomes more conscious and highly emotional during adolescence. Therefore, the young need a chance to *reflect* on self in relation to others and to *test* self in a variety of settings. The process is a healthy one so long as it does not consist entirely of looking inward. (p. 13)

Identity, both in relation to self and in relation to others, is a central role in the adolescent's development. Allowing adolescents to "try on" various styles of thought and behavior without pigeonholing them allows them to take healthy risks while developing a firm sense of self. To this end, youths often try to "fit in" through phases of expression such as trying on different style clothing like saggy tennis shorts or "keyhole" leotards or participating in a popular/trendy sport (lacrosse for example) in which they have no previous experience.

7. *Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals.*

Seventh, Konopka believed that youths need to develop a feeling of accountability for the impact they have on other human beings and in the context of a relationship among equals:

...adolescence should be a period in which youth can experiment without suffering disastrous consequences when they fail or make mistakes...it can

also be argued that learning and growth will not occur unless youth are held *responsible* for their actions and that participatory activity without such responsibility becomes tokenism.” (p. 13)

Adolescence is a time of experimentation. During this time, an adolescent’s moral reasoning is developing. For healthy development to occur, an adolescent must be able to experiment with risk-taking behavior while developing a sense of accountability for results for ones actions. Adults play a central role in this tenet by holding adolescents accountable for their actions and the outcomes of those actions. Further, Konopka stated that “we believe that youth should be helped to develop a feeling of *accountability* for the impact they have on other human beings-accountability—not in a hierarchic sense, but in the context of a relationship among equals” (p. 14). Thus, while youths should have the opportunity for experimentation, they also need to learn how their actions impact others and to take responsibility for those actions.

8. *Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life.*

Konopka’s eighth tenet was that adolescents need to cultivate a capacity to enjoy life. Doing so, “to be creative, to be frivolous, to do things on one’s own, and to learn to interact with all kinds of people,” leads to an ability to find positive feelings in adult life (p. 14). Life can be a delightful journey when varied experiences, good and bad, expand one’s notion of possibilities. Adolescents who face many experiences are more likely to be happy. In a young person’s life, such experiences may be the process of creating something new, like a new gymnastics routine or a new type of dive. They could be creating art or a story or a song or anything that did not exist before (Dissanayake, 1995).

9. *Engage in physical activity and expression of art.*

Finally, Konopka's ninth tenet for healthy adolescent development was that youths need to participate in the creative arts, learn self expression, and communicate deep feelings from within (Resnick, 2005). Konopka added this last tenet toward the end of her life and after spending decades working with youths. In her sunset years, she discovered that adolescents who participated in creative expression, whether through sports or the arts, developed more fully socially, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Such experiences led to the ability to fully express oneself through alternative means, such as poetry and physicality—areas that had not traditionally been explored by the youth development field (Resnick, 2005) or allowed by adults (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001, p. 213). In particular, this tenet allows for self reflection and self-criticism, a mainstay in arts education and sports but not necessarily designed into youth development programming (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001, p. 213).

The years following Konopka's (1973) conceptualization of healthy youth development have produced numerous definitions of youth development, each reflecting some, part, or all of the requirements of Konopka's original conceptualization. For example, according to Flay (2002), education is, and always will be, the key to youth development. Zuckerman (1971) distinguished between schooling and education in that merely attending a school does not ensure one is being educated; education is, rather, a process with distinctive components which do not necessarily include schooling. (pp. 8-9). In addition, Zuckerman believed that the primary role of schooling was to transmit and reinforce the existing norms and ideas in order to perpetuate the existing culture (p. 8). Flay (2002) and Zuckerman (1971) both considered that, globally, most people

become educated without going to what is commonly known as “school”; alternately, the fact that someone is going to a school does not mean that he or she is being educated. The distinction is that youth development can be understood as education while school in and of itself may not produce such a result because simply being in the confines of a school does not develop the necessary components for fully developed youth. By understanding that the schooling process is not the same as the educational process, it is then possible to examine what the components of the educational process are and to devise new ways of educating people without necessarily involving them in schooling (Zuckerman, 1971, pp. 8-9; Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001, p. 96-97).

In addition, conceptions of healthy, or positive, youth development are focused on all of the resources and assets in a community that offer young people positive choices, experiences, and support (Lerner, 2004; Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001). The role of positive youth development is sometimes considered to form affirming relationships between young people and caring adults and to use the skills of both in order to strengthen youth-related programs (Jones, 2005). Indeed, according to Pittman, Irby, & Ferber (2001), it is important to focus specifically on youths and youth development because youths—what they do; where and why they do it; and what they think and say about themselves, their peers, adults, and social institutions in their lives—hold a compelling interest for society. Adolescence is a distinct developmental life stage where youths are more accountable than in early childhood, but are still in a time of rapid growth and development as non-adults. It is a period of preparation and promise and for adult roles to be cast for these young people (Ianni & Orr, 1996, pp. 285-321, cited in Graber, Brooks-Gunn, & Peterson, 1996, p. 285).

The field of positive youth development typically views young people as motivated and able to be constructive agents of their own development. The term *positive* is added to *youth development* to call attention to and advocate for what some believe is to be a new paradigm in framing youth (Larson, 2006, pp. 677-678). In the sense of positive youth development, adolescents are considered “producers of their own growth, development involves more than preventing problems, and adults are most effective when they support the positive potentials within young people” (Larson, 2006, pp. 667-678). Or, as Pitman and colleagues famously stated, “problem free is not fully prepared” (McNeely & Blanchard, 2009, p. ix; Pittman et al., 2000). In current usage, positive youth development is often shortened to *youth development* while the notion of *positive* is inherent (Larson, 2006, pp. 677-678).

Because numerous definitions of healthy or positive youth development have emerged among researchers, it is challenging to find one exclusive definition. Instead, constructs of healthy youth often are described. For example, the executives of National Collaboration for Youth Members (1998) approved the following definition:

Youth development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. It addresses the broader developmental need of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models, which focus solely on youth problems.

Hamilton et al. (2004) suggested that the most favorable development in adolescents enables them to lead vigorous, gratifying, and constructive lives both as



young people and later as adults. With such favorable development, adolescents learn the skills that enable them to later earn a living, to participate in the civic world, to care for others, and to engage in relationships and cultural endeavors (p. 3). Peterson (2004) suggested that through optimal development, “good youth” emerge. Good youths have a more positive than negative affect, and are satisfied with their current lives; they recognize their strengths and use their talents to pursue their interests. Additionally, they are thought to be highly contributing members of society (pp. 185-201, cited in Fraser-Thomas et al, 2005). However, the questions of precisely how youths’ potential is fostered through positive development and how the resulting “good youths” emerge in society are only beginning to be addressed (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM, 2002) outlined four main areas of youth development: physical, intellectual, psychological/emotional, and social. Within each developmental area, NRCIM suggested related assets that facilitate positive youth development. Specifically, NRCIM (2002) sites “good health habits” and “good health risk management skills” as assets that facilitate positive physical development. In addition, NRCIM describes that the knowledge of life, vocational, decision-making, and critical reasoning skills are important to developing positive intellectual ability. Fraser-Thomas et al (2005, p.21) summarized NRCIM’s findings by stating, “Numerous assets contribute to youths’ psychological and emotional development including mental health, positive self-regard, coping skills, conflict resolution skills, mastery motivation, a sense of autonomy, moral character, and confidence.” In short, assets that facilitate youths’ social development include connectedness with parents, peers, and other adults, a sense of a social place, an ability to

navigate in diverse contexts, and an attachment to prosocial or conventional institutions (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

In short, the concept of healthy or positive youth development focuses on understanding, educating, and engaging children in productive activities rather than at correcting, curing, or treating them for maladaptive tendencies (Damon, 2004). Positive youth development as a concept contrasts with approaches that have focused on problems that some young people encounter while growing up. The problem-centered vision of youth has dominated most of the professional fields charged with raising the young (Damon, 2004). Positive youth development reverses that vision to one where adolescence can be understood in a more optimistic and affirmative manner.

### **Programs and Structures**

A growing body of evaluation research points to the successes of programs that are grounded by a positive youth development perspective. Integral to the success of such programs is the incorporation of many elements articulated by Konopka (1973). The research (Resnick, 2000; McNeely & Blanchard, 2009, pp. 2-3) indicates that the accumulation in adolescence of these experiences, as defined by Konopka, builds social competencies and reinforces conventional, prosocial attitudes and values. In addition, such experiences set high expectations of the adolescent individual while providing pathways to future experiences of success, mastery, and achievement. The sustained involvement of caring adults also is critical to youth development. Reviews and syntheses by youth development researchers such as Kirby (2007), Roth (1998), and McLaughlin (1994) demonstrated that using both a variety of programmatic formats and a youth development perspective and strategy are effective for prevention and reduction of

specific risk behaviors. They also are effective for the promotion of longer-term outcomes like helping young people to develop a positive and effective developmental trajectory (Resnick, 2000).

Resnick (2000) has begun to decode the relationship among various youth development factors that protect youths against the major threats to adolescent health and well-being. According to Resnick, from a developmental perspective, effective functioning means achievement of the developmental tasks associated with particular ages and stages. Specifically, for school-age development during middle childhood, tasks include: school adjustment and achievement; establishing and maintaining friendships; and following the rules for prosocial conduct within school, family, and community settings (p. 158). In high school, these tasks include: ongoing adjustment in school and academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, development of close friendships, and solidifying ones sense of his or her true self (p. 159). In short, these aforementioned developmental tasks combine in a complex and interactive web, acting as protective factors and, therefore, propel youths toward optimal development. However, the absence of these inputs may lead a young person away from positive youth development and, rather, propel him or her toward disconnection and disenfranchisement within his or her home, school and community.

Another framework of positive youth development is reflected in Lerner et al.'s (2005) five desired outcomes of youth development, or five 'C's of positive youth development: competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring/compassion (p. 23). The five C's are similar to the original Konopka (1973) tenets, although less delineated. They include:

1. *Competence*, which is encouraging youth to take the initiative to do their best in schools and as leaders within community organizations. Such encouragement can have the result of generating a sense of self-confidence and belief that they are capable of high achievement.
2. *Confidence*, which is promoting high self-esteem by ensuring that youth have the opportunity to become involved in a multitude of constructive, healthy activities, and to receive praise for their efforts.
3. *Connection*, which is generating positive networks and bonding among youth, their peers, and adults by working together as community.
4. *Character*, which is achieved through such means as adult volunteers serving as positive role models for youth to emulate. When adults demonstrate high moral values around youths, it creates an environment where young people can witness desirable traits (e.g., responsibility, dedication, respect, dependability, strong work ethic) and behaviors.
5. *Caring/Compassion*, which may be achieved by adults showing concern and respect to adolescents. Such concern and respect can help youth to become sympathetic to the needs and issues of others (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 23; see also McNeely & Blanchard, 2009, p. 3).

Lerner et al.'s (2005) Model of National Youth Policy suggested that policies must be developed to allow families and programs to foster and promote positive development. With youth development promoting policies in place, youth, in turn, should be enabled to demonstrate the five 'C's of positive youth development. Collectively, these processes should lead to a sixth 'C' of positive youth development: *contribution*. Fraser-Thomas et

al. (2005) theorized that as physically, socially, psychologically, emotionally, and intellectually healthy youths develop into adults, they will choose to “give back” to society. In doing so, they also will promote the positive development of the next generation of youths (p. 23).

### **School Connectedness/Bonding**

The importance of bonding to school is known as “school connectedness,” which is a core component to positive youth development. The construct of school connectedness consists of two primary and interdependent components: (1) attachment, characterized by emotionally close relationships with those at school; and (2) commitment, characterized by an investment in school and doing well in school (Catalano, et al. 2004, p. 252). School connectedness is enhanced by opportunities (such as those developed through extracurricular activities) for development of social skills and other competencies that provide a substantive basis for the development of self-confidence and a sense of well-being in young people (Resnick, 2000, p. 158).

Additionally, school connectedness is increased by strong connections between and among teachers (or coaches) and students. While multiple internal school factors—such as curriculum, administration, peers, and extracurricular activities—affect student engagement, it cannot be forgotten that by listening to and helping students, teachers can play a powerful role in reversing the tendency to become disengaged from school (Catalano et al., 2004, p. 252).

Other protective factors are considered core components of youth development in addition to school connectedness. Some of the most commonly cited protective factors include a strong sense of connectedness to parents, family, community institutions, and

adults outside of the family; the development and enhancement of academic and social competence; and involvement in extracurricular activities that create multiple friendship networks (Resnick, 2000, p. 160).

Like Konopka's (1973) tenets, the Social Development Model developed by Catalano et al. (2004) suggested that bonding plays a key role in youth development. Catalano et al. viewed the Social Development Model as being multifaceted. They theorized that bonding was composed of attachment and commitment to a socializing unit and involvement is part of the socialization process that leads to bonding (Catalano, et al., 2004, p. 252).

The Social Development Model integrated perspectives from social control theory, social learning theory, and differential association theory. The model hypothesized that children must learn patterns of behavior, whether prosocial or antisocial, from their social environment. Children, therefore, are believed to be socialized through four processes: (1) perceived opportunities for involvement in activities and interactions with others; (2) actual involvement; (3) skill for involvement and interaction, and (4) perceived rewards from involvement and interaction. With consistent socializing mechanisms, a social bond of attachment and commitment develops among the individual and the people and activities of the socializing unit. Once social bonds are strongly established, they inhibit behaviors inconsistent with the beliefs held and behaviors practiced by the socialization unit. This is done through establishing an individual's stake in conforming to its norms, values, and behaviors. It is assumed that individual's behavior will be pro-social or antisocial depending on the most prevalent behaviors, norms, and values held by those individuals or institutions to whom/which the

individual holds the strongest bonds. Family, school, peers, and community are the important socializing units to which youths bond. School bonding plays a critical role and is important in that it is believed to prevent antisocial behavior and promote positive youth development (Catalano et al., 2004, p. 252).

Eccles et al. (1993) developed the Person-Environment Fit theory to address the importance of bonding or connectedness for youth. According to this theory, behavior, motivation, and mental health are influenced by the fit between the characteristics individuals bring to their social environments and the characteristics of these social environments. The thinking is that individuals are not likely to do well or be motivated if they are in social environments that do not meet their psychological needs. If the social environments in school do not fit with the psychological needs of adolescents, for example, then Person-Environment Fit theory predicts a decline in motivation, interest, performance, and behavior as adolescents transition into this environment (p. 91).

Similarly, the Stage-Environment Fit perspective assists in understanding how changes in school context might contribute to these declines. Stage-Environment Fit theory suggests that the fit between the individual's psychological needs and the opportunities to meet these needs that are provided by the school (as well as other contexts) influences the individual's motivation and attachment to the school. In particular, there are two specific psychological needs: (1) the increasing need for autonomy and participation in decisions regarding one's experiences and (2) the continuing need for strong social supports and close, trusting relationships with adults (Eccles, Lord, & Buchanan, 1996, p. 276).

**Internal and External Assets**

Internal assets are competencies, skills, and self-perceptions that young people develop gradually. Internal assets do not simply occur; they evolve over time as a result of numerous experiences (Benson, et al., 1998, p. 171). Resnick (2000) summarized the individual assets (among others) that foster positive youth development and provide for universal needs; without these assets, an adolescent may face significant threats to his or her well-being (p. 153). Among these internal assets are psychological and emotional developments, which include positive values and positive identity (see also Benson et al., 1998, p. 171).

Konopka (1973) theorized tenets that called out “reflecting on self in relation to others, and discovering self by looking outward as well as inward” as well as “discuss conflicting values and formulate one’s own value system” as core processes of adolescence and youth development (p. 163). Others also have considered identity formation and moral identity formation as a core developmental task of adolescence and of youth development (Damon, 2004). Damon (2004) theorized that identity formation during adolescence is a process of forging a coherent, systematic sense of self and that moral identity formation is a process of constructing deeply held moral beliefs (p. 22).

Additionally Damon, like Konopka (1973), believed that moral identity often takes shape in late childhood, which is when a child acquires the capacity to analyze people, including one’s self, in terms of stable character traits. According to Damon (2004):

During late childhood, self-identifying traits usually consist of action-related skills and interests (I’m smart; I love music). With age, there is a



gradual increase in the use of moral terms to define the self. By the onset of puberty, adolescents commonly refer to morally tinged adjectives such as kind, fair-minded, generous, and honest as ways of describing themselves. Some adolescents even go so far as to describe themselves primarily in terms of systematic moral beliefs and goals. They speak of noble purposes, such as caring for others or improving their communities, as missions that define their lives. (p. 22).

Thus, both Damon (2004) and Konopka (1973) agreed that moral development is an important building block of one's personal identity. Yet another key component of moral development is the formation of empathy (Damon, 2004, p. 18). Empathy is the ability to experience and share another's pleasure or pain. This emotion provides the child with powerful incentives for positive social interaction. Born within every young person is a natural strength upon which further prosocial growth can be built. Sport activities provide ample opportunities for youths to engage in moral and empathetic behavior (Eccles Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003).

From an external point of view, positive youth development theories assume that youths are both assets to the community and true resources to be developed, rather than problems that communities must either tolerate or solve (Resnick, 2000, p. 153).

Therefore, young people's capacities must be matured by developing their own capacities through involvement with caring, compassionate adults rather than by providing services or institutional structures to them. These capacities are known as external assets. They refer to the positive developmental experiences of relationships and opportunities that adults provide. They emerge through constant exposure to informal interactions with

caring and principled adults and peers, which are reinforced by a larger network of community institutions (Benson et al., 1998, p. 171).

### **Athletics Programs**

While Konopka (1973) defined the elements critical to youth development, others have outlined the elements of programs that lead to healthy youth development.

According to Mahoney (2000), for example, effective youth activity programs have the common denominators of high organization and structure; regular meetings; an emphasis on increasingly complex, skill-building as an activity goal; and leadership by one or more competent adults (p. 514). Like other youth development program researchers (Benson, 1997; Resnick, 2000; McNeely & Blanchard, 2009). Mahoney (2000) believed that youth development programming allows for the youths and their leaders to focus on young people's strengths and protective factors rather than focusing on their deficits and risks. He suggested that such programs allow youths to participate in programs that allow youths to change interests, connect to positive adults, and to steer past negative behavior to more positive aims (p. 514).

Similarly, Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) and Benson (1997) have articulated and summarized the settings requirements that foster youth development. According to Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005), the features of positive development settings include: (1) physical and psychological safety; (2) appropriate structure; (3) supportive relationships; (4) opportunities to belong; (5) positive social norms; (6) support for efficacy and mattering; (7) opportunities for skill-building; and (8) integration of family, school, and community efforts (pp. 30-31). These features are important to positive development settings because such programming promotes physical and psychological safety, positive

social norms over aggression and competition, high challenge, and development appropriate designs. Together, these coalesce to create the most meaningful opportunities and communication among divergent youths in both their school and community.

