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The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of and experience with a Restorative Youth Sports (RYS) model in a competitive soccer environment. Sport can be a fertile ground for youth to develop life skills that can have considerable value in adult life (Martinek & Lee, 2012). Although an entire field of research has been dedicated to the examination of the purposeful integration of life skills into sport, the competitive sports environment has continued to be unexplored. It is delicate balance for coaches to prioritize life skill development with performance outcomes. RYS has been proposed as such a model to equally foster personal and social responsibility and youth empowerment with player development. This study took an in-depth look at the implementation, facilitation, and player experience within an RYS environment.

Three questions guided the research: 1) How does the research develop and facilitate a RYS model into a competitive sports team? 2) What is the experience in a RYS competitive soccer team? 3) In what ways, if any, do participants' think through and learn inside the RYS program? How do they think about elements of the program outside of the program into other areas of their lives? Through a case study (Yin, 2009) and self-study approach (LaBoskey, 2004), these questions were explored with an u14 girls' competitive soccer team across an entire season. Various sources were collected including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, a self-reflective journal, critical-friend discussions, field-notes, RP Observe, TPSR Implementation Checklists, and artifact analysis to triangulate the findings.

The research supported the growth of the coach who facilitated the RYS environment, supported the fidelity of implementation, and highlighted how RYS fostered a spectrum of

transfer across players. The themes that emerged from the case study supported Jacobs and Wright's (2018) conceptual framework of bridging the transfer of life skills from sport to other contexts through an in-depth look at program implementation, student learning, cognitive connections, and near and far transfer. These findings contribute to the scholarship of RYS and SBYD and the practical implementation and experience of centering relationships in a competitive sports environment.

CENTERING RELATIONSHIPS IN A COMPETITIVE SPORTS

ENVIRONMENT

by

Claire Newman

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Approved by

_____
Dr. Michael Hemphill
Committee Chair

This dissertation written by Claire Newman has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair

_____
Dr. Michael Hemphill

Committee Members

_____
Dr. Thomas Martinek

_____
Dr. Emily Janke

_____
Dr. Kevin Richards

_____
March 20, 2023
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
March 20, 2023
Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Sport has historically operated under the notion that it is a universally good thing (Coakley, 2012). This is grounded in the idea that through simple sport participation, children naturally develop and learn important life lessons and skills. Researchers in the field of sport-based youth development pushed back against this notion, arguing instead that there must be purposeful integration of life skill into sport in order for development to occur (Holt, 2008). Regardless, sport is viewed as fertile ground for youth to develop life skills that can have considerable value in adult life (Martinek & Lee, 2012; Petitpas et al., 2005).

Sport can provide an appealing context to foster positive youth development. Positive youth development (PYD) places emphasis on the cultivation of skills and competencies in youth that ultimately support ongoing contribution to both themselves and society (Lerner et al., 2005). PYD focuses on every child's unique talent, strengths, interests, and future potential. It is a shift of thinking from a deficit approach where youth are "problems to be solved" to an asset-based approach where youth are underdeveloped resources for society (Damon, 2004). Youth are assessed according to their strengths and potential. Therefore, if the goal of youth development is to ultimately produce productive members of society, positive youth development is highlighting the positive assets that youth already possess and fostering them for future success.

Sport is an attractive hook to entice children to engage in youth development programming (Hartmann, 2003). Sport provides natural opportunities of ethical dilemmas, conflict, participation, and cooperation. The dynamic nature of the sport environment provides teachable moments where youth can stop and reflect in the instant that situations arise. Alongside this idea, sport has been touted as means to develop young people and studied as a

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context for youth development for nearly a century (Weiss, 2008). Although much of the research took place before the formal naming of this framework, it has been framed in a contemporary context called Sport Based Youth Development (SBYD), combining research in youth sports and theories of positive youth development.

SBYD is intended to facilitate youth development via experimental processes that enable participants in adult-supervised programs to gain transferable personal and social skills, along with physical competencies. These skills and competency outcomes will enable participants in youth sport programs to thrive and contribute to their communities both now and in the future (Holt, 2008, p. 229).

One reason that SBYD has gained traction is that many youth are naturally attracted to sport and physical activity (Hansen et al., 2003). The Aspen Institute, for example, found that in 2020, 73.4% of children aged 13-17 participated in either a team or individual sport. Forty two percent of these youth participated in a team sport on a regular basis (Aspen Institute, 2020). However, other evidence suggests that sport participation has been on the decline across the past decade. Trends from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) across five cycles from 2011-2019 found statistically significant declining changes in sport participation, with girls showing less odds of engagement in sport participation relative to their male counterparts (Deng & Fan, 2022). The World Health Organization (2022) found that 85% of adolescent girls are not meeting the WHO requirement of 60 minutes of physical activity a day as opposed to 78% of boys. This supported past findings that girls might encounter huge barriers to take part in sport activities (Marques et al., 2016). Even when youth are participating in sports, girls and boys are not participating equally which highlights the need to keep youth, particularly female youth, engaged in sport activities.

In understanding the value of SBYD, one must first answer, what is the purpose of sport? Sport has been utilized as a means for prevention, intervention, sport skill development and life skill development (Holt, 2008). Concurrently in United States' society, sport has a perception of being a competitive activity infiltrated with aggression, violence, and conflict (Waddington, 2000) or a space where performance and winning is the only thing that matters (Camire & Santos, 2019). This is partially due to the business and professionalization of talent development as youth sports have become hyper focused on predetermined goals, like earning a college scholarship or going pro (Harwood & Johnston, 2016). The ensuing result are coaching approaches that look to develop athletes to fulfill their potential in a specific achievement domain and creation of a highly competitive environment with fierce competition for places, selections, and playing time that do not always foster cooperation (Harwood & Johnston, 2016). Within the United States, one study found that the downfall of this overly competitive approach to youth sport, as evident by the increase in dropout rate of youth aged 13, is because they are not "fun" anymore (Aspen Institute, 2020). To counter this, there are a growing number of SBYD interventions that ground sport programs on principles of inclusion and participation (Petitpas et al., 2005). Within this realm, coaches understand that the nature, quality, and salience of the sporting experience are critical to what extent development is achieved (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). One professional practice model that has proven effective in its intentional promotion of life skill development in the sport domain is Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (Whitley et al., 2019) .

Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) has been recognized as an exemplary pedagogical model in the field of SBYD (Hellison, 2011; Shen et al., 2022). TPSR instruction is based on a loose progression of five responsibility values, respect, effort, helping

and leading others, and self-direction, culminating in the transfer of skills learned outside the gym and/or field (Hellison, 2011). Youth learn personal and social responsibility through explicit awareness of life skills being taught and physical activities embedded with TPSR ideas and strategies (Hellison, 2011). Originally developed in a United States Physical Education classroom, the model has expanded across the globe and into other settings including community, after-school, sport, and summer camps (Gordon & Beaudoin, 2020). Although successful integration has been seen across a myriad of activities and sports (Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Jacobs & Wright, 2021; Shen et al., 2022; Weiss et al., 2012), little investigation has been done with TPSR integration into a competitive sports program.

TPSR has been integrated with other models and theories to further target specific life skill integration. One such model was developed by Hemphill and colleagues (2018) called Restorative Youth Sports (RYS). The RYS model merged TPSR with restorative justice, a separate set of practices that focus on the interconnectedness and relational unity of all people (Pranis, 2005). The RYS model keeps the structure of TPSR while extending the model by explicitly focusing on building relationships and repairing harm (Hemphill et al., 2018). In this, the authors recognized that conflict is a natural, unavoidable part of life and sport. The integration of restorative practices into TPSR provides strategies to promote positive interaction through sport and an opportunity to center player voice through collaboration and co-creation of team climate (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021). RYS promotes three pedagogical strategies: restorative essentials, awareness circles, and team meetings (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). These integral pieces of the RYS model are foundationally relation, reflective, and respectful. It is situated in the restorative ideal of doing things *with* youth rather than *to* or *for* them (Wachtel, 2013). Thus far, the literature of RYS, and restorative practices generally, has been limited to in-

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school Physical Education programs (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021; Hemphill & Richards, 2021; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). The original study concluded that many of the values that kids exemplified in the classroom did not transfer to the sport environment (Hemphill et al., 2018). However, to date, the actual implementation of RYS in a competitive sport setting has not been studied.

Despite different approaches to achieve youth development, SBYD, and by extension RYS, is an intentional effort to incorporate certain characteristics and values into the sport environment. There is a clear differentiation between youth sport programs that focus on traditional teaching of motor and sport skills to optimize favorable performance, and youth development programs that focus on sport as the context for promoting life skills and core values (Petitpas et al., 2005). SBYD requires a holistic approach where emphasis is placed on all four domains of youth development (Hellison, 2011); no longer is sport privy only to the improvement of physical performance, but also assists in a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Gould & Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005). Through RYS, the ultimate ideal is that the non-physical skills learned through sport (i.e., hard work, respect, conflict management etc.) are applied to other settings in youth's lives (Gordon, 2020). This concept of transfer can have a powerful effect when skills are taught so that the learner understands that the skill is transferable to other areas of their life and comprehends how to transfer the skill from one domain to another (Danish et al., 2005).

One such way to investigate program implementation and transfer in sport-based youth development is Jacobs and Wright (2018) proposed framework. *The Transfer of Life skill in Sport-Based Youth Development Programs* places emphasis on the cognitive process underlying student learning application in SBYD settings. Jacobs and Wright (2018) acknowledge the

dynamic interaction between in-program learning, the transfer process, and contextual factors that all affect participant learning and application of life skills. Through this conceptualization, the evaluation of life skills is no longer confined to observable behaviors, but also considers youths' intentionality and thought process. Jacobs and Wright (2021) tested their theory in a case study of 11 participants from a program that leverages power to reclaim space and unite the community. Participants recognized how life skill development inside the program extended beyond themselves into the community and other environments in their life (Jacobs & Wright, 2021). This study provided further evidence to illuminate how to learn, think about, and transfer life skills (Jacobs & Wright, 2021). Despite being one of the ultimate goals cited for RYS programs, further empirical evidence is needed to investigate the combination of observable behavior outcomes as well as the cognitive process behind youth behavior change. This study sought to close this gap.

Fundamental to the success of any RYS program is the adult who runs it (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021). Research has found that coaches are one of the most influential relationships that a player encounters in a competitive sport environment (Chinkov & Holt, 2016; Zhu et al., 2022). Effective coaches have been ones that foster autonomy, were positive, and intentional with their efforts (Flett et al., 2013). Programs need to be facilitated by effective adult leaders as coaches play a critical role in determining the quality of youths' experience. Because of this heightened importance, coaches must recognize, investigate, and reflect on their own indoctrination and socialization into sport to improve their practice. One such method to investigate this is through Occupational Socialization Theory (OST). OST was originally intended to investigate the socialization of recruits and educators into the field of Physical Education (Lawson, 1983b). This is analyzed through three phases, 1) acculturation, 2) professional socialization, and 3)

organizational socialization. Within this theory, there is recognition that individuals' have agency to resist the influence of socializing agents (Richards & Shiver, 2020). Within the scope of this study, Occupational Socialization Theory was utilized to investigate and improve the practice of the coach of a RYS based program through self-study. Self-study has been described, in part, as an investigation into one's own socialization experiences and an opportunity to take an active role in shaping future socialization through increased awareness.

Majority of research in SBYD has taken place in after school activity programs, in-school physical education programs, or recreation sports teams. The competitive sport team environment has continued to be unexplored potentially due to the idea that competitive sports programming is characterized as a traditional sports environment that just focuses on sport skill development to optimize performance. These traditional sport programs are centered on competition and take an "ego"-centric approach where youth are placed against one another, and children are trying to perform a task better than their peers (Miller et al., 1997). However, the percentage of youth who will be involved in sport as a career is minimal. Competitive sports teams could provide an opportunity to help youth in defining their identity, discovering their assets, and apply some of the principles learned in sport participation in their adult pursuits (Danish et al., 2005). Therefore, this study sought to investigate an RYS program utilizing a competitive sports team.

Although most research in RYS is descriptive, it shows promise in creating a more player-centered sports environment. From the current literature base, empirical evidence is necessary to support RYS as a feasible model in a sports environment. This study looked at implementation, player experience, and transfer in a competitive soccer team.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the experience of the coach and players of a RYS competitive soccer team. This was explored through a self-study and case study approach. Self-study (LaBoskey, 2004) allowed for an exploration of the researcher's personal experiences and implementation of RYS to identify turning points in practice, improve practice, and further implement effective RYS programming. Utilizing Occupational Socialization Theory, the researcher explored how her socialization experiences influenced the development of an RYS environment and improved her practice as a facilitator of RYS. The case study approach (Yin, 2009) allowed for the researcher to investigate players' experiences in depth in this uniquely situated competitive soccer team. Using Jacobs and Wright's (2018) Transfer of Life Skills in SBYD framework, the researcher observed program implementation and explored youth understanding and perceived relevance of life skills rather than solely behavioral outcomes.

The study will address the following questions:

1. How does the researcher-coach develop and facilitate a RYS model into a competitive sports team?

2. What is the experience of players in a RYS competitive soccer team?

3. In what ways, if any, do participants' think through and learn inside the RYS program? How do they think about elements of the program outside of the program into other areas of their lives?

Significance of the Study

Sport touches the lives of millions of youth around the world and can be fertile ground for the development of skills that will assist youth throughout their life circumstances (Camire & Santos, 2019). However, it is a delicate balance for coaches to prioritize life skill development

with performance outcomes. As past research has illustrated that simple sport participation does not automatically result in positive outcomes (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009), it is important to be intentional in holistic development in young athletes. Restorative Youth Sports has been proposed as such a model to equally foster personal and social responsibility and youth empowerment with player development. To date the implementation of RYS has not been empirically tested in a competitive youth sport setting. This study sought to investigate the experience, successes, and challenges of implementation of a RYS program in a competitive soccer team. A self-study of the coach illuminated the successes and challenges of facilitating and coaching in an RYS environment which provided insight into implementing and managing a RYS environment. The result was a paradigm shift from coaching a typical competitive environment to an understanding of restorative culture and victories away from the field. At a local level, youth expressed how participation in the program enriched their lives in both short-term and long-term instances. Since transfer of life skills was the desired outcome of RYS programs, youth provided valuable insight regarding if and how transfer occurred in their lives. Using Jacobs and Wright's (2018) Transfer of Life Skills in SBYD framework, the researcher observed program implementation and explored youth understanding and perceived relevance rather than solely behavioral outcomes.

Definition of Terms

Physical Activity: Bodily movement of any type, which can include recreation, fitness, or sport activities as well as walking or yard work

Sport: an athletic activity requiring skill or physical prowess and often as competitive nature. For the sake of this study, sport will refer to an organized, competitive setting that fosters skill acquisition for a particular sport endeavor.

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Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (Hellison, 2011) TPSR model intends to teach kids personal and social responsibility through physical activity by learning experiences to be planned and taught according to five responsibility levels of goals. This model is a loose progression of awareness or developmental levels that focus on personal well-being (effort and self-direction) and social well-being (respect for others' rights and feelings and caring about others).

Restorative Justice The literature lacks a clear and definitive definition for restorative justice. Zehr (2002) defined restorative justice as "a process to involve to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible" (p68).   For the purposes of this study, restorative justice took on more of a discipline lens. Restorative justice is either formal or informal reactions to harm, crimes, or wrongdoing.

Restorative Practices: The International Institute for Restorative Practice (IRRP) defined restorative practice as a "social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making (Wachtel, 2013, p1). These practices include both proactive and reactive practices to build interpersonal relationships and community to prevent conflict.

Restorative Youth Sports (Hemphill et al., 2018): This applied model through a combination of TPSR and restorative practice that purposefully addresses conflict resolution in Sport Based Youth Development programs. This model is grounded in TPSR structure with the inclusion of three integral pieces: restorative sport practices (TPSR with an emphasis on relationships), awareness circles, and team meetings (space for leaders to address conflict, tension, harm that occur at practice).

Transfer: Transfer is the process when non-physical lessons or skills learned through sport (hard work, respect, collaboration, etc.) are applied at home, school, or in the community.   The idea is that positive developmental outcomes from a sport environment are either explicitly or implicitly taught to transfer outside of the field and/or gym (Turnnidge, Cote, & Hancock, 2014). Empirical evidence is mixed on if transfer must be intentionally taught (Gould & Carson, 2008; Martinek & Lee, 2012) or implicit.

Occupational Socialization Theory: a dialectical perspective that encompasses the study of individuals as they learn about and take part in a profession. It is usually involves three phases: acculturation, professional socialization, and occupational socialization (Lawson, 1983b).

Transfer in Sport Based Youth Development Theory: a conceptual framework that focuses on in-program learning and the transfer process while acknowledging the importance of contextual factors that influence both (Jacobs & Wright, 2018).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

The intention of this literature review is to understand connections between Sport Based Youth Development (SBYD), Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR), Restorative Practices (RP), and how Restorative Youth Sports (RYS) came to fruition in youth physical activity spaces and competitive sports. Due to the nature of the current study, I will start by illuminating the importance of community-engaged scholarship. I will then explore the historical significance of SBYD and the features of SBYD that differentiates it from other youth sport programs. From there, I will present how TPSR arose as one of the models of best practice. I will give a brief overview of RP and how by combining with TPSR, RYS was able to develop into its own model that centralizes player voice. This will then be linked with the two theoretical frameworks utilized in this study, the Transfer of Life Skills in SBYD and Occupational Socialization Theory.

Community-Engaged Scholarship

This study is situated within community-engaged scholarship, where the researcher, a doctoral student, partnered with a local soccer club to engage with the adolescent females inside the community. Cutforth (2013) described community-engaged scholarship as "a scholarly work undertaken in partnership with community, drawing on multiple sources of knowledge, crossing disciplinary lines, and is reciprocal and mutually beneficial" (p14). He goes on to expand that a community-engaged scholar puts their attention on the practical challenges, the lived realities of the people residing in their community, and evidence which is visible (race, ability/disability) or invisible (sexual orientation, professional discipline) to the eyes (Cutforth, 2013). Regardless of if these communities are physical geographic locations or groups that people identify with or to

which they "belong", they are valued as a resource of knowledge and experience. Community-engaged scholarship allows for the exchanging of ideas through a diversity of perspectives (Schinke et al., 2013). In essence, the community-engaged scholar offers a redistribution of power among research project members where the researcher no longer holds all the power, but desires to share the experience and decision-making with the community they are working with.

Within community engagement arises the need for reciprocity. It is not unreasonable that university and community engagement would be grounded in the spirit of cooperation and negotiation through listening to the interests, needs, and demands of the community. For this current study, the players on the team got to decide what was best for them. The premise behind community-engaged scholarship is that while universities, and the researcher, got to achieve their core mission of research, service, and learning, the team was able to raise awareness of issues, ask questions, and provide opportunities for engagement (Cooper & Orrell, 2016). Reciprocity ultimately involved elements of compromise, actively working through tension and conflict, and deliberate self-reflection to ensure that self-interests were not prioritized above community outcomes.

Community-engaged scholarship is not a product, but a process. This entails that outcomes will not be finite, but evolving and cyclic. Thus, outcomes from this research period will inform the researcher as a coach and restorative practitioner as well as impact the community as she continues to further engage in this work. Lynton (1994) developed criteria to evaluate scholarship which involved components of expertise, originality, difficulty, scope, importance, and the effectiveness and impact of the activity. Although I hoped to embrace all the elements of these criteria, community-based practice stresses the last point: the effectiveness and impact of the activity. Hellison (2011) frequently asked the question "Is it working?" This was

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not only meant for a period of reflection on himself as a practitioner but looked at the impact of the youth he worked with. This aim of programming should not be for selfish incentives, but to develop youth to become productive members of a diverse society. The main outcome thus remained what was the impact on the youth and how did it transfer to outside of the program.

Existing literature provides insight into the opportunity for successful community-engaged scholarship. Hemphill and colleagues (2021) explored the feasibility, challenges, and successes of an alternative physical education where the university formed a partnership with a public high school and nonprofit social service provider to address community-identified concerns related to exclusionary discipline practices in the partner school (p3). It was through continued conversations, reflections, and compromises that the researchers were able to develop a sustainable partnership that impacted many students. Across decades, Tom Martinek's Youth Leader Corps has exemplified a successful partnership between a university, high school, and local community, where selected high school students are given opportunities to becomes leaders of their own sports program with a particular focus on caring and compassionate leadership for others (Martinek & Hellison, 2016). A similar partnership, Project Leadership, was established by Paul Wright and Jenn Jacobs where the university partnered with a local school to provide TPSR sports experiences and various opportunities for service learning (Gordon et al., 2016). These programs not only exemplify university-community partnerships that have sustainable impacts, but also represent practical takeaways for success across contexts that the researcher plans to use in this study.

Literature on community-engaged partnerships have illustrated practical implications for the development of sustainable community-engaged partnerships. Armour and colleagues' (2013) case study on the conditions for sustainable impact found matching pupils' specific needs with

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program objectives, working closely with pupils to choose activities, setting targets, reviewing progress, and giving pupils the opportunity to work with (and for) others fostered success. This was paralleled by Parent and Harvey (2017) who identified a key to successful community-engaged partnerships are communication and planning from both sides of collaboration. For the current study, these practical ideas from the literature were implemented within an SBYD program.

Sport-Based Youth Development

Throughout American history, athletically based programs have been utilized to achieve broader social ends (Dyreson, 1998; Mrozek, 1983). Interscholastic athletics and physical education were developed as a means to cultivate school spirit, build character and self-discipline among youth, and prevent criminal and delinquent behavior (Hartmann, 2001). From this idea rose programs such as Midnight Basketball, or basketball leagues that were rooted in the notion of providing an alternative to the non-productive or even destructive activities of the street (Hartmann, 2001). These programs were representative of problem-based athletic initiatives or utilizing sport as a prevention. Practitioners recognized that sport could be used for more than just prevention, but to assist in a child's development and highlight the assets youth already possess (Holt, 2008).

Sport-Based Youth Development has been summarized as the purposeful integration of life skills into sport and/or physical activity to promote positive youth development (Holt, 2008). This holistic approach to youth development places sport skill development as secondary behind the goal of life lessons learned. Although SBYD allows for flexibility in practice, there are numerous program characteristics that are considered best practice: encompass an asset-based approach (Damon, 2004); programs are consciously holistic (Hellison, 2011); must include both

sport and life skill instruction (Holt, 2008); must emphasize transfer (Gordon & Doyle, 2015; Pierce et al., 2018); are mastery-oriented versus ego-oriented (Miller et al., 1997); consist of sustained positive relationships with caring adults, peers, and community (Holt et al., 2017); provide a physically and psychologically safe environment (Weiss et al., 2016); and ultimately empower youth (Hellison, 2011).

SBYD is grounded in positive youth development principles and programming. Positive youth development (PYD) focuses on every child's unique talent, strengths, interests, and future potential (Damon, 2004). It is a shift of thinking from a deficit focus where youth are troubled who need to be "fixed" to an asset-based approach where children are seen as resources for society (Damon, 2004). Youth need to be assessed in terms of their potential and their strengths; "being problem-free is not the same as being competent or successful" (Danish et al., 2005, p.47). Therefore, if the goal of the development of youth is to ultimately be productive members of society, positive youth development is taking the positive assets that youth already possess and fostering them for future success.

Holt and colleagues (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of 63 qualitative articles of positive youth development through sport to extrapolate a model based on key themes within the literature. Core concepts inside the model were a PYD climate centered on positive relationships with adults, peers, and parents that enable youth to gain experiences that will contribute to PYD outcomes and core concepts consisting of life skill focus, life skill building activities, transfer, and outcomes within the personal, social, and physical domains (Holt et al., 2017). Noteworthy propositions that came from the study were that PYD outcomes can occur implicitly in a PYD climate, but greater outcomes will be manifested if both explicit life skill instruction and a PYD climate are in place (Holt et al., 2017).

SBYD is consciously holistic; there must be emphasis on all four domains of youth development. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM) (2002) delineated four main areas of youth development: physical, intellectual, psychological/emotional, and social. Programs are not solely structured around the physical domain of learning like most sports programs, but intentionally encompasses the mental, psychological, and social merits of youth. Youth bring all aspects of themselves into the gym, not just their physical being (Hellison, 2011). Therefore, practitioners must deal with the whole person.

SBYD sets itself apart from other positive youth development programs and sport programs because it uses sport as the vehicle to integrate life skill instruction. Sports are viewed as an attractive setting for positive youth development because the majority of youth participate and youth report more happiness and enjoyment in sports and physical activities (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; McCarthy et al., 2008). However, SBYD differs from just sports participation as the intended purpose is to facilitate youth development through experimental processes that foster transferable personal and social life skills, along with physical competencies (Holt, 2008; Holt et al., 2017). This focus on life skill development differs from other youth sports programming across the spectrum from deficit reductionist programming that uses sport as a prevention or an intervention to programming that just focuses on sport skill development. Petitpas and colleagues (2005) provided a clear differentiation between *youth sport* programs that focus on traditional teaching of motor and sport skills to optimize favorable performance, and *youth development programs* that focused on sport as a context for promoting life skills and core values. SBYD is intentional in improving more than just physical performance, but also assists in a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt et al., 2017).

So why sport? The dynamic and interactive environment of sports team provides teachable moments where youth can stop and reflect in the instant that situations arise (Gould & Carson, 2008; Jacobs & Wright, 2016). This is particularly relevant because sport allows for easily observable participant actions that allows for sociomoral education to occur (Miller et al., 1997). Additionally, youth are naturally attracted to physical activity and find it enjoyable. Hansen and colleagues (2003) examined youth development programs and found that the greatest percentage of youth participated in sports, recreation, and leisure activities compared to school, service, arts, and faith-based activities. However, research has shown the act of playing a sport by itself does not inevitably lead to development or developmental outcomes (Coakley, 2011). That is why life skill integration must be explicit in the construction of a SBYD program. From there, the desire is for participants to engage in non-sport roles where they can test their skills in other domains (Holt et al., 2017; Petitpas et al., 2005). This concept of transferring a skill or attribute learned in the sports domain to other domains of life is one of the main aims of SBYD.

Life Skill Transfer

One of the key concepts and ultimate ideals of SBYD is the idea of life skill transfer, commonly referred to as just transfer. Transfer is the process when non-physical skills learned through sport (i.e., hard work, respect, etc.) are applied to other settings (i.e., home or school) (Gordon, 2020). It is a powerful sentiment and belief that what youth learn in physical education and sport contexts influence their beliefs and behaviors in other areas of their lives (Siedentop, 1991). This idea of transfer of learning is the justification given for sport-based youth development programs and the degree to which it occurs is an important measure of program success (Hemphill et al., 2019). Sports can have a powerful effect when skills are taught so that

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the learner understands that the skill is transferable to other areas of their life and comprehends how to transfer the skill from one domain to another (Danish et al., 2005). Although numerous contextual factors can play a role in if or how transfer occurs, it is the desire for community-engaged partnership, especially in the field of sport-based youth development, that skills learned will not occur in isolation (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). It is the hope that positive outcomes that youth acquire, or life skills that are fostered, will be fed right back into the community with which the partnership co-developed. This in turn would create a positive cycle where university resources are poured into the community which help develop youth that in turn will become resources themselves for that same community.

Despite transfer being a fundamental component of SBYD because life skill integration is purposeless unless the skills are actually utilized in life, it is one of the least examined outcomes in SBYD research (Lee & Martinek, 2013). Many studies have been conducted looking at transfer in various settings such as the classroom (Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Wright et al., 2010), at home (Weiss et al., 2012), and other areas of youths lives (Weiss et al., 2016). Results have seen a range of improvements in youths' social and emotional learning (Pozo et al., 2016), a decrease in aggressive behaviors (Perez-Ordas et al., 2020), development of empathy (Holt et al., 2012), and a shift in students' behaviors related to rough play, fouls, and poor sportsmanship (Cecchini et al., 2007). Various other qualitative interview studies have reported that youth perceived and reported behavior improvement outside of SBYD programs (Allen et al., 2015; Martinek et al., 2001). Lee and colleagues (2021) examined the transfer between intentional self-regulation from a SBYD program, and offered some theoretical implications related to transfer. Their results highlighted the importance of sequencing SBYD activities so that it aligns with participants' developmental stage and ability; life skill development and transfer may not happen

sequentially; life skill development make take several seasons to unfold; and inter-organizational partnership may help leaders link SBYD programs with the broader societal contributions (Lee et al., 2021). The best approach to transfer is yet to be determined, but practitioners agree it cannot be left up to chance. herefore, an integral piece of this study was to look at how attributes learned during participation transferred to other areas of participants' lives.

Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility

Hellison's Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model has risen as one of the most effective models to promote SBYD in a variety of contexts (Gordon & Beaudoin, 2020; Martinek & Hellison, 2016). Hellison (2011) originally developed the TPSR model while teaching Physical Education at an alternative high school and recognized that he needed to be intentional in developing the whole child, not just the physical aspects of the student. The model can be summarized as teaching kids personal and social responsibility through physical activity. It consists of a loose progression of five responsibility values, I. Respecting the rights and feelings of others, II. Effort and Cooperation, III. Self-direction, IV. Helping others and leadership, culminating in the transfer of life skills outside the gym and/or field (Hellison, 2011). Within this model, coaches are grounded by four core values: putting kids first, human decency, holistic self-development, and a way of being (Hellison, 2011).

TPSR has been widely adopted due to the consistency within its daily program format. The daily format consists of relational time, an awareness talk, physical activity plan, group meeting, and self-reflection (Hellison, 2011). This unique daily format integrates the foundational aspects of TPSR; the need to recognize and develop relationships (relational time); the purposeful integration of life skills (awareness talk); leaders/teachers must embed TPSR ideas and strategies into their physical activity content, pedagogy, and activities (physical

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activity plan); emphasizing transfer outside of the program (group meeting); gradual

empowerment of kids in a safe space to be reasonably honest (self-reflection) (Hellison, 2011).

Opportunities are provided for youth to not only learn personal and social responsibility but

empowered to *take* responsibility.

Transfer of learning is an integral part of TPSR's pedagogical approach. Hellison (2011)

was explicit in his intention to facilitate positive social and moral behavior that would transfer

outside of the gym and/or field (Hellison, 2011). As mentioned previously, transfer is the final

goal of TPSR where the previous four levels are applied to other contexts outside of the program.

Numerous studies discuss the transference of skills learned in the intervention to other life

domains, but actual evidence of transfer is scarce and inconsistent (Whitley et al., 2019). Early

systematic reviews of TPSR showed mixed reporting of transfer, where some studies reported

strong evidence that transfer occurred while other studies reported that none had taken place

(Hellison & Walsh, 2002). his is consistent with more recent findings where transfer effects

have been reported in some instances (Cryan & Martinek, 2017), but not found between

intervention and control groups in others (Wright et al., 2010).

Ultimately, TPSR has provided structures and strategies that have been field tested for

more than 40 years across more than 30 countries (Gordon & Beaudoin, 2020). Research on

TPSR has shown that TPSR leads to increased self-control and enjoyment (Cecchini et al.,

2007), self-efficacy, personal and social responsible behaviors (Gordon, 2010; Jung & Wright,

2012), and improved academic outcomes (Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Wright et al., 2010).

Gordon, Jacobs, and Wright (2016) found that in their investigation of a TPSR-based leadership

program for disengaged middle school-boys, the boys had opportunities to develop and increase

their self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and positive

decision-making. Furthermore, the school administrators, and the boys themselves, identified transfer of learning from leadership club to other areas of their lives despite transfer not being one of the main objectives of the investigation (Gordon et al., 2016). In a systematic review of SBYD programs in the US, several TPSR studies reported participants experienced development relating to the TPSR levels (e.g., respect, effort, and leadership) (Whitley et al., 2019).

One large aspect of the success of any TPSR program is the adult who runs it. Studies have found that even when teachers moderately adhered to TPSR, students demonstrated increasingly responsible behaviors due to the intentional strategies that fostered responsibility (Escarti et al., 2018; Sanchez-Alcaraz et al., 2019). Camerino and colleagues (2019) looked at how teachers' behavior-oriented patterns shifted in response to a TPSR professional development and found that teachers shifted their teaching strategies from directive and controlling interventions toward participatory interventions that promote student autonomy. This lends itself to the importance of coaching in TPSR implementation and outcomes.

TPSR and SBYD in Competitive Sports

Competitive youth sports can serve as a fertile setting for PYD. However, research in the field of SBYD in competitive sports has not found much traction potentially due to the conflicting nature of "win-at-all-costs" mentality with the fundamental concepts of PYD. Luckily, performance and development do not have to be mutually exclusive. Competitive youth sports require coaches to create a delicate balance between winning and performance outcomes with the importance of providing developmental opportunities for athletes (Santos et al., 2016, p111). Santos and Martinek (2018) proposed four specific strategies to integrate positive youth development into competitive sports: (1) the coach equally assumes the role of developing sport skills and life skills by aligning skills and goals on the field with values off the field; (2) PYD

objectives must be explicitly stated so that athletes can assess their own performance; (3) Coaches must utilize potential coachable moments that naturally exist in practice and team routines to promote PYD; (4) Coaches need to maintain a consistent balance between the expectations of winning and PYD outcomes.

Although TPSR was originally developed for physical education in the United States, TPSR has expanded internationally and to a variety of contexts including after-school programs, community programs, summer camps, and even competitive youth sports teams (Gordon & Beaudoin, 2020). The literature on delivering TPSR in a competitive youth sports setting is scarce (Gould & Carson, 2008). It may be due to the unique challenges that coaches face in a competitive setting presents as performance, victories, and records are highly valued (Camire et al., 2011) or due to the increasing professionalization of youth sport (Camire & Santos, 2019). Carreres-Ponsoda and colleagues (2021) did a comparative study between two competitive soccer teams, one TPSR-based soccer team versus a control, and found that the TPSR intervention had an increase in personal and social responsibility, prosocial behavior, and self-efficacy compared to the control group. Strachan, Cote, and Deakin (2011) interviewed and observed five elite youth sport coaches using National Research Council and Institute of Medicine's (2002) setting features that explicitly emphasize holistic youth development as a framework. The authors then conceptualized the results into sport-specific criteria for the delivery of positive youth programs in an elite sport setting: (1) the existence of a physical and psychologically safe training environment, (2) the opportunity to provide physical, personal, and social skill development, and (3) regular supportive interactions (Strachan et al., 2011). What much of the literature lacks, and this study adds, is the examination of player experience inside a SBYD in a competitive environment.

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Multiple studies examined coaches insight and impact of SBYD in a competitive environment. Chinkov and Holt (2016) found that instructors and peer support were the two main perceived influences for life skill acquisition inside a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu club. Santos and colleagues (2016) analyzed the perceptions of youth coaches on delivering, and barriers to delivering, personal and social responsibility in competitive youth sport in a Portuguese Football league. Coaches recognized the importance of fostering personal and social responsibility and the transference of life skills learned in sport to outside life but there was no intentionality in practice (Santos et al., 2016). Even though coaches were well-educated in the realm of coaching, they frequently supported "zero-tolerance" approaches by using negative teaching strategies (Santos et al., 2016). This highlights the need for the restorative youth sport practices that are intentional and focus on restoration, community, and empowerment of youth.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices are rooted in Restorative Justice (RJ). RJ is grounded in the desire and belief to heal and rectify harm through involving those who were offended, or have stake in a specific offense and collectively ascertain what harms, needs, and obligations are needed to be addressed (Zehr, 2002). It is an alternative approach to thinking about wrongdoing. It is not a replacement for punishment, rather it is concerned about the needs and roles of the victims, offenders, and community (Zehr, 2002). This concept is grounded in ancient and indigenous thought that all individuals are interconnected (McCaslin et al., 2005; Pranis, 2005). Thus, repairing harm done and restoring relationships are the fundamental concepts behind RJ.

Although the literature lacks a clear and definitive definition for RJ, for the scope of this paper, RJ will take on more of a discipline lens. RJ tends to be either formal or informal reactions to crimes or wrongdoings (Wachtel, 2013). The guiding questions of RJ ask what harm

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happened and how can they put it right; Step 1. Recognize the harm, Step 2. Repair the harm, Step 3. Stop the harm from occurring again (Hopkins, 2004). In the United States, RJ was first introduced into the criminal and juvenile justice system through uses of restorative dialogue and offender mediation (Bazemore & Schiff, 2005). RJ transitioned outside of the criminal justice system into the realm of education to work through, resolve, and transform conflict in general. This offered an alternative to traditional exclusionary means of discipline and as a response to the school-to-Prison pipeline (Gregory et al., 2014; Hopkins, 2004). In this shift from the judicial system to education and discipline to holistic approaches, the shift from RJ to restorative practices (RP) came to fruition.

The International Institute for Restorative Practice (IIRP) defined restorative practice as "a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making" (Wachtel, 2013, p1). These practices include both proactive and reactive practices to build interpersonal relationships and community to prevent conflict. The essence of RP is working *with* youth rather than for or to them. This can be explained through the Social Discipline Window, an illustration of four approaches with combinations of either high or low social support and behavioral control (Wachtel, 2013). The restorative domain consists of high control and high support and is characterized by doing things with people rather than *to* (punitive) them or *for* (permissive) them (Wachtel, 2013). RP values inclusivity, where all individuals should have a voice in decisions that impact them (Hemphill & Richards, 2021).

Enhancing student voice has been approached through various restorative pedagogical practices. Restorative pedagogy primarily centers on relationship-based classrooms, where students are empowered to create a learning environment of reciprocity with their teacher and

peers (Cavanagh et al., 2014). The International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) and SaferSanerSchools identified 11 essential elements of restorative practice that are necessary for successful whole-school implementation of restorative practices: affective statements, restorative questions, small impromptu conferences, proactive circles, responsive circles, restorative conferences, fair process, reintegrative management of shame, restorative staff community, restorative approach with families, and a fundamental hypothesis of understanding (Acosta et al., 2019; Mirsky, 2007; Rainbolt et al., 2019). Other pedagogical strategies seen throughout the literature have consisted of setting aside time each day to ingrate circles (Wang & Lee, 2018), one-on-one student check-ins (Sandwick et al., 2019), purposeful integration of community-building strategies (Sandwick et al., 2019), flexible pedagogy where lessons can be adjusted to address current events (Fine, 2018), student's personal journals and reflection on restorative questions (Mirsky, 2007), and engaging stakeholders within the restorative processes (Garnett et al., 2019). Intertwined within these pedagogical practices, many academics have associated RP as one approach to social and emotional learning (SEL). RP aligns with SEL through a holistic approach to student behavior that proactively increases social and emotional skills in students and staff (Kehoe et al., 2018).

Education research has found that RP can result in various successful outcomes across relationships and youth improvement. Numerous studies found that the utilization of RP allowed for more durable relationships (Cavanagh et al., 2014; Weaver & Swank, 2020), had a positive impact on classroom climate (Wang & Lee, 2018), sustained efforts of community and collaboration (Mirsky, 2007; Rainbolt et al., 2019; Sandwick et al., 2019), and engagement across multiple levels of stakeholders (González et al., 2018). RP was found to empower youth to speak without fear (Lustick et al., 2020; Wang & Lee, 2018), increased leadership

opportunities (Sandwick et al., 2019; Stinchcomb et al., 2006; Weaver & Swank, 2020), valued

for their experience and cultural assets (Cavanagh et al., 2014; Fine, 2018), and an increase in

resiliency, empathy, positive youth development, and academic performance (Acosta et al.,

2019; González et al., 2018; Mirsky, 2007).

Restorative Practices and Sport

To this date, the literature based on the use of restorative practices in sport have been

limited to discipline and alternatives to punitive actions within sports arenas. Ballie (2021)

explored how RJ could be implemented inside the NCAA through interviews with RJ

professionals, football players, and head coaches. Through exploration of ineligibility sanctions

that lead to unfair and negative consequences, this study looked at the utilization of RJ as an

opposition to punitive measures. Similarly, Salm and Sefiha (2021) proposed an RJ approach to

issues of doping in sports to humanize voice, relationships, responsibility, addressing harm, and

strengthen community. Kim and Parlow (2009) explored how the private exclusive form of

punishment inside sport leagues, where sports leagues opt-out of the public criminal justice

system for a private resolution, can be utilized. Within this, some sport leagues opt for restorative

justice where punishment is a community-based response to crime that precludes public

punishment and process in the conventional sense of the term. There needs to be more literature

in the utilization of RP as a proactive and reactive approach inside a sports environment.

Hemphill and colleagues (2018) recognized that integrating restorative practices into

SBYD programs could provide an opportunity for youth to address tension and conflict that may

arise in their lives. The study investigated various professionals who administered SBYD or

restorative programs for youth and found that many of the values that kids exemplified inside the

classroom did not transfer to the sport environment (Hemphill et al., 2018). One PE teacher noted that:

> "Sport is an interesting thing, isn't it? I (was the referee for) a football game. And on this side of the white line I'm a well-respected teacher. Once you step over the line, you become a referee in soccer, we allow the kids to actually say lots of (inappropriate) things to the referee and it's a part of the game" (Hemphill et al., 2018, p86).

This study highlighted the need for a model within the realm of SBYD that purposefully addressed conflict resolution and centered player voice and cultural experience. The authors thus proposed the Restorative Youth Sports model.

Restorative Youth Sports

Hemphill and colleagues (2018) proposed Restorative Youth Sports (RYS) as a model that could be a more culturally responsive version of SBYD. The RYS model keeps the structure of TPSR while extending the model by explicitly focusing on building relationships and repairing harm (Hemphill et al., 2018). The extension of restorative practices onto TPSR provides intentional strategies to promote positive interactions through sport and an opportunity to center the systemic injustices experienced by youth participants (Hemphill et al., 2021). RYS promotes three pedagogical strategies: restorative essentials, awareness circles, and team meetings (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). Restorative essentials include intentional focus on being relational, reflective practice, diversity/inclusiveness, and transfer. Awareness circles provide a routine space for restorative conversations where all stakeholders can have equal voice, community members can model respect, and teams can affirm expectations (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). Team meetings offer a space to address conflict, tensions, and harms that may

occur during practice or games (Hemphill et al., 2018). Although the RYS model offers flexibility, at its core is the emphasis on the assets youth bring with them to the team.

Thus far, the literature on Restorative Youth Sports has been secluded to in-school Physical Education program. Lynch & Curtner-Smith (2019) conducted a case study of an elementary school Physical Educator who used restorative practices to transform his pedagogy. The results emphasized his ability to create a community of learners that centered student voice in the creation of curriculum, his classroom organization, and even the limited occasions of discipline (Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). Hemphill and colleagues (2021) explored the issue of conflict and harm in restorative schools in New Zealand. The results showed spaces for restorative pedagogy in PE and that Physical Educators are in a unique position to set the tone for issues of conflict and implement restorative practices. Similar success of implementing restorative practices inside the PE environment was illustrated in an alternative Physical Education program with ninth graders (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021). Not all research has been quite as successful or intentional. One physical educator felt that despite his school adopting restorative practices, he was left without effective tools to integrate RP nor effective conflict resolution practices (Hemphill et al., 2022). This study, along with various other educational research, highlights that context matters in order for successful implementation of RP. RP requires a significant amount of investment and buy-in from not only facilitators and youth, but the stakeholders in the environment, including other staff members, administration, and parents (Acosta et al., 2019; Hemphill et al., 2022; Sandwick et al., 2019). The current literature base has examined the feasibility and challenges of integrating RYS, but not in the sport setting it was intended for.

Although most research in RYS is descriptive or anecdotal, it shows promise in creating a more player-centered sports environment. From the current literature base, empirical evidence is necessary to support RYS as a feasible model in a sports environment. This study sought to investigate implementation, player experience, transfer, and coach experience of a RYS competitive soccer team.

Theoretical Frameworks

Transfer of Life Skills in Sport-Based Youth Development Theory

Jacobs and Wright's (2018) *Transfer of Life Skills in Sport-Based Youth Development Programs* emphasizes the cognitive process underlying student learning application in SBYD programs (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). Jacobs and Wright (2018) acknowledge the dynamic interaction between in-program learning, which involves program implementation and student learning, the transfer process, which involves cognitive connection and application, and contextual factors related to the student, the teacher/coach, and the environment (Figure 1). Through this conceptualization, the evaluation of the transfer process is no longer confined to observable behaviors, but also considers the youths' intentionality and thinking process (Jacobs & Wright, 2018).

Figure 1. Jacobs and Wright's Conceptual model for Transfer of Life Skills in SBYD
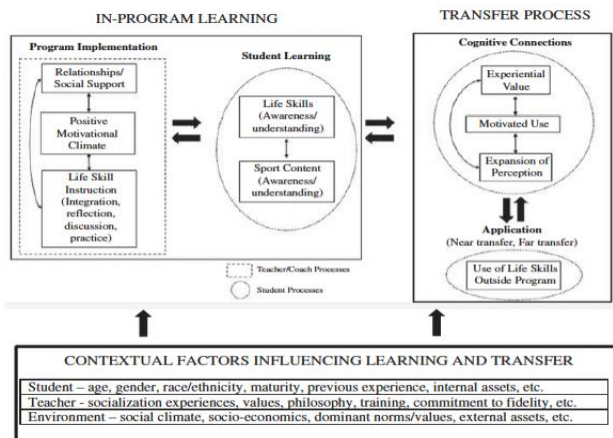
A significant quality of the Jacobs and Wright's conceptual framework is the bridging of in-program learning with out-of-program transfer. The authors reviewed the literature in SBYD to conceptualize the key elements of successful in-program learning (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). The identified features of program implementation were an emphasis on relationships/social support (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009; Holt et al., 2017), purposeful integration, discussion, and reflection on life skills in the context of sport (Gould & Carson, 2008; Hellison, 2011), and maintaining a positive motivational climate. Program implementation didactically affected and was effected by student learning where youth must be aware of the life skills being taught (Martinek & Lee, 2012) and have an understanding of the sport content. Together, program implementation and student learning, comprise in-program learning. In-program learning interrelates to the transfer process, where cognitive connections, embodied of experiential value, motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), and expansion of perception (Pugh et al., 2010), interacts with application, or the actual use of life skills outside of the program. These life skills can be utilized in similar to the environment in which they were learned, near transfer, or different environments from the original learning environment, far transfer (Salomon & Perkins, 1989).

At the core of Jacobs and Wright's (2018) conceptual framework are Wigfield & Eccles (2000) *Expectancy Value Theory* and Pugh and colleagues' (2010) *Theory of Transformative Experience*. The Expectancy Value Theory recognizes that youth have certain expectations about their ability to carry out a behavior and this shapes if they choose whether to perform said behavior or not. Expectations and values are influenced by task-specific beliefs including the belief about one's ability, the perceived difficulty of different tasks, and the individuals' goals, self-schema, and affective memories (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Jacobs and Wright paired this theory with the theory of Transformative Experience to ground their own framework. The

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Theory of Transformative Experience looks at how youth come to see and experience the world in meaningful new ways and this can enhance student learning and how he or she engages with the material (Pugh et al., 2010). This theory is rooted in Dewey's (1933) teaching on transformative learning, where he contended that for science content to be meaningful in real life, there must be a transformative experience. While the content knowledge in sport and science differ, understanding and perceived relevance still have similar mechanisms for utilization and transfer to other areas of life (Pugh et al., 2010).

Transfer has long been an explored phenomenon in learning and behavior. Salomon and Perkins (1989) theorized on the internal mechanisms of transfer that were dependent on the amount of practice and variability of context in which the practice occurred. Gordon and Doyle (2015) expanded upon this theory by highlighting the importance of bridging or mediating the process of abstract concepts to build connections through analogies and metacognition. This included opportunities for quality learning, where reflection occurred both "in action", whilst the activity is ongoing, and "on action", when the activity is completed (Schon, 1987). Other research has highlighted the importance of the role of coaches in the transfer of life skills through demonstration, modeling, and practice (Camire et al., 2012), importance of the individual differences in youth trying to learn, the confidence in the ability to transfer, comprehension of transfer, and support of transfer (Gould & Carson, 2008). These theories were often utilized to investigate transfer and the observable outcomes that come with it (Camire et al., 2012).

Looking beyond observations and into participant perceptions, Jacobs and Wright (2021) conducted a case study of 11 participants from a community-based program where the program leverages the power of sport to reclaim the space and unite the community. The study resulted in all participants reflecting on how the program impacted them beyond just sport but reinforced

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their core values and identity development (Jacobs & Wright, 2021). There was recognition that life skills extended beyond themselves and into the community as well as cognizance of how participants' surroundings impacted their decision to apply life skills to other environments (Jacobs & Wright, 2021). This study provides further evidence that helps to illuminate how to learn, think about, and transfer life skills. Since the transfer of life skills is a process, further empirical evidence is needed to investigate the combination of observable behavior outcomes as well as the cognitive process behind youth behavior change. This study sought to close this gap.

Occupational Socialization Theory

Socialization into a particular setting and/or profession has always been an area of academic interest. Socialization is understood as the process in which individuals learn from particular settings and the norms, culture, and ideologies associated with it, through interactions with others and social institutions (Clausen, 1968). Lawson (1988) recognized that pedagogy is a human product, which acts back on their human authors by socializing them; therefore educators must ask themselves what kind of socialization they encounter, including what they learn, when, how, and where (Lawson, 1988). As more physical educators examined their own socialization into the physical education profession, Lawson (1983) desired to synthesize these findings into a working model, Occupational Socialization Theory.

Socialization is a lifelong process. Lawson synthesized there are three basic tenets of occupational socialization: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization. Acculturation requires an analysis of what happens to teachers before they enter a formal PETE program; individuals develop preconceived notions and are influenced by the dominant meanings carried by all society's institutions (Lawson, 1983b). In the field of Physical Education and coaching, individuals are shaped by teachers, coaches, counselors, family and this

exposure to various teaching and coaching methods shape what individuals think Physical Education and sport should look like (Richards & Templin, 2019). During this phase, students interested in going into the Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) field are usually distinguished by either having a coaching-orientation, where they desire to coach and have a low commitment to teaching, or teacher-orientation, where teaching is the primary objective of their career (Richards & Templin, 2019).

Once individuals make a formal commitment to pursue a career PETE thus begins their professional socialization (Lawson, 1983b). This phase is aligned with preparing pre-service teachers with the knowledge and pedagogical skills to be an effective teacher, and challenge their preexisting subjective theories that do not align with evidence-based practice (Richards et al., 2013). Once that individual enters their first job, organizational socialization occurs, and individuals start to be socialized by the job's culture and climate. Organizational socialization can be collective or individual; formal or informal; sequential or random; fixed or variable; serial or disjunctive; and new knowledge and skills can be welcomed or rejected (Lawson, 1983a).

Socialization occurs across a spectrum of arenas into one's eventual professional arena. Socialization occurs in society, sports, professional, organizational, and occupational. For instance, sport socialization is the process by which individuals acquire knowledge and the skill necessary for participation (Lawson, 1988). For individuals who decide to teach physical education or coach, it is important to investigate the separate and joint effects of education and sport (Lawson, 1988). It is important to note that all social institutions are socializing agents, but individuals have active agency against these socializations. Individuals can express their voices to resist the influence of those who seek to influence them (Schempp & Graber, 1992).

Lawson (1983) created a clear delineation between coaching and teaching when he conceptualized Occupational Socialization Theory. Dewar and Lawson (1984) argued that when individuals are socialized through sport, i.e., are successful as athletes and highly skilled in sports, individuals viewed the role of PE teacher and athletic coach as one and the same. This led to coaches being described as "nonteachers" where they provide little way of meaningful instruction and primarily focus on high-level teams during extracurricular sport (Prior & Curtner-Smith, 2020). However, more recent literature has offered a more multidimensional perspective on the teacher-coach role (Richards & Templin, 2012). In their paper, Richards and Templin (2011) stated that during acculturation, individuals who found success as athletes can develop a teaching orientation through positive experiences in Physical Education. They followed up with a conceptual paper in 2012 that suggested that individual personal dispositions and environmental factors influence the experiences and challenges of the teacher-coach (Richards & Templin, 2012). More recent literature has proposed a spectrum of orientations between teaching, coaching, and a novel third orientation, fitness (Parkes & Hemphill, 2020). A number of preservice teachers are now influenced by modulating levels of these three orientation, where an acculturation into an appreciation for fitness, movement, and wellness has been identified as a key socializing factor (Parkes & Hemphill, 2020).