Benson et al.'s (1998) 40 developmental assets also have been found to lead to positive youth development, particularly in the youth sports setting. These assets include, among others: a caring school climate; youths as resources; adult role models; high expectations; planning and decision-making; and a positive view of personal future. Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) specifically examined the 40 assets as they related sports to youth development and found that sports programs have the potential to foster multiple assets. In a review that summarized the relationship between sports and youth development, they found that involvement in sports programs can foster external assets in the areas of constructive use of time, emotional support from family, empowerment, positive intergenerational relationships, positive role models, and high expectations (pp. 30-31). Past research (Weiss, 2009; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Silva, 1984) also indicated that youth sports programs have the potential to foster numerous internal assets such as achievement motivation, school engagement, caring, responsibility, social competencies, empathy, cultural competence, resistance skills, conflict resolution skills, and a sense of positive identity (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005, p. 31). These studies indicate that while positive youth development is not an automatic outcome of sport-driven participation, with systematic and intentional implementation of core components of youth development—whether defined by Konopka (1973), Benson (1997), or more recently by Petitpas, Van Raalte, Cornelius, and Presbrey, (2004)—adolescent athletes can have positive achievements in such area as leadership, initiative

and problem solving as well as external connections to adults and peers, also known as teammates, school, and community.

The importance of physical activity and organized sports as a means of fostering positive youth development has gained considerable attention among researchers (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Weiss & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2009). While the benefits of youth sports participation have been of interest to sport researchers for some time, it was not until September 2009 that the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports published the first paper explicitly linking sports to the framework of positive youth development (Weiss et al., 2009). However, adolescents clearly experience many positive developmental outcomes through their sports involvement (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). These outcomes, according to Fraser-Thomas et al., include connection to adults and coaches, initiative, and leadership. Such positive outcomes apparently emerge because of developmentally appropriately designed programs and positive adult influences within the program.

To date, only Weiss (2008) and Weiss et al. (2009) have embraced the notion that positive youth development through sports must be sought deliberately by coaches, parents, sports organizations, and policy makers. This model of intentionality envelops the work of many previous researchers included in this chapter's discussion (Benson, 1997; Eccles et al., 1993; Eccles et al., 1996; Cote, 1999; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Weiss et al. (2009) concluded that "a caring and mastery-oriented climate, supportive relationships with adults and peers, and opportunities to learn social, emotional and behavioral life skills—these are the nutrients for promoting positive youth development through physical activity" (p. 6). Indeed, previously only Cote (1999), Cote & Hay

(2002), and Wright (2003) acknowledged the necessity of intentionally designing sports programs that consider youths' physical, psychological, social, and intellectual development, and foster developmentally appropriate training patterns and social influences (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005, p. 31).

To that end, Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) suggested that successful youth sports programs: (1) consider youths' physical, psychological, social, and intellectual stages of development (Cote, 1999; Cote & Hay, 2002; Cote et al., 2003); (2) are conducted in appropriate settings (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002); and (3) foster developmental assets in youths (Benson, 1997). Further, they proposed that the successful design and implementation of these programs depend on the efforts of policy-makers, sports organizations, coaches, and parents. Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) contended that organized sports programs need to be consciously designed to ensure that youths have positive rather than negative experiences, resulting in positive rather than negative outcomes. They outlined setting features (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002) and developmental assets (Benson, 1997) that are said to foster positive youth development, and they presented an applied sport-programming model of positive youth development as a starting point for further theoretical and applied research. Their model highlights the important role of policy-makers, sports organizations, coaches, and parents in creating sports programs that embrace particular setting features and developmental assets, which in turn are believed to create competent, confident, connected, compassionate, character-rich members of society. As Konopka's (1973) work suggested and Lerner et al.'s (2005) Model of National Youth Policy indicated, creating such sports programs in turn should lead to "Contribution," the sixth

“C” of positive youth development. By addressing situations conducive to the sixth “C,” Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) suggested that youths will “give back” to civil society, and promote the positive development of the next generation (pp. 34-35).

Unfortunately, many sports programs designed to foster positive youth development appear to be doing just the opposite (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). For example, the adult influence on youths can be highly negative if the coach, parent, or the sports program adopt a distinctly negative approach to youth participation (i.e., *winning is everything*) (Miracle & Reese, 1994, p. 96). Such problems include too much focus on the singular mastery of sports at an inappropriate developmental level (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005), participation in antisocial behavior such as involvement in alcohol use (Eccles & Baker, 1999; Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 97), and placing community entertainment above the academic need of young athletes (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 179). Athletic programs that fail to foster youth development often stem from the coaches’ and administrators’ lack of sufficient training in youth development, on adolescent development, and on a specifically designed youth development programming (Weiss, 2009; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). These deficits raise questions of how policy-makers, sports organizations, coaches, and parents can ensure positive youth development through sports, and what contributes to positive and negative experiences and outcomes in youth sports. To address such questions, Bronfenbrenner's (1999)—and similarly Weiss’s, et al (2009)—model of development provided a framework to facilitate understanding of youths' activities and the contexts within which their activities may take place. Their models suggested that for effective development to occur activities must be accessible, within a context of a safe climate both physically and emotionally, and must meet the

developmental level of the athlete. Specifically, Bronfendrenner's (1999) model emphasized that an athlete (a) must engage in activities, (b) these activities must take place 'on a fairly regular basis, (c) activities must take place over a long enough period of time to become 'increasingly more complex,' and (d) activities must involve long-term reciprocal relationships (pp. 5-6). Thus, these models emphasized the importance of the context of youth sports participation in youth development. In particular, they emphasized the value of an on-going sports activity, such as a season- or year-long team effort in football, soccer, or cheerleading, for example. As mentioned above, Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) have pointed consistently to two factors that contribute to positive and negative outcomes and experiences in youth sports: program design (i.e., early diversification versus specialization) and adult influence (i.e., parents and coaches).

## **Education and Sports**

### **Historical View**

Sports have not always been a part of the American high school framework. In fact, up until the twentieth century, schools remained a place designed for transmitting cultural heritage (Zuckerman, 1971, p. 8). This purpose was accomplished primarily by teaching reading so that children could learn to read the *Bible* (Gage, 1987, p. 16) since Christian teaching was a primary component of American culture. Through this educational process, youths were exposed to new ideas in order to assist in the survival of the culture and to maintain the religious freedom on which this country was founded (Zuckerman, 1971, p. 8). Although in the late nineteenth century some fissures between religious education and public education emerged, educators nevertheless realized that moral education was important and inseparable from education itself because it was

necessary in teaching the meaning of equality among men, at least in its most generalized sense (Gage, 1987, p. 16). In addition to the educational mechanism of school, the early days of American schooling also provided a venue for community gathering. The school house provided a place for entertainment that generally focused on children, such as school picnics and poetry reading—events that extended into the community (Miracle & Rees, 1994, pp. 179-180).

High school sports were introduced into the American fabric in the early 1920s (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 194). This new focus on sports followed the trend of spectator sports that developed prior to the 1920s in college and professional sports and transferred itself into the high school arena (p. 49). The idea that sports build character infiltrated into spectator sports as early as the 1860s and then in the 1920s seamlessly blended in to high school sports. Since then, U.S. presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Gerald Ford have perpetuated this construct, making it a mainstay of American mythology (p. 49).

Sports also have been used as a way to “Americanize” youths from different ethnic backgrounds (p. 49). From 1865 to 1900, 14 million immigrants entered the United States, which created disparate ethnic communities that youth sports could blend through common goals and interests. One way of Americanizing these youths was to link success in sports to morality. In other words, involvement in sports was perceived as making students better people (p. 76). Thus, with the melding of the backgrounds of athletes and the linkage to morality, sports have become the primary venue for community connection to schools as well as a source of civic pride and revenue generation (p. 171). In short, both educational institutions and sports have shared the goal of teaching some form of



moral behavior, values, and integrity. These aspects have led to what now can be seen as the foundations of youth development. Nonetheless, as this dissertation examines, it is unclear whether the inclusion of no pass/no play as a mechanism to this moral framework has resulted in the desired outcome for American youths.

With the emergence of the factory as the new mechanism for work, and child labor laws that prohibited youths from working in the factories, school populations ballooned (p. 181). Schools now mirrored the factory and became a training ground for the new factory worker. Workers and students learned to be punctual, obedient, healthy, and—of paramount importance—to work hard as the ultimate measure of success—all of which is demonstrated by leadership, competition, and victory (p. 181). According to Miracle and Rees (1994): “The emphasis on practical training was not the only change in the academic curricula of twentieth-century high schools. There also was a new emphasis on inculcating common values in students” (p. 183). High school sports became a mechanism to “build character” especially among first generation immigrants. They also became a way for those less studious to become acculturated in school, and by design, good workers (p. 185).

As industrialization proceeded and children spent more time in school and less time laboring, the post-World War II era brought with it both prosperity and a propensity toward being sedentary (Kraus & Hirschland, 1953). In “Muscular Fitness and Health,” Kraus and Hirschland (1953) expressed concerns about the physical fitness of America's children relative to children in Europe. The affluence of the second quarter of the century combined with both accessible automobile transportation and a decrease in manual labor were causing children and adults to be less physically fit. The authors warned that

Americans would have to insert regular physical exercise into their lifestyle to maintain their health (p. 211).

President Eisenhower took notice of the report, calling the findings “shocking” and “alarming” (Sturgeon & Meer, 2006, p. 212). In addition, he recognized that half of military draftees were considered physically unfit and that juvenile crime had become both a national and presidential concern. Eisenhower believed that keeping young people involved in activities and off the streets was an important measure in the positive development of the nation’s youths. To achieve that, in 1956, President Eisenhower asked then Vice President Nixon to create a conference of national leaders to discuss the demise of American adult and youth fitness. Nixon gathered key cabinet members, prominent professionals, and key citizens from a variety of disciplines to study and alert the American public about the demise of their health. The conference turned into a Cabinet-level council known as The Citizens Advisory Committee on the Fitness of American Youth. As a result, Eisenhower founded the President’s Council on Youth Fitness in 1956 (President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 2011).

The Council, with the president’s guidance, set a serious tone about the declining state of youth fitness in the country and became a catalyst for change that survived into the Kennedy administration. Since its inception, the Council has been pivotal in getting American children physically active through an array of programs, events, and initiatives including the establishment of May as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month and the publication of the quarterly *Research Digest*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about the council’s history and programs, visit [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov). See “President’s Challenge Physical Activity and Fitness Awards” at [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org).

Shortly before he took office, President-elect John F. Kennedy identified physical fitness as a core element of his administration. As the first media-savvy president, Kennedy mobilized the power of media by publishing an article entitled “The Soft American,” in *Sports Illustrated* (Dec. 26, 1960), which eventually led to an outcry for greater physical fitness among Americans and led to the development of the President’s Council on Physical Fitness. Upon Kennedy’s death, President Johnson took up the national physical fitness cause and directed the Council to establish a “signature award” and recognition program for physical fitness among America’s youth—the Presidential Physical Fitness Award. What started in 1966 as the Presidential Physical Fitness Award has expanded into a cadre of fitness and physical activity programs and recognition for participation in healthy living including physical activity and, most recently, nutrition. Housed under the President’s Challenge umbrella are the youth physical fitness test, adult fitness test, two school recognition programs, and two physical activity awards programs—the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) and Presidential Champions Award, available to people aged 6 and older (President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 2011). The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCFSN) retained its name until, in an Executive Order signed in June 2010, current President Barack Obama authorized a name change and expanded the mission of the Council to include “nutrition”: President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.

As industrialization progressed through mid-to late years of the twentieth century that encompassed desegregation, Sputnik, and Japanese domination, so did the demand for new educational reforms from parents, politicians, and new industrial leaders of the 1980s (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 183). As in the past, calls for reform from the business

world were heard loudly, and politicians readily gave in to these demands. Unlike the past, however, where sports were seen as a venue for acculturation, the contemporary industrials now saw that sports had gone too far in the sense of being the only thing that mattered, leaving meritocratic academics in its wake. It was as if the famous saying of Vince Lombardi—“Winning isn’t everything; it’s the only thing”—had taken over high school education. A business culture now emphasized that the high school game was the only game in town and academics were sidelined (Miracle & Rees, 1994; Coakley, 1997).

In the early 1980s, the “Nation at Risk” report was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. It was among several national studies that focused on social and educational problems in the United States that apparently were contributing to the nation’s inability to compete with other industrialized nations. These reports faulted the educational system and called for sweeping changes (Sandefur & Hinely, 1991, p. 3.) Therefore, it seems unsurprising that in 1984 Texas Governor Mark White appointed a panel of business leaders with business tycoon Ross Perot, known as the Select Committee on Public Education, and he introduced sweeping changes to the Texas educational system (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 186). The committee’s work resulted in the introduction of the now common-place reform “no pass/no play.” The primary point of no pass/no play was expressed as “if a student did not maintain a certain level of grades, academic achievement, or hours in academic pursuit, the student would not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities, either temporarily or permanently” (Shannon, 1987, p. 38; Sawyer, 1995, pp. 106-107; Davis, 1996, p. 1). Other legislation was included in this reform, but no pass/no play became the most well known and most

debated reform by far (Miracle & Rees, 1994, p. 186; Shannon, 1987). The next section of this chapter addresses issues relative to this no pass/no play ruling.

### **No Pass/No Play**

Eligibility requirements for student sports have been developed to promote academic achievement and minimum grade point averages, as well as to encourage amateurism (Sawyer, 1995, pp. 106-107). The primary requirement examined in this dissertation is the “no pass/no play” rule. As a policy, no pass/no play requires students to maintain passing grades to be eligible for sports participation. The term as it commonly is used applies to all young people representing their schools in athletic contests (Davis, 1996) and has been expanded through the years to include other activities such as band and drama (Joekel, 1985).

Under “No Pass/No Play” as it was written in 1984, students had to pass all classes with at least a 70% average in order to participate in any extracurricular activity, which includes sports activities. Also implemented was the “8-20 Rule,” which stated that student’s practice time in any one activity could be no more than eight hours per week, with a combined practice total for all activities not exceeding twenty hours per week (Texas Homeland Security, 2010, p. 204; Sawyer, 1995, p. 38). In 1985, the Texas State Legislature officially enacted no/pass no play legislation into law (Texas Homeland Security, 2010, p. 204). The term and the idea stuck and no pass/no play sanctions quickly spread across the nation (Sawyer, 1995, p. 15). Other kinds of penalties commonly instituted by state chapters of The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) also were implemented rapidly. NFHS chapters exist in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Since 1920, this body has written the rules of competition

and standards of conduct for most high school sports and activities in the United States (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2008, p. 205; Knutson, 2001, p. 14).

The rules governing how athletes should conduct themselves in their out-of-school time have been upheld in courts several times (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 1999; Burnett, 2001). Courts have affirmed on several occasions that athletes can be held to standards and codes of conduct in the belief that participation in after-school activities is a privilege, not a right. At this point, it is important to note that all the cases analyzed in this dissertation involve residents of either Minnesota or Wisconsin who participated within the rules of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) or the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA). Specific sanctions varied between the states. In these states, schools both are allowed and encouraged to create codes of conduct that go beyond the formal rules of the League or Association.

While the term no pass/no play originally applied only to grades, non-academic behavior infractions such as underage alcohol consumption and tobacco use have since been linked to no pass/no play (Texas Homeland Security, 2010). This expanded definition seems to have developed because state high school sports leagues have combined the two kinds of infractions in equally weighted concerns. In the MSHSL policies, for example, students must be “in good standing,” although the definition of *good standing* is very broad. MSHSL states that good standing includes “being eligible under the consideration of the school” and therefore often includes other infringements

like no pass/no play that are codified under state and local legislation (Minnesota State High School League, 2009).

Many of the standards in high schools have paralleled those of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), but vary widely since school districts, and schools themselves may alter or override the policies (Knutson, 2001, p. 14). For instance, in Wisconsin, students are eligible if they do passing work in a minimum of 20 hours of the latest grade-reporting or academic-evaluation period. However, in Minnesota, students are not required to be passing their course work during a current marking period. Nonetheless, students forfeit their eligibility for the next marking period if they have not made satisfactory progress toward the school's requirements for graduation at the end of the marking period (Sawyer, 1995, p. 15).

No pass/no play rules have been tested in the courts, where the courts generally have sided with schools, states, and athletic associations by choosing not to interfere with or overrule eligibility, participation, and discipline of athletes (p. 15). Moreover, there is no judicial mandate for the courts to inquire about the expediency, practicability, or wisdom of the regulation (p. 15). Given past court challenges to no pass/no play rules, those that are grounded on a student's constitutional guarantee of equal protection and due process tend to fail to overturn such rules (Shannon, 1987, p. 50):

Courts will probably continue to refuse to recognize participation in extracurricular activities as a fundamental right or as a protected liberty or property interest. This is particularly true in light of the fact that the Supreme Court has specifically declined to recognize the right to an education as a fundamental right. Extracurricular activities are merely an

extension of a student's curricular education and are probably deserving of even less protection than education itself. (p. 51)

In short, courts have ruled that participation in school athletics is a privilege and not a right (Shannon, 1987, p. 50; Sawyer, 1995, p. 15; O'Reilly, 1992, p. 6).

The types of standards or regulations associated with no pass/no play requirements generally are regulations that (1) protect the athlete, (2) promote education, and (3) maintain the amateur standing of the competition and the athlete. Most of these regulations, at least in theory, are designed to provide a strong incentive to maintain a minimal level of performance in classes (Sawyer, 1995, p. 15; Davis, 1996, p. 154) or maintain a minimal behavioral standard (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2008, p. 205). Standards and eligibility are determined by each athletic association, school district, or state (Sawyer, 1995, p. 15; O'Reilly, 1992, p. 6). Additionally, the rigor in which each regulation is enforced also varies widely (O'Reilly, 1992, p. 6). Thus, it is arguable that no pass/no play means something different in each state, making global discussions about the concept and its effects on students challenging (p. 6).

The phenomenon of no pass/no play has stuck beyond the Perot era, in spite of some who argue against the rule by citing that participation in sports is a legitimate educational experience. This argument contends that sports foster the academic skills of teamwork, external discipline, self-discipline, and tenacity—all of which contribute to the socialization process of a young person (Tauber, 1988, p. 10). Joekel (1985) similarly considered that, while sports participation requirements are necessary, their aim should



be to enhance education rather than act as a means for punishment (p. 191). Doing so has proven challenging.

In a survey of California districts, O'Reilly (1992) found that enhancing education opportunities for athletes under sanction was difficult to achieve. In his review of no pass/no play imposition, O'Reilly discovered that over two-thirds of those California districts surveyed were unable to provide support services such as tutoring or study classes to athletes on whom sanctions had been imposed (p. 6). In addition, O'Reilly indicated that much of the public debate about no pass/no play had played itself out in the media while little, if any, reliable evidence of its positive impact on individual students and schools was available. Outcomes such as dropping out of school, regaining one's eligibility, graduation following sanction, impact on motivation for one's education, and ongoing sports participation have gone largely unstudied and unmeasured, leaving anecdotal evidence and "impassioned rhetoric" in place of research evidence that these sanctions work (Davis, 1996, p. 154). Thus, the controversy surrounding no pass/no play rules has by no means been laid to rest (Knutson, 2001, p. 15; Stacy, 2010; St. George, 2011). Indeed, given the lack of research available, empirical studies focused on the rule's impact on a student's total educational experience remain needed to validate educational concerns over the ramifications of the no pass/no play rule since certain students may be deprived of their educational benefit (Koester, 1987, p. 133; Davis, 1996, pp. 1-2).

### **Disagreements Regarding Positive Youth Development, Education, and No Pass/No Play**

Since their adoption, no pass/no play rules have become a subject of controversy at both the local and national levels. Proponents of the rules have argued that they advance education by giving the students who fail to meet minimum academic standards an incentive to do better and have a more positive outlook toward academics as well as more free time to devote to studies (Burnett, 2001, pp. 5-6; Lapchick, 1989, p. 30; Eccles & Barber, 1999, p. 21.). However, opponents of the rules have questioned this logic. They contended that the rules may, in fact, lead more students to either drop out of school altogether or to pursue less academically challenging courses (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005, p. 33; Flores-Gonzalez, 2000, p. 104-105; Knutson, 2001, p. 47; O'Reilly, 1992). The most recent entrant in the controversy has been the judiciary branch. Challengers in the courts have attacked the constitutionality of these rules by asserting that the rules violate their equal protection rights under both the Federal Constitution and the relevant state constitution. However, since no pass/no play's inception, the challengers have not had success (Shannon, 1987, p. 165; O'Reilly, 1992, p. 58; Sawyer, 1995, p. 106-107; Koester, 1987, p. 133). With these substantive rulings from lower courts to higher courts, the legality of these rules has been well established and therefore are no longer challenged.

As noted previously in this chapter, many people are interested in the potential of no pass no play as a mechanism for facilitating positive youth development and preventing problematic behavior. Both governmental agencies and private foundations are investing substantial amounts of money on youth development programs, sports

programs, and more recently youth development infused sports programs in hopes that they will promote positive youth development—particularly for youths living in poor communities. Given tight economic times with agencies and foundations having limited resources, it is important that these investments be directed towards programs that work (McNeely and Blanchard, 2009, p. x). However, it also is important to ask whether enough is known to help policy makers and financial supporters choose programs to support. In a recent report by Durloch and Weissberg (2007) on the impact of after-school programs, they concluded that it is possible to identify effective program elements that foster multiple benefits for youths (Walker and Larson, 2006, p. 17).

Nonetheless, although general characteristics of effective programs have been identified, very little is known about the specific mechanisms through which youth development programs work. The existence of such programs and the increasing call for more programs provide program designers and program evaluators opportunities to design evaluations that will enable studying the mechanisms of no pass/no play and their influence on positive youth development. For example, the review in *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development* by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (Eccles & Gootman, Editors, 2002) and the *President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest* (Weiss, 2009) monographs provide examples of what can be done using longitudinal designs guided by strong theory to create effective programming for both community-based youth development programs and youth development programs and sports. Researchers are at a point in the field of positive youth development to do more such longitudinal studies as well as experimental

studies designed to test specific theoretical hypothesis about mediating mechanisms (Eccles et al., 2003; Weiss, 2009; Zeldin, 2000).

Students' involvement in organized extracurricular activities—such as high school sports, social clubs, or unorganized activities like “hanging out” or gaming—and their effects on achievement have been debated extensively for a number of decades (Chambers & Schreiber, 2004, p. 329). Out of this debate have come two views that dominate the literature about the impact of after school activities on achievement. The first view is based on the assertion that a greater amount of time spent on non-academic activities decreases academic achievement because the amount of time spent on academic activities is decreased. However, the second view suggests that after school activities provide opportunities that increase a student’s development. Thus, evidence exists for both views. Therefore, a balance between these views is warranted; for example, some activities such as high school sports or academic-related clubs are potentially beneficial, while other, unstructured or poorly planned activities such as hanging out or gaming may be detrimental to academic achievement (Chambers & Schreiber, 2004, p. 329).

According to DeNitto (1989), no pass/no play policies that schools across the country are implementing are doing a serious educational injustice to young people (p. 197). With no pass/no play policies, educators, education administrators, and politicians are implying that traditional education skills must be learned at any cost and that other less traditional learning, such as music, athletics, or drama are second-rate subjects that exist only to support the three R’s of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The policies imply that such lesser subjects are rewards, reserved only for those who have shown excellence

in the three R's. Therefore, limiting access to sports and other after school activities are justified because they are defacto a reward. (p. 57).

This question of whether sports should be a reward for academic excellence should be answered because it is at the heart of the most compelling argument against the no pass/no play rule. This argument considers which activities provide a measure for success for students who do not perform well in the classroom although they may be performing at or above their individual potentials. In other words, students who are not as academically inclined or skilled as others and/or who experience failure in school even though they are applying themselves also need avenues in which to excel. Excluding such marginal students from sports and other activities may not be wise or fair because it removes their one area of potential success and a major motivation to stay in school (O'Reilly, 1992, p. 57).

For example, O'Reilly (1992) found that students, who were rated as academically marginal, such as Special Education pupils, especially were the ones who lost privileges of access to important activities. Furthermore, O'Reilly found this consequence to be the most negatively perceived outcome of the no pass/no play legislation. Many students in special education and those in regular education who have learning disabilities or who are not particularly academically capable may be most often made ineligible by this rule. This potential raises the question of whether this rule unfairly penalizes the student who is working at his/her level of ability but who does not do well in school; it causes one to consider whether such students are hurt, rather than motivated, by this rule (O'Reilly, 1992, p. 57).

On the other hand, professionals who align themselves with positive youth development likely would argue that since extracurricular participation has the potential of transforming the schooling experience of youths and contributing to the retention of students, extracurricular activities should be fostered by schools (Flores-Gonzales, 2000). Therefore, one cannot expect students to become engaged in school, especially when schools offer little more than academics. Since the implementation of No Child Left Behind, essentially a back-to-the-basics movement, public pressure has been to focus students on spending even more time on the 3 Rs over other non academic subjects and activities. However, according to Flores-Gonzalez (2000), in schools that have more extracurricular offerings, test scores are higher and most students graduate and go to college. While extracurricular activities are not the only solution to enhancing the school experience, evidence supports that they often have the potential to engage students in learning and motivate them to stay in school (p. 106).

Moreover, to be a true benefit, the apparently minimal positive benefits of the no pass/no play rule must not be outweighed by potential long-term negative consequences. Although the research on the long term effects of participation in extra-curricular activities is correlation-based, the results raise important concerns about the possible long term impacts of this rule. O'Reilly (1992) reported on the research about the relationship between activities such as work, hobbies, and extracurricular activities and experience in later life and found that the individual "who is more deeply involved in such activities turned out to be consistently more productive and fulfilled at every period" in her/his life (O'Reilly, 1992, p. 47).

If the potential benefits of sports activities in high school are positive, then the interruption of those activities through no pass/no play potentially can be negative. Research has yet to prove this correlation. To this end, the research study described in this dissertation has been designed to develop an understanding—albeit one limited by case size and location—of the effects of no pass/no play on 15 college students who experienced that sanction while in high school. Chapter 3 outlines the methods used to develop the study, collect data, and analyze that data.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology**

##### **Overview**

This research study investigated the influence of imposed no pass/no play sanctions on the youth development of high school athletes. It used the retrospective lenses of 15 college-attending young adults aged 18-22 who have experienced one or more sanctions as a high school athlete. This study engaged a qualitative, interview-based, grounded theory methodology.

This chapter's organization follows the research process. First, the chapter describes the research questions that directed the study and defines relevant terms. Second, it describes the research methodology as qualitative grounded theory that uses one-on-one interviews. Third, it describes the study's organizational structure, planning, implementation, and data collection procedures. Finally, this chapter summarizes the analytical process developed to yield the study's results, which are reported in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

##### **Research Questions**

As described in Chapter 1, this study arose from a particular concern that I had during two decades of coaching high school gymnastics. Throughout those years, no pass/no play sanctions required that I ask female gymnasts to sit out one or more games or to leave the team because they violated a school, district, or state high school league rule. Most of the time, girls were "benched" or ultimately declared ineligible for participation because of poor academic performance, attendance, or other infractions in keeping with the local no pass/no play rules. Less often, gymnasts were removed for



alcohol or other drug violations. Sometimes the school administration capriciously enforced the sanction rules.

Because there is little research on the *influence* of imposed no pass/no play sanctions on athletes' youth development, especially as it relates to high school athletes, and because these sanctions seem contrary to literature on positive youth development that suggests young people need opportunities for skill building, supportive adults, and opportunities to belong to some kind of healthy group (Catalano et al., 2004; Fraser-Thomas et. al., 2005; Resnick, 2000), this research study asked: *What effects do imposed no pass/no play sanctions have on the youth development of high school athletes?* To address this primary question, the study considered two sub-questions: *How do no pass/no play sanctions influence those athletes' social, moral, and physical development? Do imposed no pass/no play sanctions make such athletes competent members of society?*

These questions guided the study's methodological choice to interview young people who relatively recently had experienced a no pass/no play sanction. With a few years' distance from the sanction, I thought that the interviewees both could remember the experience and retrospectively examine its influence on their own development. The study focused on the social, moral, and physical influences of the sanctions because, as Chapter 2 has shown, research literature has suggested that these are key elements of youth development.

It is important to note that while many interviewees discussed their perceptions of and feelings about receiving a sanction, this research study does not examine the emotional component of their experiences. In essence, the study regards the potential influences of sanctions, not as punishment, but as an opportunity for growth. However,

the nature of sanctions is that they may appear to be punishment to those who receive them; in this sense, the notion of punishment as a negative influence of sanctions does arise in the student interviews and discussion of these interviews in Chapter 4. Thus, while the interviewees' feelings certainly may play a part, this study's focus was on how to make sanctions effective, not on how those who received the sanctions felt about them then or at the time of the interview. For the purposes of this dissertation study, an effective sanction would be one that propels the sanctioned youth toward positive social, moral, and physical development. An effective sanction would strengthen or build up the youths rather than lessen them.

### **Definition of Youth Development**

While many definitions of youth development exist, this study's research framework uses Konopka's (1973) taxonomy of youth development as the defining characteristics of positive youth development. According to Konopka, youth development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that helps them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively<sup>3</sup> competent. It addresses the broader developmental need of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models, which focus solely on youth problems (National Collaboration for Youth Members, 1998).

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<sup>3</sup> The issues of cognitive development are outside the scope of this dissertation and were not addressed by this study.

**Definition of No Pass/No Play**

In 1984, Texas Governor Mark White and oil tycoon Ross Perot coined the term “no pass/no play,” following a Texas study of public education for which Perot was appointed commission leader. The no pass/no play reform recommended by the commission was among many sweeping educational reforms proposed to the Texas State Legislature. In 1985, the Texas State Legislature officially enacted no pass/no play into law (Texas Homeland Security, 2010). Both the term and the idea stuck, and no pass/no play sanctions quickly spread across the nation, eventually including other kinds of penalties commonly instituted by state chapters of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). NFHS chapters exist in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Since 1920, this body has written the rules of competition and standards of conduct for most high school sports and activities in the United States (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2008).

In the context of this study, no pass/no play means an athlete’s either permanent or temporary removal from a high school sports team because of an infraction such as poor grades, drinking, smoking, or other such violations. While the term originally applied to grades (Texas Homeland Security, 2010), non-academic, behavioral infractions—such as underage alcohol consumption and tobacco use—commonly have been linked to no pass/no play sanctioning. This expanded definition seems to have developed because state high school sports leagues like those in Minnesota have combined the two types of infractions into one category of sanction. In their policies, by definition, students must be “in good standing.” However, the definition of *good standing* is broad. The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) indicated that good

standing includes being eligible under the conditions of the school and therefore often includes state and local legislation that ties the other infringements like no pass/no play with the MSHSL specified infringements (Minnesota State High School League, 2009). Therefore, as this research study was conducted in Minnesota, it uses the MSHSL concept of no pass/no play.

### **Investigative Method**

This study used a qualitative, interview-based, grounded theory method. Qualitative research is designed to allow researchers to test a sixth sense as to how one might continue (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this case, I speculated that more effective methods exist for developing the high school athletes' social, moral, and physical development rather than the sanctions-based "bench them and let them think about it" methods subscribed to by many school district and high school league policies. In addition, it seemed possible that apologies as a form of restoration, for example, might be more effective in propelling potentially sanctioned youths toward positive social and moral development. I based this hunch in part on my own experience as a high school coach who needed to impose the no pass/no play sanctions on athletes and then observed the apparently mixed results.

A qualitative study methodology was employed because there is little descriptive research that captures the experience of sanctioned high school athletes themselves as it relates to their psycho-social development. Even where no pass/no play has been studied, it usually has been considered within the context of grades and attendance (Groudge & Augustin, 1987; O'Reilly, 1992; Sabatino, 1994) or regarding the legal establishment of the right to impose such sanctions (Flygare, 1985). An important shortcoming of these

previous studies is the lack of discussion regarding how these sanctions influenced the youth development of high school age athletes as evidenced by their own perspectives. Furthermore, no research has explored the specific combination of youth development, high school athletes, and no pass/no play sanctions. However, common sense, personal experience, and published research suggest that no pass/no play does influence high school athletes in terms of their development; precisely how such sanctions have influenced them has not been explored fully to date.

Grounded theory is theory inductively generated from a researcher's interviews in real life settings, and qualitative research can produce grounded theory (Patton & Patton, 2002), and it is "inductively derived" from the phenomena represented (Pandit, 1996). Grounded theory interests policy makers, academics, and others in the field related to the research (Patton & Patton, 2002) because it provides a theoretical foundation for decision-making, academic policies, and curricula. Since such individuals are those who influence and are affected by no pass/no play, they would be interested in the findings of this study. Grounded theory does not predict an outcome based on a hypothesis. Instead, concepts are the basic unit of analysis, and the conceptualization of the data—not the actual data—produces the theory (Pandit, 1996; Patton & Patton, 2002). Additionally, those who use grounded theory are interested in generalizing the understanding gained from the study to other settings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). A grounded theory study is especially appropriate to the research questions developed for this dissertation because the information garnered from the research has a certain utility: It can be applied to real-life situations in both youth development and no pass/no play considerations—areas that previously have not been connected theoretically through research studies. Many policies

already are in place based on the current assumption that no pass/no play is effective as a sanction. The qualitative grounded theory of this study allows me to develop a better understanding of the phenomena under study while remaining flexible in terms of potential outcomes, enabling a logical and explanatory schema to emerge (Patton & Patton, 2002).

This qualitative study was interview driven in that talking directly with study participants was the dominant data collection strategy. In qualitative data collection, the goal of the interview is to understand how the interviewed individual thinks (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998); undoubtedly, the thoughts and the experiences of the people being interviewed are worth knowing in order to understand their environment and perspective (Patton & Patton, 2002). Because only the athletes could explain their perceptions of the sanction, I was especially interested in what previously sanctioned young adults thought regarding their firsthand experiences of no pass/no play.

The interview method employed in this research combined a standardized open-ended format and an interview guided approach. It was used because the combined method offered the most flexibility to pursue a line of thinking with probing questions or to explore an issue more deeply that the participant raised while still ensuring that the same basic questions were addressed with all participants (Patton & Patton, 2002). In addition, because every youth's experience with sanctioning was somewhat different, the interview guided approach enabled individualized follow-up questions with non-standard probes. During the analysis stage, the standardized open-ended interview allowed for more concise data analysis. It was possible to quickly and accurately place the

respondents' answers to the same questions into a standardized theoretical format (Patton & Patton, 2002).

### **Planning and Implementation of the Study**

#### **Development of the questions.**

Questions for the study were designed collaboratively between Clea McNeely, an expert in youth development serving as a consultant on this project, and me. An initial search of research and interview questions in youth development, high school athletic participation, and no pass/no play sanctions garnered no questions that could be borrowed from previous research. Additionally, to my knowledge, no questions specifically related to the topic exist in a question data bank such as the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) or Add Health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Harris et al., 2009). Therefore, interview questions specific to this study were developed that reflected the taxonomy of youth development as described by Konopka (1973), with an eye on the policy implications of these sanctions for adolescent athletes (see Appendix A). Additionally, interview questions 4 through 13 reflected those experience-based concerns that I had about the implications of these sanctions on high school athletes from my coaching years.

The interview questions were designed prior to firmly devising the primary and sub-research questions. In a small pilot, these questions were tested on one eligible individual; subsequently, my colleague and I revised the questions. However, as is common in qualitative research, the interview process demonstrated that the questions needed to be more narrowly focused on youth development and more specifically on Konopka's (1973) nine tenets. After four interviews were completed, an iterative process

was followed of adding four additional questions to account for policy around school connectedness and longer-term implications of the sanctions as perceived by the athlete.

These interviews were included in the study, none-the-less.

### **Subject recruitment.**

Each participant in the study self-disclosed a high school experience of either permanent or temporary removal from a sports team because of an infraction such as poor grades, drinking, smoking, or other such violations. As discussed in Chapter 2, these violations fell under no pass/no play sanctions.

Subjects were recruited from two Minnesota universities. As the researcher, I had graduate student status at one of these universities and instructor status at both of them. Both universities had substantial undergraduate student bodies, which afforded me a potentially large number of eligible students from which to draw. Additionally, one institution was a public university and the other a private university with religious foundations, and each had its main campus in opposing cities within five miles of each other; both settings offered the potential of greater diversity in the respondents. However, this greater diversity did not materialize in the number and type of respondents to the advertised study.

### **IRB process.**

Because this research was conducted at two universities, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was necessary at both institutions. Using each university's online application process, I filed for expedited rather than exempt status because both institutions indicated that asking college-age students about potentially negative near-distant experiences might cause some emotional distress.



For each institution, I submitted an example of the flyer used to advertise for study participants (see Appendix B). It was a 9 1/2 by 11 inch bright pink flyer designed to catch attention; it had phone number pull-tabs for potential participants to remove and phone the researcher for screening. Flyers, posted on bulletin boards within high traffic areas of the two universities, addressed the potential for monetary compensation and explained the potentially sensitive nature of the topic. Interested individuals were asked to phone or email me to express their interest and to be screened.

Forms that used the language required by each institution were incorporated into a consent form. As Appendix C indicates, these consent forms were explained to and signed by every participant in the study. Participants who completed the interviews were compensated \$20.00 cash, provided through a research grant from my home institution.

#### **Screening potential participants.**

Interested persons emailed or telephoned me to express interest in participating in the study. Regardless of method of inquiry, I personally telephoned the individual and screened each person for eligibility. Screening typically required five minutes. The following screening criteria had to be met with affirmative answers before I asked additional questions about the specifics of a person's experience:

- Current age between 18 to 22
- Former high school athlete
- Had received a sanction. In other words, while in high school, the potential participant had been temporarily or permanently removed from his or her sports team for an infraction, such as:
  - Low grades or failure grades

- Truancy or skipping school
- Poor school attendance
- Violation of a State High School League Rule

If there was another type of infraction or sanction, I asked the potential participant to describe and explain it.