Occupational Socialization Theory and Self-Study Literature

More recent literature has started utilizing Occupational Socialization theory as the theoretical framework behind self-study. Self-study is the study of one's self, one's actions, one's ideas, and one's practice to challenge, reflect, and ultimately, improve one's practice (Hamilton et al., 2008; LaBoskey, 2004). Grounded in social constructivist learning theory, self-study places emphasis on how personal history, experience, culture, assumptions, and multiple

perspectives influence learning (LaBoskey, 2004). Being an educator requires the simultaneous balance of the educators' learning with the facilitation of learning. It is a commitment to ethics, marginalized voices, and the insider perspective; the aim is to be good judges who help others to be so as well (LaBoskey, 2004). Self-study can be utilized as an approach to investigate one's occupational socialization and allows for individuals to think more critically about their pedagogy, how different roles interact (i.e. teacher, coach, researcher, service), and the sociopolitical relationships around them (Richards & Ressler, 2016). In the process-orientation of community-engaged literature, self-study allows for a cyclical cycle of self-reflection for continued improvement and evaluation. It is a scholarship initiated by and focused on the educator. The end result will be an interactive, narrative report that helps to understand, facilitate, and articulate the teaching-learning process (LaBoskey, 2004). The purpose moves beyond particularities of practice to dissemination of developed understandings that can be critically appraised (Richards & Fletcher, 2018).

Self-study exists at the intersection between theory and practice, research and pedagogy (LaBoskey, 2004). A similar intersection exists between restorative practices, a more theoretical framework, and TPSR, a pedagogical framework, illuminating the space of RYS. Like RYS, self-study research is continuously evolving but involves certain distinctive features. Self-study is communal; it involves a community that recognizes pedagogy is messy and imperfect (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014). It is inquiry-oriented, where the researcher illuminates the complexities and challenges of teaching and learning to teach and not only recognizes, but places emphasis on, the contextual elements behind practice (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014). Lastly, self-study enacts disposition of desire- to be more, to improve, to better understand (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014).

Self-study as a methodological approach has found relevance in all realms of education as researchers navigate being Physical Education teachers (Attard, 2014), doctoral students (Lynch et al., 2018), and teacher educators in higher education (MacPhail, 2014; Richards & Fletcher, 2018; Richards & Ressler, 2016). In doctoral education, self-study has the potential for rising academics to analyze their teaching (coaching) while also promoting reflection on the balance of education, research, and service roles (Gregory et al., 2017). Self-study has been found to be a valuable method for studying professional practice settings, to improve practice, to better understand, facilitate, and articulate the teaching-learning process (LaBoskey, 2004). Through this approach, educators have highlighted the importance of investigating physical reactions and feelings when teaching (Forgasz, 2014), pushing through complacency in practice (Attard, 2014), organizational periphery can be a powerful position to teach in (MacPhail, 2014), the delicate balance between control and allowing for student autonomy (Richards & Fletcher, 2018), and the need to be receptive to change and dedicated to improvement (Richards & Ressler, 2016). Although these findings are unique in their individual contexts, they expand to relevancy and applicability amongst other professionals. As the field of Physical Education has continued to evolve, the rise of self-study has risen to meet the need for educators to adapt and evolve with it. This study expanded the use of self-study into the realm of coaching.

Literature Overview for this Study

The following study is conceptualized within the SBYD framework which broadly places emphasis on the importance of coaching, relationships, and transfer within sports (Holt et al., 2017). Restorative Youth Sports (Hemphill et al., 2018) is an applied model the falls under the scope of SBYD that extends Restorative Practices into Hellison's (2011) TPSR model to stress conflict resolution and relationship-building. This study sought to investigate the implementation

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of an RYS model into a competitive soccer team by equally focusing on sport skill development and life skill development. Due to the novelty of RYS implementation into a competitive space, a self-study study (LaBoskey, 2004) approach was utilized through the lens of Occupational Socialization Theory (Lawson, 1983a) to consider past and present socialization to help the researcher-coach grow in her RYS facilitation. Jacobs and Wright (2018) conceptual framework of the Transfer of Life Skills in SBYD Programs was applied to get a fuller picture of in-program implementation, student learning, and the transfer process. This framework is grounded in theoretical frameworks such as Pugh and colleagues (2010) Transformative Experience Theory and Wigfield and Eccles' (2000) Expectancy Value Theory and ideas of near and far transfer (Salomon & Perkins, 1989) to examine the interplay of program implementation, student learning, and contextual factors and how these elements relate to transfer inside and outside of the program. The literature combines to create a more holistic depiction of why it is important to investigate RYS not just through determined outcomes, but from the narrative of both a coach and player experience.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Purpose

This study was conducted in hopes to examine the experience and implementation of the

Restorative Youth Sports (RYS) model in a competitive soccer team. Within this examination,

the goal was to highlight the experiences of the players through a descriptive case study, the

coach through a self-study, and the implications of the RYS values transferring outside of the

program to the other areas of players' lives. A qualitative research design was especially useful

in seeking to understand people's beliefs, values, feelings, and motivations (Hastie & Hay,

2012). Through interviews, focus groups, exit slips, artifact analysis, reflective journals, and

critical friend discussions, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. How does the researcher develop and facilitate a Restorative Youth Sport Model into a
   competitive sports team?

2. What is the experience of players in a RYS competitive soccer team?

3. In what ways, if any, do participants' think through and learn inside the RYS program?
   How do they think about elements of the program outside of the program into other areas
   of their lives?

Research Design

Self-study is a process where educators can take a detailed inquiry into their personal

experiences, actions, interactions, observations, and ideas (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014). Grounded

in self-constructivist learning theory, learning and facilitating learning is affected by personal

history, experience, culture assumptions, and multiple perspectives (LaBoskey, 2004). According

to LaBoskey (2004), self-study must involve five key tenants: it is self-initiated and focused; it is

improvement-aimed; it is interactive; it includes multiple, mainly qualitative, methods; and it defines validity as a process based on trustworthiness. For the current study, the initiative and aim of self-study was improvement as a coach and restorative facilitator; from a broader context, I aimed to investigate how theory and literature interact with practical implementation. A necessary component of self-study is that it is interactive (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014). Interactions include conversations with youth, parents, other coaches, mentors, restorative practitioners, and various stakeholders from the community. One key interaction is establishing a critical friendship. A critical friend is a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers a critique of a person's work as a friend (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p50). For this study, Dr. Kevin Andrew Richards was asked to serve as the researcher's critical friend due to his expertise in self-study as well as knowledge in the RYS model. Kevin was invited because of his experience conducting self-study research of his own (Richards & Fletcher, 2018), serving as a critical friend (Richards & Shiver, 2020), and is a well-established contributor to PETE and SBYD literature. Various qualitative methods served to investigate, explore, and improve my coaching practice such as a self-reflective journal, critical conversations, player interviews, informal conversations with stakeholders, exit slips, and focus groups. Each method was triangulated to ensure trustworthiness of the research.

The case study approach offers the best means for an in-depth examination of the implementation of a RYS based soccer team. The unique strength of a case study is that it allows for a full variety of evidence- documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations (Yin, 2009). Since the context of the study was inherently unique, as described below, qualitative data were necessary to gain insight into participants' experiences. It is important to note that although this study did have elements of co-engagement and action-orientation, it did not fully align with

participatory action research (MacDonald, 2012). Instead, it was classified as a case study with participatory elements. As a researcher, it is imperative that I considered the age and context in which participants are situated; therefore, I was diligent in my use of rigorous methods, respected individuality, used appropriate research methods, avoided imposing one's own views, established rapport, used clear questions, maintained confidentiality, protected participants from harm, and managed disclosures (Kirk, 2007).

Within the realm of qualitative research, it is important to recognize the subjectivity of researcher as an active participant in the research. Therefore, it was imperative to understand where I, as the researcher, situated myself, values, and knowledge and its natural influence on each phase of the research project.

Researcher Positionality

My Epistemology

Positionality was paramount to my production and understanding of knowledge because how I approached the composition of knowledge and what I valued as knowledge was ultimately influenced by my perception and values. In my first semester of my doctoral degree this was illuminated to me through a practical fable written by Carter and Little (2007)

> Professor Jeffery and Professor Rose are trying to assist their student Anna in her creation
> of a pilot study. Due to their differing epistemologies, it becomes evident in how a social
> constructivist, Professor Jeffery, differs from a post-positivist, Professor Rose. Professor
> Jeffery urges Anna to be an active researcher, inextricably imprinting on the research
> process from beginning to end, and constantly reflexive in her role. Professor Rose
> desires the research to be as generalizable as possible, where Anna must avoid
> introducing bias and keep her question non-leading and depersonalized.

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Upon entering grad school, and coming from a quantitative research background, I read this fable and instantly sided with Professor Rose. Research should be generalizable, right? Over the course of the past three years, I realized that no research is truly generalizable because context matters. In my work with the community, I desired to co-create programs with participants, and recognized that their social interactions, values, and beliefs, as well as mine, are a part of the research. Where Professor Rose saw participants as passive in the research process, Professor Jeffery illustrated participants' agency in the research process and as co-creators of the study. Through this illustration, I understood that I am a social constructivist.

Social construction of reality is the notion that habits become routines and that routines become legitimated knowledge (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Systems, process, definition, and identities are socially constructed. The human world is different from the natural, physical world; people cannot have essence because they are defined interpersonally and intersubjectively by people interacting in a network of relationships (Patton, 2015). Truth is a shared meaning and consensus amongst people. No absolute truth exists, but rather it can only be constructed. Therefore, in my research, knowledge was constructed through my interactions with participants, participants interactions with each other, and the outside world. However, this may change and vary depending on research projects.

My Assemblage

As stated above, Bettez (2015) writes about how we are an assemblage of our unique identities and recalled experiences, and this assemblage adapts and shifts as we live our lives, grow, and change environments. She prefers assemblage over the word intersectionality because intersectionality speaks to a static point where multiple statuses in our positionality crossover. Assemblage is more dynamic and shifts the idea to different combinations of social status groups

and experiences that make up our positionality. I prescribe to Bettez's notion that I am a dynamic assemblage of my different identities and experiences. My assemblage is a white heterosexual female who is an athlete, philomath, empathizer, and coach. Even within this study, I was a researcher, restorative practitioner, and soccer coach. Engulfed within all these elements was privilege, ethical strife, and the desire to elevate others.

Researcher Objective: Elevating Others' Voices & Communion

In my research, the meaningful part of my work arose from the elevation of the voices of the participants that I work with. Hellison (2011) constantly asked the question "Is it worth doing?" As I embarked on any research journey, the question resonated in my mind. It frequently brought me back to who should be the one answering this question? Who gets to determine "worth?" Through this understanding, I acknowledged that it is youth voices and experiences that need to be empowered and featured, not my own. Readers will see what I found by allowing participants to speak for themselves(Watt, 2007). By giving space and support to those whose voices have otherwise been diminished, I highlighted the experiences and perspectives of people who otherwise may not be heard.

Inherent in the statement about elevating marginalized voices, especially youth's voices, was underlying power relations. With these power relations come the recognition of the ethical dilemmas that were raised in my research. As a white woman working with youth from a culturally diverse background, I needed to be inherently and explicitly thoughtful, engaging, and learn about the cultural knowledge needed to interpret the experience of those I study (Milner, 2007). An added ethical element was that my work dealt mostly with youth. There are important differentiations when researching youth due to their understanding and experience of the world, their communication, and the unequal power relationship between adult researchers and youth

participants (Kirk, 2007). Part of this required open reflexivity to keep the process of my research ethical. When dilemmas arise, I had to be transparent in the decisions I made rather than try to conceal them. When being transparent, I illuminated the difficulties, and leaned into the power of reciprocity and communion and how my participants played a role in my decisions.

Research that centers relationships allowed for a give-and-take. This idea was grounded in the centralization of communion. Communion was viewed as the striving for meaningful connection, a shift from being product oriented to human oriented (Hendry, 2007). It required a commitment to meaningful connection through humanity, dignity, respect, and equity practices and values (Bettez, 2015). Through this lens, I negotiated how I did my work and for what end. I wanted to work *with* youth and allowed them to be active participants in how and why we did things. By co-creating knowledge with my participants, their individual experiences, contexts, culture, history, and so forth were regarded as sources of insight for program and research development (Rothman, 2014). Although this required a delicate balance, by centering and valuing youth for who they are, I created a shift to an asset-based approach.

My Role as Coach

I was uniquely situated to coach this RYS team. Having a unique balance of soccer expertise, pedagogical knowledge and experience, and understanding of both restorative and TPSR practices, I was well equipped to take on this endeavor.

I have played soccer for almost the entirety of my life. For my final years of youth soccer, I was on the inaugural Fusion soccer club when Greensboro Twisters combined with Winston Salem Twins. Although now it is not the same product as I once played on, I understood the nuances and dynamics of the combination of two separate soccer institutions and their respective communities. I went on to be recruited and play Division 1 college soccer at College

of Charleston. Within my time in college, I was formally trained as a Physical Educator and amassed numerous hours of coaching, teaching, and volunteering in physical education, sports, and physical activity across a wide spectrum of ages, abilities, and cultures. Post bachelor's graduation, I had the opportunity to be a graduate assistant at University of Virginia, a top-10 NCAA women's soccer program while pursuing a master's degree in Exercise Physiology. For the last two years, I assisted Sari Rose in running the Fusion Foundation, the nonprofit sector of Fusion soccer club. Within this role, I coached numerous TPSR-based soccer programs including a refugee middle school boys' team, elementary and middle school afterschool programs, parks and recreation programs, and summer camps.

As a student of Dr. Hemphill, I have become immersed in learning about Restorative Youth Sports, restorative practices, the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model, and positive youth development. I conducted a systematic review of restorative pedagogy in secondary education where I read over a hundred articles dedicated to the successes and challenges of restorative practice interventions. I gained a certificate of participation from the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) training for restorative practices for educators. I led restorative circles and utilized a spectrum of restorative practices at two separate alternative physical education programs, at Black Development Institutes' summer camps, and throughout various afterschool programs in the community. In addition, I assisted Dr. Martinek with his afterschool sports club Project Effort and its counterpart Youth Leadership Corps (YLC). This cross-aged peer mentorship program involves high school students utilizing the TPSR model and then creating their own activities to use with underserved and refugee youth in Project Effort. The foundational values of TPSR were so embedded within my life, I could not differentiate myself from Don Hellison's ideals.

Foundational to my role as a coach was the firm belief that physical activity is for everyone. I believe that our world would be a better place if everyone found a way to engage with some type of physical activity for at least a small portion of their day. This idea was grounded in me from a young age as my mom mandated that "we must get one hour of physical activity a day." From this mandate arose the opportunity to fall in love with physical activity. I was afforded exposure to organized sports such as soccer, swimming, tennis, basketball, volleyball to unorganized physical activity such as neighborhood roller hockey, capture the flag, and dance routines on the trampoline. This adoration of physical activity, not just exercise, has inspired my career path in Kinesiology.

Kinesiology is the study of human body *movement*. Movement encompasses both formal bouts of exercise and/or sport to informal activities where individuals are just moving their bodies. I think frequently adults confuse physical activity with exercise and automatically get discouraged if they don't fit into a mold that societal norms and the fitness industry have established. It is my idealistic dream that everyone would fall in love with some type of physical activity if they were willing to try and be creative. Although I was lucky to be a naturally gifted athlete and afforded the opportunity to play Division 1 soccer, I think that part of my success in staying physically active was exposure at a young age. Therefore, co-creation with youth to find activities that fit their needs and allow them to fall in love with movement was important to my goals.

Part of the work with sport-based youth development (SBYD) was the idea that as a coach, leader, and facilitator, I must approach youth with an asset-based approach. This entailed that youth are not problems to be solved, but resources to be developed (Holt et al., 2012). Youth bring unique experiences, knowledge, and talents with them to be the table. Excellence can and

does emerge in multiple, varied forms; different does not mean deficient or deficit (Milner, 2007). Yet even with my internalization of this ideal, it was still difficult and challenging work. On paper it was an idealistic concept, but in reality, youth can be challenging. That is why respect became a foundational approach to all my relationships. Respecting youth for who they were and what they valued and understanding that our values may not have been the same, but they were still deserving of quality physical activity and development. It was working through the difficulties that led to meaningful work and changes.

Context of Study

RYS is an integrated model of TPSR and RP that purposefully uses sport as a means to build relationships, teach conflict resolution, and center youth experiences (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021). It includes specific pedagogical practices that center player voice. These practices include restorative essentials, awareness circles, and team meetings (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). Restorative essentials create a sense of belonging amongst the team and as well as an expectation that youth will demonstrate TPSR principles (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). Awareness circles create an intentional space at the beginning and end of practice where all community members should be heard, model respect, and have the team expectations affirmed (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021; Hemphill & Richards, 2021). Team meetings resemble restorative conferences where participants have the opportunity to express concerns and explore conflict that may happen on and/or off the field (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). RYS places an emphasis on co-creation of the sport environment between all affected parties.

Participants in this study included me as a coach-researcher, a critical friend (Kevin Richards), and a team of 15 females born in the year 2009 (Table 1). Participants were assigned pseudonyms. The research was conducted in a local soccer club, North Carolina Fusion.

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North Carolina Fusion is a local sports club that desires to unite the triad through sport.

Originally two separate clubs served Greensboro and Winston, the clubs merged in 2018 to form

one club that serve not only their respective communities, but the Triad region. Built on ideals

such as trust, humility, development, and community, the aim of NC Fusion is to provide

progressive coaching and programs that help players improve their knowledge and enjoyment of

the game, emotional well-being, physical health, and personal relationships. Their commitment

to this goal was built by creating a culture of empowerment for players and the community.

Within this commitment, NC Fusion was open to the idea of having a doctoral student coming in

and implement a RYS program that placed equal commitment on player's skill development and

personal development.

Table 1. Player Information

Player	Position	# of Years on Current Team	# Years Playing Competitive Soccer*	Data Source
Adaline	Forward	Fourth	Fourth	1
Abby	Forward	Fifth	Fifth	1
Suzanna	Defender	First	Fifth	1,2
Betsy	Defender	First	Fifth	1,2
Bobbie	Forward/Defender	Fifth	Fifth	1,2
Ellie	Midfielder	Second	Fifth	1,2
Hope	Defender	Second	Third	1,2
Genevieve	Forward/Defender	Fifth	Fifth	1
Jacelyn	Midfielder	First	First	1
Carmen	Defender	Fifth	Fifth	1
Georgia	Defender	Fifth	Fifth	1,2
Molly	Forward	First	Third	1,2
Mackenzie	Midfielder	Fifth	Fifth	1,2

Raegan	Goalkeeper	Second	Second	1,2
Tori	Midfielder	Fifth	Fifth	1,2

Note 1=focus group; 2= individual interview

*Competitive Soccer denotes organized, non-recreational soccer (usually higher cost, more practices, and more games)

The team was the NC Fusion "gold team". "Gold" represents the most skilled team played at the local state level (Level 2). There is a set of teams within this age group that play nationally and regionally (Level 1), but it is at the discretion of the parents' which level they prefer their children to play at (Level 1 has higher cost and travel). Within either level, 1 or 2, players must try out and qualify to play on certain teams. My 15 players were selected from a panel of coaches that either coached them previously or watched them in a tryout. All coaches within the club must have either coaching licensure certification through U.S. Soccer, or in some unique cases, such as my own, coaches will be accepted based on previous experience playing and coaching through a try-out process. The team involved in this study played in a competitive league that competed in the state of North Carolina. It was made up of girls born in the year of 2009. The team practiced three days a week followed by games on weekends. During the course of the study, the girls competed in two tournaments and seven league games. The length of the season mixed with the large number of practices and interactions provide in-depth opportunities for the researcher to be fully immersed in the research environment. NC Fusion is a pay-to-play organization requiring players to pay a fee to participate. The majority of the players on this team were financially able to afford it. A select few required assistance from the NC Fusion Foundation, a non-profit sector of NC Fusion that assists marginalized communities in overcoming barriers to participation.

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It is important to note that NC Fusion encompasses a wide variety of levels of soccer, from recreation to elite level competition to outreach. This is reflected in their mission statement in an attempt to align with an all-encompassing, idealistic image of unity through sport. The more competitive environments, Level 1 and 2, practices do not necessarily align with the mission statement. Ultimately, the goal of these competitive levels is to develop skillful soccer players. The further up the spectrum of elite players rise, the more team ideals align with winning and college- or professional- commitments as measures of success.

Due to the limitation that high school competitive teams only play in the Fall, I conducted a pilot study with a similar population, high school 9th grade girls, but in a different environment, a local high school. Unlike in this research study, I was not the primary coach due to time constraints but was allowed to fully conduct RYS in the practices I was present and the primary head coach, Gracie, was completely supportive.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in the Spring of 2022. There was concern about the feasibility of conducting RYS inside a competitive team. The purpose of the pilot study was to allow me to test self-study reflections with her critical friend, examine interview questions, practice data collection, and familiarize herself with the analysis of her different approaches. Specifically, I coached/facilitated an RYS practice once a week over the course of a high school season (n=12). I was able to pilot writing in my reflective journal (n=12), my critical friend conversations (n=3), my player interview questions (n=6), and use axial codes to analyze the data. This allowed for me to constantly reflect on the process of implementing RP into a competitive soccer environment and the challenges/successes of each practice.

Fidelity of Implementation

The data collected during the pilot study provided support for the feasibility of implementing RYS into a competitive soccer environment. The session plans followed TPSR daily format and allowed for creation of specific restorative questions for circles. The review of the reflective journal and critical friend conversations supported a conscious effort of improvement as a restorative facilitator and coach. It also helped to foster a positive relationship between the critical friend, Kevin, and myself. It should be noted that due to the shortened length of this current study, Kevin and I met more frequently during the Fall season (biweekly) and I wrote in my journal whenever I was inspired, not just one day a week as the pilot. The pilot study helped to confirm that RYS was possible following a TPSR daily format, integrating restorative circles into each practice, and using RYS essentials.

Interviews

The pilot study revealed that the player interviews took less time than predicted and that the concept of transfer was not as clearly defined as hoped. I chose six different players with different soccer skill levels and experiences. All six participants were 9th grade girls who were in their first year on the JV team. Since I was not the primary coach, I did not have control over the majority of time the players' spent together. Gracie did adopt some strategies of RYS like "two-clap shoutouts" and having players choose a player of the week and give an explanation. Clarification on team values and more intentional conversations about transfer were obviously needed.

Despite needed changes, each participant spoke on the importance of relationships and bonding on the team. Numerous players, who played on competitive teams outside of this one, were able to differentiate between how this competitive soccer team differed from their other

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experiences. For instances, players identified the focus on relationship-building, communication, and in-depth conversations as being unique to this team. Also, players spoke on the importance of opportunities to bond outside of soccer. This highlighted the need to implement out-of-practice bonding opportunities to help foster sustainable relationships that continue outside of the competitive environment.

Overall, the pilot study indicated that RYS was a feasible model to implement inside a competitive environment and that more research was needed. The current study allowed for a more in depth understanding of player experience, implementation, and how values learned in an RYS could transfer to outside environments.

Trustworthiness and Data Collection

In this proposed study, I played multiple roles in the participants' lives as research, facilitator, and coach. In considering and being transparent about the roles played in shaping this proposed study, I created a context that demonstrates an honest commitment to the research process (Smith & McGannon, 2017). Protocols were established for all collection of data (Yin, 2009). The first step was recognizing the biases of the researcher and reflecting on them in my reflective journal, my conversations with my critical friend, and being honest before each practice and interview. Techniques utilized to establish credibility were prolonged engagement, persistent reflection/observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation

In accordance with Lincoln & Guba's (1985) assessment that prolonged engagement and persistent reflection are critical to being credible, I spent a significant amount of time with the team and players I coached. Across the span of three and a half months, I coached the girls three

to five days a week for 75 minutes, plus games and tournaments. My critical friend and I developed a relationship that spanned almost a year with critical friend conversations piloted before the study even began. Time thus served as a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data: time at my research site, time spent in my reflective journal, time building relationships with participants, and time spent interviewing (Patton, 2015). Data sources were implemented across the entirety of the study and collected following consent as a sequenced process of engagement with the team that culminated in final interviews and a final focus group.

Triangulation

Triangulated findings contribute to trustworthiness of the data. Triangulation involves the use of multiple data collection methods and sources. Put simply, the greater the number and quality of support sources for a study, the greater the triangulation of sources, the more complete and accurate account than either singular data source alone (Maxwell, 2012). To increase triangulation and gain authentic and purposeful data from the team, a variety of systematic data collection methodologies were employed that will be outlined in this chapter. Multiple qualitative data sources, from multiple participants and stakeholders of the study, helped to triangulate and confirm findings.

Peer Debriefing

My advisor and critical friend served in the role of peer debriefers. Peer debriefing is the process of exposing oneself for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that may otherwise remain only implicit within the researcher's mind (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through conversations, peer debriefs probed me to think critically regarding my biases, perspectives and assumptions and my posture toward the data and my analysis. This allowed me to process and

explain choices made, describe my standpoint, and indicate my awareness to ethical considerations about voice, privacy, and responsibility to others (Patton, 2015).

Negative Case Analysis

Negative case analysis seeks to analyze data that doesn't fit primary patterns and that may oppose primary preconceptions. These exceptions help to illuminate the boundaries of the pattern and extend the idea behind the code to include the circumstance of the negative case, thus extending the richness of the coding (Gibbs, 2007). Negative cases naturally arose when dealing with different personnel and within varying contexts. A consistent effort was made to search for and discuss elements of the data that have contradicted patterns that were emerging from the data analysis.

Member Checking

Member checking provided a way for me to ensure that I was accurately portraying the participant voices by allowing participants the opportunity to confirm or deny the accuracy and interpretations of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using the guidelines of Yin (2014), I returned my completed analysis to the players. Players were asked to read through the analysis and get back to me. Member checking was utilized as a means for reflection to help player think through their experience on the team and look forward to integrating what was learned(Candela, 2019). Only a few players responded and deemed my interpretation of their experience as accurate.

Data Collection Sources

Numerous sources of qualitative data were collected for this study. Table 3.1 provides the rationale for each data source.

Table 2. Data Collection Sources

Data Source	Rationale

Individual Player Interviews	Obtain information regarding player experience, lessons learned, and how those lesson may transfer to outside environments
Focus Group Interviews	Conversation between players provided more insight into player experience on the team
Exit Slips	Allowed for immediate weekly feedback and an opportunity for players to ask questions
Field Notes	Gathered information pertaining to each practice with regards to RYS essentials, observations, and activities
TPSR Implementation Checklist	Identified TPSR strategies integrated into each practice and further linked RYS to TPSR
Peer Debrief	Obtain information and field notes from experts in the field of SBYD, but not individuals within the Fusion organization
RP Observe	Provided specific reflective capacity around restorative circles
Artifacts collected from players and parents	Provided additional data to triangulate practice observation, player responses, and stakeholder responses
Self-Reflective Journal	Allowed for self-reflection with efforts to improve as a facilitator/coach of RYS
Critical Friend Discussions	Went further in depth and challenged the coach to a deeper level of reflection with efforts to improve as a coach
Autobiography	Provided insight into my acculturation

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews (n=10) were utilized to answer research questions 2 (player experience) and research question 3 (transfer). The Jacobs & Wright (2018) framework that guided elements of this research study investigated beyond just observable outcomes to cognitive thought processes behind SBYD learning application. My interview guide (Appendix D) followed the structure of Jacobs and Wright (2021) guide for their investigation into the transfer of life skills. There were three stages to the interview: Stage 1) Perceptions of RYS team (*how would you describe this team to a friend who may be interested in learning about it? What are some things you've learned from being on the team?*). Stage 2) Once it has been established, they

have learned things from the program, I moved to the cognitive process behind transfer (*Do you look for chances to apply what you've learned in the program in everyday life? If so, when? What goes on inside your head when you think about what've you've learned in the program?*). Stage 3) Impact of RYS on their lives (*do you think being on this team has shaped other areas of your life? Do you think it will have a long-term impact on your life?*). Players were purposefully selected based on availability and willingness to participate (both consent-assent forms turned in).

Focus Groups

Focus groups (n=2) allowed for higher quality data in a social context where players considered their own view in the context of the views of others (Patton, 2015). Two focus groups occurred across the season. The midway focus group involved the entire team and helped to inform the coach of players' experiences and learning within the team. Participants got to listen to others' opinions and understanding to help them form their own. The second focus group, which involved 6 players on the team, took place at the end of season. Focus group questions (Appendix E) were similar to interview questions but allowed for more conversation between participants. This allowed for additional data as the conversation between participants were insightful into their unique and collective experiences.

*Exit Slips***:**

After each week, players were sent an online Google survey to fill out (n=8) (Appendix F). The google survey asked for ratings (1-5) on different elements of practice (time for relationship building, if they felt like their voice was heard, if they felt like they got choices in the practice, if they felt like transfer was highlighted, etc.). These surveys were anonymous. The final question was an open-ended question asking if there was a question or topic they wanted to

talk about during circles. Modeled after the "anonymous" feedback box in "She Hits Hard" after school program (Fuerniss & Jacobs, 2019), this anonymous response allowed for players to ask questions and empowered them to lead circles in person.

TPSR Implementation Checklist and Field Notes

The researcher did a quick 5-minute reflection after each practice (different from her reflective journal). In this, she jotted down quick notes of significant comments/questions/concerns during practice, ideas, and conversations. Field notes included completion of the TPSR Implementation Checklist (n=32) (Appendix G)(Wright & Walsh, 2018).

Peer Debrief

Periodically, two outside observers, peer-debriefers, came to practice and took field notes that consisted of observations regarding the coach and player actions. The observers were considered experts in the field of SBYD due to their high number of publications in the field but were not members of the Fusion organization or competitive soccer league, providing a different point of view in their analysis of practice. The observers had recorded peer-debrief conversations whilst completing the TPSR Implementation Checklist and RP Observe (n=2).

RP Observe

The researcher completed the RP Observe (Appendix H) at the end of most practices (n=24) to allow for specific reflective capacity around circles and restorative practices (A. Gregory, Clawson, et al., 2014). The first week of camp and combined practices with other teams were excluded due to IRB permission and no specific circles taking place. When the peer-debriefers attended practice, further conversation centered around the RP Observe document in addition to the TPSR checklist.

Practice Plans/Artifacts

The researcher wrote a practice plan following Hellison's (2011) daily format for every practice (n=32). These practice plans included both soccer skill and life skill focus for each day. Other artifacts included email communication with parents, player text message conversations, schoolwork, communication sent out from the Fusion organization, and handwritten communication from players.

Reflective Journal

The researcher maintained 69 pages of a reflective journal that she wrote in any time she found an urge, but after the majority of practice and games. The reflective journal was not just a journal on actions and observations, but consisted of an internal dialogue of reflection, critical understanding, and improvement. The journal was guided by the following questions:

What I hope to learn from this project is how to facilitate a more democratic version of a soccer team. How do I think more deeply and critically of my role as a coach? How do my experiences reading and studying RP influence my ability to facilitate RYS? How do I become a more effective facilitator of RP? What are the successes and challenges I face in implementation, practice, and reflection? Restorative practice consists of the restorative domain of the social discipline window, where things are done with participants rather than to or for them. What does co-creation of a sports team look like? How do I as a coach implement that? How do I understand my roles as a coach, facilitator, and researcher? How can I continue to bring in player voices? What does team structure, coaching structure, and feasibility of RYS look like? Evidence is needed on how practices are structured, and lineups are created. How do I overcome barriers that

may arise during circles? How do I effectively lead a circle and allow others to lead circles?

Kevin, her critical friend, had access to this journal and was able to write thought-provoking comments and questions throughout. The researcher then responded to these questions in a different color to create a stream of dialogue between the two.

Critical Friend Discussions

The researcher and Kevin, her critical friend, engaged in an informal critical friend conversation every 2 weeks that were recorded on Zoom (n=8). These involved 45 minutes of conversation that allowed for Kevin and the researcher to engage in further discussion about the researcher's practice and dig deeper into elements that were highlighted in the reflective journal. These conversations were not guided by specific questions but allowed for further thought-provoking conversations about the "why" behind practice and to think more critically about her role and conflicts between research, coaching, and practice.

2nd Grade Autobiography

The researcher utilized past written materials, like a 2nd grade autobiography, as a data source for her acculturation into different aspects of sport growing up. This provided written insight into how meaningful sport and competition was in her upbringing.

Data Analysis

The researcher served as the primary deductive and inductive analyzer (Patton, 2015). As mentioned previously in this chapter, the data was analyzed with trustworthiness in mind through the triangulation of various methods. The data was implemented involving *Miles and Huberman Framework for Qualitative Data Analysis* where data was reduced, displayed, and conclusions were drawn before presented as themes (Sutton & Austin, 2015). All physical and digital data were

gathered, time stamped, transcribed, and stored in a secure location at the coach-researcher's university. The researcher conducted open and axial coding. Coding involves short labels that describe, dissect, and distill the data while persevering essential properties (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). Open-coding was a process of going line-by-line analyzing topics that may be of particular interest to the study. It refers to the identification of topics, issues, similarities, and differences that are revealed through the participants' narrative and interpreted by the researcher (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This process allowed the data to be broken down into manageable parts with the result of rebuilding the data into a storyline (Stuckey, 2015). In vivo codes reflected the selection of a participant's word or phases as a code. In vivo codes analyzed to pursue meaning that appropriately represented participants' perspectives and context rather than what the researcher thought should align with the literature (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Descriptive codes were used to identify and group interesting statements or events. The researcher used inductive analysis and constant comparison to apply scholarly consideration to develop themes. Yin (2009) addressed the need to have a theoretical basis when examining a case and the use of research questions to guide the examination. Jacobs and Wright's (2018) theory of program-implementation and transfer served to guide the analysis. Once these labels were created, axial coding was used to examine the relationships and connections between them.

For the self-study, data analysis was guided by Occupational Socialization Theory (Richards & Hemphill, 2017). The researcher conducted open and axial coding and sought out turning points. Turning points are regarded as moments when new understanding is revealed during the process of self-study either through journaling and/or critical friend discussion. These moments can be either a distinct moment or a slow burn over a period of time (Richards & Fletcher, 2018), but are moments where the researcher arrived at a new understanding and these

understandings frame future practice. Critical elements to turning points include (a) an affective component, (b) a problem of practice developing, (c) the educator implicitly or explicitly seeking help from a friend, and (d) an action-oriented focused on change (Richards & Shiver, 2020). Data were viewed again, and turning points and codes were turned into themes and subthemes (Richards & Hemphill, 2017).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Self-Study

The primary investigator sought to answer, "how does the researcher develop and facilitate a Restorative Youth Sport (RYS) model in a competitive sports team?" through a self-study approach. The researcher answered this question through an analysis of her self-study journal and critical friend conversations comparing them to other qualitative data points, interviews, focus groups, practice plans, and artifacts. As with any type of development, growth was not linear, but modulating through questions, turmoil, and turning points. These turning points are presented as the following themes (a) why am I here? (b) is it working? (c) redefining success. Self-study is self-initiated and improvement-aimed thus requiring a "why" to take root at the base of any journey. Although difficult to articulate a clear definitive why, it was even harder to act on. From the why, there were consistent questions of "is it working?" Finally, this evolved into a redefinition of success, where sport development and restorative practices were both valued as ideas worth pursuing.

"Why am I here?"

The first turning point of this study was more of a "slow-burn" (Richards & Fletcher, 2018) than a turning point. It developed from my recognition that it was easy to use my knowledge from the literature and past practice to come up with a "why" that sounded good, but it was more challenging to figure out in this new context to definitively understand why I choose to pursue restorative youth sports in a competitive soccer environment.

Before even beginning to embark on my self-study journey, Kevin challenged me to think beyond the *what* into the *why*: "This is the 'what'. Also provide the 'why'. Why were you drawn to this particular project? What about it speaks to you?" (Self-study journal preliminary entry).

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My "why" started with the idea that I had a passion to foster positive assets in kids. As reflected in my self-study journal and critical friend conversations, a consistent theme arose: "trying to develop good people and to instill good values." This why expanded beyond just physical activity to holistic development that I was consistently pursuing across a multitude of programs in my life: a physical education program, an after school cross-age peer mentoring program, and a refugee soccer program. This was easy to identify across my life, but ambivalent on why I choose this competitive soccer environment.

The original intent of this study was driven by my recognition that as a soccer coach I was going to leave an impact, whether positive or negative:

> Yah, I think once again it takes a lot of self-reflection as a coach to recognize not only the "why" but the potential impact, both foreseen and unforeseen. In a restorative manner, we are essentially trained to think that our actions have a far greater effect than we realize–it is not just about the actor and the action, but the ripple effect of the action (Self-study journal entry).

It was further illustrated in my own acculturation into coaching by my cognizance of the negative impact my college soccer coach had on me, which was came up frequently during conversations and journaling. For instance, in a critical friend conversation, Kevin and I spoke about the importance of allowing players the freedom to make mistakes and be careful in how, as a coach, you react to mistakes. I reflected,

> I think that's like my very first spring of college, I got like traumatized by fear, and I literally didn't ever want the ball at my feet because my was coach was like kind of a crazy person…so then you get paralyzed by fear and then all you're going to do is make that many mistakes because your anxiety is overwhelming.

I knew that as a coach I wanted to push back against the authoritarian and insensible coaching environment I was exposed to in college. Through recognition of my own autonomy, I realized that I could restructure a competitive soccer environment and create an environment that was engulfed by positive youth-development ideals: youth-centric, physically and psychologically safe environment, and an enjoyable atmosphere that would keep kids coming back.

The Vulnerability of Player-centered Coaching

Being youth-centered was something that I was consistently taught in my doctoral program. As it was frequently stated, meet youth where they are at. Despite this, it was hard to identify what it meant to be player-centered in this new space. In a competitive environment where parents pay-to-play there is a certain expectation that soccer skills will be at the forefront of any team.

> Working with it with an elite sport club where you know it's paid to attend, pay to participate, so you know there's money involved. And typically, parents that sign their kids up for those types of opportunities see them as ways to kind of advance skill and perhaps get to the next level whatever that means, or work towards that you know, people might have lofty goals.

Some of these hyper competitive assumptions that accompanied a competitive sports team seemed to be in contradiction with what I was reading in the SBYD literature. As Hellison (2011) frequently alluded to, the whole child walks into the gym, not just one part of them. One must allow space for the social and emotional side of the game, but I frequently questioned the balance between the physical elements of the game with the social and emotional learning that needed to take place.

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A restorative youth sport model allows for this all-encompassing focus of development, but it does require a coach to be vulnerable. At the start of the season, Betsy compared my coaching style to that of a substitute teacher, "like no one listens to her… I know because some players were talking over you the whole time." In my approach to being player centered, I was seen as "weak" compared to traditional coaches as I was hesitant to redirect *any* player expression in fear it would limit them from buying into RP. It took time for players to recognize my coaching style was different to that of more traditional authoritarian coaches. This was a clear and distinguished shift from past years and past coaches. As Georgia put it, "with our past coach, he was really just focused on the game of soccer, and we never talked about things outside of soccer." Opening myself up to conversations and sharing stories helped break down barriers, but this process took time. Coaches should attempt to be in tune with and attentive to their players' needs and care about their experiences, but it doesn't happen in a week. This frequently left me classifying practices as "poor" when I felt like I wasn't getting the best out of the physical space of soccer practice despite maybe being attentive to the girls' wishes.

How Do You Create a Safe Space Physically and Psychologically in the Heat of Competition?

Kids will develop where they feel comfortable. As I reflected in my journal, "it all goes back to Maslow's hierarchy of needs where safety and love and security are underneath self-actualization. An environment where a child feels loved, safe to explore, and have fun, and make mistakes is going to be an environment where that child develops" (Self-study journal entry). Behind my player-centered why was the desire to instill confidence. Even though I knew I desired for this to take place, I was left questioning how it looked in action.

The creation of this safe space had to take place amongst an organization that in practice only valued competition. Organizational demands such as paired practices with an older team

created environments where my players felt insecure, other coaches made unacceptable comments, and there were occurrences of disrespect amongst teams. As Kevin noted, "these combined practices are a terrible idea because of what you are trying to cultivate. Since the other coaches are not working toward similar goals, there are contradictions across the spaces." One such instance was when another coach created a "relegation and trade" pool:

> At one point, I was in conversation with another coach… In this moment, Damion was organizing something across the teams we were supposed to be jointly coaching. As I came over, he had created a "draft" where players were supposed to vote which player they wanted to add to their team from another while simultaneously voting someone "off" of their team. I immediately stopped it, shut it down; told him how psychologically damaging this could be for a player and told him we would not be doing it. (Self-study journal)

Instances such as these were recurring as joint practices were mandated by the club biweekly. Misalignment between my goals in creating a restorative environment and the club's ideals of competition frequently clashed. By directly checking in on players, I was able to counteract negative instances such as these, or directly speak about instances where I would slip up and say something inappropriate.

At certain points, the competitive sports setting seemed to contradict the SBYD ideal of creating a physically and psychologically safe environment. I understood the importance of creating a mastery-oriented environment versus an ego-oriented one. Yet at the start of the season, it was challenging to figure out how to redirect players' emotions which were tied in with the "win-at-all" cost mentality that players were used to. This was seen in a number of instances during practice and games:

After the result (at the end of a tournament), when emotions were high, Ellie and

Genevieve got in a dispute. I am unsure what words were exchanged, but I did catch the

end when Ellie said she would beat up Genevieve if she didn't get out of her face. I

immediately shut down the conversation saying that the conversation did nothing to

benefit our team or change the result… Is Tuesday too late to have a restorative

conversation?

Certain instances required redirection instead of a restorative approach because emotions

ran high. It was challenging to figure out when to redirect and circle back to RP or when to react

with a restorative conversation. For the first third of the season, I honestly viewed competition as

incompatible with a restorative environment because of how many emotions were tied into

competition. As I reflected with Kevin, "I have a hard time distinguishing when I should step in

and shut it down and when I should open up conversations about RP." This highlighted the

tension I felt with understanding why I was there, I knew what I *wanted* to create in the RYS

environment, but challenges arose that had me question the actions behind my why.

Is It Working?

The second theme came when RYS practices were in place, but questions arose about "is

it working?" As with any self-study project, the goal is not a static endpoint, but rather a

trajectory of growth, reflection, and development as a practitioner. My growth as a soccer coach

was guided by questions of understanding, critical thought, mistakes, and feedback. Within these

questions are ideas about what it means to be a coach and facilitator of a restorative youth sports

team in a competitive soccer environment. As a multitude of mistakes were made and lesson

learned, I asked myself "is it working?".

A large piece of utilizing sport as a means for holistic development is rethinking and repurposing certain activities with a holistic development focus rather than just a physical one. This was exemplified across my season with penalty kicks.

Our first tournament together we go into the tournament, as both a coach and team, with the focus on learning and effort. Since I don't fully know the girls yet, everyone will play a multitude of positions, numerous minutes, and rotate through starting and not starting. It will be about trial and error and the only expectation I have is that players will give their best effort. Unexpectedly compared to my initial expectations, we make it to the finals, tie a team we probably shouldn't have tied, but we did, we gritted it out. It was wonderful, it was a good game, it was 0-0. Then we went into a PK shootout. (PK shootout is where teams alternate taking free kicks 12 yards away from the goal to determine a winner, usually best of 5). We only have 3 girls that wanted to do it (take PKs), because these girls are already traumatized from past experiences. Then, 4 of my players missed their PKs. 4! And 3 of the players from the other team missed theirs. Every single one of those players burst into tears after they hit the PK. We end up losing 2-1 at the end of the game, it ended up negating every piece of effort those girls put in. They did not understand that I was still proud of them, they didn't even listen to my speech that it doesn't matter we lost, the results don't matter. (Critical friend conversation 08.23.22)

In a follow up, Kevin and I talked about the structural limitations of PK and whether they were developmentally appropriate.

As Kevin put it, "things have gotten out of control and aren't developmentally appropriate and I think adults design youth sports to relive their own childhood fantasies

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about being athletes and its really not healthy for anyone, especially the kids. I mean

that's a real high-pressure situation for everyone. Everybody is looking at you" (Critical

friend conversation 08.23).

Despite this, Kevin urged me to practice PKs with the girls. I was initially reluctant citing that

"PKs are such a small percentage of the game –0.2%-- less than 1% of the game and the girls

have so much development to do that we can't waste time on a PKs." Simply put, PKs did not

seem to be a good use of the time we had together. This was coming from a perspective of a

traditional soccer coach, one focused on only the physical development of the game. Kevin

pushed back,

> It might not be, but where I would push back on that it may not be a good use of practice
>
> time of the psychomotor/mechanical aspect of the PK, but the emotions that surround the
>
> experience may be worth diving into that… If all of those girls were up there and said
>
> they were ready to take a PK and ready to go and then afterwards, same outcome but they
>
> weren't really traumatized by it, I would say ya know just leave it alone, it's not a major
>
> issue. But it seems like it is a major issue. (Critical friend conversation 08.23)

> Despite his urging, I attempted to just talk about the weekend in a restorative circle and

leave it at that. The circle was less than productive as many players weren't ready to be

vulnerable about it. After a lot of reflection and contemplation, I eventually circled back to

practicing PKs.

> We finished practice with PKs. We talked about the emotional response of PKs and I
>
> tried to create an environment where we just focused on technique with little to not
>
> pressure to make them. My effort to create this environment was to just go quickly
>
> through the line of PK shooters and make a fake whistle noise (the girls really enjoyed

the noise). In this, I thought that it was less time to think and more time to act. I am not

sure if this was the best way to approach PKs but you saw multiple girls wanting to retry

their attempts and step up to take PKs.

Although I was nervous that I may reintroduce "trauma", penalty kicks are going to forever be a

part of the game of soccer and learning to handle the emotion that comes with them is an

important piece of their development, both on and off the field. Although one player who missed

a PK said she was ready to step up and take another one if the time came, another player refused

to practice because "she was still traumatized." The penalty kicks represented more than just a

small fraction of the game, they represented a learning experience that needed to be taken

advantage of. This instance highlighted growth in my practice, but when opportunities for

potential PKs arose again (but never came to fruition), players still voiced hesitancy, fear, and

inhibition to even attempt. This left me asking, "is it working?"

Who Gets to Determine if the Action was Intentional?

At the start of the season, we had an all coaches meeting for the club. The club engulfs a

wide area of North Carolina thus requiring a multitude of staff members and coaches. The

meeting kicked off reviewing the club's mission statement, "to positively impact people for life

by creating intentional experiences through sport." In my self-journal entry immediately

following the meeting, I reflected that the meeting "lacked strategies for holistic development"

and "it took a lot of strength to not stand up and preach on evidence-based practice for holistic

child development and that it does require INTENTIONAL practice, not just following the 'sport

builds character' mantra of society" (Self-study journal). To the club, building relationships was

simply giving out high fives before and after practice. In their eyes, that was an intentional

strategy, but is it actually?

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Planning practices in advance allowed for successful implementation of both restorative

practice and TPSR. Utilizing practice plans with Hellison's daily format (n= 32) ensured that all

elements of the lesson format were consistently checked off on the TPSR Implementation

Checklist (n=32). My practice plans (Appendix I) that were more intentional about integrating

life skills into the physical practice were frequently reflected on as checking all the boxes. For

example, when a practice revolved around communication (i.e. respect), our circle topic

incorporated elements of active listening, the practice involved explicit instruction from

teammates in order to complete tasks, and our open-ended game involved listening to numbers to

know who should go. As Kevin noted during our critical friend conversation, "this is something

that I think you're really good at in terms of threading the kind of TPSR, you know youth

development, kind of messages meaningfully through your content. I've picked up on that in

several of your journal entries and just thinking about how you know you kind of identify a goal

and then you work towards that you, and you now meaningfully make progress" (Critical Friend

Conversation 10.18). Yet, reflections after practice were viewed as "extremely successful from a

TPSR perspective but felt like player development was lacking" (Self-study Journal). Despite

success in one area of practice, I still frequently questioned if players were getting out of the

competitive environment what they needed, and/or expected.

Reflecting about after each practice allowed for a consistent progression of coaching

practices. When Carmen seemed to take an "apathetic approach to soccer", I reflected that I

needed to talk with her one on one because I recalled her trying a lot harder at the start of the

season. This reflection turned into her admitting she felt like she was bad at soccer, me asking

what she wanted to do at practice that would help her feel more successful, which resulted in us

playing a team favorite game of Flying Changes. This exemplified how intentionality and reflection are linked within the restorative process. As I reflected in my journal,

> "I think restorative practice involves a lot of reflection in the moment in terms of people are supposed to really reflect and put themselves in the other person's shoes. That is why emotions are so important to take note of and communicate because it really highlights 'how DID that make me feel?' I think in RYS, reflection after practice really allows a time to decompress and think about how situations were handled and if everyone was able to have a voice in decisions that affect them. Sometimes it takes being out of the environment to truly understand that and think about."

Despite this reflection, Carmen still seemed to struggle. One of her teammates who conducted a science fair project on confidence noted in a post-season interview that Carmen still viewed herself negatively in the scope of soccer. This begged me to question if my intentionality in practice actually worked if Carmen was still upset.

Challenges in Developing an RYS Practice

A traditional competitive sports environment is highlighted by physical practice with soccer skill development, cognitive practice that incorporates strategy, and competition that tends to be structured around a 'win-at-all costs' mentality. RYS requires a shift from a coach as an authoritarian to that of a facilitator. With this shift comes issues with time, structure, frustration, and emotion. These challenges frequently left me feeling drained, wondering what success really was.

Time constraints were cited as one of the largest issues involving RYS implementation (n=14). The balance between time spent on restorative practice (i.e., circles) and physical practice consistently created tension when facilitating practice. Questions of "when to cut off"

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circles, the strain between on-topic and off-topic responses, and the need to consider

stakeholders expectations (i.e., parents and bosses) of what practice should look like were

consistently reflected on and examined. It is a delicate overlap of RYS and competitive soccer

expectations and some days we did not get the best out of either.

"Earlier today we talked about the scaffolding of the restorative justice side of RP. My

original intention was to have a restorative chat with Ellie and approach it in such a way

that I would use affective statements to present that issue that we have been facing and

then moving forward we would have the ability to work on things together. However,

when only a few girls were at practice with 2 minutes before we would begin, an

opportunity presented itself. Three girls showed up to practice who all carpool and spoke

about how Ellie was hitting the other girls in the car and Ellie claimed that her two

teammates, Georgia, and Tori, were pinning her up against the side of the car… I thought

we could talk through this example through as a restorative circle. I gave each player a

chance with the ball and asked for them to tell their point of view… we were able to

identify Ellie felt some type of emotion and her response to the emotion escalated the

situation. This in turn created this environment where Georgia and Tori felt like they

needed to pin Ellie back so that she would stop hurting them. I finally asked how this

situation could be resolved and they apologized to each other, and Georgia gave a

solution to Ellie to use her words first before acting aggressively… As I reflect, I am

nervous that I was in the RJ headspace of RP and approached the restorative circle in the

wrong way. 1) If I could go back, I would have pulled the three girls aside even though I

wanted to rest of the players to see what a restorative circle looked like, 2) I wonder if I

can put a time limit on allowing players to tell their side of the story because it rambled

on for a good chunk of practice." (self-study journal entry).