Potential interviewees needed to meet all of the above criteria to be eligible for the interview. These criteria were important because they narrowed the field of respondents both in terms of current age and age as it relates to length of time from which they were recalling the event. I presumed that 18 to 22 year-old students were close enough in time to the event to clearly remember the circumstances of the event while allowing for reflective clarity of the event since one to four years had passed since its occurrence, for most and a few more years for others. This approach can be called “near retrospective.” Additionally, 18 to 22 year old students did not require the same level of IRB approval as minors would. Limiting the respondents to those who were athletes (rather than others who may also be included in State High School sanction criteria such as marching band and competitive drama) allowed for greater specificity in the interview questions and potentially more valid comparisons among respondents. In short, it ensured that the analysis could be focused on athletes and youth development rather than some broader characterization. Finally, athletes were chosen because this category of student has been more studied within the generally minimal research literature and because athletes reflect my interest and experience as a coach using sanctions.

As a final point, I asked potential interviewees whether they were male or female and what sports they played. Answers to these questions were recorded as a mechanism

to attempt to achieve an equal representation of both males and females in the sample, as well as to seek diversity among the sports represented.

Eligible participants were read the following statement:

For my dissertation research, I want to understand the effects, including social, education and psychological, that major sanctions have on high school athletes. The results of the research may be used to shape future athletic policies, especially as they relate to high school athletes and sanctions.

After hearing this statement, the potential participants were asked about their preliminary willingness to participate. I informed those who affirmed their interest about the interview process and scheduled an appointment.

Finally, potential participants were told that the study would be an in-person, one-on-one audio-taped interview that would last approximately 60 minutes. They were informed that they would be asked open-ended questions about the nature of the sanction as well as their thoughts, facts, and opinions about the influence of that sanction on their personal and academic life. They also were informed that a stipend of \$20.00 cash would be paid to all participants who completed the interview. Then, I arranged a mutually agreeable time and selected one of two settings for the interviews to take place based on the convenience of the interviewee.

In all, 18 persons were screened. Of those, 15 were interviewed because two were not eligible and one did not show up. The two who were not eligible did not meet the sanction criteria listed.

**Interview process.**

I conducted interviews in the library of the student's campus, which was a quiet public location. This location was selected in order to meet the confidential nature of the questions, allow for tape recording, and diminish safety concerns for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Prior to the interviewer meeting with the potential respondent, the room was arranged with the interviewee's chair across from the interviewer. I used a lapel-pin microphone and a handheld tape recorder.

After initial introductions, participants were given the required IRB consent form to read and were encouraged to ask questions. When consent was obtained, the participants were given a copy of the consent form with original signatures; I kept a copy with original signatures. Participants also were given a list of the questions so that they could read along as I posed the questions.

The interview began with a check of the microphone and recording equipment. When assured that these devices were working, I began the interview with the same questions, using a pre-typed script, as shown in Appendix A. The purpose of the script was to ensure that all questions were asked in the same order and that no questions were left out inadvertently. I closely adhered to the script, although tangential or follow-up questions or comments were allowed immediately after posing a question. As required by IRB protocol, at no time after the completion of the interview did I re-contact the respondent to ask follow-up or additional questions.

I attempted to use a conversational tone during the interview, allowing for expression both verbally and gestural, taking notes alongside the questions on the script.

These notes were used to keep me on topic as well as to provide backup information during analysis.

Initially, I had planned to interview ten persons based on the dissertation committee's suggestion; this decision, in part, was driven by the amount of funding available for participant stipends. In addition, it was theorized that finding eligible participants might be difficult. However, the response was greater than anticipated. Since it appeared that more interviews were both feasible and attainable, recruiting continued until 15 persons were scheduled and interviewed. By chance, near equal numbers of males and females responded. Therefore, no sex-specific recruiting occurred.

### **Data Coding and Analysis**

Primary data analysis began with a review of all the digital recordings and transcripts. The interview tapes were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. I reviewed hard copies of the transcriptions and checked them against the tapes, correcting minor transcription errors.

### **Data Coding**

Before analysis of the data could begin, a coding taxonomy was developed to find and record those aspects of the data that were most relevant to answer the research question. The units of analysis were drawn from the Konopka's (1973) nine tenets of youth development in order to answer the primary and sub-research questions.

Specifically, the following coding decisions were made:

1. Code and analyze data related to imposed sanctions that either impeded (-) or facilitated (+) one of Konopka's (1973) nine tenets. This coding rule was a judgment call based on the relation between the answer about the imposed

sanction and the actual outcome of the sanction. When the response aligned with one of the nine tenets as a positive outcome of the sanction, it was placed into the facilitated (plus) category of that particular tenet. If the respondent noted that the imposed sanction negatively affected or impeded his or her youth development by virtue of the nine tenets, it was assigned to the impediment (negative) category.

2. Code for potential implications that could be linked to imposed sanctions. This was decided because the research question focused on the actual impact of the imposed sanction, as reported by the respondent. At times, respondents suggested or hypothesized about implications. For instance, it was common for the respondent to add thoughts about what would have happened had he or she not been sanctioned. Since these suppositions were merely conjecture and not based on actual outcomes, they were not included in the analysis. Since the research question focused on the actual impact of what did happen, such hypotheses, while coded, were not analyzed.
3. Code comments regarding prospective events as speculative. Comments regarding threats of sanction or confessions made prior to the imposition of a sanction; such actions and behaviors taken by the respondent prior to having the sanction imposed were considered to be based on other lived experiences. For example, one respondent said: "I wanted to tell the coach myself before he found out from school or another athlete." Another said: "I don't think I would have ever gotten caught if I hadn't confessed." As with the first coding decision, respondents often theorized about what might have happened, but since the

research question focused on the actual impact of what did happen, such conjectures, while coded, were not analyzed.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, all comments were coded, resulting in over 387 substantive responses and interjections. Only five speculative or interpretive comments were removed from the analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data, the nine tenet headings (Konopka, 1973) were written on half sheets of paper designated with either a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to signify whether they facilitated or impeded youth development. The sheets were then cut in half and laid out on a large open space, where they remained throughout the initial sorting process. In addition, each half sheet of paper was assigned a number one through nine (1 – 9) as a mechanism for keeping track of the tenet and its associated response. The numbers corresponded to the nine tenets in the order that Konopka originally outlined them. These numbers were later removed in analysis but appear below for demonstration purposes. This first level of analysis, therefore, created 18 categories into which all coded data were initially sorted. The process supposed that this initial sorting was a level-one sort with other possible sorting stages to follow. The names used in the examples of the coded data below were changed for privacy purposes.

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<sup>4</sup> As noted above, data that speculated about friends or events were not included in this analysis because speculation was not a result of an imposed sanction. Moreover, speculation on the future impact of the sanctions such as conjecture about what the respondent would do if he or she were a coach in the future were not analyzed because doing so repeated stated beliefs based current event, but did not necessarily reflect its impact on youth development. Items coded but specified as not to be analyzed were set aside and do not appear as part of this dissertation's findings.

Below are example coded data from the interviews for each of the nine tenets.

1. Tenet 1: Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers, and as responsible members of society.
  - a. +1: Jesse officially protested to the school board regarding his sanction. While he did not win, he found the experience of fighting for “what he believed in” within a democratic structure empowering.
  - b. -1: Isaac, on the other hand, expressed that he felt punished with no mechanism for input with his principal or administration: “It made me lose a lot of faith in the integrity of our school system.”
2. Tenet 2: Gain experience in decision-making.
  - a. 2+: Travis and his coach decided together that the team was no longer a very good fit for him: “The coach and I felt that it was not very beneficiary for either one of us for me to be on the team.”
  - b. 2-: Angela, on the other hand, found: “It didn’t really affect me so much because I still drank throughout high school. I just was more cautious about it, I guess.”
3. Tenet 3: Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging.
  - a. 3+: Kara indicated that she and others benefited from the connection of sports to school and her team: “Sports are really important to kids. A lot of kids benefit from sports academically...it just puts their whole life together and keeps them off the streets.”
  - b. 3-: Tony noted the disconnection he felt: “It just felt real odd not participating and representing my school. It just felt real depressing.”



4. Tenet 4: Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward.
  - a. 4+: Kara recognized how her actions affected her relationships: “The sanction was kind of like I had to do it. It was more facing the relationships I had, facing my coach, facing my parents, facing my team.”
  - b. 4-: Marin said: “I was pissed. I was so mad that my coach, that she was snooping around. I was working so hard. And because of one thing I did out of my whole school life. I thought it was really unfair. It is eight years later now and I still think it isn’t positive. It didn’t change any of my behaviors. If anything, it made me want to do it more.”
5. Tenet 5: Discuss conflicting values and formulate one’s own value system.
  - a. 5+: Jesse noted that his character had been affected: “Well I appreciate that I still have athletics...So, I just kind of feel lucky that I am still able to do it and I am glad that was not the way that it had to end...I guess it was a character builder...”
  - b. 5-: No data were found that supported this negative category of tenet 5.
6. Tenet 6: Experiment with one’s own identity, with relationships; try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably.
  - a. 6+: Megan commented: “Throughout my whole life up to [the sanction], I was always trying to be a good girl for the teachers because I felt like they were my family friend. From then on, I was like, well, I’m me. I’m just going to be who I am.”

- b. 6-: Isaac expressed that he felt the sanction irrevocably labeled him: “It kind of encouraged me to think, well, if they’re going to think of me this way, then I’m going to go ahead and be this way because that’s the way everyone is going to perceive me anyway.”
7. Tenet 7: Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals.
  - a. 7+: Kelly noted: “I know deep down in my heart that I probably deserved it and that this one time just screwed up everything.”
  - b. 7-: Isaac said: “I agree that the sanction should have happened, but I’ve always disagreed that it should have been an athletic (one) because there were other people that were there that weren’t involved in any sports. What punishment were they getting?”
8. Tenet 8: Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life
  - a. 8+: No data were found that supported this positive category of tenet 8.
  - b. 8-: William said: “Just became depressed behind that issue and I became non-motivated. It just really threw me for a big loop and made me a bitter person. I just didn’t feel like it was being fair at all.”
9. Tenet 9: Physical activity and expression of art
  - a. 9+: Kevin’s removal from the team turned him to channel his energy to music: “I guess after I went off the basketball team, I really focused on music...Maybe I really took that negative energy and focused it somewhere else, which was a positive outlet.”

- b. 9-: Tony's removal from the sports team turned him away from school activities: "I was just angry. I just didn't want to do anything. I just wanted to sit and watch TV or do what I wanted."

Within each interview document, all comments were organized then by the nine tenets and their positive and negative implications based on the context of the response. This was an iterative process that enabled me to refine my thinking as I analyzed the data (Hahn, 2008). The following are examples of the themes that emerged from the data as related to each of the nine tenets:

1. Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers, and as responsible members of society: *Citizenship as captain, doing community service, gaining or losing faith in system, cheating the system; lettering, being on varsity.*
2. Gain experience in decision-making: *Participating in the deciding the potential outcome of a sanction; based on sanctions, making a decision about an action such as leaving a party; deciding to leave team.*
3. Interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging: *Removal from team, games, practice, being suspended; feeling connected or disconnected to team, family, and/or friends because of sanction.*
4. Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward: *"I felt bad because" it affected our score, game, season; disappointed self, coach, family, teammates, etc; embarrassment to sit on bench; letting self or other people down.*
5. Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system: *Debating the right solution or consequence; working with adults toward a "just" solution;*

*arriving at a decision where the consequence was judged as fair; assessed the situation and decided the action and consequence were in line with values; applying their own consequence.*

6. Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships; try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably: *Implies labeling of adolescent, once a bad kid, always a bad kid or a leader who just screwed up one time; felt school, coach, administration made an example out of them.*
7. Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals: *Apologizing to family, team, coach; unlucky/lucky, not acknowledging fault.*
8. Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life: *After sanction, never played sports again, got lazy, became and remained bitter; still resentful.*
9. Physical activity and expression of art: *Sanction itself and/or the outcome was long enough to exclude athlete from participating for a significant amount of time, beyond the usual two weeks or 20% rule.*

I sorted all comments by hand, after coding relevant excerpts for the 18 Level 1 themes described with the + and – signs. The hand sorting process involved finding the unit of analysis in the data, isolating it, and coding the bottom of the comment with the respondent's name. Each unit was then assigned either a positive or negative and using a scissors to keep the entire quote intact, physically cut out and placed under one of the 18 headings. A self check on coding was used by asking myself: "Would I be able to point to the excerpt alone and explain how I determined that code?" (Foss & Waters, 2007, pp. 189-190). In summary, the following criteria were used to determine and clarify the inclusion and exclusion of data:

- Is the comment related specifically to the result of the sanction? If yes, then code. If not, then code as speculative.
- Is the response because of the sanction? If yes, then code; if not, then code as speculative.
- Did the event described in the comment happen before the actual sanction (i.e., picked up by cops and so told coach)? If so, code as speculative.
- Did the sanction impede youth development tenets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 in any way? If yes, code with a plus (+) or a minus (-) sign.
- Did the sanction facilitate youth development tenets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 in any way? If yes, code with a plus (+) or a minus (-) sign.

In some cases, excerpts contained more than one unit of analysis and were thus coded multiple times reflecting each of the data analysis units. Each of the 18 categorized comments was then double checked for whether they shared significant characteristics assigned to that category (p. 190). The categorized coded data were then placed into envelopes and labeled with the code they represented, one of the nine tenets marked as either positive or negative. After arranging the data into the 18 envelopes, the envelopes' contents were further examined for volume of content. Comments were counted and recorded. Table 3.1 represents this coding process and includes the raw numbers that were found and analyzed for Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

**Table 3.1. Comments within Tenets as Facilitative or Impeding of Youth Development**

<b>Tenet of Youth Development (Konopka, 1973)</b>	<b>Sanction Facilitates Youth Development</b>	<b>Sanction Impedes Youth Development</b>
Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers and as responsible members of society	37	54
Gain experience in decision-making	7	9
Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging	8	58
Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward	48	10
Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system	13	0
Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships; try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably	12	22
Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals	31	52
Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life	0	17
Physical activity and the expression of art	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>230</b>

Within each of the 18 categories, category comments were found to have a high volume of response (tenets that they reported most often and resulted in an increased or decreased ability to achieve the growth represented by the tenet), medium volume, or low volume. This categorization provided different ways to understand their possible meanings. These high, medium, and low volume categories, then, represented the number of responses that suggested whether the tenet was facilitated as an outcome of the sanction. As Konopka (1973) never placed a value of importance on the tenets, but rather suggested that all were necessary for youth development, the coding did not include placing value on the individual tenets. The same analytical process was repeated for outcomes that impeded tenets of youth development. A natural break in the number of responses occurred among the three categories (high, medium, and low) in both the *facilitating* and *impeding* categories, which mirrored each other.

As previously stated, all analyzed comments resulted in a combined total of 387. With further subdivision, the *facilitate* category yielded 157 comments and the *impede* category yielded 230 comments. The *high* category represents comments with a range of 31 to 58 comments per tenet. The *moderate* category represents comments in the range of 7 per tenet to 22 comments. Finally, those in the *low* category were tenets that had no or one comment(s) representing that tenet; there were three of these total—two in the “facilitates youth development” category and one in the “impedes youth development” category. These details and raw number values can be seen in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2. Number of Interviewee Comments Representing Each Tenet**

Tenet of YD (Konopka, 1973)	Highly Facilitates YD	Moderately Facilitates YD	Minimally Facilitates YD	Highly Impedes YD	Moderately Impedes YD	Minimally Impedes YD
Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers and as responsible members of society	37			54		
Gain experience in decision-making		7			9	
Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging		8		58		
Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward	48				10	
Discuss conflicting values and formulate one’s own value system		13				0
Experiment with one’s own identity, with relationships; try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably		12			22	
Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals	31			52		
Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life			0		17	
Physical activity and the expression of art			1		8	
<b>Total</b>	116	40	1	164	66	0

This iterative process of assigning positive and negative values, as well as categorizing responses into high, medium, and low volumes, provided the groundwork for an evolving taxonomy. From my perspective as researcher, this taxonomy most clearly captured what the data revealed by (1) telling the story of the impact of sanctions,

(2) merging the two themes of youth development and sanctions, and (3) providing a foundation to generalize the data to other settings, as grounded theory suggests.

The three appendices indicated in this chapter directly follow the dissertation proper. Chapter 4 addresses the results of this research by presenting the synthesized data from the analysis.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of imposed no pass/no play sanctions on the youth development of high school athletes. Specifically, the study explored the sanctions' impact on the youth development of high school athletes using Konopka's (1973) nine tenets of healthy youth development as the theoretical construct. To date, no other research has explored this direct connection to youth development from a sanctioned high school athlete's perspective. The discussion of this research is subdivided into a summary of the demographic information and a presentation of the data analysis.

#### **Demographic Information**

Table 4.1 shows the demographic profile of the 15 interviewees. There were seven females and eight males, whose names have been changed in this dissertation to protect their privacy. Interviewees' ages at time of the no pass/no play sanction ranged from 14 years to 18 years, and all were college-attending and between the ages of 18 and 22 at the time of the interview. Interviewees came from urban, suburban, and rural areas in the Midwest, with 47% of subjects coming from a rural community.

Table 4.1 also shows the sanctions related to sports of many types. Alcohol use was the most common reason for sanctions (66%), followed by other various infractions including low grades, skipping school, use of inappropriate language, tobacco possession, fighting, sexual harassment, and accepting athletic equipment from a coach. Two respondents reported two sanctions during their high school career.

**Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Interviewees**

Interviewee Name	Sex	Age/Year at Sanction	Age at Interview	Sport at Time of Sanction	Reason for Sanction	School Location
Angela	F	16/Sophomore	20	Basketball	Alcohol use	Rural
Mary	F	14/ Freshman	22	Gymnastics	Alcohol use	Urban
Kara	F	16/Junior	19	Wrestling	Low grades	Urban
Kelly	F	17/Junior	20	Track	Alcohol use	Rural
Megan	F	17/Senior	18	Softball	Alcohol use	Suburban
Natasha	F	16/Junior	19	Volleyball	Alcohol use	Rural
Tina	F	18/Senior	20	Softball	Alcohol use	Suburban
Brian	M	17/Senior	22	Basketball	Vulgar language	Rural
Isaac	M	16/Junior 18/Senior	21	Track	Skipping school/Alcohol use	Rural
Jesse	M	17/Junior	20	Soccer /Basketball	Alcohol use	Rural
Kevin	M	15/Freshman	22	Basketball	Alcohol use	Urban
Mark	M	15/Freshman 17/Junior	21	Basketball/ Basketball	Alcohol use/ Tobacco possession	Rural
Tony	M	17/Junior	18	Track/Football	Public boxing match with friend	Suburban
Travis	M	17/Junior	20	Golf	Sexual harassment	Suburban
William	M	17/Junior	22	Track	Accepting athletic equipment from coach	Urban

For the data analysis, the results of these interviews, or cases, were categorized by Konopka's (1973) nine tenets of positive youth development as outlined and described in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Each tenet was used as a backdrop for examining what facilitates or impedes healthy youth development. As described in Chapter 3, data from the 15 cases fell into two groups: (1) factors that facilitated youth development and (2) factors that impeded youth development. The data were categorized to discern whether the no pass/no play sanctions either propelled an athlete towards healthy youth development or impeded it.