Within this journal entry, I went on to elaborate how the practice plan for the day involved

several cognitive elements of the game that were not as physical. Since the cognitive elements

of the game also required sitting or standing with less action, over a third of the practice was

stationary and the girls had a hard time "switching-on" to practice mode. This meant that I felt

practice suffered at the hands of too much talking and too little action.

With the struggle of time came tension with dealing with a spectrum of players' physical

skill development. In my PETE program, teachers frequently emphasized "don't teach to the

athletes" as a reminder that Physical Education is for everyone, not just those who are "good" at

it. On the team, tension arose surrounding players that were less skilled and lacked work ethic.

As I reflected, "my issue with the whole situation (frustration with an unskilled soccer player

who lacks effort) is that I have other players who are not very good, but they at least work really

hard. So, for me, even though they aren't the most tremendous player, their work ethic negates

some of the negatives." Part of this was recognizing that I was indoctrinated into a soccer

environment where I found success because of my work ethic. This was paired with the fact that

"I played at a higher level at this age then what my players are playing at right now, so it is

difficult to comprehend what is developmentally appropriate when I recall being able to do a

number of these skills at their age" (Critical Friend Conversation 08.23). Furthermore, coaching

was symbolized as having a 'lack of control' as coaching games were cited as being less

enjoyable to practice. "In a soccer game, I can coach and cheer and talk all I want but ultimately

the game is almost completely out of my control." Depending on the game, this lack of control

created a marker of whether RYS was actually shaping players actions. This was mirrored in being the only coach positioned in SBYD and RYS in both the club and the league.

As summarized in my self-study journal, "it is challenging to figure out restorative youth sports when my team is the only team structured within that culture." This disconnect was viewed as both a disconnect from the rest of the club as well as our competition. At the start of the season, many of my writings exposed the conflict I felt between the club and what I was aiming to do: "It is a balance of the roles of researcher/practitioner and competitive soccer coach. Other coaches probably don't understand the importance of the circle process and see it as less time being physically active on the ball which may indicate that I am not as good of a coach." I wrote about the differences between my coaching style and others, reflecting that I was "turned off by hearing other coaches' coach and not hearing any emphasis on effort or respect or other life values". As new to the competitive space of the organization, I tried not to be too outward about my opinions to avoid undue interpersonal conflict between myself and my colleagues. Kevin created the analogy between myself and Don Hellison being on the "margins" of our respective professions, where my restorative lens, at least at face value, created tensions with competition. This had me questioning *who* got to determine if my "why" was working.

As my practice developed, I recognized that a lot of unnecessary energy was being directed at my frustrations within my organization. Learning to "accept and work with things we can't change" (Kevin; self-study journal) helped to shift my energy to my original intent, developing my players on and off the field. By shifting my focus away from organizational demands to my players, I was able to differentiate what was *actually* important to my players and what I *thought* was important to them:

This week, I am required by the club to send out one document to the entire team with feedback for each player: one positive and one improvement aimed. From the club's perspective, this will hold players accountable for their improvement because other players will be able to see what others were supposed to work on. I wrestled with the idea of sending out everyone's feedback because personally there is an emotional element to everyone seeing my what could be better but also seeing what I did well. (Field Note 09/04/2022)

In an effort to align myself with the literature on restorative practices where individuals get a say in decisions that affect them, I had a circle with the players about sending out the document. After my players voted to send out the document to everyone, I reflected in my journal,

I think through this conversation I was able to recognize three things. 1) My players don't necessarily think the same way I do so I need to make sure I am utilizing their voice not my own. 2) By having this conversation, the club-mandated feedback now is grounded in an inclusive improvement manner not a criticism way, and 3) I was tempted to go to bat for not utilizing this "blanket" idea across all teams and advocate for my players at a higher level BUT I am happy I asked the players their thoughts because once again I don't need to speak for my players, but rather, I should represent their best interests.

By surrendering control to my players, I was able to preserve my energy for the thing that mattered most: the girls. This required an alteration of my traditional thought process and within that, how I measured success.

Redefining Success

As Kevin eloquently stated, "What's the point of what we're doing here and I think that is an evolving question, but, I think that if you answer that question if at least part of what you're

doing there is trying to develop good people and instill good values then your outcomes should reflect that and so time spent doing restorative activities isn't wasted time, it's time aligned with your objectives; they're not narrowly focused sport objectives" (Critical Friend Conversation 09.08). A key turning point within this study was when I was able to recognize a shift away from soccer being the only marker of success.

In my second-grade autobiography, I wrote about my family and friends in relation to their athletic ability (Appendix K) frequently citing the number of sports they played, their ranking in said sports (tennis ranking), and utilizing sports pictures as evidence of who they were. Athletics were held in high regard, as over 3/4ths of my autobiography were all about "radical sports." I even desired for those to remember me as "being the world's greatest soccer player, swimmer, and track racer." My middle school yearbook was full of pictures of athletic events and even had friends mention "my great soccer skills" in their handwritten summer wishes. I was acculturated to an environment where being an athlete mattered.

At the start of the season, Kevin consistently pushed back against my definitions of success. Although I could confidently state, "success is not in winning or losing, success is not you know in the so-called results, but rather in the impact that I'm having on the girls" (Critical Friend Transcript 10.04), I was subconsciously reverting to my old definition of success. Kevin noted several times in my journal that my successes were determinant on performance. I would consistently label practices as "good" or "bad" depending on how well the girls played or how smoothly drills were executed. When time had to be taken out of my structured skill development practice due to conflict or a circle running over, I would write about my frustrations and equate my negative emotions as a "bad practice." "You know it's not a good physical practice, like for example, that day that we had all of those circles, there were good responsive

and restorative pieces to that practice. Yet, I automatically equated that to being a bad practice because I'm thinking solely about the soccer side" (Critical Friend Conversation 09.08).

Soccer in it of itself no longer needed to be the only measurement of success. As I struggled to find the balance between timing of restorative practices and soccer skill development, Kevin reminded me that implementation required a change from the "traditional" sports practice. "It requires a bit of a shift in focus and definition of what it means to be involved in sport. If this is a part of sport than it is not an imposition, it is just a part of it" (Kevin's response self-study journal). He later elaborated to say that "this is important and goes back to fully committing to restorative and reconceptualizing the sport and associated outcomes." This reconceptualization highlighted that it no longer needed to be soccer skills OR RYS, but about the impact I was having on players.

Slowly as the season progressed, my marker of success was transformed from practices' bearing on the players. In my self-study I labeled this, "restructuring the meaning of success away from the results on the field to the impact on the girls." I started to be able to celebrate small victories from off the field and felt less consumed by the results. Part of this was due to the positive impact that restorative practices were having on players. This was illustrated by a text between players after a frustrating practice (a text the players were very enthusiastic to share with me):

Ellie: And I feel that I had a good practice, but it was frustrating

Georgia: I feel like with Claire instead of Peter (their past coach) we can talk through hard emotional practices bc she's a girl and talks to us instead of "games this weekend, bye"

Ellie: lol

Georgia: That was kinda sexist but I didn't mean it like that. I just mean that Claire is

easier to talk abt feelings with than Peter

By looking at the impact the practice had on players rather than my emotional response, it

disclosed the positive aspect of dedicating time to utilizing responsive circles even though it took

time away from "practice". This shift created a freedom in my coaching practice to explore

different methods of life skill integration; "Restructuring it (practice) away from results to seeing

like what is the impact being had on the girls I think it has really helped and allowed me to be

more creative in my practice plans" (Critical Friend Conversation 10.18).

Despite my initial doubt, the things that actually made me feel successful as a coach were

not on the field, but the positive feedback I was receiving off of the field. In an unprompted letter

written to me asking if I would help her with her science fair, Betsy illuminated the payout of the

"why" that overshadows all of the challenges that come with coaching:

The last thing I wanted to do was thank you for being such a good coach to me already

this season. 3 years ago, I told everyone that I knew that I never wanted to play soccer

again and now the best part of my days are practice BECAUSE OF YOU. You manage to

coach our team so well while also making it a fun and positive environment to make

mistakes and learn. Thank you for that Coach. (Figure 1).

Figure 2. Handwritten Letter from Betsy
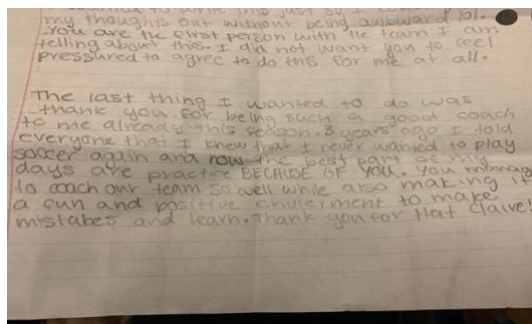
Coaching, regardless if it is for profession, volunteer, or hobby, should always be for the players. A genuine love and interest in youth must be at the forefront of every coach's passion. This was emphasized by multiple emails from parents:

> Hi Coach, you are the BEST! I want you to know how much Adaline adores you and has had such a wonderful season under your tutelage. She has played with this club since she was 3 ½ years old. You are the best coach she has had. Your soccer expertise combined with your genuine love for the kids is remarkable. I appreciate all that you do.

> Hi Coach, we (the parents) are really glad the girls have you as a coach this year. Thank you for helping them grow on and off the field.

Within this, coaches must recognize that soccer expands so much beyond the physical and cognitive side of development.

Reimagining Competition

In SBYD literature, competition sometimes has a negative connotation as it is equated with an ego-oriented climate. Thus, introducing RYS into a competitive sports environment naturally seemed to be conflicting. This line of thought came from a delineation of competition and positive youth development being an either-or scenario. However, competition was viewed as a necessary tool to success in this study in both soccer skill development and youth development. It was about finding a balance between competing with one another while not allowing winning or losing consume positive development. This was exemplified across critical conversations and in my self-study journal:

> "Competition or restorative practices and youth development do not have an other, or an either-or, right? It doesn't have to be like you're either going to be competitive or you're going to focus on development. I have a really good example of that from yesterday's

80

circle talk, but I still use competition for the means that it's supposed to be used in, if that

makes sense. My girls still love competition, they love competition, what I'm trying to

get them to see out of competition is we should take the positives away from it and try to

recognize, at least, and try to modify the negatives. So, competition does not need to be

cut-throat, and I think that where we kind of do things wrong (in youth sport) is that it's

like 'oh well it doesn't matter about the other team, like the other teams aren't humans,

when we are on the field, they are competitors' and that's not true, they're humans.

They're humans trying their best and I try to really emphasize and recognize that"

(Critical Friend Conversation 10.04).

In modifying competition to deemphasize results and focus on working together, players started

to recognize this shift. One player who recognized this shift was Besty. Besty said that

competition was always hard for her because "it is comparing yourself to others." She said that

on this team, "we talked about it more as in like a thing we should have against other teams, but

not against each other, and like we shouldn't need to have it against each because we're all

individuals." In a follow up response, Betsy put it perfectly, "competition is for growing instead

of like beating someone else."

One shift in competition was to promote confidence by viewing mistakes not as failures,

but as growth opportunities. As Bobbie said, "I feel like we've definitely enjoyed like playing

and have much more energy because like you're our coach, and the other guys (past coaches)

yell at us and kind of got mad at us, but you don't really get mad at us; yah, it makes us feel

more confident." Ellie made a similar comparison, "our past coach, if we did something wrong,

would yell at us and tell us like not to do that but he didn't really tell us what to fix, but you

don't yell and tell us what to fix." Reagan even viewed mistakes as an opportunity to grow, "you

81

aren't scared to make a mistake, you're encouraged, you are getting better because you are

willing to try new things." This growth-mindset was triangulated across stakeholders, from

parent emails (n=5) to player interviews (n=7). Even when a peer-debriefer came and evaluated

my RYS program, he spoke about the encouraging, positive atmosphere in which we practice.

> I thought while they were engaged—one thing I did notice, and just listening to you,
>
> you're always positive with the kids out there and I didn't hear any negative
>
> condescending comments about the play. Of course, they were doing well, but I also
>
> think in terms of when they did well, you encouraged them, and you know supported
>
> what they did well and kept them going, so I thought your positive interaction during the
>
> participation part of that I thought was really awesome.

This required a shift in practice as a coach because I knew that players needed

opportunity. During a critical friend conversation, I spoke about the idea of everyone getting,

more or less, equal playing time on the field.

> I think it is beneficial because you get a lot of these players who maybe don't get that
>
> opportunity to feel encouraged, or don't get the opportunity to show I have all these
>
> things that I'm good at and you know maybe they live in fear because if they make a
>
> mistake they will get yanked off… you get freedom in that like if you make a mistake
>
> I'm not going to yank you off the field and not let you play again. I think that allows for
>
> some freedom to make mistakes but like two, confidence building in the fact that if
>
> you're scared of failure, you're never really going to reach success.

The desire to create a space where girls felt safe and secure expanded beyond the field.

During one planned relational event with the team, I reflected on how "I constantly remind

myself to just let the girls talk and not judge what they are saying. I think that is an important

piece of building relationships, especially relating across generations. I try to just be a sounding board for them, and then I step in to ask questions that may have them be a bit more reflective of their actions- sort of like a critical friend approach." Players recognized this, "with you, I just feel like I can tell you anything I want and you're not going to judge or anything you just give really good advice and like listen to what I have to say" (Interview with Georgia); "You talk to me a lot and I feel like you give me good opportunities" (Interview with Hope).

This transformed view on competition did not translate to every aspect of the team all the time. Competition still resulted in heightened emotional responses that would lead to interpersonal conflict on the field with both teammates and other teams. A few players (n=2) still predicated their view on the overall team on the success we experienced on the field. Even myself as a coach recognized the frustration and disappointment I felt when our on-the-field performance did not go well. Yet, it is not unexpected that this altered definition of success did not completely transform across one season,

> I used to tell the undergrads when I teach about social emotional learning that you know this is not a linear trajectory—I can't draw a line on a graph and say we're going to start in here and by the end of the semester, we're going to be here. It going to go like this, it'll be all over the place, but the trend pattern is going to be that things improve gradually over time and that feels to me like a real marker of success (Critical Friend Conversation 10.04).

A New Marker of Success: Keep Things Fun

As the literature consistently reported that middle school girls were at a higher risk of dropping out of sports because "sports just weren't fun anymore", it was important to be intentional about creating an enjoyable environment. In my redefinition of success, it was

important to recognize the end goal was to keep players coming back. Part of this was understanding what my players needed each day.

> I arrived at practice today with the girls bouncing off the walls. Even during our circle, the girls were extra fidgety, wanting to bounce the ball when they talked, or shuffle their feet during others' opportunity to speak. With multiple players being out due to sickness, injury, or field trips, I quickly shifted my practice plan to allow for this energy to be directed in a more positive manner. Capture the flag. My one rule was the girls had to keep moving or Mackenzie (who was injured at the time and could not participate) would yell "jail break". The girls had SO much fun; they laughed, joked, and got competitive. After the game, we were able to break down what elements of capture the flag related to soccer. (Field Notes 09/15/2022).

Later in my journal, Kevin and I wrote about that day, "honestly it was so enjoyable. I think it is important to keep fun centered in your planning. That is youth sport, after all, and if youth sport is not enjoyable, then why are we doing it in the first place?"

This was further supported by 8 out of 10 girls mentioning the word "fun" in their individual interviews. My coaching style was consistently referred to as "energetic and exciting and fun" (Suzanna); "you bring energy to the team we've never had before" (Bobbie); "you are the best, most encouraging person ever and I LOVE it. Whenever anyone is sad you know just what to say!" (Mackenzie).

The responses of how enjoyable the team was further triangulated by other stakeholders of the players. Bobbie's mom sent me an email writing that "Bobbie was having a blast and loves being on the team, so it's fun to see her growth as a player too!" One of my coworkers who is family friends of Mackenzie and Abby told me that their parents are so excited by how much fun

their girls are having. She said that the past couple of years they weren't having as much fun and wanted to quit but they feel a total revival and are having a great time. The focus on fun helped to promote retention which is a true marker of a successful SBYD program.

With anything that is a novel experience, it takes time to take shape. Developing and building a restorative culture inside a competitive sports team was no different. Throughout my journal, I was able to paint a picture of how the culture shifted from a more traditional sports environment, where competition is king, to a restorative one, where voices and experiences of ALL players mattered. What followed was players' desire and excitement to participate. Players frequently spoke about this in comparison to their past teams. As Suzanna stated, "Sometimes I would like I wouldn't be sad to go to soccer, but I wouldn't be really excited, but now I'm always really excited to go to soccer." This was reiterated by Georgia who said, "I was always like, excited to go to soccer, I was never like "oh no we have practice", but I am like "we have soccer tonight!" Even parents alluded to this shift as Adaline's mom wrote in an email "On a separate note, I have not seen Adaline as excited as she was after practice last night in a long time! She loved it!" Part of their desire to participate came from a psychologically safe environment where growth was highlighted over failure and the goal of my coaching practice was to instill confidence. This required patience, consistent reflection, and growth in my coaching practices.

Restorative Youth Sport Culture

With any youth-centered research, it is important to highlight the experience of the youth that participate. This chapter seeks to answer the second research question, "What is the experience of players in an RYS competitive soccer team?" This chapter underlines the fidelity of implementation of a RYS program through analysis of both TPSR and RP principles. This will

be followed by themes that depict player experiences through the elements of program implementation.

Implementation fidelity of the RYS model in competitive soccer team

As RYS implementation is novel to a competitive soccer space, it was important that there was fidelity to the intended design of RYS. Fidelity of implementation was established through TPSR Implementation Checklists, RP Observe, practice plans, field notes, and peer debriefs. The data aimed to establish that the RYS pedagogical strategies, (1) restorative essentials, (2) awareness circles, & (3), team meetings were all appropriately utilized.

Practice took place three times a week for 75 minutes. All the sessions, beside one, were held outside, with the other being held in an indoor training facility. Each session plan utilized Hellison's daily format as the template and included circle questions, coaching cues, and activity descriptions under each section (Appendix I). Each practice plan listed a soccer aim and an RYS aim at the top of the session plan. All 32 practices were analyzed using TPSR Implementation Checklist (Table 3) and confirmed that all five elements of the Daily Format were executed. Table 3 shows the degree of the teaching strategies and student behaviors demonstrated across the season. TPSR Levels 1-4 were addressed fairly equally, with transfer being addressed the most frequently (87.5%). The teaching strategies seen most often were modeling respect (96.8%), addressing transfer (96.8%), and fostering social interactions (87.5%).

Table 3. TPSR Implementation Checklist Results

Levels (Goals)	Times Cited	Percentage	Examples of Action
Level One (Respect)	13	40.6%	*Nice communication; respect the game, your teammates, and yourself*
Level Two (Effort)	10	31.3%	*Trying your best; working hard*
Level Three (Self-Direction)	10	31.3%	*Goal-setting*
Level Four (Helping/Leading)	12	37.5%	*Player- led practice; how to be a good leader*

Level Five (Transfer)	28	87.5%	*How skills fostered in practice apply elsewhere in life*
Lesson Format			
Relational Time	32	100%	*Recognizing each player individually*
Awareness Talk	32	100%	*Circle that addressed life skill theme for the day, as well as soccer theme*
Physical Activity with Responsibility	32	100%	*Integration of respect into different drills*
Group Meeting	32	100%	*Closing circle addressing transfer of life skills*
Reflection Time	32	100%	*"Thumbometer" rating of how players thought they demonstrated specific life skills*
Teaching Strategies			
Modeling Respect	31	96.8%	*Using positive language*
Setting Expectations	20	62.5%	*Establishing rules for circles and drills -3 L's*
Providing Opportunities for Success	20	62.5%	*Getting a point for scoring a goal or by passing 5 times or doing an overlapping run*
Fostering Social Interactions	28	87.5%	*Designating time and spaces to talk (i.e., while warming up)*
Assigning Management Tasks	19	59.4%	*Asking players to set up fields, bring in goals, hand out pennies*
Promoting Leadership	16	50%	*Assigning captains*
Giving Choices and Voices	23	71.9%	*Asking for players to vote on games; ask players to choose drills*
Involving Students in Assessment	10	31.3%	*WWW-EBI: What went well, even better if*
Addressing Transfer	31	96.8%	*Making connections between things we work on in practice to school, at home, with friends*
Student Behaviors			
Participating	32	100%	*Players were active, no players voluntarily sat out*
Engaging	32	100%	*Players wanted to be there, paid attention to instructions*
Showing Respect	25	78.1%	*Player helping another up if they fall or were fouled*
Cooperating	26	81.3%	*Games that required players to work together to achieve a common goal*
Encouraging Others	26	81.3%	*Players cheering each other on*

Helping Others	10	31.3%	*One player explaining rules or technique to another*
Leading	20	62.5%	*Players explaining rules and expectation of games to their teammates*
Expressing Voice	22	68.8%	*Players voting on activities, choosing drills*
Asking for Help	20	62.5%	*Players asking how to do a certain skill*

*Note: Daily format was not included because each element was always present

Circles were pertinent to the execution of the Restorative Youth Sports model. RP Observe (n=24) was completed after each individual team practice to assess the awareness and closing circles implemented during practice. (There are fewer completed RP Observes than practice plans because practice plans were created for the first week camp and for each combined practice, when RP Observes were not). For the majority of the circles (n=22), Coach Claire was the only adult and the number of participants ranged from 12-15. Majority of the circles were coded as proactive circles (n=23), a talking piece was present (n=22), and players were sitting or standing in a circle (n=20). Table 4 shows the descriptive results of the rating of the 24 RP Observes. On average, circle topics were meaningful to players (relevancy) and players took risks to disclose personal conflict (Risk Taking). The players demonstrated respect and responsiveness between each other and the coach (Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness) and abided by agreed-upon behavior (Circle agreements). Circles displayed low levels of authentic choice in the circle process with little circle being player-led (Student Ownership). Finally, out of the 24 circles reflected on, only 2 circles were coded as displaying steps of problem solving (Problem Solving).

Table 4. RP Observe Ratings

Ratings (1= Low to 7 =High) of Awareness circles on Eight RP-Observe Dimensions (Gregory et al., 2014) (n=24)

Circle Dimensions	Description	*M*	Median	Mode	Range

Student circle agreements	*Student focus/engagement; enthusiasm*	4.7	5	5	3-7
Adult-student respect and responsiveness	*Acceptance; positive report; empathy*	5.5	5	5	5-6
Student-student respect and responsiveness s	*Acceptance, positive rapport, empathy*	5.1	5	5	3-7
Relevancy	*Meaningful circle content; personal opinions*	5.8	6	6	4-7
Student Ownership	*Student ownership of the process; circle keeper use of power; authentic choice*	2.8	2	2	1-7
Risk taking	*Appropriate personal disclosure*	4.9	5	6	2-6
Problem solving (only if appropriate n=2)	*Problem-solving steps; collaborative efforts*	4.5	4.5	n/a	3-6

Note: I am unaware of established national norms for RP Observe to which these ratings could compare; scores of 1,2 are considered low; score of 3,4,5 are mid, and scores of 6,7, are high (Gregory et al. 2014).

Restorative essentials include intentional focuses on being relational, reflective, inclusive, and transfer. Several strategies were implemented to foster relationships including asking pointed questions about individual's, utilizing partnerships and partner drills, promoting vulnerability, an emphasis on collaboration both on and off the field, and purposeful opportunities for bonding. Throughout the season there were numerous opportunities to foster relationships off the field: a cookout at the start of the season, attending an MLS game with friends and family, utilizing practice time to go watch a local college team, going to get ice-cream after a game, team meals, and a Holiday party. Reflection was utilized effectively both during and after practice and games. Players were frequently asked to reflect on "WWW-EBI": "what went well, even better if" to assess themselves, their teammates, and their performance. Two-clap shout-outs were essential

post-practice and post-game strategies for players to recognize one another in an encouraging manner. Each post-circle was utilized as an opportunity to explicitly talk about transfer. It should be of note that team meetings were not utilized during the course of the season because no element of conflict arose that required a restorative conference.

Effective Use of Scaffolding

An important aspect of implementing RYS was scaffolding the use of awareness circles so that players were given time to buy into the process. Circle topics started simpler, "what is your best asset on the field?" (Circle topic 08/09), to build relationships and moral across the team. Ellie noted in her post-season interview that her favorite circle topic was "what each person brings to the team, like I like that one because everybody brings something different." During one of the first sessions, players were asked to create norms for the circle process making it easier to adhere to circle agreements because they were a part of the decision-making process. The team came up with the "3 L's- love, listen, let go."

> "Love": be respectful, what is said in the circle should stay in the circle out of respect for your teammate, be empathetic. "Listen": be an active listener if someone else has the talking piece you should be listening. "Let go": you can just pass the ball off to the next person, you don't have to speak if you do not want to, say just enough, and if you disagree with a teammate said, it doesn't have to be a fight just let it go." (Self-study journal)

This simple mnemonic allowed for an easy refresher to circle agreements and a way to refocus if agreements were broken. Circles always started with the question, "does anyone have a question they want to ask?" This was supplemented by anonymous surveys where players who felt uncomfortable were able to submit questions to ask the group. As the season went on, more

players started to take ownership of the circle process (n=7). This progression was paralleled with deeper circle topics: "do you think that girls and boys sport should be equal?"; "was Hitler a good leader?"; topics surrounding body image. Starting off with easy questions where everyone could answer simply allowed for a scaffolding effect in terms of depth of questions. Those foundational circles were super important for the later ones as there was an established environment of trust, respect, and honesty.

As a focal point of RYS and TPSR, Coach Claire was intentional in employing the voices of players. Players were frequently given opportunities to vote on activities, make up rules, choose partners, and express their opinion. As Georgia put it, "when we do things for like voting to play what we want I feel like I do say like 'Oh no I don't wanna play that' or 'I do wanna play that' and if it's an even vote for players like 'OK, we can do both things'." Players emphasized that expressing their opinion made them feel "heard and valued" (Interview with Bobbie). This was paralleled across conversations with a number of players.