### **Positive Facilitation of Youth Development in Response to Sanction**

The data suggested that sanctions may in some ways positively facilitate youth development as categorized by Konopka's (1973) tenets. The underlying theory of no pass/no play sanctions is that somehow they will facilitate the development of the athlete into becoming a citizen that is more likely to be a positive contributor to society.

Sanctions generally are considered to take something (athletic participation) away from the individual in order to shape behavior (from negative to positive). The following subsections present the data first and then a brief discussion of how those data meet each requirement of Konopka's nine tenants.

#### **Facilitating Positive Youth Development: High Number of Occurrences**

The statements from participants presented below indicated that in some instances the no pass/no play sanction led the respondent toward positive development in particular areas categorized by three of Konopka's nine tenets. In all, 116 responses fell into the category of *highly facilitates youth development*, as noted previously in Chapter 3. Those examples represented in the high category were found most often as reported in the participant interviews.

- Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers and as responsible members of society (37 responses reported)
- Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward (48 responses reported)
- Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals (31 responses reported).

*Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers and as responsible members of society (37 responses reported)*

Included in this category were actions that facilitated or increased participation in social groups as a result of the sanction. Examples from the data included committing more time to school, being elected as a captain, remaining on the varsity squad, working within the school board system to address the sanction, obeying the law, and doing community service. In each of these first examples, the respondent explained how the outcome of the sanction facilitated his or her citizenship development.

Jesse, who was sanctioned from soccer for alcohol use, fought his sanction with the school board. While ultimately he was not successful, he engaged in the process as a citizen with perceived rights. He remarked that he became a stronger individual in the process of fighting for what he believed in:

Well, when you kind of have to fight the system, you learn a lot of things about a lot of people and it makes you a stronger person in general to have to fight for something. Especially since these were powerful people in the administration and stuff, so I guess that it helped build some character. I guess I felt a lot more conviction. (Jesse's Interview, #10, p. 6)

Mary was "sentenced" by her parents to do community service because of receiving the sanction from gymnastics. While she admittedly disagreed with the school's sanction, she ultimately expressed value in contributing to the greater good in her community. In fact, she found so much value in it that she continued to participate in community service beyond the time required by her parents:

You know, I think my parents' consequences of having me do community service really were positive. They added something to my life. However, the sanction only took something away. I missed my best year of gymnastics because of this and I don't have any positive thing to say about it. I stayed with things that were my positive consequences even after my parents said I didn't have to do them anymore. (Mary's Interview, #1, p. 2)

Natasha was sanctioned from volleyball for illegally drinking as a minor; she learned that it was not worth the "trade off" of having to miss games. The team activity appeared to become more important to her than her individual desires. After the sanction, she did not drink during the season:

They (the sanctions) were effective. I didn't drink after that until the season was over. My senior season, I never, ever went to one party after that. I don't know—suspending me really me because I loved volleyball, so obviously that was a good punishment for me. Having to talk to the younger girls—that was hard. I was really nervous and that was a hard thing to do. But even though it stunk so much, penalizing me from making games was almost a better punishment because I realized that I don't want to miss any games. (Natasha's Interview, #11. p. 4)

Kara learned the value of education, which suggests that she perceived the need to become a responsible member of her school/educational society. The process of being sanctioned from wrestling enabled a new focus for her on the importance of education over athletics. With respect to her no pass/no play sanction, she said:

I think it's a great idea. They have to have it. Sports always came first to me and school was second. They absolutely have to have something like this. I never got off for a full season for my GPA, but I saw other people that did. It's a great idea; it really is. Sports shouldn't come first; school should come first. I absolutely think they have to have it. (Kara's Interview, #9, p. 7)

In all four of these cases, the no pass/no play sanctions had the value of propelling the participants toward greater civic participation, either through democratic process of fighting the school board, finding greater engagement in studies or service, or providing a reason for being a law-abiding citizen. For example, Jesse found value in the formal participatory process of petitioning the school board. While he was not successful, he discovered his rights as a citizen and in turn his own personal strength. Mary, too, learned the value of participation in the form of volunteering. From the sanction, she discovered a whole new way to be involved in her community, one she continued after the sanction period was over. Also, like Mary and Jesse, Natasha discovered something very important about herself. She learned to value the right of participation in something, which in her case was volleyball. From the sanction, she grew far more appreciative of the fact that participation carries with it responsibility, as demonstrated by her refusal to ever attend another party where underage (and thus illegal) drinking was happening. In all of the above examples, these young people grew in their understanding of what it means to be a citizen of their communities and the rights and responsibilities that come with that citizenship.

*Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward (48 responses reported)*

Reflecting on and accepting the implications of one's actions on others were included in this category of actions that highly facilitated positive youth development. For example, participants indicated that missing a game or meet because of a sanction impacted the outcome of the game; they acknowledged that their actions let their coach, teammates, or parents and grandparents down; and they reported feeling a sense of personal disappointment, expressed as "I really disappointed myself," among other related emotions.

The no pass/no play sanctions often have profound personal impacts that may or may not be anticipated by the adults who implement them or the adolescents who experience them. Sanctions approximate a toddler being put in "time out." While the toddler sits in the timeout chair, she has time to think about her actions and the parent has time to think of effective justice or appropriate reparation before taking additional action. For some of the participating adolescents who received sanctions in this study, their experiences were similar.

Tina, upon informing her parents and coach of the sanctions from softball, had an opportunity to hear directly from them about how her actions affected them. Not only were they disappointed but, as she also learned, there was a direct connection between the disappointment and the financial investment her parents had made. Her actions directly impacted her parents, which was a consequence she did not seem to have imagined possible. Tina explained:

I was more scared of my parents than the sanctions really; I've never been scared that they were going to hit me or something. It was more like, I'm sitting at the table and my dad is over there and my mom is pacing using every swear word I've ever heard out of her in her entire life. She's going on and on about how I've let her down. They spent tons of money putting me through pitching clinics and hitting and all this stuff. Of course she brings that up at 8:00 in the morning. I guess it's not true of everybody that they'd have that for their parents, but I was more scared of them than any sanction. The sanction was kind of like I had to do it. It was more facing the relationships I had, facing my coach, facing my parents, facing my team and saying what I did [and hearing them say], "Now we have to find a pitcher for these two games." (Tina's Interview, #8, p. 10)

Like the child released from the timeout chair, some of the participants reported that the most difficult part of the sanction was admitting what they had done wrong to those their actions had most affected. This consequence also was true for Tina and Kelly. Tina said: "It was pretty effective. To stand up to your peers and say, 'This is what I did and this is what's become of it. Not only does it affect me, but it affects all of you,' was probably the hardest part of it, I would say." (Tina's Interview, #8, p. 10)

Kelly, who was sanctioned from track, stated:

Well, think just having to explain to 100 people what you had done and why are getting penalized is a pretty big deal. I guess if they just saw me sitting on the sideline watching people they ask me what was going on and I would have to say I got caught for drinking. It would be a little bit



personal on a one to one basis, but sort of oh well, three meets, whereas explaining to the entire team that I am going to be sitting out and...I guess the biggest thing was that I was a sprinter so I was on relay teams and those were the people that I felt bad for. You do handoffs, blind handoffs, everything is perfect and you have to throw to someone who has never actually done it before or some who is not quite as fast...I don't know. Those are the people that I probably felt the worst for. (Kelly's Interview, #14, p. 4)

Like a toddler, an adolescent who sits on the timeout chair of no pass/no play sanctions has time for reflection to learn that his actions can affect him personally. This can serve as a motivating force to change his behavior for the better. Travis, who was sanctioned from golf, learned this valuable lesson:

It might sound kind of bad, but it worked out for the best but that's not how I want it to come across. I really wanted to be a leader on that team, so I guess it motivated me more to do better. I did end up lettering that year and I was team captain that year as well. So I guess in the long run, no, it didn't have any implication on my status on the golf team at all, but obviously, as a person it did. (Travis's Interview, #12, p. 3)

Adolescents, like toddlers, are developing their social and emotional skills. As the statements above demonstrate, young people need opportunities to reflect on their behaviors and the implications that their behaviors have on themselves and on others. The sanctions appear to have provided this opportunity for some of this study's participants, just as the timeout chair provides this reflective time for the toddler. In all the above

examples, reflection played a crucial role in helping the adolescent athletes understand the implications of their actions. Tina learned the value that she placed on her relationship with her parents and that their disappointment in her actions was not only personally painful (“inward self”) but also painful externally (the “outward self”), as described by Konopka (1973). So, too, was this the case for Kelly. Again, her sanction required her to admit her wrongdoing both to herself and her teammates, something she found both internally and externally painful but that she also experienced as a mechanism for personal growth. In all, reflection of self both internally and externally was a cause for growth in all the athletes whose interviews placed them in this category. Each developed positively in this specific area of Konopka’s tenet.

*Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals  
(31 responses reported)*

Data in this study revealed that this tenet was represented strongly in terms of facilitating positive youth development after the athletic sanction. The sense of accountability developed included apologizing to the team, coach, parents, and family; accepting the removal of captainship or lettering; and understanding the emotional impact of sanction or act that resulted in the sanction on teammates, coaches, family members, and the broader community.

If given the opportunity, adolescents have the capacity to accept accountability for their actions. All too often, adults step in and rob them of this opportunity by either excusing them or taking the responsibility onto themselves. From these passages reported by this study’s participants, it seems clear that allowing the adolescent to *feel* accountable and accept the repercussions for his or her actions was highly effective. In fact, many of

this study's athletes reported that one of the most effective methods of reconciling their transgression was being asked or required to give a formal apology to their teammates.

Kelly, while outwardly angry that her coach would not let her be team captain, knew her team's rules and understood fully that a sanction meant she would no longer be eligible for a leadership role—something on which she had set her heart: “Yeah, besides that I couldn't become a captain. I had been on varsity so long beforehand that it was probably the biggest thing. I know deep down in my heart that I probably deserved it and that this one time just screwed everything up.” (Kelly's Interview, #14, p. 5)

Angela, sanctioned from basketball, expressed that she felt deeply concerned about how her youth pastor and very religious grandparents would think about her sanction. She saw her sanction as evidence that she had faltered in the eyes of her faith and loved ones: “Our town is a very religious town, too, so I worried about what is our church going to think? What are my grandparents going to think?” (Angela's Interview, #4, p. 5)

Brian, sanctioned from basketball, understood that he had failed to meet a social standard held by his community. He indicated that he was well aware that he had crossed the line with his prank and understood that his actions offended the sensibilities of some community members: “Yes, I guess I'd agree with it (the sanction). For that specific instance what we did, and he was driving around town with that on it (the car). It was just obscene. If I was someone driving around and I saw that (a vulgar word painted into the dust of the car) I'd be a little upset.” (Brian's Interview, #5, p. 5)

For Travis, feeling the pain of his victim as well as the pain that his absence from the team caused for his teammates was an effective method of reconciling his transgression:

I did pull the girl aside and I did apologize deeply to her, because like I said, we've been friends for how long. At practice one time when we all were out putting the green, I just pulled the guys aside and said, "Hey, I screwed up. Let's put this behind us and let's have a good year. Yeah, we're down a couple of conference standings because of the first two meets that I missed. Let's just pull together." I gave them a pep talk and said, "I'll be back." That's probably about it, just being apologetic to the guys for letting them down and to the girl for what I did to her. (Travis's Interview, #12, p. 3)

As is evident from these statements, allowing adolescent athletes to feel accountable for their actions, especially in relation to their peers, community members, congregation members, family, or teammates, can greatly facilitate the adolescents' social and emotional development. The effectiveness of sanctions appears to be enhanced when adults hold the adolescent accountable and allow him or her to become aware of the impact on others. Kelly, Angela, Brian and Travis all in some way were asked to show accountability for their actions, mostly in the form of apology. Each was deeply moved by the experience of apologizing, as they recognized their actions were connected with others and these actions impacted teammates, family, and community. In other words, they did indeed develop a feeling of accountability within the context of others with whom they were in relationship.

**Facilitating Positive Youth Development: Moderate Number of Occurrences**

The data revealing that sanctions propelled youths toward youth development in these two tenet areas were moderately represented in that the number of examples was less than those in the high category but greater than those in the low category.

Specifically, there were 40 comments overall that fell into the *moderately propels youths towards youth development* category. In these categories, growth areas were represented in learning and solidifying one's value system as well as adolescent identity formation.

- Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system (*13 responses reported*)
- Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships: try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably (*12 responses reported*).
- Interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging (*8 responses reported*)
- Gain experience in decision-making (*7 responses reported*)

*Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system (13 responses reported)*

The data in this category revealed markers of values such as weighing the outcome of events and applying a value to it; speaking up and speaking out; and assigning a positive value to a seemingly negative situation. Athletes reporting responses in this area were able to examine the situation and either develop stronger values around their actions or assign meaning to the event, as well as to recognize the negative outcomes associated with the event. One might say that those reporting in this category found the meaning in what happened to them, which in turn shaped their growth in this area.

One of the necessary areas of adolescent development is values clarification. New brain research (McNeely & Blanchard, 2009) has demonstrated that values clarification is an area of slower development in the adolescent, making it imperative to provide adolescents with opportunities to practice forming and testing their values. The following example statements from this study's participants illustrate the opportunities that some athletes had to practice these skills because of their no pass/no play sanctions.

Upon being sanctioned from the basketball team, Kevin recognized that he valued his music more than sports. By reexamining what he really cared about, he confidently put his energy into music, something he identified as more important:

I guess after I went off the basketball team, I really focused on music at that point and between my sophomore and junior year was when I probably saw the biggest improvement in my percussion skills. Maybe I really took that negative energy and focused it somewhere else, which was a positive outlet, fortunately. (Kevin's Interview, #13, p. 7)

Because of her sanction, Natasha missed over fifty games during the volleyball season, which constituted most of the season. Sitting on the bench throughout the season gave her plenty of time to think about the impact her sanction would have on her future. Ultimately, she decided that playing college volleyball was not in her best interest. When asked about how the sanction affected her, she said: "Yeah, but I guess I think now that that's what was going to be best for me, that I just focus on school, and studying, and getting grades, and going to a bigger school and getting a better education, or having more opportunities. I guess now that what I think. It's better." (Natasha's Interview, #11, p. 9)

While Jesse adamantly defended his innocence, he recognized the sanction experience had value. He expressed that he learned to move on, appreciating that he could still play college sports, and he recognized that possibility did not exist for some other athletes who had been sanctioned:

Well, I appreciate that I still have athletics. I play here. When I look back on it, I see that at least I am playing. At least there is life after high school athletics, because for a lot of people there isn't. So, I just kind of feel lucky that I am still able to do it and I am glad that that was not the way that it had to end. Aside from that, I guess it was a character builder, I suppose in ways. (Jesse's Interview, #10, p. 5)

William, who was sanctioned from track, expressed that he was the victim of circumstance. He lost his eligibility to run college track in the future when his coach violated NCAA rules by providing his low-income high school athletes with running shoes. William defended his coach's actions, recognizing that rules are often defined by those who make them, even if they are not always fair: "I didn't think anything was wrong about that because the school didn't have anything set up for people who couldn't afford those shoes or anything. He (the coach) did it out of the goodness of his heart, and in return he wrote it off as a deduction, which was fair." (William's Interview, #2, p. 2)

In the above examples, the athletes took the sanctions as opportunities to examine their situations and make value judgments about them. Some of the situations required the athlete to speak out, others engendered more quiet reflection, and some resulted in the participant's apparent resignation regarding the circumstances. However, each of these reported experiences appeared to have provided an exercise in values clarification, which

in the end seems to have facilitated their development. For instance, Jesse affirmed his values that there must be a system in place to make sports accessible to those who do not have the financial means, while Natasha realized that academics were a more important part of her value system than sports, ultimately deciding not to participate in volleyball at the collegiate level.

*Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships: try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably (12 responses recorded)*

Integrated among these data are concepts associated with allowing athletes to save face, remaining supportive or neutral about their character following the sanction, and providing a safe place to experience making a mistake without being labeled as a “bad kid.” These are representative roles that the participants may have taken on in response to the no pass/no play sanction.

Identity development in adolescence resembles having a costume party every day. The adolescent tries on new costumes to see which one fits the best, gets the most laughs, fools others, or scares the most. The fun (and growth toward youth development) is in being able to try on a new identity or role daily and to take it off if it does not work. Adults and adolescents alike assist their party guests in the process when they allow for many costume changes, not labeling them as any particular character and while supporting their guests without making misjudgments about their costumes.

In this vein, it is interesting to know that many community, faculty, and team members knew about Mark's sanction from basketball. Nevertheless, he was able to resume normal activities without any labeling from them. Mark stated: “Nobody cared. Everybody knew what was going on. It was just a matter of...I had friends and everybody



knew who did it. Nobody was out there and wouldn't talk to you or anything like that along those lines." (Mark's Interview, #3, p. 4)

For years, Megan felt she must wear the good girl costume to school because her dad was a teacher at her high school. Following her sanction from softball, she expressed that her family and friends supported her no matter what role she was playing—even when it was not the athlete's role—thus allowing her to be who she really was:

Throughout my whole life up to then, I was always trying to be a good girl for the teachers because I felt like they were my family friend. From then on, I was like, well, I'm me. I'm just going to be who I am. I still respected them, but I didn't care as much. And my dad, we were closer, too, and then I kind of figured out, I think he figured out, too, who his friends were. He protected me and I think we got closer and we decided that it didn't really matter what everyone thought. (Megan's Interview, #15, p. 4)

Through her sanction, Tina indicated that she learned that coaches, too, wear costumes and roles, but underneath them are real human beings, willing to accept her in all her forms—sad, happy, confrontational, and mad: "For a while, I ended up going in there and just breaking down and telling her how I wasn't happy with the way she was dealing with it. I guess I learned, too, how to confront something. It didn't change it for the long term. I still talk to her (the coach) all the time." (Tina's Interview, #8, p. 7)

Travis found that his identity or costume choice was among the worst for any male—that of a convicted sexual harasser. His coach offered wise counsel that eventually

allowed Travis to remove his jailbird costume and move on to other identities. He explained:

The father of the girl that was trying out for the team called our coach and said what was happening. This is actually a friend of my parents. They've been friends for how long. That's why I said it was kind of weird that she would accuse me of this. He called the coach and they talked about it. Of course a coach has to report that; he can't keep that under his belt. I don't understand when she handed the form in, or if she handed it in because the coach told her to. But, afterwards, we talked. He was more of a personal coach. It wasn't like he was over there and tells us what to do. He said, 'Just serve your penalty. Just get it out of the way and put it behind you.' He actually told me to come back and lead this team. It wasn't more of a disciplinary thing that he did at all. It was more, put it behind you, serve your penalty and just get it over with, and come back and help this team out." (Travis's Interview, #12, p. 2)

From these data, the importance of allowing adolescent athletes to maintain their personal pride amidst missteps or blunders is highlighted. Rather than being labeled or having to maintain a label, Megan, Tina, and Travis were able to step out of their usual roles and try on new dispositions following the sanction while remaining safe and supported in the experience. Each gave an example of where adults allowed them to safely venture into new territory, even when it was not in their best interest to do so, while still allowing the athlete the grace to turn back or move on when the outcome of trying on this new identity faltered.

*Interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging* (8 responses reported)

Regarding this tenet, indicators of connection to team, team members, coaches, school, and family were used to indicate facilitation towards interaction with peers and acquiring a sense of belonging from that interaction. Only a few (8) study statements expressed that the participants acquired such interactive belonging as a result of the no pass/no play sanction.

An infant needs to connect to a mother or father or someone in another parental role in order to successfully develop physically, emotionally, and intellectually (Bretherton, 1992). For adolescents, these needs are still in place (Ackard, 2006). However, their realm of connection expands beyond the familial unit to include other caring adults. Sports coaches and teams may fulfill that need for youth, as supported moderately by Kara's expressed experience.

According to Kara, sports were an explicit part of her connection to young people and school, and they continued to be so after her sanction:

Sports are really important to kids. A lot of kids benefit from sports academically also. It just puts their whole life together and it keeps them off the streets, and it gives them discipline. I think if it were dealt with in a more formal way, it would have crushed me. If I had gotten kicked off that team, I would have been really bitter about it, and it would not be like, oh, now maybe I should study more. It would be like, 'Fuck school, fuck sports; I'm pissed off! Unfortunately, kids, including myself, tend to backlash in a really negative way. It would be like I'm going to punish the teacher and my parents by not doing homework, whereas I'm punishing

myself in the long run. I would have been like I'm going to boycott school and that'll show them. (Kara's Interview, #9, p. 10)

Megan, too, expressed the importance of the sanction in terms of connecting, in her case, to her father:

And my dad, we were closer, too, and I kind of figured out, I think he figured out, too, who his friends were. He protected me and I think we got closer and we decided it didn't really matter what everyone thought.

(Megan's Interview, #15, p. 4)

As Kara and Megan's comments indicate, feeling a sense of belonging or connection is highly important to young people, and the events which were due the sanction promoted this connection, although responses in this category were only moderate by volume and mentioned much less frequently than those in the Highly Facilitates area.

*Gain experience in decision-making (7 responses reported)*

The data revealed that some participants demonstrated or otherwise indicated active decision-making either in relation to the sanction and its consequences immediately following the event or in post sanction situations.

Decision-making is a skill that can be taught and learned. When faced with difficult issues and given an opportunity to weigh the consequences and then be involved in making the decision itself, adolescents who have been taught how to make decisions often make choices that are more appropriate. Further, they may be more accepting of the consequences of the choice. Adults can foster this decision-making process by creating

opportunities for adolescents to make choices. Athletic sanctions appeared to have this result for some of the study's participants.

Such was the case with Travis. In the past, Travis indicated that he had not exercised his decision-making skills, which was a likely contributor to the offense that led to his sanction. However, after having a sanction, Travis decided to use the 15-minute window option, which is a clause in the sanction rules that allowed athletes to leave a party when they recognize that alcohol or drug use is occurring, and in this way to avoid being held accountable. He explained:

Definitely. After I got the first sexual harassment thing, that's always on my record and that applies the whole time you're in high school. There were a bunch of us together on New Year's Eve the following year, and there had been a party that got busted a couple weeks before. We didn't want to have anything to do with that. There were a couple of parties going on, and we have this flexible thing where you go there for 15 minutes to party. If you see drinking going on you have 15 minutes to leave. We went to this party at one of our friend's houses, and sat there and watched for 15 minutes and we took off. All my friends are in athletics in the wintertime, basketball or wrestling. They didn't want to lose out on the season that they were currently in and I didn't want to have to sit out half the golf season the next spring. (Travis's Interview, #12, pp. 6 & 7)

Another example of positive actions promoting decision-making can be seen in the interview with Kevin. In this instance, Kevin indicated that he actively had engaged

in the decision-making process when he decided that he, his coach, and his team were no longer a good match and that leaving basketball was in fact the best decision for him. In this case, he was the driver of the decision:

I didn't [stay on the team after the sanction season]. We [Kevin and the coach] really didn't get along at all. The coach and I felt that it was not very beneficiary for either one of us for me to be on the team. I loved practice the first three weeks and after that (the sanction) I just didn't feel like a part of the team. I felt like he always kind of singled me out and that I wasn't getting a fair shot. I don't know—it just wasn't fun and that was why I was there. It wasn't a great team or anything and I wasn't a great basketball player so it was just for fun. After that it wasn't fun anymore.  
(Kevin's Interview, #13, p. 5)

Natasha also appeared to have benefited from her sanction when she made an active decision to stop attending parties. Having recognized the likely consequence and realizing her ability to make decisions that did not compromise her eligibility, Natasha expressed that she decided not to attend parties after her sanction from the volleyball team.

They [the sanctions] were effective. I didn't drink after that until the season was over. My senior season, I never, ever went to one party after that. I don't know---suspending me really affected me because I loved volleyball, so obviously that was a good punishment for me. Having to talk to the younger girls; that was hard. I was really nervous and that was a hard thing to do. But even though it stunk so much, penalizing me for

making games was almost a better punishment because I realized that I don't want to miss any games. (Natasha's Interview, #11, p. 4)

From these data, the opportunity for these adolescents to be active decision makers regarding continuing participation either in the activity that caused the sanction or in other choices resulting from the sanction appeared to have had positive impacts on the athletes themselves. Travis learned that he was able to take advantage of an option that was in place, an option that recognized that sometimes adolescent athletes need time to make a decision that is in their best interest. Likewise, Natasha's sanction forced her to reflect on her past decisions about attending parties and make new decisions around that. From the sanction, she learned the value of sports in her life and how past and future decisions could impact something she so highly valued.

#### **Facilitating Positive Youth Development: Minimal Number of Occurrences**

In this section, data representing these two tenets were nonexistent or represented by only one occurrence with respect to how they played out in the study participants' expressed experiences of growth from their sanctions. In other words, by number, only one data point was reported regarding sanctions that propelled youths toward youth development in the following two areas.

- Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life (*0 responses reported*)
- Physical activity and the expression of art (*1 responses reported*)

*Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life (0 responses reported)*

No data in the study supported the administration of no pass/no play sanctions as leverage towards fulfilling the adolescent's need to "cultivate a capacity to enjoy life."

*Physical activity and the expression of art (1 responses reported)*

In this section were sanction outcomes that supported youth development by encouraging athletic participation and any other expression of art. The no pass/no play sanction, by its very nature, removes the athlete from his or her playing field. For many athletes, there are no positive effects of this with respect to encouraging any other physical activity. Kevin, as discussed earlier, was rare among these participants in that he was able to rechannel his energy to another artistic venue away from athletics: “I guess after I went off the basketball team, I really focused on music at that point and between my sophomore and junior year was when I probably saw the biggest improvement in my percussion skills. Maybe I really took that negative energy and focused it somewhere else, which was a positive outlet, fortunately.” (Kevin’s Interview, #13, p. 7)

#### **Negative Facilitation of Youth Development in Response to Sanction**

Although the data certainly indicated that no pass/no play sanctions sometimes facilitated positive youth development as defined by Konopka’s (1973) tenets, it suggested more strongly that sanctions may have negative consequences. In all, there were 230 comments that indicated that they either highly or moderately impeded youth development. Also in this category was one tenet falling into the minimally impedes youth development group: *discuss conflicting values and formulate one’s own value system*. There were no comments in this area. Interestingly, there also were three tenets in the highly impedes youth development categories: *participate as citizens, interact with peers, and develop a feeling of accountability*. Together, these three tenets represented 72% of all the data in all responses regarding how sanctions may impede youth development. Again categorizing participant responses by Konopka’s tenets, the



following examples from the data revealed aspects of sanctions that may have a negative impact on youth development.

### **Impeding Positive Youth Development: High Number of Occurrences**

The following examples of negative results represented those most often found in the data. In other words, they comprised the highest number of reports of these activities in the following three tenets. As mentioned above, these three tenets represent the majority of all the responses, both positive and negative. In addition, they accounted for over nearly three-quarters of all responses in the *Impede* category (164 responses out of 230 responses).

- Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers, and as responsible members of society (*54 responses recorded*)
- Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging (*58 responses recorded*)
- Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals (*52 responses recorded*)

Included in this category were actions that greatly impeded participation as members of social groups, especially in schools and community from a systematic sense. Examples that participants disclosed included losing faith in the system and cheating the system. In addition, actions that generally would be considered socially irresponsible, such as disobeying the law or school rules, were found.

In the following example, Isaac, who was sanctioned from track, used the word “Gestapo” to express his strong feelings of being pushed or ordered around, with no mechanism for input, feeling in essence a non-citizen of the school community:

I never really got along well with a lot of teachers in high school, especially with our principal and the administration. Just the way the whole thing was handled and the kind of Gestapo tactics they used. They would lie to people and tell them that five other people said that you were there, so you have to confess. Just witnessing that made me lose a lot of faith in the system. I was guilty as anyone else, but it rewarded you for lying. The system rewarded you for lying and punished you for telling the truth. It just made me lose a lot of faith in the integrity of our school system, and pretty much the Wisconsin public schools in general because I would assume that . . . my school was fairly typical of a small-town public school, so I lost a lot of faith in the educational establishment. I guess.

(Isaac's Interview, #6, p. 1)

In this next example, Jesse indicated that the lack of due process affected how he felt about school and its administrators. He was a three-sport athlete who was suspended from all his upcoming activities for his senior year because he was with others who had been drinking although breathalyzer results showed no alcohol in his system and he was not charged with a minor legal offense. Like Isaac, Jesse expressed that he felt as if his rights were non-existent even though he was well aware that he had rights:

I just couldn't believe it. They didn't give me due process, which was the first thing. They immediately said that I was going to sit out and that was the way it was going to be. I was class president and we were in the middle of class elections and they made me pull out of that. I didn't get due process in that sense, because I was guilty right away. I was running

for class president my senior year, because we did the voting in my junior year. They made me pull out of that right away. I never got a chance to do that, because they assumed I was guilty from the get go. I thought that was pretty ridiculous since these were the people that I had been working my tail off for years. I had played varsity basketball since my freshman year. I was the team captain my junior year and my senior year was going to be a big year. I was excited about it and was hoping to get a Division One scholarship in basketball. I really felt like I had been working my butt off for these people for years now. I was a good student and class president. I was one of the good examples of the school and this was how they treated the good kids at their school. I just couldn't believe it. I was really upset.

(Jesse's Interview, #10, p. 3)

In this third example, Tony, sanctioned from track and football, lamented his "sentence," explaining the he too felt disconnected and that his view of school athletics had changed: "In the short run, it got me a lot of bad feelings for the school, especially the athletic director who gave out the sentencing. It actually impacted me for the long run, too, because I just didn't have the same outlook on our sports and our program as I did before." (Tony's Interview, #7, p. 3)

In each of these examples, the adolescents expressed that they had felt either ignored or stripped of their rights as citizens and functioning members of their school society. Some made statements that were analogous to being a community member living under oppression. Clearly, such a strong sense of oppression, while common in these analyses, is not conducive to sense of being a responsible community member.

Additionally, as in each of the examples given above, the sanction was viewed as a process of criminalization. Words like "Gestapo" used by Isaac, "guilty" used by Jesse, and "sentencing" used by Tony all reflect words of the criminal justice system, a system in which one's guilt does, in fact, remove one's rights as a citizen. Clearly, these words are powerful descriptors of the negative impact the sanctions had on these adolescent athletes.

*Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging (58 responses reported)*

Included in this category are actions that greatly impeded connecting and maintaining interactions with peers as well as school and/or greatly impeded feeling connected to friends, coaches, family, or the school itself. Included among these are stories of removals from practice, games, the team, or school or the expression of a general sense of disconnection from peers.

As noted earlier, to successfully navigate the adolescent years, adolescents need to interact with peers and feel like they are a part of something. In the following example, William, who was sanctioned from track, explained very simply the disconnection he felt after no longer being allowed to play: "It just felt real odd not participating and representing my school. It just felt real depressing." (William's Interview, #2, p. 2)

Tony, too, explained the negative emotional and mental impact of the sanction on his connection to school, and he also conveyed a sense of withdrawal from the institution: "At the end of the year, I probably didn't care as much because I just didn't feel that the school was helping me out, so why would I try." (Tony's Interview, #7, p. 3)

Jesse indicated that his sanction severed many ties for him, even those that clearly would have benefited his future ability to be recruited and to maintain important connections in his life:

I had a good season my senior year, but this horrible relationship with my coach ended up in me not even finishing the season. I quit with one game left because we got in an argument. It was at the end and I decided not to finish the season. I just couldn't [do] this. By not finishing the season, I was ineligible for All Star State and All Conference. We have an All Star game in Wisconsin and those were all probably things that I would have gotten the chance to do and I didn't because of that. This is important in recruiting and stuff like that. I definitely hurt my chances. (Jesse's Interview, #10, p. 5)

Finally, Natasha addressed the impact the sanction had on her interaction with peers. She described how the sanction affected her friendships (peers) and her sense that she could still be a part of something important:

A lot of my friendships suffered. I'm not friends with a lot of those people that I used to be. It ruined it because I could not believe the immaturity of our coach, that she would talk about me behind my back. It was just a horrible season. She didn't understand that I had stepped up and that I had tried to better myself through this, that I hadn't just started partying again, that I had learned something. She never realized that. (Natasha's Interview, #11, p. 7)

These examples illustrate how the sanctions they experienced disconnected some of the youths in this study from their peers and engendered a more general sense of disconnection or lack of belonging. As in the first tenet discussed above, *participate as citizens*, the language used by the athletes in this area, *interact with peers*, also reflected the social isolation that is experienced by a convicted criminal; to some degree, their comments indicated a sense of having been jailed for their offenses. For example, Tony talked about how he no longer cared, “Why should I try?,” while Natatasha said it ruined her friendships. In each, there was a loss of connection and hope, much like comments an incarcerated inmate may make.

*Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals  
(52 responses reported)*

The data collected and categorized in this tenet reflected how the sanction highly impeded “the accused” athletes’ sense of accountability, especially in relation to others. Among the outcomes were failure to acknowledge fault, viewing the sanction as a result of simply being the unlucky one who was caught, not recognizing the impact of one’s actions on others, and justifying or making excuses for one’s actions. The following examples contain many indications that the sanctions, in fact, had an effect on the adolescent that was opposite of what was intended. In these examples, rather than developing a sense of accountability, adolescent athletes often externalized the situation, explaining it away rather than seeing their contribution to it. In addition, they sometimes seemed oblivious to the impact that it had on their team and teammates.

Isaac described that while he agreed with the sanction in theory, he did not grasp why it should apply to him, an athlete, when it did not apply to non-athletes. Although he

presented an interesting argument, Isaac appeared not to acknowledge that regardless of one's status, he ultimately was responsible and needed to be accountable for his actions:

I agree that a sanction should have happened, but I've always disagreed that it should have been an athletic [one] because there were other people that were there that weren't involved in any sports. What punishment were they getting, maybe a week of detention, which is nothing. It seemed like anyone that was an athlete was held to this ridiculously high standard, whereas students that weren't involved in athletics could pretty much do whatever they wanted and get away with it. It just kind of felt like discrimination. It was discriminating against you for being more involved and trying to do positive things in the school. (Isaac's Interview, #6, p. 2)

Similarly, Mark stated that the sanction was "no big deal;" never acknowledging that it may have had an impact on others beyond himself: "I really don't think there were any [impacts of the sanction] besides being annoyed and upset that I couldn't participate. It was really no big deal. It kind of sucked, too, because you had to be at all the practices and things like that." (Mark's Interview, #3, p. 5)

Tina found solace for her actions from her teammates. However, like some other study participants, she indicated feeling that she was just unlucky to have been caught, and she never acknowledged that she was indeed responsible for her actions that led to the sanction:

The ones [her teammates] who came and talked to me said, 'You'll live through it,' and stuff like that. I just remember a lot of people saying, 'It could have been me.' We had four or five minors [illegal possession] on

the team at the beginning of the year, so it wasn't like I was the only one either. (Tina's Interview, #8, p. 5)

These examples described how sanctions had the opposite impact on the adolescent athlete. Again, within these data is language that is not unlike what a criminal might express. It is a commonplace fact that jailing people rarely is rehabilitative and, like these sanctions did, may in fact teach the criminal more "tricks of the trade." Rather than learning accountability for their actions from the sanctions, these adolescents expressed feelings that, in spite of their "guilt," they themselves had been wronged. They all felt in some way that the sanction made their indiscretion justified. Isaac said, "It was a ridiculously high standard." Mark indicated that the sanction had no real impact: "It was no big deal." Tina said, "I wasn't the only one..."

### **Impeding Positive Youth Development: Moderate Number of Occurrences**

The data revealing that sanctions failed to propel youths toward positive youth development in the following five tenet areas were moderately represented by the number of the examples. They ranged from a low of 8 remarks to a high of 22 remarks. This range represented comments that were less frequently represented than those in the high category but more often represented than those in the low category. In total, there were 66 participant comments regarding these tenets that were judged to moderately impede youth development, which comprised nearly 30% of all the 230 comments and exceeded those in the *moderately facilitates youth development* category by 65%.

- Gain experience in decision-making (9 responses recorded)
- Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outwardly as well as inward (10 responses recorded)



- Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships: try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably (*22 responses recorded*)
  - Cultivate capacity to enjoy life (*17 responses recorded*)
  - Physical activity and expression of art (*8 responses recorded*)
- Gain experience in decision-making (9 responses recorded)*

Sometimes sanctions produced outcomes that moderately impeded youth development because the sanctioned athletes did not participate in the decision-making process, despite the availability of decision options. Also included here are instances in which the sanction apparently led to the athletes' taking deceptive risks rather than making smarter choices.

Mark had received a sanction for being in the presence of alcohol. Although he was fully aware of the rule about alcohol, he did not make the decision to leave the party. He, in fact, had two sanctions during his high school career:

It means that if you're there, even if you're not drinking. You're just there hanging out with your friend and your friends are drinking and they find out about it, it's as guilty as they are, which kinds of sucks. You could be their designated driver, and if you stayed there what was deemed longer than like five minutes or an appropriate amount of time, and figure out that there's drinking going on and don't leave, you might as well stay the whole time and crack open a can of beer because you were screwed."

(Mark's Interview, #3, p. 2)

In another interview, Brian indicated that he might commit the same kind of act in the future but that he would cover himself better. He was sanctioned for writing obscene

messages on a teammate's car. The teammate then drove the car home with the words still on the car and the teammate's parents contacted the coach:

Interviewer: "How about you personally, did you learn a lesson from this (the sanction)? Was there anything you took from it?"

Brian: "Just to think a little bit before I do stupid things. If I was going to do something again, it wouldn't be anything that could be traced.

Interviewer: "So you might have learned how to be more deceptive?"