> Claire: Can you give an example of a time you feel like you've gotten to make a choice?
>
> Tori: Sometimes we get to picks teams or something and we just separate, sometimes people get to pick up pennies and create teams
>
> Claire: How does it make you feel when I let you express your opinion?
>
> Tori: like sometimes I don't, but when I get to, I feel good about being able to express myself

Player voice was subsequently scaffolded from simple votes and decisions to practices where players were in complete control. In practices dedicated to leadership, players were selected to pick teams, assign rules to the game, and then enforce the rules as the game went on.

Today's practice was dedicated to leadership. Hope, Suzanna, and Georgia were selected

as the first leaders for the day. The rest of the team were asked to continue the warmup

game as the three girls were pulled aside to pick teams. Once they picked teams, they

were asked to explain the rules of the game, Over the River (a three-team game that

involves quick transitions from offense to defense). Coach Claire prefaced to the team

she expected the team to be respectful to their captain as they would be respectful to her

and that she wasn't going to speak but allow the players to assume the role of "coach".

Coach Claire was then silent for the rest of the game and the girls subsequently filled the

silence with their own voices. The game started off a little rocky with ambiguous rules

and confusion with making decisions. Coach Claire paused the game, asked the three

captains to get together, clarify the rules, and then reexplain it to the group. The girls did

so, and the game continued with great success.

This example highlighted the effort to empower players with leadership opportunities. This

practice was followed up with two other practices where every player on the team assumed the

role of "captain." The girls had varying levels of success when guiding their team, but each

player felt a level of ownership on the team. Mackenzie said expressing her opinion and making

decisions made practice, "a lot more fun, you actually feel like you have a say"; Reagan stated

that, "it makes you feel like you are a part of a team instead of just a member of the team. You

ARE the team."

In-Program Learning

To address the question of player experience, field notes, self-study journal, player

interviews, and focus groups were all triangulated. Inductive analysis guided by the research

question was used to create broad themes and then deductive analysis was used to find

similarities across the data. Data from the entirety of the case study were used to support each theme. The themes were guided by Jacobs and Wright (2018) in-program learning: Positive Motivational Climate, Relationships/Social Support, Life Skill Instruction/Awareness, and Student Learning (Life Skill and Sport Content).

Positive Motivational Climate: A Restorative Culture

Creation of a restorative culture took time. At a foundational level, it was the process of building respect. Respect for a new coach, respect for each other, respect for the circle process, and respect for a new way to approach the game of soccer. A number of the girls grew up in a traditional sports environment, where the competition is viewed as an enemy and winning is the only thing that mattered. This transformation to a mastery-oriented climate needs time to take root.

> At practice tonight, the 2v2 shooting game was equal parts fun and equal parts competitive. Because the game involved two big goals, Coach Claire jumped in one, but still provided feedback and coaching cues to both teams. Hope missed a shot near post and Coach gave feedback to Hope to get her hips around it and slip it far post next time.The next time Hope was in, she did exactly that! Coach was so excited (even though she was the one who got scored on); "Well done Hope-I am so excited that you were able to make that connection!" Hope was beaming. However, at this same instance, Ellie made a comment, "I can't believe you are celebrating her, she is on the other team." Coach responded to Ellie about interconnectedness of <u>everyone</u> on this field. "How do you think that celebration made Hope feel? In the end, we are all the same team, but even if we weren't, we are connected to the competition and if we acknowledge that the

competition is good, it only makes the game of soccer more enjoyable, competitive, and worthwhile" (Field Note 09/15/22).

This example highlighted that even simple comments could be utilized as teachable moments. In the smaller moments, the utilization of affective statements and affective questions helped when bigger issues arose. These foundational steps were important to the shift to a restorative culture.

Communication was identified as an extremely important aspect to the development of a restorative culture (codes n=33). When asked what was learned on the team, eight different players identified different aspects of communication. Molly said, "I learned how to listen better and to listen to other people's opinions." Reagan noted that it helped her "relate to others better... now you know where they are coming from"; As Hope stated, "it feels good because then people are listening to you and they're not just like saying 'Oh, Ok', they're actually taking it into consideration." Not only did players identify growth in themselves in regards to communication, but also highlighted growth in their teammates.

> As Georgia put it, "there are two people that used to argue a lot and it was just like, it was constant, kind of annoying and frustrating, and you'd be like, "Okay well you have to be nice to each other like you have to because you're not going to go anywhere" and they've definitely been being nicer to each other and I can see them listening more instead of talking in different circles."

However, not all players felt this way. Ellie identified that sometimes "people can be a little bossy... they're very controlling like they think that what they're doing is exactly correct and when people try to correct them, they don't listen." Ellie's frustration was mirrored in a few instances in practice where disputes broke out between players on the field because they did not

like how people were talking to them. Given that negative criticism was acceptable on the team in the past, it is not unanticipated that instances happened, but they were never left unaddressed.

A parallel to communication was that it was important for players to be given rational behind decisions that affected them. Some decisions were out of the realm of control of the team and/or coach. One instance was a friendly scrimmage against boys. It was a rainy night at the end of season and the boys coach asked if we could scrimmage for the last 20 minutes of practice. This was depicted in the field notes:

> The team scrimmaged the boys' team for the last 20 minutes of practice. It was an emotionally heightened environment for the girls because in circles they frequently address the inequality between boys' and girls' sports. With that, the boys' coach asked the boys to play two-touch to help them improve and play quickly. The girls took this approach as being "pitied" and although they played harder, some of the girls were in tears. Coach Claire asked the other team's coach if he could talk with the team to lend understanding to the situation. The coach came over and explained his reasoning had nothing to do with them being girls, but just wanted to highlight how his team needed to improve on their speed of play. Some of the girls were appeased by this explanation. When Ellie continued to create her own narrative that it was him thinking the girls were weak, Tori said 'he just explained it to us, stop!'

This example illustrated how sometimes an explanation helped youth rationalize why decisions are made. Coach Claire deemed it important to provide clarification to maintain a motivational positive climate. This was seen in conversations surrounding starting lineups, substitutions, playing different positions, and even weekly emails to parents letting them in on goals and expectations for the weekend (Appendix J). Ellie's reaction highlights that despite an

explanation, it may not attenuate the negative feelings that may arise during these situations but hopes to ameliorate some of them.

In comparison between the current team and the past, parents and players noticed a shift in environment. As Mackenzie and Abby's mom message stated:

"I just appreciated your approach to changing the 'culture' of our team that has been built the last several years. I love seeing the team work together, celebrate their wins, but also encourage each other when we are down. This is not the way it has been and I really think the shift is already impacting the girls' play in such a powerful way- it's so fun to watch!"

When asked about it, Channing attributed the shift to "people don't yell at each other, and when they do they're like 'oh sorry'… and like when you say OK I want high effort, I feel like everyone starts trying more or at least I do." Mackenzie commented that our success on the field may be due to "we've actually communicated and it's not just one person screaming at us the entire time." Reagan backed this up by stating, "Our team, we have done a lot more positive reinforcement with each other, we've never had to run sprints. We all know that if we make mistakes then we aren't going to be punished for the mistake, we are going to learn how to do it better next time." The refence to positive reinforcement denotes a shift from previous experiences where players had to run suicides due to mistakes and/or attitude to the new environment where mistakes were viewed as growth opportunities.

Restorative practices aren't going to be without challenges. As Kevin put it, "restorative practices aren't going to make all the problems go away. There's always going to be issues but, I think what it will do is give you a method for coping with trauma, with shared challenges, with frustrations, with anger." Chippy days at practice still took place, soccer still elicited heightened

emotions, and moments of redirection were still needed. But embedded within these moments were more understanding, more empathy, more positivity, and an overall desire to care.

Relationships/Social Support: The Sisterhood

An essential element to Restorative Youth Sports is highlighting the interconnectedness of all individuals connected to the team. RYS expands upon SBYD to place an emphasis on relationships. In order for a restorative culture to actually come to fruition, where circle conversations are deeper than surface level, there must be a mutual level of trust. Relationships were coded 73 times while analyzing the data and mentioned by every player that was interviewed.

Relationships were viewed as a critical piece to being a part of the team. During one circle, Reagan asking, "What is one word you would use to describe our team?" The circle conversation had a resounding familial stance where the players recognized they loved one another, but there was always room for growth. As Georgia put it, "it's a sisterhood." When asked about their relationships with their teammates in post-season interviews, players came back to the idea of being a family. "Energetic, kind—sometimes depends on the situation—just overall like sisters" (Molly); "Yah, definitely sisters" (Carmen); "we have a lot of crazy people but like everyone's nice, like there's nothing, there's no one that you're like not going to want to be friends with" (Georgia). During a peer-debrief, it was noted that "the kids really hang together well, they really do; obviously, it's very cohesive and they seem to enjoy each other." The enjoyment in being together translated from not only off the field, but on the field as well.

As a naturally collaborative sport, soccer was viewed as an important tool to relationship building. Players emphasized that the relational success off the field mirrored the success on the field. Hope stated that, "We always want to get better, but also team building- like we never do

anything alone, it's always as a team, we win and we lose as a team." She later elaborated that "we're a good team like we can play really well together, like we don't single people out for doing something bad, we say like 'oh that was *our* mistake' and not that one person." Since an element of soccer requires cohesion to be successful, it was easy to parallel success on the field to cohesiveness off the field.

A number of intentional strategies were utilized to develop player-player relationships and coach-player relationships.

Claire: can you give me an example of how you build relationships?

Bobbie: like one time after the game we all sprayed our hair with paint, we went to get ice-cream and it uh we had like an ugly dance contest—it was fun!

Claire: Yah you like your dances, I knew that

Bobbie: And handshakes!

Claire: I also knew that you and Georgia made up handshakes, and every else also made-up handshakes so you like set that trend, right?

Bobbie: Yeah, it's really cool!

Beyond handshakes and silly dances, other strategies were implemented such as designated time before games and practice to just talk, choice in partners, drills to elicit team bonding rather than soccer strategies, and coach sharing personal stories about her own life to ease difficult conversations. Mackenzie noted that "you let use choose our own partners so we get to choose partners we actually enjoy being around." By allowing choice in the matter, players felt like they got to express their own autonomy in developing relationships. Even with this freedom, players frequently chose different partners allowing for new relationships to foster. Several players (n=5) noted that they got to know players better this year and foster new relationships they never had

before. Three new players to the team noted in their interviews that they feel welcomed and like they've established "life-long friendships".

By promoting opportunities to be vulnerable through circle conversations and sharing moments of her own vulnerability, Coach Claire saw how being open and honest was mirrored on the team. When asked about their relationship with their coach, Hope stated, "we build a relationship with you because we ask you a lot of questions about yourself". Suzanna linked it back to being a family, "it's (the relationship between her and her coach) is more like a fun aunt than like a coach because you teach, you help us with soccer, but then just being good people and you always make me really happy." Bobbie noted that she felt closer to her coach than her coaches in the past because "we talked, like we connect more than with other coaches have." These relationships expanded beyond the field to other areas of players lives. Players frequently sent emails to Coach Claire so she could celebrate their accomplishments outside of soccer (triathlons, music rehearsals, other sporting matches). This was reciprocated when Coach Claire completed a half ironman and the girls surprised her with handwritten notes of encouragement and gifts (Figure 2). This connection extended beyond just players to stakeholders on the team.

Figure 3. Handwritten Notes before Coach Claire's Ironman
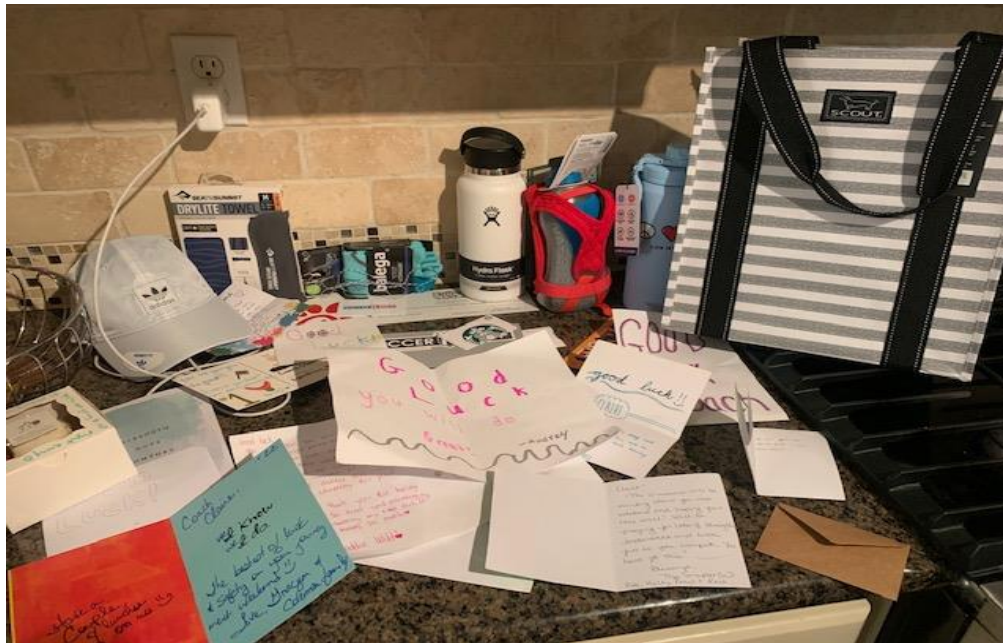
Note: There were 17 handwritten notes from players and stakeholders on the team wishing me luck in my first half Ironman.

An element of restorative practices is understanding that actions affect more than just the actor and the recipient. Stakeholders' involvement was an important element of developing social support amongst the girls. Weekly emails (Appendix J) were sent to team parents recapping practices, games, and goals. In these emails, stakeholders were actually enlisted to help keep track of goals, hold the team accountable, and highlight elements that were touched on in practice. These emails allowed for parents to send back questions, feel actively involved in the coaching process, and feedback. Suzanna's dad even stayed after a game to ask for tips on how to build relationships as he needed to do so at work. He made sure these efforts did not go unnoticed in an email to the club director:

> I can earnestly state Coach Claire receives the highest accolades from me and other
>
> parents on the team. The relationship she has built between herself and the players, as
>
> well as the interaction among players have been amazing to witness. She also

demonstrates her approach to coaching and instilling a healthy team environment can be accompanied with a winning team as the team has been extremely successful on the field. Parents recognized the relational efforts being established on the team and frequently expressed their gratitude. As Bobbie's mom responded, "So, thank you, not only for your skill, but also for your efforts to see the girls as both athletes and people!" Communication to parents played an important role in establishing a positive rapport and creating opportunities for relationships to develop off the field.

Players acknowledged that part of relationships is learning how to not be friends with someone. With any team dynamic, not all players are going to be friends, or players may have days where they need time away. As Georgia put it, "sometimes I get frustrated with some other people on the team, but I know that it's just like I need some time by myself and the next day I'm not gonna be mad at them anymore." One circle topic on respect asked about how to still be respectful in instances where you don't want to be. Mackenzie reflected on this circle when asked about her relationship with her teammates, "some of have gotten strengthened; other, I have just socialized myself away from them, so I don't get in trouble for yelling at them." These lessons, although less than idealistic, are important takeaways for players to understand in conflict resolution: there are opportunities to walk away.

Life Skill Instruction/Awareness (Integration, reflection, discussion, practice): Learning not just from the coach, but one another.

Embedded throughout each practice were lessons about life skills. Life skills tended to be connected to two or more of the levels of TPSR: effort, respect (conflict resolution), helping and leading others, and self-direction (goal setting), with each practice addressing transfer, taking the skills out of the field into their homes, schools, or communities.

Important to the element of life skill awareness was the fact that circles allotted a space where everyone had an opportunity to speak and listen. This cultivated a sense of awareness to what the topic of conversation was because "whenever we sit in a circle, you always pass the ball to the next person, and everyone has a chance to talk" (Bobbie). Numerous players highlighted that circles were a space for learning; As Ellie noted, "I like getting to talk in circles and then, like, getting to hear about like other people's days, and seeing how they do things differently from me is interesting." Ellie's quote depicted a large element of life skill instruction, players not only learned from Coach Claire, but there were opportunities to learn from one another.

One strategy that developed throughout the season was utilizing player's real-life examples as opportunities to engage with life skill instruction. During a week focused on conflict resolution and respectful communication, Ellie brought up a teachable moment as described in this field note:

Ellie in her off-topic way told the group about how her friend is cheating off her in math class. Her scheme for tomorrow was to write the incorrect answer, allow her friend to cheat off that answer, and then erase it and write the correct answer. "My friend will know not to cheat because she's going to get the wrong answer." Coach Claire then redirected this thought by asking "why don't you just talk to your friend about it? You are taking a very passive-aggressive approach and girls already get the reputation of being catty." Her teammates all jumped in and brought in previous circle topic conversations to support the more direct approach. The next day Ellie runs up to Coach Claire at the start off practice "Coach Claire! It turns out my friend wasn't cheating; we are just both super smart!"

This example highlights direct connections being made between circle conversation and how they translate to real world scenarios. Through daily awareness circles, players were provided the opportunity to realize sports are more than just a game, but can have real world implications.

Life skills were integrated into the soccer portion of every practice and game. Players were frequently asked to "control the controllables" which implied their effort and attitude.

Before each game, Coach Claire asked the girls to look to a teammate and set a goal for the game. She prefaced this with choosing a goal that is within a players control. Players ultimately cannot control the other team, the refs, their position on the field, whether they score, assist, win, or lose; but players always have control over how hard they work, if they try for every 50/50, if they take chances, are resilient, and have a good attitude. Many girls established goals about not diving in, trying their best, playing simple. During half time, players were asked to "check-in" with their teammate and reflect on how their goal is going. This was then followed up with a reflection after the game.

This purposeful integration of life skills into the sports environment allowed for a blending of off-field goals with on-field goals. These elements started to become synonymous with one another as one could not be delineated from the other.

Practices ended with a combined Group Meeting and Reflection. This time allowed for Coach Claire to check in with players and have them assess their practice and/or game. After a session focused on effort, players were asked to rate their effort through the use of a thumbometer. This simple assessment (where a thumb's up denotes excellent, sideways denotes okay, and thumbs down denotes needing improvement) allowed for a simple moment of reflection about their own actions. This was followed up by "two-clap shout-outs" where players

recognized their teammates actions. The "shoutouts" were integrated into every practice to allow for players to acknowledge their peers and their positive actions for the day.

> During a devastating loss in PKs, the team circled up to break down the tournament. With a lot of heads turned down and shoulder slumped, Coach Claire offered an opportunity for two-clap shout outs. Georgia raised her hand and wanted to give a shout out to the whole team, "my tears are not because we lost, but because I am so proud of our effort today." This was followed by other players recognizing each other for putting in incredible work, scoring goals, or stepping up to take PKs.

This example highlights that two-clap shout outs often expanded beyond just on the field play (even though frequent shout-outs still highlighted elements of the game) to elements of life skill integration.

Student Learning (Life Skills and Sport Content): AND rather than OR (Competition and Development)

Frequently in the literature, competitive sports are delineated from youth development. This delineation comes with a definitive or, one must choose between competition OR positive youth development. Yet, player interviews and player experience in the RYS environment illustrated that competitive youth sports can do both; a team can be equal parts successful on the field while still balancing holistic, positive development. Players noted that it was actually challenging for them to delineate between soccer and life:

> As Suzanna stated, "we focus on like soccer skills but we also focus on like personality and like being the person that you want to be and like always thinking about what, how what you do impacts others and like things go back and forth different things—just soccer and life are kind of the same."

To the players' lessons learned on the soccer field were translated to outside of soccer and vice versa. Mackenzie noted that the focus of the team was, "more than just soccer, like actual life lessons."

Life skills were clearly integrated into a sport environment where soccer skill development was an equal focus. This was reiterated by a peer observer, "the skill focus, it was clearly a team practicing to get better… I mean it wasn't like all you're doing is life skills, but they did value the life skills." He elaborated:

> "Several times there was some kind of joy with the life skills... like high fives for effort happened two or three times and they had a kind of an excitement around that and so it was centered around the life skills which was interesting, but still feeling they want to compete and get better in a good way."

This was mirrored by the number of players when asked what they've learned from being on the team; they stated that they learned "how to be a better soccer player" (n=6) paired with a life skill. As Betsy responded to the team's focus, "being nice...diagonal runs… and not being mean." The life skill recognition alongside the sport content illustrated the equal footing of the two.

Competition was utilized as a means to connect soccer content with restorative practices. As illustrated in a field note:

> Today's practice started off slow. The goal was to focus on completing 3 passes and transitioning to a 2v1 attack to goal with one player from possession joining the attack. Players were having a hard time concentrating as balls were rarely making it out of the possession box. Coach Claire stopped practice and asked for feedback from the girls on what was wrong. The girls admitted they were hyper, but the energy was not directed in

the correct place. Before resuming the practice, Coach Claire added in an element of competition, first team to score three goals wins. By adding the element of competition, the girls dramatically improved because they were just a little more concentrated. Once the game was over, and one team subsequently won, the team moved on seamlessly to the next drill. The game wasn't discussed further except for a simple WWW-EBI and the 'losing team' didn't have any punishment or were treated differently or yelled at.

Competition was utilized as a means to hold players accountable for their effort and discipline. Later in this same practice, the closing circle addressed barriers to accomplishing our goals. Players cited fears of failure or disappointment or embarrassment. By creating an environment where results were not the pinnacle but a means to accomplish student learning, took away the tension that is frequently associated with competition and winning and losing.

It is important to note that not everyone bought into the AND. Constructs from the organization and from other teams still confined how many stakeholders viewed sport. One field note highlighted this traditional way of viewing sports:

Bobbie's dad came to introduce himself at practice today. He told me that Ellie and Bobbie were raving in the car the other day about how much they are enjoying the team and how much fun they were having. He responded by reminding them, they aren't just there to goof around but to develop as good soccer players. Coach Claire smiled and said 'we are having a good time'.

The conversation underlines the traditional societal belief that focusing on fun and relationships has to be mutually exclusive from skill development. This was mirrored in a field note taken during an all-staff coaches meeting, where one head coach stated, "we have to include competition, why is that?" This was followed by responses from coaches stating "we need

winners and losers", "it makes them try", "competition makes them better." These comments are replicative of societal ideals of sport, where competition is compulsory to foster player development. This is a narrow idea of development that solely encompasses soccer skills. This case study expanded upon society's definition of competitive sports to comprise of both life skill integration and sport content and found success in both. (Results from the season in Table 5).

Table 5. Results During the Course of the Study

Game	Result	Significance
Game 1*	1-0 W	
Game 2*	1-1 T	
Game 3*	3-0 W	
Game 4*	0-0 T (Lost in PKs)	2nd Place Finish in Tournament
Game 5*	0-0 T	
Game 6*	2-0 W	
Game 7*	7-0 W	
Game 8*	1-2 L	2nd Place Finish in Tournament
Game 9	1-0 W	
Game 10	0-0 T	
Game 11	5-1 W	
Game 12	6-0 W	
Game 13	2-0 W	
Game 14	6-0 W	
Game 15	2-2 T	2nd in Division Standings

Final Record for Regular Season: 5-0-2

*Tournament Game

Transfer

The ultimate goal of any RYS program is that the skills learned and assets cultivated inside of the team environment would transfer outside of the soccer team to other areas of players' lives. This section seeks to answer the third and final research question, "in what ways,

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if any, do participants' think through and learn inside the RYS program? How do they think about elements of the program in other areas of their lives?" Field notes, interviews, focus groups, and other artifacts were used to determine what players understood and how they perceived the team impacting their lives outside of the program. The players were able to think about moments and values that they could apply in other contexts. Players all had different experiences and understanding ranging a spectrum of transfer: for some girls it was just a seed that had been planted, for others roots had started to ground, while other players' transfer had fully blossomed.

Cognitive Connections: Planting of the Seed: "Like your subconscious?"

Players understood that the program was focused on more than just soccer skill development, but encompassed a range of valuable life skills. As Reagan put it, the team's focus was "ways you can translate soccer into real life or real life into soccer." Cognitive connection involves the relationship between the experiential value, the motivated use, and the expansion of perception. It links the idea that in order for transfer to fully blossom, a seed must be planted first. One focus group conversation illustrated this:

Claire: Do you feel like you've used what we talk about in circles outside of soccer?

Carmen: probably, but on accident

Claire: Probably on accident? It might be unintentional, but it is somewhere in your brain?

Carmen: Yes

Betsy: like your subconscious?

Carmen: Yah!

Carmen represented the planting of the seed, she could name things she found important or elements she learned but could not give examples of how they translated to her everyday life.

Numerous players indicated that they felt like the team impacted their lives, but could not directly link examples to concepts. As Ellie described, "I mean I don't really think about it, I'm sure I do it more, I don't like think about it". When asked to expound upon what the "it" referred to, Ellie responded, "I probably listen more". Other players illustrated that they found the experience on the team valuable but could not describe in what ways they used it. When asked about a time where she found things learned on the team to be interesting or useful, Tori said "sometimes it just happens" but could not provide elaboration on what happens.

Players frequently alluded to the idea that they understood the life skills being taught but did not necessarily act on them. Betsy said she frequently thought throughout the course of the season, "is this really something I am going to do?" and then decides some things she would rather just not think about. Suzanna noted that "I feel like if the opportunity presented itself I would, but I haven't been faced with any of those problems." This highlights that not all players were motivated to use certain values taught on the team outside of the team. Motivation was a key indicator to whether or not transfer occurred.

Some players started to hint at the idea of codeswitching. Code switching is the understanding that not all things that are socially acceptable in one context would be socially acceptable in another. Hope recognized that not all things learned from the program are useful all the time and, in all situations, "bringing it up at the right time like not random and making sure people actually hear it, not just saying it." Hope identified school as not being conducive to applying what she learned in the program because "school is a bit straightforward, like they don't really talk much about things other than school." Players recognized that certain environments

weren't as conducive to restorative practices. Ellie said that "it just depends on like the situation." In Ellie's case, other competitive sports environments were easier to make direct connections than to completely different contexts, like home or school. This may be attributed to Ellie viewing her school as "violent".

Circle topics that made players instantly connect were viewed as more memorable. Reagan noted that "you remember the most important ones because those translate the most to real life scenarios… it clicks in your brain." Experiential value is when content is valued because of immediacy of usefulness in everyday experience. Circle topics that almost every player identified as most impactful were the topic of inequality between men and women (sports, clothing, inequity vs inequality). Players identified ways they felt like boys treated them unfairly in sporting or physical education arenas. In a focus group, Genevieve described how "she thinks about our inequality conversation and now tries to shrug off when boys think they are better than her." This idea was echoed across the rest of the team.

Other topics that were identified as important were topics that made the players think. Expansion of perception involves seeing the world in a new way. Tori said that a number of the circle topics had influence on her; "I feel like it's made me think about it more deeply." A number of players (n=5) said that they would take questions asked during circles and go ask their friends or family outside of practice about them. Two players, Betsy and Hope, both mentioned going home and asking their friends, "Is Hitler a good leader?" They both alluded to the idea that since the question made them think, they believed their friends would think about it deeply as well.

Several players noted that they believed that although the things talked about on the team may not be translating to action at the moment, that this season would have a long-term impact.

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Mackenzie reflected, "Yah when I am older, I'll think about these things and realize you (Coach Claire) were that age and thinking about your perspective and things." Betsy seconded this idea, "I saw on TikTok will it matter in five years? And then it's like probably not, but I feel like this is something I will think it matters, and like think about positively in five years."

Near Transfer Application: Taking Root: "It's now easier in games because we practice it"

The idea of near transfer encompasses how transfer occurs when the context between where information is learned is similar to where the learning is applied. For the players, it was clear that they understood how things learned in practice could be applied to games and other areas of sports competition in their lives. This represented a seed starting to take root, laying the foundation to fully blossom.

Being respectful during competition seemed to resonate with players. Georgia noted,

"I've definitely learned how to be like a better sport and like you always go up and say good game even if you lost or even if you're mad at the other team. I haven't done that in the past years and this year I'm definitely like I like to go to all the players on the other team and say good game you did really well."

Coach Claire frequently emphasized and applauded sportsmanship during practice and games. Players were required to give each other high fives after drills, help others up if they were fouled, and commend others on admirable plays. Practicing respect during practice made it easier to prompt sportsmanship during the heat of competition.

Learning to communicate effectively was an important facet in the creation of a restorative culture. Reagan reflected that, "this year, it's like before practice we talk, and we do our circle, and then we actually communicate on the field." This was a skill that numerous stakeholders and players mentioned as a change from previous years, where only one or two

players were known to communicate during competition. Reagan said that in the past, "when you are shut down immediately before you get the chance to communicate, it's like on the field, I don't really want to be a leader because he is going to do it for me. Why do I need to stand up for myself if they are going to do it?" She later continued that, "it is now easier to be a leader during games because we practice it." This was mirrored by Adaline who noted that she frequently would apply her leadership skills to teaching her friends at school soccer. Allowing players to practice leadership in a safe and controlled environment allowed for the girls to feel more confident in arenas that were less measured.

Betsy was a player that lacked confidence when entering the team. She was new to the team and had a pretty terrible experience a few years before that resulted in her quitting soccer. Although an extremely talented soccer player, Betsy would hang her head when she made mistakes. At the start of the season, if Betsy accidently made a mistake during a game, she would refuse to try again. Throughout the season, Coach Claire worked with Betsy on confidence, positive self-talk, and trying her best even if she didn't succeed. A field note reflected Betsy's growth in this situation:

> The game today was played on a rough pitch that was a rounded hill. Betsy took the first corner of the match and since the corner was a direct uphill slant, Betsy ended up falling backwards, miskicking the ball and scraping up her side on the rocky surface. Betsy picked herself up and jogged back to her position letting out a little giggle. Her teammates all told her, "Don't worry, next time!" without letting out a laugh. The next time the ball went out for a corner, Coach Claire asked Betsy to try again. Betsy smiled, ran to the corner, and hit a really beautiful kick that resulted in a goal.

In the past, Betsy would have avoided retaking the corner. When asked about the situation in her post-season interview, Betsy explained, "yah, but then it was like not so bad because like even though I messed up it didn't really matter." She was able to reflect back on her season and see the growth from the times where she gave up after mistakes and now. Betsy even noted that this season "I am trying stuff I am not good at." This was not secluded to only the soccer field, but other areas of competition. Betsy tried out for her middle school basketball team even though she has never played before; "I can't play basketball and normally I was like no, I'm not playing basketball because I don't know the rules but now, I'm like it doesn't really matter, I'll learn eventually, right?"

Ellie, who required a lot of redirection during the season, also noticed how things learned in practice carried over to other areas of competition. Throughout the season, Coach Claire talked with Ellie frequently about respectful communication and not letting her competitive side result in aggression. Ellie noted that she learned, "when I am on the field to not like scream at people…I talk less aggressively." When asked if being on the team would help elsewhere in her life, Ellie was able to relate things learned on the soccer team to other sports she was involved in; "Like in cross country the leadership things were helpful and then in basketball the like communication ones are going to be helpful just because you have to talk a lot." It was easy for Ellie to make the connection between the two environments because she classified sports in general as competitive spaces. She was elected captain of her cross-country team and often times would tell stories linking things talked about in circles to her outside space. Despite the near transfer connection, Ellie frequently told stories where elements of respect, self-control, and conflict resolution did not transfer to other areas of her life. Ellie represented a seed being planted that had some roots, but still need to nurtured to be able to foster far transfer.

Within the realm of respecting others was emphasizing self-control. Mackenzie noted in a focus group that she learned "communication. I yell at people way too frequently. If they disrespect someone it is game on, but now if they disrespect me, it's fine, it's more controlled. Until they disrespect one of my friends or my sister, and then it's game on." Mackenzie had a little bit of a temper as a combination of being extremely competitive and being super protective over her sister, Abby. At the beginning of the season, Mackenzie would be fuming if someone fouled her or her sister, even if they were on her own team. Together, the team talked about self-control and respect even in these challenging moments and taking a moment to regather oneself before reacting. During one game toward the latter half of the season, Mackenzie exhibited this self-control,

> Mackenzie was upset because the other team was continuously fouling her team and the ref was not calling it. In the second half, Mackenzie got fouled three times in quick succession. The last one resulted in her getting both of her legs taken out from under her and a face plant into the ground. One could tell by Mackenzie's body language that she was frustrated. Mackenzie looked at Coach Claire and said, 'Coach, can I please have a sub?' When she came off, she told Coach Claire she recognized she was angry, in a little bit of pain, and it would be okay if she didn't sub back on.

At the start of the season, Mackenzie would never ask for a sub. She was so zealous in her desire to play that it actually resulted in an overuse injury. This moment illustrated growth in Mackenzie's ability to recognize when she needed a moment before she reacted in a harmful way.

Far Transfer Application: Starting to Blossom: "All the real-life scenarios"

Far transfer is more challenging to facilitate than near transfer because it involves an understanding of how skills learned in one setting can be utilized in a completely different setting. For far transfer to work, Coach Claire found it important for players to identify the life skill being taught, apply it within the soccer program, and then make connections to using them outside of the program. Closing circles were often guided by questions asking to make comparisons to topics or utilizing examples from their own lives. Far transfer indicated that the seed of the life skill took root and was starting to blossom.

Reagan noted that circle conversations had an impact on other areas of her life. As Reagan put it, "all the circle topics, and all the real-life scenarios." Reagan noted that when she thought about the team, she realized her words and actions have a greater impact then she initially thought, "Situations where you are not the most comfortable, and you kind of think maybe I shouldn't say this, how could this affect the person I say it to... What type of impact are you going to have." Circle topics during practice frequently addressed how actions have a greater influence than one may realize. Some circles contained real-world examples asking players to think about how the actions between two people may have a greater bearing than just the individuals involved. Reagan illustrated that, "I have this certain friend who was really mad at someone and we talked about on the team how being a leader may be helping people realize this isn't the time for that… me and someone else on the team brought it (the situation) down a little to realize we can handle this in other ways." Thinking through situations in their entirety from action to effect were of particular importance in a number of practices.

Circles enforced the idea that everyone should get an opportunity for their voice to be heard. Georgia noted that the circles about respect and listening were particularly valuable at

school, "In circles we talk about how to respectfully express yourself…I definitely use that because I get frustrated with the people in my class and I'm like well just like stop because they have an opinion as well." Sometimes in practice during moments of choices and voices, Coach Claire would have to step in to make sure everyone's voice was being listened to and everyone was working together. Georgia recognized that learning to work in a team would be impactful, "knowing how to work with different kinds of people and different ways, different people with different opinions is definitely something you're going to need for the rest of your life."

Bobbie noticed that she also learned how important giving people space to talk was. As Bobbie put it, "I've learned that everyone has a voice and like everyone can talk when they want to talk." She said this was useful with her friends when they went to a neighborhood market and played games, "sometimes we'll just like play games and some people can't talk, I'm like shush y'all let them talk… I think about other people and not just myself." During practice, Coach Claire gave personal examples about in her life where she thought she could have thought about others more or vice versa where others didn't think about her and the emotional response. Giving examples from both points of view allowed players to realize not only the action, but subsequently the potential result, highlighted the importance of thinking about impact. Paired with the frequent use of affective questions throughout the season, Bobbie recognized that, "I get into the habit of like thinking that and then I could always think that, think that like other people's choices matter." She even took this with her to the dinner table, where traditionally her parents used to be the only one asking questions but now, she asks them questions as well.

As noted previously, the latter half of the season had a particular emphasis on leadership. Betsy was able to make parallels between practicing leadership at soccer and utilizing it during

school. She was assigned by her English teacher to be the captain of her public speaking club. Betsy observed that leadership required her to really think about those she was leading,

> "I had to tell people what they were doing and I was like well it wouldn't be very good of me if I gave like myself all the stuff that I wanted to do and everyone else like the sucky stuff. So like, I had to be nice even when this one kid messed the whole thing up, but I couldn't tell him he messed the whole thing up because what if he was trying his best? So instead, I just said good job."

Throughout focus groups and interviews, Betsy noted that her big take away from the season was how to be nice and not be mean. Betsy and one of her teammates had a noted history and sometimes had a challenging friendship that would result in conflict on and off the field. Restorative conversations were frequently used to talk through situations with the two players and help to see the other player's point of view. She said that this helped her at school and at home to not get in unnecessary arguments with her dad or her friends.

Suzanna was new to the team and naturally got along really well with everyone. Suzanna handled all interpersonal relationships with ease and was never seen in conflict or tension with anyone on the team. For her, the circle topics about goal setting and effort were the ones that made the most impact. Suzanna reiterated that "you have to put in effort to get a result, so you have to try, not expect things to happen." She noted that she utilized goal setting in writing class or while studying, "I'm going to like set a goal, I'm going to like write this much, I would like to get to this certain part, yah." Before each weekend, the team would take time and establish goals they wanted to achieve both on and off the field. Coach Claire frequently reiterated that these goals were meant for growth, not as a determinant of success or failure, and the goals would be adjusted each week. Suzanna echoed this sentiment, "not all goals are perfect and you can't

always do it, but you can think like what like what mistakes did I make? and how you could fix that for next time." At the end of the season, Suzanna's dad mentioned that Suzanna was particularly good at setting goals when taking on online language class that semester. Although a simple comment, it was indicative of a much larger idea, the team was having a much larger impact than just on the field.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The RYS model was developed as a combination of two-widely accepted practices, TPSR and RP, to emphasize relationships and conflict resolution. Although originally intended for the sporting environment, most literature on the model has taken place inside the Physical Education classroom (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021). This paper intended to close that gap by examining how to implement and facilitate an RYS model in a competitive soccer space. Overall, the results highlight the complex nature of facilitation, program implementation, and transfer. Players on the team indicated that the model allowed for them to learn more than just soccer through a carefully cultivated environment that equally centered relationships and soccer. Transfer was underscored by varying levels of understanding, near, and far processes. The current discussion will address the findings related to the three research questions relative to previous literature.

Research Question 1: How Does the Researcher Develop and Facilitate a Restorative Youth Sport Model into a Competitive Sports Team?

Throughout the course of the season, I studied my actions, ideas, and took a systematic inquiry into my own coaching practice to reveal knowledge about it (Hamilton et al., 2008). My self-study journal and critical friend conversations with Kevin took an interactive and reflective approach through implementation of an RYS environment. My coaching identity transformed over time as my data provoked, challenged, and illuminated rather than confirmed or settled what I had been doing in other SBYD programs that I was involved in (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; LaBoskey, 2004). The self-study was highlighted by three overarching turning points that steered to a redefinition of success.

The utilization of OST was a helpful lens to investigate my practice. Examining how I acquired the knowledge, skills, and derived meaning from sport participation was an important step in understanding my acculturation into sport (Lawson, 1988). As LaBoskey (2004) noted, our memories shape the construction of our identities, our thought processes, and our future behavior. This was exemplified in identifying athleticism as a marker of success at a young age and my desire to resist the socialization with my college coach. It was important to note the dialectical process of socialization that took place throughout the course of the study. The players on the team served as socializing agents that informed my practice while I served as a socializing agent to them as a nontraditional view of coaching and sport participation. As an essential requirement of self-study is the results provide evidence for reframed thinking and transformed practice, this study highlighted the evolution of success in a competitive sports environment away from traditional sports victories to one where restorative successes and holistic player development were not only noted but celebrated.

Self-study is inherently social. It is an interactive approach that involves a sustained dialogue with others co-participating in the practice (Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). In the current study, this was reinforced by my critical friendship with Kevin, who was integral to the self-study process as he provoked, challenged, and supported the entire process. Foundational to the critical friendship was a level of vulnerability where people can critique one another's practice and assumptions about practice that ultimately transform one's understanding of pedagogy while simultaneously helping them celebrate their successes (Richards & Shiver, 2020). With Kevin's help, I was able to illuminate turning points in my practice where I was able to arrive at new understanding and the new understandings helped frame future practices.

Self-study must begin with a stance of inquiry. The starting with the "why" positioned the study to explore the complexities and challenges of coaching and learning to coach (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014). It forced me to look and reflect on my own practice, not for the aim of refining my skills, but improvement to enact good judgment (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014). Thus, the purpose of this study was to move beyond the particularities of my practice in an RYS environment to expose the ideas and thought processes behind the practice so others may critically debate and develop understanding for their own practice (Richards & Fletcher, 2018). Ultimately, the intent was to advance the public knowledge base of RYS facilitation and coaching.

There was recognition from my acculturation into sports that coaches have a large impact on players, whether positive or negative. Research has found that coaches are the most influential individuals in sport and have an essential role in creation of motivational climates for athletes (Camire et al., 2012). With the goal of having a positive impact on players, it is crucial for coaches to establish a coaching philosophy that prioritizes both life skill development and life skill transfer. Gould and colleagues (2003) recommended coaches start with answering the following questions: Why do I coach?; what are my objectives for coaching?; what do I get out of coaching?; why did I get into coaching? Although life skills were said to be valued at the start of the study, my reflections privileged physical victories over restorative ones. It took time for this shift to occur.

While there is flexibility within the RYS model, it does require a shift from a traditional authoritarian approach to a values-based approach and the right attitude to be successful (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). Lynch and colleagues (2020) agreed, noting that the easiest place to start is "power with" which is a shift to cooperation with youth from an attempt to control them. This shift took time as many players had to adjust to this new style of leadership compared

to their old authoritarian coaches. Being compared to a "substitute teacher" illustrated that players viewed my coaching style as easily taken advantage of. This is congruent with a lot of RP literature that finds RP to be too linnet and a direct threat to the traditional authority of educators (Sandwick et al., 2019; Wang & Lee, 2018). It required vulnerability from both myself as a coach and the players that took investment and time (Wang & Lee, 2018).

The turning point of "is it working?" mirrored the question asked of TPSR by the academic community (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). Throughout his career, Hellison noted his own self-doubt and vulnerability when working with kids (Martinek & Hemphill, 2020). This was reflected in my own self-doubt as players struggled and practices didn't go as planned. To get through the challenges of programs, adjustments were made to ensure the needs of the youth were met, both on the spot and after reflection, and the smallest victories were celebrated to illuminate what was possible (Martinek & Hemphill, 2020). By redefining success away from athletic accomplishments, I was able to appreciate the small restorative victories and individual growth of myself and my players across the season.

Being an intentional coach is not one large action, but requires small, conscious decisions that eventually turn into a "way of being". Hellison (2011) frequently desired for individuals to make TPSR their own and just become a part of who they are. Consciously practicing RYS over and over again eventually turned into a subconscious effort to be restorative in other areas of my life. This was demonstrated through cited conversations with my fiancé (n=3), and other professional areas of my life including teaching college-aged students (n=5). Yet, developing an RYS practice was not without challenges.

A component of the struggle with facilitating an RYS environment was the tension between occupational socialization into the club and professional socialization in SBYD

practices. Organizational demands frequently were seen in conflict with RYS best practices. I would be remise not to mention the professionalization of youth sport that favors industry and financial gain (Camire & Santos, 2019; S. Gregory, 2017). These repercussions are felt at a base-coach level where one must reconcile developmental objectives with the competitive environments and privatization of sport clubs (Camire & Santos, 2019). Competition and competitive social norms were increasingly valued by my bosses, other coaches within the club, and other clubs. This study supported the recommendation derived from OST that emphasize creation of an atmosphere that allow for teachers (coaches) to exercise their sense of agency (McEntyre & Richards, 2021; Richards et al., 2013). By reflecting on my own practice and incorporating best practices from SBYD literature, I was able to recognize and make choices despite my organizational constraints (Lawson, 1988). This study aligns with current research practices in OST that emphasize the effectiveness of reflection inside professional socialization environments (McEntyre & Richards, 2021). Consistent reflection inside my self-study journal allowed me to reconcile what I knew as best practice from the literature with what I was doing every day in training.

Fun and retention became an important indicator of program success. This research study confirmed previous research that programs utilizing TPSR can lead to increased enjoyment (Li et al., 2008). Physical activities that are intentional in promoting a caring atmosphere have a higher likelihood of youth returning in the future (Holt et al., 2017). The players in the program were 13–14-year-old girls which is the age when youth sports see the largest rate of attrition. he reasons for this exodus from youth sport are varied, but some research attributes it to lack of enjoyment (Aspen Institute, 2020). The data in this study illustrated that players and stakeholders were having fun and players desired to come to practice and participate.

Research Question 2: What is the Experience of Players in a RYS Competitive Soccer

Team?

A case study approach was used to examine a unique competitive sports environment that was grounded in RYS. The manner in which RYS was facilitated and integrated into the soccer experience was viewed by participants as vital to their satisfaction on the team. Through the utilization of Jacobs and Wright (2018) Transfer of Life Skills in Sport Based Youth Development model, the following section focuses on in-program learning that incorporates SBYD best practices. The current research supported RYS as a model that helped with the creation of a positive motivational climate, with relational and social support, and purposeful life and soccer skill instruction that was recognized and valued by both Coach Claire and the girls on the team.

Implementation Fidelity

Although with RYS there is allowance for flexibility, research emphasizes that it is important to demonstrate a good level of fidelity to the model (Gordon et al., 2016). By exemplifying integrity to the model, identified outcomes can be attributed to the implementation itself. The applied model of RYS was developed through a community-engaged study in New Zealand where 89% of youth participate in community sports programs and 200 schools are considered restorative schools (Hemphill et al., 2018). The current study was contextually very different as RP were a completely novel experience to all players on the team. This required deliberate strategies such as scaffolding to ease participants into RP.

The RYS model has three integral pieces that need to be established on the team: restorative sport practices, awareness circles, and team meetings (Hemphill et al., 2018; Hemphill & Richards, 2021). Restorative sport practices involve the utilization of TPSR with

emphasizes on relationships. The deliberate use of daily format into the practice plans and TPSR implementation checklist allowed for consistent reflection and evaluation of whether TPSR strategies were being used. Coach Claire utilized the easier implementation strategies of affective statements and restorative circles to introduce RP to the team (Hemphill & Richards, 2021). This was paired with deliberate relationship building strategies that included both on the field team bonding activities and off-the field planned events.

Awareness circles were utilized as a proactive approach to build relationships, build community, or respond to wrong doing, conflict, or problems (Hemphill & Richards, 2021; Wachtel, 2013). In the current study, circles were valued by members of the team as a space to speak and listen. The general quality of awareness circles showed several dimensions were frequently observed (e.g., adult-student respect, student-student respect, relevancy) while others were not (student ownership). However, research has shown that in order to arrive at the point of student agency in circles, students need to be familiar with the process in which this case they were still learning (Gregory et al., 2014). In the sport environment, both sequential and non-sequential circles were key, while certain circles were structured around topics or questions raised by the coach/facilitator, quick huddles allowed for conversations to proceed freely with no fixed order (Wachtel, 2013). For instance, nonsequential circles were utilized in instances where time was limited, quick reflections were needed, or brief redirections with player input. Sequential circles were optimal in situations where each player needed a clear opportunity for input, team building questions, and time was not an issue. It is important to note that in circles life experience is viewed as more valuable than advice or counseling (Pranis, 2005). Coach Claire frequently took on the element of telling stories from her own life to bridge the gap between lessons learned and the lessons desired to be taught. The critical use of circle in the

current study supports previous RYS studies that found circles to be foundational to program success (Hemphill, Lee, et al., 2021; Lynch et al., 2020).

This was paired with utilizing the smallest incidents of conflict as opportunity for feedback, discussion, and resolution (Hemphill et al., 2018). Similar to Hemphill, Janke, and colleagues (2021) finding in PE environments, there was not a level of harm and conflict that called for the use of a restorative conference or team meeting. Despite this, this study did support the idea that coaches are in position to set the tone for issues of conflict (Hemphill, Janke, et al., 2021). Coach Claire utilized immediate redirection in instances where behavior was unacceptable, and players and stakeholders noted this shift away from "the boys will be boys" attitude that many coaches adopt. This shift supports the idea that when it comes to rule breaking or violence in sports, the most significant influence is what the athlete believes is acceptable to the coach (Guivernau & Duda, 2002).

In-Program Learning

With the ultimate goal of any SBYD program is for the transference of life skills fostered inside the program to outside, the first essential component is program implementation or how a coach executes program design, structure, and curriculum (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). In the current study, this was underscored by the creation of a restorative culture, relationship-building, and the integration of life skills into soccer practices. This resulted in student learning marked by an awareness of both soccer skill and life skills being emphasized during the season. This is emphasized throughout SBYD literature which highlights that youth must be aware of and understand the life skill taught inside the sport program (Martinek & Lee, 2012). The study also refutes the current societal belief that being successful in competition and holistic youth

development have to be mutually exclusive (Camire & Santos, 2019). The team was successful both on the field while simultaneously promoting and valuing holistic youth development.

Creation of a positive and motivational climate where individuals can foster and develop is a staple of any SBYD program. A PYD climate has been defined in the literature as being shaped by the quality of relationships and ability for youth to have legitimate leadership opportunities and a feeling that they are a part of a larger community (Gordon et al., 2021). Youth empowerment was a critical piece of the creation of an RYS environment where players recognized their voice was important, valued their chances for leadership, and understood they had input in decisions that impacted them. This was taught through learning respectful communication, giving explanation behind decisions, and emphasizing empathy. Escarti, Llopis-Going, and Wright (2018) found that the degree of youth empowerment was significant to youth's degree of participation, caring, and self-direction. The current study illustrated that scaffolding voices and choices allowed for youth to build up from simple decisions to complete control of practice.

By extending RP into sports practice, there is an intentionality and centrality in developing relationships amongst peers, peer-coach, and stakeholders (Hemphill et al., 2018). The quality of relationships in the current study was demonstrated by the way in which the girls constantly referred to their teammates as sisters, respected and valued their coach as a role model, and saw growth in one another. Gordon and colleagues (2021) found that an integral piece to a long-standing TPSR program was a strong sense of belonging and being a part of a 'family' amongst participants. In the current study, valuing of relationships was not only critical as an emphasis on prosocial behaviors but also helped with team cohesion during games. Thus due to the team nature of soccer, there was a greater predominance of social responsibility over

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personal responsibility (Carreres-Ponsoda et al., 2021). This was exemplified by players

emphasizing "*our* mistakes" rather than singling individual teammates out.

By creating solid rapport with Coach Claire and their teammates, players felt able to take

risks both on the field and in circles; this foundation of trust has been seen as valuable in both

RYS literature and RP literature (IIRP, 2017; Lynch et al., 2020; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019).

This process took time. Riciputi and colleagues (2016) found in their case study analysis of a

large PYD summer program that relationship building was a "process, not a switch" and that

learning and using the character concepts took time, effort, patience, and practice. To establish a

restorative environment required a more didactic feedback between the adult and youth (Lynch

et al., 2020). The cyclic nature of feedback with WWW-EBI and anonymous exit slips allowed

for the team and Coach Claire to approach feedback with a growth mindset rather than a negative

one as it was frequent and ongoing.

Relationships extended beyond just coaches and players to stakeholders. By utilizing

frequent communication and involvement, stakeholders had opportunities to buy in and provide

social support for the players. This has been supported by other research that has shown

stakeholder involvement to be of importance for positive outcomes and value within RYS

programs (Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). By creating a

collaborative relationship with parents, Coach Claire and parents were able to work toward

similar objectives of personal and social responsibility for their children (Santos et al., 2016).

TPSR and RYS are models that utilize sport to not only focus on sport skill development,

but also develop personal and social responsibility. Awareness circles allotted a time where

clearly defined life skill goals could be stated; soccer drills allowed for the promotion of life

skills in real-time; closing meetings allowed for a specific part of practice where transfer could

be emphasized, players could self-reflect, promote self-awareness, and recognize their teammates. Two-clap shoutouts allowed for both players and Coach Claire to recognize teammates' efforts and utilization of life skills inside the team environment. Coatswoth and Conroy (2009) found that praising players' effort was a strong predictor of competence. Player interviews, focus groups, artifacts, and peer-debriefs all highlighted the positive encouraging environment in which the team was set.