Brian: "Yeah. I wouldn't leave anything in writing." (Brian's Interview, #5, p. 4)

Indeed, Brian continued: "I think that if someone's going to do something, they're going to do it. They don't need these rules to tell them yes or no. If they are going to do it, they're going to be more clever about it. I think high schoolers pretty much know what they're going to do. That's how I felt anyway." (Brian's Interview, #5, p. 5) Similarly, although she permanently lost her place on the team, Angela expressed a similar sense of covering her tracks more carefully while committing the same kind of offense: "It didn't really affect me so much because I still drank throughout high school. I was just more cautious about it, I guess." (Angela's Interview, #4, p. 4)

Rather than learning to make good, responsible decisions, data regarding this tenet category reveal that the sanctions may have impeded the athletes' youth development by either teaching them to opt out of decision-making or by using deceptive tactics to avoid having to make responsible decisions. For example, Angela learned to be "more cautious" when she drank rather than making the responsible decision to eliminate drinking as a minor, and Brian said he would just be more careful—to be untraceable—in

the future so he would not be caught. In these cases, the sanction served little purpose in teaching the youths the intended lesson of becoming able to make responsible decisions, and in fact, it appears to have propelled them toward sneakiness and deceit.

*Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outwardly as well as inward (10 responses recorded)*

In this section were sanction outcomes that moderately impeded youth development in that the athletes did not recognize the impact of the sanction on themselves and on others, including their teams, teammates, coaches, or parents. In the following examples, participants' remarks expressed a rejection of their involvement in the activities. The sanction, therefore, seemed to have created an opportunity to blame others and minimize the impact of the event on themselves and others rather than to provide an opportunity to be self-reflective both outwardly and inwardly.

Mary stated:

I was pissed. I was so mad that my coach, that she was snooping around. I worked so hard. And because of one thing I did out of my whole school life. I thought it was really unfair. It is eight years later now and I still think it isn't positive. I didn't change any of my behaviors. If anything, it made me want to do it more. I don't ever remember a kid that got punished and improved their behavior. It didn't bring any positive influence into my life. (Mary's Interview, #1, p. 1)

Mary continued to express that sanctions were not teaching opportunities:

It doesn't make it a cooperative attitude. It is just like sex ed. You can say, 'Don't have sex,' but they still have it. Instead, you can teach them safety.

There are always consequences. You just think you are invincible. It [the sanction] doesn't teach you reality. It is pretending that if there is a punishment, kids won't do it. Whether or not you are on a sports team.

(Mary's Interview, #1, p. 2)

Kevin, on the other hand, seemed self-dismissive and believed that his sanction could not have had an influence on the team given his lack of team stature and perceived lack of talent:

Actually, one of the team members was one of the guys who was with me before the game and was drinking with me. He knew and he felt really bad about it, especially because I eventually ended up quitting the team. I don't know, I think a lot of the team members didn't really care. I wasn't a significant part of the team. I was just kind of the eighth or ninth man on the bench. I guess if I had played a more significant role it would have really affected everybody, but I think that because I wasn't that great, it didn't." (Kevin's Interview, #13, p. 6)

In the above examples, Mary and Kevin both indicated how the sanctions propelled them away from being self-reflective, inwardly and outwardly. Instead of recognizing the impact their sanction had on themselves and others, they denied its significance from an apparent sense of disconnection from the reality of one's responsibilities and ability to impact others. These two athletes represent the others in the study who expressed similar feelings that the sanction did nothing either to themselves or to others around them.

*Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships: try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably (22 responses recorded)*

In this section were sanction outcomes that moderately impeded youth development because the former high school athletes being interviewed appeared to accept being labeled as bad by others, questioned their own character following the sanction, and admitted to believing that “mistakes” leading to sanctions are irrevocable.

In this first example, Isaac said:

I think it really did. Up until the second semester of my junior year, I never really drank much. That was one of the first times—not the first time—that I drank. My senior year I drank a lot. Even looking back on it now, it's hard to say whether it was... There were other factors involved, but it definitely was a contributing cause to it, because of the way the faculty reacted, the way that everyone was like, you're so much less of a person because you did this. It kind of made me feel, well, if they're going to be judgmental on one thing that I did, why should I want to be involved in this, and why should I care what these people think? It kind of encouraged me to think, well, if they're going to think of me this way, then I'm going to go ahead and be this way because that's the way everyone is going to perceive me anyway. Like I said, I'm sure there were a bunch of different reasons why that happened, but I think that (the sanction) was definitely a contributing factor. (Isaac's Interview, #6, p. 3)

Similarly, Tina indicated that her role and future as an athlete were diminished by the sanction. She stated:

My junior year, my name was out there and coaches would call and send letters. Then my senior year, I didn't start those two games, my name wasn't out there, and everybody assumed when you missed two games that it was for drinking. It could have been a combination of things, but the letters didn't come as much. (Tina's Interview, #8, p. 5)

Natasha lost her sense of self as a team leader and found herself stuck in the role of a "druggie," which led to a decision about where to go for college:

Yeah, like a year-and-a half probably. It had a lot of negative effects—big ones. The next year I was captain and my coach would talk to other kids in the school that weren't even on the volleyball teams about how I was a bad kid and a bad influence and I was a druggie. Obviously, I had tried to stand up and be the leader because otherwise they wouldn't have voted me captain. My whole senior season was really bad and after that I decided not to play college volleyball. I was going to go to a smaller school and play. I decided to go to a bigger school and forget about it, so I decided to come here instead of going in a Division 2 or 3 school to play. I didn't play club after that. It ruined it." (Natasha's Interview, #11, p. 7)

As is apparent in these statements, these athletes accepted a negative label regarding their actions and self worth, a label that they believed they must continue to wear: "[I was] a bad influence and I was a druggie." In addition, these sanctioned athletes questioned their own character following the sanction in such a way that changing their actions for the better would not change others' perceptions of them; they appeared to believe wholeheartedly that their behaviors that had led to their sanctions were immutable.

*Cultivate capacity to enjoy life (17 responses reported)*

Whereas positive youth development would foster an increasing capacity to enjoy life, some study participants indicated that the outcome of the sanction impeded their ability to enjoy life. Examples of data in this category were losing a sense of enjoyment in the sport, a lasting feeling of resentment and feeling bitter years later, and a lasting impact on life.

Mary, who was sanctioned from gymnastics in high school and now was in college, said: “I was fourteen. I am still so bitter and angry.” (Mary’s Interview, #1, p. 1) William expressed having damaged feelings: “I just became depressed behind that issue and I became non-motivated. It just really threw me for a big loop and made me a bitter person. I just didn’t feel like it was being fair at all.” (William’s Interview, #2, p. 6) Mark also indicated long-held resentment: “[After three to seven years,] there is still resentment there, so I really don’t think that they work. I just don’t think they [the sanction] really prove anything” (Mark’s Interview, #3, p. 5).

For Tony, the sanction seemed to have engendered a sense that something good had been irretrievably lost: “It just left a bad taste in my mouth from high school. I looked up to my coaches and the program so much. I still do because we accomplished so much. I respect my coaches a lot, but the athletic director still put that little damper on it. It will never be a perfect memory.” (Tony’s Interview, #7, p. 7) Natasha, despite some expressed wisdom described earlier in this chapter, also retained negative emotions: “Yeah, I am still upset about it. I loved volleyball. I would still play it now probably if none of this had happened.” (Natasha’s Interview, #11, p. 7) Natasha’s experience of being left out of a beloved sport played out as friends and teammates, who also were

involved but not caught, were recruited to a larger college team while recruiters stopped calling her after the sanction.

In the examples shown above, respondents used strong, negative words such as “bitter,” “upset,” and “resentment” to describe the destructive emotional impact the sanctions had on them. In particular, some stated that these feelings still remained, in spite of several years passing since the sanction. In the field of youth development, the end goal is to develop a youth with positive feelings towards life. Obviously, however, youths who expressed such strong negative emotions as result of the sanctions were not positively propelled by those sanctions to cultivate a capacity to enjoy life.

*Physical activity and expression of art (8 responses recorded)*

In this section were sanction outcomes that moderately impeded youth development by removing the will or the opportunity to engage in the sport. In these cases, as opposed to the positive effects described earlier in this chapter, this tenet did not play out with a substitution of another sport or of an art to replace the sport. According to Tony:

I was just angry. I just didn't want to do anything. I just wanted to sit and watch TV or do what I wanted. I just felt like doing what I wanted to do because I felt like I was being persecuted. I just wanted to go against the rule because I thought I was following them and they went against me anyway. I just wanted to be rebellious against them. (Tony's Interview, #7, p. 7)

William, too, lost his sense of self as an athlete: “You can see I gained a lot of weight. I got less motivated in running after that. It just bummed me out. I lost interest in



the sport. That's the biggest impact, staying in shape, feeling good, motivated, doing exercises. That's the biggest impact about it to me." (William's Interview, #2, p. 4)

Like William, Mary expressed that her healthy exercise habits were affected by her sanction from her team:

I was always a B average. My grades didn't improve until two years later so I don't think there was any real connection between the grades and the sanction. In fact, the sanction didn't have anything to do with my grades. If anything, the sanction took away my structure. It took away a healthy part of my life. I wouldn't have meant that I would have been doing my homework. Instead, I put things off when I was sanctioned because I had extra time on my hands. (Mary's Interview, #1, p. 1)

These data represent sanction outcomes that moderately impeded youth development. They did so by removing the athlete's will or opportunity to participate in the sport. Instead, as Tony, William and Mary all describe, the sanction propelled them away from the sport either leaving them with no physical activity or with unstructured time that was not put to other useful, art-like purposes.

### **Impeding Positive Youth Development: Minimal Number of Occurrences**

In this section, data representing a minimal impediment to youth development are represented. Here, only one tenet was represented as it had no data with respect to how it played out in the study participants' expressed experiences of growth from their sanctions. In other words, no respondents reported that the sanctions did not in some way impede their youth development.

- Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system (*0 responses reported*)

*Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system (0 responses reported)*

Examples of data included in this category would be markers of values such as weighing the outcome of events and applying a value to it, speaking up and speaking out, or assigning a negative or ambivalent value to the situation. No data in terms of participant comments were found for this category.

### **Summary**

This chapter has explored the data in terms of its positive (facilitative) and negative (impeding) impact on the youth development of sanctioned athletes using Konopka's (1973) nine tenets. Three hundred and eighty-seven data points were analyzed and categorized according to whether they highly, moderately, or minimally facilitated or impeded youth development. Data supporting both facilitation and impeding of youth development were found and described. The data in the highly impeding youth development represented the majority of data for all categories. In the final chapter of this dissertation, the implications for these findings are discussed as well as areas for future research in youth development and sports with regard to no pass/no play sanctions.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Implications of the Findings**

#### **Review of the Study**

##### **Review of the Research Question**

Given the general national acceptance of no pass/no play sanctions in high school athletics and the commonness with which they are implemented, I became interested in the impact of these sanctions on athletes' youth development. As a high school gymnastics coach, I often was required to implement these sanctions in spite of often feeling very conflicted about the impact they were having on the development of my athletes. I was compelled to ask whether the sanctions were helpful or hurtful. I needed to know whether they propelled an athlete toward improved behavior or facilitated resentment and disillusionment among my athletes.

One season, an incident forced me to truly examine the impact of no pass/no play sanctions. I had to remove an athlete for a no pass/no play violation, but in the process, I lost her as a team member. Instead of coming to practice since the sanction prohibited her from coming to practice even if she did not practice, she disappeared each day after school. And, after the sanction ended, her grades had not improved, she was no longer working out, and she never returned to the sport. To rectify the problem, I sought out potential remedies in the existing school structure, but instead I found policies that limited the student's development and that tied my hands as the coach. I had hoped I could find alternative policies that acknowledged my athlete's wrong doing but also reinforced that a young person could be understood as a "responsible citizen" rather than as a "troubled youth." I ended that coaching season asking myself whether effective

youth-development policies could be adopted rather than punitive approaches from which my athletes seem to be gaining little, if anything, positive.

This event, along with many similar situations, was the impetus for the primary research question of this dissertation: What is the impact of imposed no pass/no play sanctions on the process of youth development for high school athletes? The specific aim of this study was to describe the impact of these sanctions on youths who had been sanctioned. First, using Konopka's (1973) nine tenets of youth development, I wanted to discover the impact on these sanctions on the youth development of high school athletes. Second, I wanted to consider potential new policies or sanctions that were could be effective in propelling offending youths toward positive development. Finally, and self-servingly, I truly wanted to know what the best course of action would be for me to take as a coach when faced with an offending athlete.

For this study, a broad definition of no pass/no play was employed. Beginning with the State of Texas in 1985, the term originally applied to grades (Texas Homeland Security, 2010). However, the term and its application have been broadened significantly across all 50 states and now, depending on the locality of enforcement, they encompass attendance and other behavioral transgressions such as smoking and drinking alcohol.

Thus, in the context of this study, no pass/no play means an athlete's either permanent or temporary removal from a high school sports team because of an infraction like poor grades, drinking, smoking, or other such violations. I used this broader definition because it is the definition under which I coached and it most reflects that of current policies of state high school leagues across the nation.

**Review of Study Design**

To answer my research question, I used a qualitative, interview-based, grounded theory methodology by examining retrospectively the views of 15 college-attending young adults aged 18-22 who experienced one or more sanctions as a high school athlete. Grounded theory was selected because it allowed me to test a “sixth sense” as to how I might continue (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), and I suspected that there might be elements to no pass/no play that are effective and some that are not. Additionally, I used grounded theory because I was interested in generalizing the understanding gained from the study to other settings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The study focused on the social, moral, and physical influences of the sanctions because, as Chapter 2 has shown, research literature has suggested that these are key elements of youth development. Konopka (1973) defined youth development as a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Konopka’s nine tenets were used because, while many theories of youth development now exist such as the 5 C’s of Lerner (2005), Konopka is arguably the mother of youth development in the United States.

**Review of the Data**

To analyze the students’ interviews through the lens of Konopka’s (1973) nine youth development tenets, I applied the responses from each interview to the nine tenets in order to consider whether the sanction facilitated or impeded the adolescent’s growth in terms of youth development. This was an iterative process that enabled me to refine

my thinking as I analyzed the data (Hahn, 2008). Examples below show each of Konopka's tenets and the attitudes and behaviors that emerged in the interviews as they were categorized into that tenet:

1. Participate as citizens, as members of a household, as workers, and as responsible members of society: *Citizenship as captain; doing community service; gaining or losing faith in system; cheating the system; lettering, being on varsity.*
2. Gain experience in decision-making: *Participating in deciding the potential outcome of a sanction; making a decision about action such as leaving a party based on the sanction; deciding to leave team.*
3. Interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging: *Removal from team, games, and practice and/or being suspended; feeling connected/disconnected to team, family, or friends because of sanction.*
4. Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward: *"I felt bad because" it affected our score, game, or season; disappointed self, coach, family, teammates, etc; embarrassment to sit on bench; letting self/people down.*
5. Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system: *Debating the right solution or consequence; working with adults toward a 'just' solution; arriving at a decision where the consequence was judged as fair; assessed the situation and decided the action and consequence were in line with values; applying their own consequences.*
6. Experiment with one's own identity, with relationships; try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably: *Implies labeling of adolescent, as*

*in “once a bad kid, always a bad kid” or a leader who just screwed up one time; believed school, coach, and/or administration just made an example out of them.*

7. Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals: *Apologizing to family, team, coach; unlucky/lucky; not acknowledging fault.*
8. Cultivate a capacity to enjoy life: *After sanction, never played sports again, got lazy; became and remained bitter; still resentful.*
9. Physical activity and expression of art: *Sanction, itself, and/or the outcome was long enough to exclude athlete from participating for a significant amount of time, beyond the usual two weeks or 20% rule.*

Together, these characteristics and their corresponding acts formed the organizing principles for this study.

In all, 387 data points emerged, each categorized into one of the nine tenets and as either facilitating or impeding youth development. Of these, 157 data points were categorized as facilitating youth development and 270 points were categorized as impeding youth development. From these, six sets could be counted by volume within the nine tenets: highly facilitates or impedes; moderately facilitates or impedes, and minimally facilitates or impedes. The *high* category represented comments with a range of 31 to 58 comments per tenet. The *moderate* category represented comments in the range of 7 per tenet to 22 comments. Finally, those in the *low* category were tenets that had no or one comment(s) representing that tenet; there were three of these total—two in the “facilitates youth development” category and one in the “impedes youth development” category. Exact breakouts of the volume of each comments represented in the tenets can be seen in Chapter 3 and are explained in Chapter 4.

What emerged was a clear, yet somewhat mixed, representation of the impact of the sanctions on the youth development of athletes. In total, those comments that indicated youth development had been facilitated were outnumbered by those that indicated it had been impeded by 73 comments; in other words, nearly 30% more suggested impeded youth development. In the highly facilitated or highly impeded youth development categories, again those that indicated youth development had been highly impeded exceeded those that highly facilitated youth development by 48. In the moderate categories, again those comments that indicated youth development had been impeded were greater by volume than those in the facilitated category by 26, or about 25%. Only one comment appeared to suggest that youth development had been minimally facilitated. Since the “highly impedes” and “moderately impedes” categories represented the majority of all the data within this data set, these findings suggest that no pass/no play sanctions more often negatively impact the youth development of athletes. However, such is not always the case. As it is apparent that in some cases, participants were able to identify events that categorization within the tenets suggested facilitated youth development as a result of their sanction, although this finding was less common.

### **Implications**

As seen in this research study, by volume respondents reported more often that sanctions impeded their youth development. There are clear implications for the impact of the sanctions on the youth development of high school athletes.



## **Implications of Sanctions that Facilitate Youth Development**

### **Highly facilitate.**

In this category, respondents reported that in some way the sanctions highly facilitate their ability to:

- Participated as citizen, as members of a household, as workers and as responsible members of society
- Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking inward as well as outward
- Develop a feeling of accountability in the context of a relationship among equals

This finding suggests that, as they were experienced by the high school athletes in this study, the no pass/no play sanctions can facilitate students' evolution into engaged citizens in their homes, schools, and communities. In essence such sanctions may assist some adolescents into becoming self-reflective youths who see their connections inwardly and outwardly and who understand the need to be accountable to peers.

### **Moderately facilitate.**

In this category, there were four tenets represented:

- Gain experience in decision-making
- Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging
- Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system; and
- Experiment with one's own identify, with relationships; try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably.

The implication for these findings is that within each category the no pass/no play sanctions did moderately propel the athletes in this study toward positive youth

development. Themes that emerged here suggest that those athletes learned from the sanctions that fostered some of their growth, although in moderation.

**Minimally facilitate.**

There was one data point in this tenet:

- Physical activity and the expression of art

One athlete reported that when he was no longer participating in sports, he threw himself into music. Therefore, the sanction appears to have propelled him toward an expression of art when he was unable to participate in the sport. The scarcity of data regarding the facilitation of this tenet indicates that the act of sanctions may only rarely move an athlete into greater participation in sport or art, which makes sense in that a sanction takes a particular sport away from the athlete. In fact, because data related to this tenet is more abundantly represented in the category of impedance, coaches, parents, school administrations, and policy makers should understand that the outcome of imposed sanctions may rarely be more participation either in athletics or arts. It should also be noted that there were no data for the tenets that positive youth development activities should cultivate a capacity to enjoy life. Thus, it would be falsely optimistic if one believed that by implementing no pass/no play sanctions young athletes learn life skills or lessons that in some way facilitate great life enjoyment in the future.

**Implications of Sanctions that Impede Youth Development**

In the area of sanctions that impede positive youth development, represented tenets included three that highly impeded youth development and five that moderately impeded youth development with only one tenet not represented in this area. This category included actions that greatly impeded participation as members of social groups,

especially in schools and community from a systematic sense. Examples that participants disclosed included losing faith in the system and cheating the system. In addition, actions that generally would be considered socially irresponsible, such as disobeying the law or school rules, were found.

**Highly impede.**

The area of sanctions that highly impeded positive youth development was represented by three tenets in this study:

- Participated as citizen, as members of a household, as workers and as responsible members of society
- Interact with peers, and acquire a sense of belonging
- Develop a feeling of accountability in the contest of a relationship among equals

Each of these three tenets had very high numbers of comments within them indicating that sanctions blocked progress in these areas of youth development. In the first and third tenets (“Participate as citizens” and “Develop accountability”), the data exceeded by 32% and 40% the number of comments that suggested athletes’ youth development could be positively affected by sanctions in these tenets. The implication is that these students experienced a strongly negative impact from sanctions. Embedded among many of the comments categorized within these tenets was a theme that if one treats an athlete like a criminal, he or she will feel and act like one. In this category, respondents used language that mirrored the language of the criminal justice system. Words like “due process,” “discrimination,” “wrong place/wrong time,” and “not the only one” were described by several athletes in each of the tenets in this area. In addition, the sanctions they experienced seemed to have disconnected the athletes from their peers and created a

sense of not belonging similar to that which is experienced by a convicted criminal; their comments indicated a sense of having been jailed for their offenses. In each, there was a loss of connection and hope, much like the incarcerated person experiences. However, very few expressed that they believed justice had been served. Because of the strong theme of criminalization voiced in this category, it is very important that coaches, administrators, parents, and policy makers realize that sanctions very negatively impact youths in these areas and, in fact, may be facilitating anti-social behavior or have anti-social implications.

**Moderately impede.**

The data revealing that sanctions failed to propel youths toward positive youth development in the following five tenet areas were moderately represented the examples. They ranged from a low of 8 remarks to a high of 22 remarks. This range represented comments that were less frequently represented than those in the “highly impedes” category but more often represented than those in the “minimally impedes” category. In total, there were 66 participant comments regarding these tenets that were judged to moderately impede youth development, which was nearly 30% of all the 230 comments and exceeded those in the “moderately facilitates youth development” category by 65%.

The five tenets represented in this category were:

- Gain experience in decision-making
- Reflect on self in relation to others, and discover self by looking outward as well as inward
- Experiment with one’s own identity, with relationships: try out various roles without having to commit oneself irrevocably

- Cultivate capacity to enjoy life
- Physical activity and expression of art
- Gain experience in decision-making

Sanctions in these areas produced outcomes that moderately impeded youth development for several reasons. Relative to these areas, athletes reported not participating in decision-making processes even when there were options to so. They also described participating in deception around risk-taking rather than making healthy, smarter decisions. Therefore, these sanctions may have impeded the athletes' youth development either by teaching them to opt out of decision-making or use deceptive tactics to avoid having to make responsible decisions. Several respondents talked about being more sneaky or more careful as a way to evade being caught rather than describing ways they learned to make responsible decisions. In short, the sanction appears to have served little purpose in teaching the youths the intended lesson of becoming able to make responsible decisions; in fact, it appears to have propelled them toward sneakiness and deceit. In addition, the sanctions propelled them away from being self-reflective, both inwardly and outwardly. Respondents denied the sanction's significance and expressed that they believed the sanction had no impact on themselves or on others around them. In addition, these sanctioned athletes questioned their own character following the sanction. They appeared to embrace the idea that their behaviors that had led to their sanctions were now a lasting part of their character. Finally, strong, negative words such as "bitter," and "upset" were used by respondents to describe the destructive emotional impact the sanctions had on them, both in the past and currently—this despite the fact that in all cases they were a year or more beyond the actual sanction. In the field of youth development, the end goal

is to develop a youth with positive feelings towards life. Obviously, however, youths who expressed such strong negative emotions as result of the sanctions were not positively propelled by those sanctions to cultivate a capacity to enjoy life. In short, the data in this area represent sanction outcomes that moderately impeded youth development by removing the athlete's will or opportunity to participate in the sport and by propelling them away from the sport. The implication is that coaches, parents, school administrators, and policy makers should be aware that these sanctions are resulting in youths turning to deceptive practices, feeling irresponsible, and also to having no physical activity or to having unstructured time that was not being used constructively.

**Minimally impede.**

In this section, data representing a minimal impediment to youth development are represented. Here, only one tenet was represented as it had no data with respect to how it played out in the study participants' expressed experiences of growth from their sanctions. In other words, no respondents reported that the sanctions did not in some way impede their youth development in this area:

- Discuss conflicting values and formulate one's own value system

Since no respondents' comments fell in this category, clearly they did not experience the sanctions as impeding this area of youth development. And, in fact, this is the one case of more instances occurring where athletes were moderately propelled toward youth development than impeded by it. Therefore, coaches, parents, administrators, and policy makers should create opportunities within their sports that open the window for an athlete to examine one's values in light of a transgression rather than imposing the values of others (the adults' values) and leaving no room for discussion with the athlete.

### **Programmatic Implications**

The evidence from this study suggest several areas where youths, adults, coaches and teachers, school administrators, policy makers, and community members should focus to better achieve the desired outcome of sanctions. In particular, they should work toward creating more responsible and prepared young people, helping them to develop their decision-making skills, and assisting them in becoming productive citizens.

To begin with, athletic programs must start with a higher goal than merely preventing or punishing problems. By using the punitive approach of sanctions, they are minimizing their ability to utilize the athlete as a resource to participate in addressing the repercussions of his or her own transgressions. As the data in this study indicate, sanctioned youths may feel more like criminals than assets to their community. In many cases, sanctions take a deficit approach rather than a competency approach, which is contrary to the thinking about how to propel a youth toward youth development. It is necessary to reach out to athletes and engage them in decision-making, in being accountable for their actions, and in our institutional structures—such engagement is necessary whether it comes from participating in their own due process hearings or in being required to apologize for transgressions. As Mahoney (2000) indicated, once youths are engaged, they are able to leave their past expressions of antisocial behavior behind and replace it with socially productive behavior where they feel connected to teammates, schools, and community.

Moreover, it is possible to train coaches and administrators to use effective methods to foster youth development in athletes. Durlak and Wiessberg (2007) and Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) cited several programs where, when effective, consistent

training was used, youths consistently developed positive youth development outcomes. Although these programs were in after-school programs not specific to high school athletics, these principles can be borrowed and applied to high school athletics. Among activities known to facilitate youth development is progressive skill development that is highly engaging and structured. In this dissertation study, the most comments related to the impedance of positive youth development (“interact with peers” and “acquire a sense of belonging”) were found in this area. Again, it appears that the sanctions as currently implemented disconnect youths and leave them with unstructured time rather than keeping them connected to schools and peers, as the literature suggests.

In addition, programs should be adult-driven but youth-centered (Walker and Larson, 2006). As the sanctions are now implemented, adults generally make all the decisions through the lens of an adult. However, coaches, school administrators, policy makers, and communities can do better in creating rules, structures, and roles that give youths opportunities for exercising responsibility within the framework of high school athletic rules. For instance, coaches can help athletes by increasing mechanisms for being of accountable. As Larson (2006) described, youths need to experience ownership of their learning in order to develop constructive participation in society. The data in this study show that when sanctions have been applied from an adult driven, youth-centered perspective (e.g., they were held accountable and asked to apologize), the athletes appeared to be propelled toward positive youth development. However, in more cases than not, the sanctions achieved the opposite. In these cases, respondents reported that they felt like criminals and their behavior soon took on that role. Perhaps instead of the more effective approach described above, more often adults’ solutions (criminal-like



indictments) are implemented. Thus, this study's data support the statement that if youths are treated like criminals, they behave like criminals. Nonetheless, there is evidence in the data to support that sanctioning can be done far more skillfully than it often is. For example, when coaches, schools, and parents allow youths to participate in the process of the sanction (petition the school board) or engage in restorative practices with the coach, the team or the community (hear the impact of the sanction on the team and coach directly from those affected or do community service), their ability to move positively toward youth development seems to be supported. Therefore, restorative measures combined with the sanctions may be far more powerful and effective than just sentencing the athlete with the typical sanction of sitting out or removal from the team.

In addition, evidence from effective youth development programming indicates that the programming must foster a sense of moral identity in young people (Burnett, 2001, Larson, 2006). In this dissertation's data, discussing conflicting values and formulating one's own values were outcomes moderately facilitated by the sanctions; indeed, there were no instances suggesting that these outcomes were impeded. Therefore, the data indicate that this is an area where, when carefully and deliberately crafted and enacted, sanctions can propel youth toward clarifying their values.

Finally, sanctions in this study had the equal and opposite effects of highly facilitating and highly impeding youth development in Konopka (1973) tenet: "Participate as citizens, as member of household, as worker and as responsible members of society" Joekel (1985) supported the construct that it is imperative that schools should use both academics and activities to "preserve our democratic ideal of participation for all" (p. 8). This study's data support this construct. When sanctions were used to help

facilitate participation either in deciding one's sanction fate, using volunteering as the sanction punishment, or allowing the athlete to take part in some sort form of restitution for the sanction, athletes reported they were propelled toward this tenet of youth development. However, in many cases this positive outcome did not happen for the study's participants.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study has several shortcomings that future research should consider. First, the sample size of 15 students was too small to extrapolate to larger populations. To this end, a larger sample would have increased the robustness of data in each of the nine tenet areas. Second, the convenience sampling procedure that used college students who had experienced a sanction is not representative of all high school students who have been sanctioned and, in particular, does not account for those for whom the sanction was college-career inhibiting. Inherently included in this sample were athletes who were not excluded from a four year college due to their sanction or other circumstances. A more diverse sample, one that includes young adults who had been sanctioned but who do not attend a four year college, may provide for more a more in-depth understanding of the impact of the sanctions on all youths. Finally, Konopka's (1973) nine tenets were used to evaluate the impact of the sanction on the athletes' youth development. Because several other youth development theories exist, the application of these different theories of youth development as the artifact for analysis may have produced different results of equal value to the understanding of this study's key question.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The results of this study have several implications for future research. First and foremost, more research needs to be done with a specific focus on no pass/no play sanctions and youth development. Recent research has been emerging that looks at youth development and sports (Weiss & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2009; Bhalla 2009), but to date, this study is the only one that examines the impact of no pass/no play on the youth development of high school athletes. Next, it is imperative that a broader array of young people be interviewed about the impact of sanctions on their youth development. Because the sample in this study was narrowly drawn in terms of college-attending previously sanctioned students, it is extremely narrow in its representation of participants. A broader representation in terms of those college attending and non-college attending would facilitate a better understanding of how these sanctions impact more young people. Next, as Fraser-Thomas, Cote and Deakin (2005) indicated, more studies need to be conducted that look specifically at how schools, for example, can more effectively implement youth development programming into sports. Finally, research on policies and coaching strategies that incorporate best practices for effective sanctioning in regards to high school athletes should be explored. Currently, little is known about alternatives to sanctioning. Because no pass/no play sanctioning has become an accepted norm in high schools, it is applied without apparent thought about how best it can be implemented. From this study, it is obvious that in most cases, such sanctioning is poorly or ineffectively implemented. Further research on best practices approaches to sanction implementation may either alter the course of the implementation of sanction or, at a

minimum, provide coaches, school administrators, and policy-makers with better tools to effectively facilitate athletes positive youth development rather than hinder it.

### **Conclusion**

In short, although these words are somewhat dated, DeNitto (1989) was accurate in saying: “No pass, no play should be reexamined in light of human needs other than the need to know. Schooling must develop the total person and not just some fractional part of the person. The most vital need we all have is the need to become” (p. 197). It is imperative that sanctions be formulated so that they propel youths towards these youth development goals and thus highly facilitate their development.

In response to the major question I asked of myself as coach at the beginning of this dissertation, there are things that coaches, administrators, parents and communities can do when the need to sanction an athlete arises. When formulating sanctions, coaches, administrators, parents, and communities need to focus on youth development outcomes when deciding the actions they should take in light of a youth's transgression. For example, athletes reported often that while they disagreed with the sanction, they ultimately learned from the process or the required restitution when it focused on developing their sense of being responsible members of society. Marin talked about learning to do community service and the value that had in making her a better citizen. Jesse learned to work within governmental structure and democratic process to fight for what he believed in. He valued the stronger person he became because of this action. Coaches need to be aware that many of their typical sanctions—such as benching athletes, removing them from positions of authority such as captain, not requiring accountability such as apologizing to their teammates or temporarily or permanently

removing them from the team—may in fact have just the opposite impact on the athlete from what the sanction intends. In this study, youths that experienced these types of sanctions withdrew from sport, became bitter, and resented the actions of the coach but rarely mentioned any positive development from it. In fact, many mentioned the very opposite, such as learning to cheat the system or becoming distrusting of adults.

Therefore, coaches, administrators, parents, and communities should consider creating sanctions that focus on activities that propel youths toward citizenship, self reflection, both internal and external, and accountability. Examples might be community service at local nonprofits or attending school board meetings when sports are on the agenda. Additionally, restitution may come in the form of apology to teammates and coaches. Clearly, sanctions must focus externally on connecting the athlete to the greater community and internally on reflecting one's actions and on the impact it has on others and oneself. This is where sanctions that minimally impede youth development combined with those that highly propel youths toward positive youth development are so very important. It makes intuitive sense that discussing conflicting values and formulating one's own value system is a developmental outcome that adults would seek in high school age youth. Moreover, it can be seen intuitively and through published literature that values clarification is a highly valuable experience for youths and it certainly does not impede their development. However, this was the category where no respondents reported an experience. Therefore, one can surmise that athletes may not be experiencing opportunities to discuss their own values when it comes to the sanctions; similarly, coaches, administrators, parents, and communities may not use sanctions that foster an explicit exploration of the athletes' values and values systems. In summary, when

coaches, administrators, parents, and communities more deliberately apply no pass/no play sanctions in ways that appear to facilitate youth development rather than impede it, it can be surmised that sanctioned athletes' learning and, ultimately, their positive youth development would be the most highly facilitated.

**Appendix A: Interview Questions****Expect Great Things: Interview Questions****Athletes**

1. Current age, name
2. Tell me about the circumstances that led to your temporary or permanent removal from your athletic team.
3. How old were you?
4. What were your grades like before the sanction? After?
5. What was your attendance like before the sanction? After?
6. Tell me how you felt about getting the sanction at the time.
7. How did others around you respond?
  - a. Parents?
  - b. Coaches?
  - c. Friends?
  - d. Others?
8. What impact did it have in the short run?
9. At the time, tell me what effect it had on other parts of your life like school connection, friends, and family.
10. At the time, did you agree with the sanction?
11. Reflecting on it now, do you agree with the sanction? Why or why not? Did it work? Was it effective?
12. What long-term positive effects did the sanction have, if any?
13. What long-term negative effects did the sanction have, if any?

14. Do you think that these sanctions act as incentives for keeping people like yourself engaged in school?
15. Were these sanctions applied equally? Among girls and guys teams? Among various sports? Between schools?
16. If you got to make the decisions about such sanctions, now, would you impose like sanctions? Why or Why not?
17. What else should I know about the impact on sanctions in your life either at the time or now?



**Appendix B: Recruitment Flier**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA HUMAN SUBJECTS CODE # 0310E53294  
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS IRB NUMBER: #02-052-2

**RESEARCH SUBJECTS WANTED**

You will be paid \$20 for up to 60 minutes of an in-person interview.

**ARE YOU:**

- ❖ Female or Male
- ❖ Currently Between the Ages of 18 and 22
- ❖ A Former HIGH SCHOOL Athlete

*and*

**WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL, WERE YOU EVER  
TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY REMOVED  
FROM YOUR SPORTS TEAM FOR ANY OF THESE:**

- ❖ Low grades or failure grades
- ❖ Truancy or skipping school
- ❖ Poor school attendance
- ❖ Violation of a State High School League Rule
- ❖ Violation of a school rule for alcohol, smoking or other substance use
- ❖ Other similar violation

**Contact the researcher at: (Phone Number)**

**Appendix C: Informed Consent Form****ATHLETE'S CONSENT FORM****UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS**

IRB #02-052-2

Fall, 2004

Expect Great Things: Young Women, Athletics, and Athletic Policies**Introduction:**

I am conducting a study about female and male athletes who have experienced a major athletic sanction in high school.

Participants in this study must be females or males, between the ages 18 to 22 who experienced a sanction such as suspension or temporary or permanent removal from athletic activities. Reasons for the sanction may include but are not limited to violations of a State High School League rule, failure to meet a minimum grade point average, and/or truancy during the time in which the participant was a member of a high school sponsored athletic team. Eligible persons may have also experienced such a sanction due to drinking alcoholic beverages or using other such substances.

I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because you are male or female, between the ages of 18 and 22 years old, and have experienced a major sanction from athletic activities while in high school. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Jennifer A. Oliphant, MPH, a Doctoral of Education candidate and Bruce Kramer, PhD, Professor of Education, both of the University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to understand the effects, including social, educational and psychological, that major sanctions have on high school athletes. The results of this research may be used to shape future athletic policies especially as they relate to high school athletes, school connectedness and sanctions.

**Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- ❖ Verify your age using state identification or passport or by self-report.
- ❖ Participate in a one-on-one tape recorded interview with the researcher answering up to 60 minutes of open-ended questions about the nature of the major sanction and your thoughts, facts and opinions about the impact of that sanction on your personal and academic life.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

The study has minimal risks. However, this study may ask you questions that cause painful memories, discomfort, or distress. To minimize this risk, you can refuse to answer any question that causes emotional distress or discomfort without jeopardizing your relationship with the study, the researcher or the institution.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating outside of the financial compensation and the contribution to research knowledge.

**Compensation:**

You will receive a payment of \$20.00 upon the completion of the interview. Participants will still earn the \$20 payment if they skip questions for any reason.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you in any way. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

Tape recordings will be used only by the researcher and heard only by the researcher and the transcriptionist. Tapes will be erased upon transcription or one year from the date of your interview, whichever comes first. These tapes will NOT be used for educational purposes. Tapes will be stored in a locked file.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will still be used.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Jennifer A. Oliphant. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 612-624-1907. The advisor to the researcher is Bruce Kramer, PhD. You may reach him at 651-962-4894. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns.

You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study.

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Signature of Study Participant

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Date

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Signature of Researcher

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Date

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