In the current study, players could not differentiate between the soccer team and the life skills integrated into the team. This was mirrored by Hemphill & Richards (2016) investigation of an urban squash program where students could not separate their sport activity, squash, from the academic enrichment that the program provided. As Suzanna noted, "soccer and life are kind of the same." The consistent emphasis placed on positive developmental outcomes such as respect, effort, goal setting, and leadership was noted by all players interviewed. Literature has found that when youth sport are not designed to include positive developmental outcomes, youth may learn less-adaptive skills such as cheating, cutting corners, and developing the win-at-all costs mentality (Coakley, 2011). Coach Claire and individuals noted that these less-adaptive skills took time to override as they were deemed acceptable in past team environments.

A key exploration of this study was the examination of the adaption of a positive youth development model, RYS, into a competitive space that, historically, is hyper focused on predetermined goals surrounding performance. Coach Claire entered the competitive space grounded with the objective to equally foster life skill development and soccer specific development. From the outside, this is contradictory to traditional competitive spaces where coach's approach sport with the intent to develop athletes to fulfill their potential in a specific achievement domain (Harwood & Johnston, 2016). However, the focus on more holistic

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development, where players were taught, challenged to think critically about, and had conversation surrounding the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective domain that soccer engulfs, holistically fed into their performance on the field. The TPSR and RYS model was strategically adapted to a meet a higher end of the player development spectrum, where practices and games were extremely intentional with the focus on improving players' soccer skills. This is a shift from the utilization of TPSR in less competitive environments, where researchers have highlighted more skilled soccer players did not find the environment competitive and became less enthused as the program progressed (Cryan & Martinek, 2017). Instead, a mastery-oriented environment arose, where the established environment had high expectations for players physical, cognitive, social, and emotional objectives, with no particular emphasis on any singular domain.

The current study established support for Santos & Martinek (2018) strategies for balancing competitive sports and education. 1) Coaches equally assume the objectives of sport skill and character development (Santos & Martinek, 2018). Coach Claire emphasized and players recognized the value in both soccer and holistic development as demonstrated by including both soccer and life skills in response to what the team focused on. 2) Creation of age specific PYD behaviors to recognize, evaluate, and transfer these skills to other areas of their lives. Coach Claire promoted consistent reflection through framing, facilitating, and debriefing activities with intentional dialogue that promoted development and transfer of learning (Newman et al., 2021). 3) Progressively integrate PYD based approach into training sessions. As discussed previously, the fidelity to the RYS model allowed for thoughtful integration of TPSR strategies into the soccer environment. 4) Maintain a balance between expectations of winning and PYD intervention. Although competition was still utilized and valued within the team, creation of a

mastery-oriented environment was enforced over an ego-oriented one. In a mastery-oriented

environment, individuals were celebrated for effort, demonstrating improvement, and helping

each other learn to achieve a goal (Riciputi et al., 2016).

Research Question 3: In What Ways, if Any, Do Participants' Think Through and Learn

Inside the RYS Program? How Do They Think About Elements of the Program Outside of

the Program in Other Areas of Their Lives?

The sport experience is a fertile ground to foster and develop life skills as it provides

authentic opportunity for participants to reflect on moments of teamwork, leadership, conflict

resolution, and other life lessons that are seen as applicable off the field (Gould & Carson, 2008).

Quality learning needs to include time for both reflection when participants are actively

participating and reflection after the activity is completed (Schon, 1987). Coach Claire

celebrated the demonstration of different life skills during practice. She frequently asked players

to reflect on certain instances that occurred to gain insight and reflection about what could be

taken away, both positive and negatives. Finally, transfer was a recurring theme across practices

where players were asked to not only think about how the life skill discussed applied to their

lives outside of soccer, but frequently challenged to apply those life skills to different

environments. These various approaches to transfer fall under Gordon and Doyle's (2015) "Good

Shepard" approach to transfer where coaches actively and consistently shepherd participants

toward transfer as a fundamental part of the team.

It is important to highlight that transfer is an ongoing process that occurs over time; the

individual is the center of the transfer process not the skill. Therefore, transfer may be largely

dependent on the individual learner. In this current study, the analogy of a seed being planted,

taking root, and growing was created to highlight the different levels of transfer that occurred

across individual players. In order for transfer to truly blossom, individuals must understand and apply the life skill developed or refined on the team to other domains of their live (school, home, community). This study exemplified what is fairly well established in SBYD transfer research, skill transfer can manifest in a number of ways that are dependent on participant's motivations, existing repertoire of skills, and personality (Pierce et al., 2017, 2018).

Cognitive Connections

For transfer to occur, life skills must first be understood. Coach Claire took an explicit approach to the transfer of learning (Turnnidge et al., 2014). Empirical findings have exemplified that youth development strategies that are deliberately planned into practice can have an enhanced effect on athletes' ability to transfer skills outside of sport (Camire et al., 2012; Weiss et al., 2016). Circles were found to be an impactful space to talk about life skill focus before practice and contemplating how that life skill could be utilized outside of the team in closing circles. The benefit of the circle space allowed for players to not only reflect on the life skill and its application, but learn from their peers about their different approaches to transfer (Allen et al., 2015). In addition, numerous players alluded to the idea that they felt like they learned to listen and communicate better due to circles, even if they could not expound upon application outside of circles.

One way to examine players' cognitive connections between what was focused on in the program and its applicability to their outside lives is through Pugh's transformative learning framework. Pugh's (2010) three methods of knowledge utilization, experiential value, expansion of perception, and motivated use, were highlighted by various players actions and responses. Players were able to describe situations where they thought about circle topics in other areas of their lives (experiential value) which has been acknowledged as an essential step for transfer to

occur (Pierce et al., 2017). Numerous players spoke about how certain circle topics expanded their perception about different moments in their lives and utilization of life skills. A few players even noted that they continued these impactful conversations elsewhere in their lives with their friends and family. Although not all players could link a direct impact to their current lives, some players noted that they could see it having an impact on their future lives which has been noted as a valuable component for in-program learning to progress to out of program transfer (Jacobs & Wright, 2021).

Pugh's final method of knowledge utilization, motivated use, was seen as a valuable indicator of how players thought through circle conversations and life skills. Not all players found all lessons presented on the team as relevant or useful. In some instances, code switching was identified as a determinant of whether or not a life skill would transfer. Code switching is affiliated with youth's specific context where they compartmentalize their identity structure to intentionally align with their current context (Glenn & Johnson, 2012). Newman and colleagues (2021) found that coaches described code switching as acting differently depending on the social situation and for athletes, it was not about merely fitting in but often an attempt to demonstrate one's social value and worth. Certain players identified not all environments were conducive to practice the lessons learned on the team as there may lack "opportunity" or it would be viewed as "not them."

Near Transfer

Research has shown that before life skills can be appropriately transferred, they must be effectively mastered within the sport context (Pierce et al., 2018). Near transfer arises when the context of learning is similar to that of application (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). Competitive games and tournaments provided a context in which lessons learned during practice could be observed

in a less controlled environment. Many of the examples provided in this study were descriptive evolutions of individual players from the observable behaviors at the start of the season to behaviors observed toward the end of the season.

These illustrations were supported by players giving practical examples of how life skills such as leadership, effort, and communication were transferred to other sporting environments in their life. For Ellie, consistently working on effective communication across the soccer season required little to no reflective thinking when she wanted to use it during cross-country and basketball season. The mechanism behind this type of transfer is almost automatic as it is a highly practiced skill in a similar sport context (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). In the current study, this was viewed as a tree taking root, where life skills are identified, practiced, and become automatic in situations that are similar.

Far Transfer

Far transfer involves a mindful abstraction, or a deliberate, decontextualization of a life skill where it can then be transferred to contexts that are not directly similar to the original context (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). In the instance of this case study, many players illuminated opportunities where they took life skills such as goal setting, conflict resolution, communication, and leadership, that were fostered inside the team and applied them at home, in school, or with their friends. A number of strategies were utilized to shepherd this process. The utilization of catchy slogans like WWW-EBI and the 3L's and Coach Claire's personal stories facilitated retention and memory of important life skills discussed (Pierce et al., 2018). Maintaining positive relationships between coach-athletes and stakeholders was a key marker for successful development and transfer of life skill as Coach Claire showed interest in athletes' lives outside of sport and stakeholders could promote repeated enforcement (Camire et al., 2011; Gould &

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Carson, 2008; Pierce et al., 2018). Creating structured debriefs allowed a space where transfer could be explicitly talked about, athletes could learn from the successes and mistakes of their peers, and gain understanding (Allen et al., 2015; Hellison, 2011). A number of these strategies were deliberate to promote bridging of concepts that allowed for mediation of processes that youth may view as abstract and help youth create connections (Gordon & Doyle, 2015). Ultimately, players recognized that skills learned in life and soccer compounded on one another.

It is important to note that although the primary investigator did not have a chance to observe the players outside of the team, the team environment presented opportunities to discuss transfer of RYS principles to other settings, and the players offered examples of their behaviors suggesting transference occurred. Self-reporting was the marker to gauge what, if any, type of transfer occurred. Similar to the findings of Jacobs & Wright (2021) SBYD program, many players comments were appraisals of the team's impact rather than explanations of their thoughts. Yet, players' use of examples from their outside lives mixed with the fidelity to the RYS model help to elicit that some type of learning and transfer is occurring within the team environment.

Implications

This study explored the integration of an RYS model into a competitive soccer team in hopes that through this innovative approach the players could experience both holistic development and soccer-specific improvement. This study has implications for numerous individuals and organizations who influence youth sport contexts. The findings from this study offer important applied information for coaches, physical educators, youth sport implementers, restorative practitioners, SBYD scholars, and the PYD literature. In addition, it allows for important methodological implications that could benefit other researchers in sport contexts.

Youth Sports Coach and Practitioner Implications

This study illuminated that coaching matters. This was exemplified in Betsy's letter about how a few years ago she quit soccer as a result of a coach and now she looks forward to practice due to a coach; coaches have a tremendous impact on players. Coaches need to be cognizant of their influence and practice beyond just physical development, to the psychological impact they can have on players. Coaches must recognize their players, develop relationships with their players to understand their positive assets, communicate effectively, and be intentional about the integration of life skills into the environment. Cote and Gilbert (2009) argued that effective coaching requires coaches to understand the individual needs of athletes across different contexts. Providing opportunities, both on and off the field, to develop genuine connection between coaches-players, peer to peer, and coach-to stakeholder allows for a foundation of respect and collaboration.

Coaching in an RYS environment requires a shift from a coach as an authoritarian to a facilitator. This case study provided examples of real authentic leadership opportunities that came up with surrendering control both within physical practices and restorative circles. These practices were underscored by the importance of scaffolding. Starting with simple forms of choice should be implemented before just conceding control of drills to players. Gilbert (2017) recommended introducing choice through a suggestion of two or more activities and allowing players to choose. Building off simple choices and voices allows players to build confidence without getting overwhelmed. A similar mechanism can be utilized for bridging for transfer where players can slowly build in making-connections (Gordon & Doyle, 2015).

As discussed previously, coaches must take advantage of the authentic teachable moments that arise during practice. This may mean a sacrifice of physical activity time to allow

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for a fostering of social, emotional, or cognitive elements of the game. Providing opportunities for reflection during practice when circumstances arise can be pertinent to the transfer process to link actions to non-sport situations (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). This should be paired with discussions of transfer after practice, where players should have opportunities to learn from one another, not just each other.

This study contributes to the broader SBYD literature by illustrating that sport participation can facilitate PYD in a variety of ways that may not translate into direct observable behaviors (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). Transfer was analogous to the growth of a tree: planting a seed, taking root, and a full blossom. There was a spectrum of transfer occurring across the team based on individual characteristics, where not all players transfer had observable outcomes. Therefore, it should be important for programs to consider measures of success beyond just behavioral outcomes when trying to evaluate SBYD programs to consider the individualization of youth participants (Wright et al., 2012). In addition, transfer should be conceptualized as a process rather than a set of outcomes (Jacobs & Wright, 2021).

This study highlighted that integrating RYS values in a competitive soccer environment did not take away from success on the field. In fact, it could be argued that emphasizing holistic life skill development should be valued and taught as a good part of coaching. The vast majority of life skills learned in sport, like conflict resolution, teamwork, goal setting, and leadership all help athletes become better performers. Thus, transfer should take a didactic approach where applying life skills learned on the field off of the field will thus reciprocally help players in the competitive sport context (Pierce et al., 2018).

This study emphasized the importance of recognizing the realm in which players arrive to a team. By situating the study in a community-engaged ideal, there was a situational

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understanding of whose voices are being heard, taken into consideration, and who are the benefactors. The study was guided by the power of reciprocity, where this study was not solely for the benefit of the researcher-coach and university, but for the players on the team. It is important for coaches to reflect on who youth sport is serving. Even in a competitive setting, the ultimate ideal should be to develop youth to be not only productive members of the team on the field, but off the field. It should be noted, the population in this study was not representative of the multiple barriers many underserved youth face, particularly socioeconomic barriers. However, it does represent the power of player-centered coaching, and the idea that the more a coach invests in holistic player development, the better served the players are.

Methodological Implications

Self-study methodology should be utilized beyond just teachers, to the all-encompassing role of educator, anyone who is involved in instruction. Although coaching and physical education have been delineated previously in the literature (Lawson, 1983a), coaching requires a fundamental knowledge of pedagogical practices to ensure physical sport skill development ensues. Therefore, this study proposes that self-study research should expand beyond previous recommendations of inside realms of PETE programs and doctoral education into coaching (Lynch et al., 2018). Self-study is a valuable methodology that allows for a more detailed understanding of practice and improvement of practice (LaBoskey, 2004). Revealing coaching successes and challenges through self-study could make a contribution to the broader collection of literature in order to illuminate similarities and differences coaches experience in comparison to educators. This expansion of self-study research will enhance the future of not only youth sport, but other out-of-school context practitioners and physical educators.

Case study methodology is useful for questions about process (Lynch et al., 2018). For this study, case study methodology provided a holistic examination of multiple individual experiences within the social and contextual process of an RYS program (Yin, 2009). The use of Jacobs and Wright's (2018) conceptual model within a case study allows for researchers to investigate key elements within a program in any unique setting. Since this research sought to close the gap of RYS implementation in an environment other than a Physical Education classroom (Hemphill, Janke, et al., 2021; Lynch et al., 2020; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019), more research is needed across a range of out-of-school contexts and sports environments. As the research on RYS has primarily been qualitative in nature, adding quantitative elements to studies would be beneficial.

Future Directions

While promising, the current study can be built upon to further explore the implementation, experience, and outcomes of RYS. In the current study, a proportion of the team were selected to be interviewed, interviews were purposefully sampled based on the availability of players and their willingness to participate. Interviews were relatively short in time, as is natural when working with youth, but eliciting discussions in greater depth could be beneficial. Unsolicited feedback from parents did help triangulate some of the findings, but expanding the interview process to stakeholders would allow for further collaboration of observations, expansion to players' responses, and give further insight into the transfer process.

Circle ratings were based on the assumptions that higher scoring dimensions represented more successful circles. This may not always be the case as the purpose of circles vary. Majority of the RP Observes were completed in reflection by one coder (two were coded by peer debriefers), meaning that no RP Observes occurred during the circle as the implement was

intended. It should be noted that little research exists of what the mean scores for these circles are or denote. In addition, the team was only in its first season of RYS implementation. Research has suggested that as youth become more familiar with the circle process, they would shift from complying to taking ownership (Wang & Lee, 2018). Future research studies should include a more longitudinal approach to examining implementation of RYS to deliver insight into youth ownership and leadership of RP.

This program could serve as a template for future coaches that are looking to implement PYD and RYS principles into a competitive space. This study was conducted in a relatively short period of time (one season). Longitudinal research is needed to determine the true impact of sport participation on the players. As this RYS study took place in a singular soccer context, it would be useful to explore RYS in other sport environments, as well as sports that are more individualistic in nature since soccer is naturally collaborative and relational. Continued research is needed to establish what features of this sport program work, under what circumstances and contexts, and the continued understanding of the mechanisms that produce or limit the transfer of life skills into other environments.

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IRB #: IRB-FY22-716
Title: Centering Relationships in a Competitive Soccer Environment
Creation Date: 6-17-2022
End Date: 8-16-2023
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Claire Newman
Review Board: UNC-Greensboro IRB
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved

Key Study Contacts

Member	Role	Contact
Michael Hemphill	Co-Principal Investigator	mahemphi@uncg.edu
Claire Newman	Principal Investigator	cenewman2@uncg.edu
Claire Newman	Primary Contact	cenewman2@uncg.edu

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Participant's Parent/Legal Guardian's Consent Form

Project Title: Centering Relationships in a Competitive Soccer Environment
Principal Investigator: Claire Newman
Faculty Advisor: Michael Hemphill

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
Your child is being asked to take part in a research study. Your child's participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose for your child not to participate, or you may withdraw your consent for him/her to be in the study, for any reason.
Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to your child for being in the research study. If you choose for your child not to be in the study, or you choose for your child to leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship or your child's relationship with the researcher or Fusion.
Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about your child being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?
This is a research project. Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) has been used in schools and sports programs as effective teaching methods to teach life skills in a physical activity environment. The u14 WS Gold Fusion Team will use TPSR practices to facilitate your child towards desired positive outcomes, such as effort, respect, self-direction, and leadership, etc. The desire is to center your child's voice, create meaningful relationships, and empower them.

Why are you asking my child?
This project is in collaboration with Fusion soccer club. I am asking your child because she will have the unique experience of partaking in a TPSR program in a competitive soccer environment.

What will you ask my child to do if I agree to let him or her be in the study?
Your child will be instructed with a trained soccer coach in this study three times a week. Over the course of the season, your child will be asked to partake in a one-on-one interview with me as well as a focus group interview with 4 of her teammates (~30 minutes each). Your child will be asked questions about her experience on the team and with her coach. After each practice, your child may be asked to complete a quick 3-minute survey to provide feedback to the coach about practice.

Is there any audio/video recording of my child?
There will be interviews in this study designed for hearing your child's participation experience. The interviews will be recorded with a voice recorder. Because your child's voice will be

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potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, confidentiality for things said on the recording cannot be guaranteed, although the researcher will try to limit access to the voice recording by ensuring it is on a password protected device. The researcher will NOT use the voice recording for any public use. The audio recording will be deleted after the data has been transcribed. All electronic data will be stored in the Box cloud server under protected and secured UNCG account. All participants' names will be given pseudonyms.

What are the dangers to my child?
The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants.

If you have any questions, want more information, or have suggestions, please contact the primary investigator Claire Newman at (336)402-2373, email: cenewman2@uncg.edu or Dr. Michael Hemphill, mahemphi@uncg.edu

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns, or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of my child taking part in this research?
Your child's participation in this study could provide important data and information on how TPSR can make an impact in a competitive soccer environment and be helpful to others in the future for planning additional programs for youth.

Are there any benefits to *my child* as a result of participation in this research study?
The study will provide a safe, enjoyable, and relationship-centered team environment for your child to learn essential interpersonal and emotional skills, which may help your child to succeed in school and later in life.

Will my child get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything for my kid to be in this study?
There are no costs or payments to you or your child as a result of participation in this study.

How will my child's information be kept confidential?
All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The principal investigator of the study, who is also the coach, will not know who agreed to participate in the study until after the season is over. The electronic data will be stored in the online cloud service named Box under a protected and secured UNCG account. There will be no record of your child's personal information. During and after the research, the researcher will use a pseudonym to protect your child's privacy in any form of documentation and will make every effort to avoid privacy disclosure.

Will my child's de-identified data be used in future studies?
Your child's de-identified data will be kept indefinitely and may be used for future research without your additional consent or your child's additional consent.

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What if my child wants to leave the study, or I want him/her to leave the study?
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to allow your child to participate or withdraw him or her any time, without penalty. Choosing not to participate in the study or withdrawing from the study will not affect playing time, treatment by the coach or any further interactions with NC Fusion. If you or your child choose to withdraw, you may request that any data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

What about new information/changes in the study?
If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to your willingness to allow your child to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:
By signing this consent form, you are agreeing that you have read it or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and consent to your child taking part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are the legal parent or guardian of the child who wishes to participate in this study described to you by Claire Newman.

Participant's Parents/Legal Guardian's Signature:

Date:

August 3, 2022

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Participant's Assent Form
Study Title: Centering Relationships in a Competitive Soccer Environment
Investigator: Claire Newman

What is this about?
I would like to speak with you about your experience on the Winston-Salem Fusion u14 Gold Team.

Did my parents say it was okay?
Your parent(s) said it was okay for to be in this study and have signed a form like this one.

Why me?
I would like you to take part because you signed up to play soccer for Winston Salem's Fusion u14 Gold Team.

What if I want to not participate and/or stop?
You do not have to say "yes" if you do not want to take part. At any point during the study, you are allowed to say "no". Even if you say "yes" now and change your mind after you start doing this study, you can stop, and no one will be mad at you. Choosing not to participate in the study or withdrawing from the study will not affect playing time, treatment by the coach, or any further interactions with the club (NC Fusion). Your coach, the principal investigator, will not know who agreed to participate in the study until the season is over.

What will I have to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, you may be asked to take part in one individual interview (~ 30 minutes) and one focus group interview with 4 other teammates (~30 minutes) at the end of season. In these interviews, you will be asked questions about your experience on the team and with your coach. In addition, you will be asked to complete a quick survey after practices to give feedback on how you felt at practice.

Will I get anything for participating?
Although you will not get anything directly, the results of the study could potentially help Fusion and other competitive teams to provide opportunities to other youth like you.

Will anything bad happen if I don't participate?
There is nothing bad that will happen if you choose not to participate.

What if I have questions?
You are free to ask questions at any time.

If you understand this study and want to be in it, please write your name below.

_____   _____
Signature of Child   Date

August 3, 2022

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APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Centering Relationships in a Competitive Soccer Environment
Individual Interview Guide

Note: This is a semi-structured interview approach that identifies the key topic areas that are to be discussed with participants in this study. Interviewers should listen carefully to answers to questions and ask follow up questions when appropriate. Follow up questions should be consistent with the topic of the question asked by may be reframed to be consistent with the response of participants. The general questions apply to adult and child interviews, but the interviewer should adapt the language to suit the interview participant.

Participant Experience:

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself: how long you have been playing soccer, etc.
2. How would you describe this team to a friend who may be interested in learning about it?
   a. What are some things that you focus on as a team?
   b. How has the differed from teams you have played on in the past?
3. When you think about your time on the team, what would you say? How do you feel?
4. Do you feel like you get opportunities for your voice to be heard? How? Can you provide me with some examples?
   a. How does it make you feel when your coach lets you express your opinions or works with you to make decisions?
5. What are some things you've learned from being on the team?
6. Are there things you don't like about the team? Any challenges with being a part of the team?
7. Can you describe your relationship with your coach? With your teammates?
   a. Do you get opportunities to build relationships with your coach and teammates?

Transfer

1. What goes on inside your head when you think about what you've learned in the program?
2. Do you look for chances to apply what you've learned in the program in everyday life?
   a. Do you think the program helps you do better in school or at home?
3. How do you decide/think through if you want to use what's in the program in your life?
4. Tell me about a time you found what you learned in the program to be interesting/useful?

Impact:

5. Do you think being on this team has shaped other areas of your life?
6. Do you think it will have a long-term impact on your life?
7. Would you like to add anything else?

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Centering Relationships in a Competitive Soccer Environment
Focus Group Interview:

1. In general, how would you describe your experience on this team?
2. How does this team differ from other teams you have been on in the past?
3. What types of things do you focus on while apart of the team?
4. What is your favorite part about being on this?
5. Is there anything you would change if you could?
6. Are there any experiences on the team that stick out as particularly impactful?
7. What have you learned from being on this team?
8. Do you look for chances to apply what you've learned in the program in everyday life?
   a. Can you think of an example when you used what you've learned in the program?
   b. What goes on in your head when these situations happen?
9. Has this team helped you in other areas of your life? If so, why?

At today's practice, how often do you felt like you got to utilize your voice?

	1	2	3	
Never	◯	◯	◯	Multiple Times

At today's practice, how often do you feel like you got choices?

	1	2	3	
Never	◯	◯	◯	Multiple Times

At today's practice, how often do you feel like your coach emphasized non-physical skills of development (ex: effort, respect, teamwork, leadership, etc.)?

	1	2	3	
Never	◯	◯	◯	Multiple Times

What was the most impactful thing that happened to you at today's practice?

Your answer

Do you have a topic or question you would like to talk about in the next circle? (If you don't want to ask the team yourself)

Your answer

Submit   Clear form

TPSR Implementation Check List

Coach_____   Date _____

Session _____   Observer_____

Which of the Levels (goals) was directly addressed in this lesson? (mark all that apply) _____ Level One (respect) _____ Level Two (effort) _____ Level Three (self-direction) _____ Level Four (helping/leading others) _____ Level Five (transfer)	Which components of the Lesson Format were used in this lesson? (mark all that apply) _____ Relational time _____ Awareness talk _____ Physical activity with responsibility _____ Group meeting _____ Reflection time
Which of these Teaching Strategies was used in this lesson? (mark all that apply) _____ Modeling respect _____ Setting expectations _____ Providing opportunities for success _____ Fostering social interaction _____ Assigning management tasks _____ Promoting leadership _____ Giving choices and voices _____ Involving students in assessment _____ Addressing transfer of life skills	Which of these Student Behaviors could be seen in this lesson? (mark all that apply) _____ Participating _____ Engaging _____ Showing Respect _____ Cooperating _____ Encouraging others _____ Helping others _____ Leading _____ Expressing voice _____ Asking for help

Additional Comments_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX H: RP OBSERVE

Sample *RP-Observe* Circle/Conference Coding Sheet

Coder name: _____   C oding Date: _____/_____/_____

Start time:_____ End time:_____   Circle Student or Educator initiated?_____

Circle Keeper's Name:_____   Numbe r of student participants: _____

Number of participating adults (note if parent, teacher or administrator):_____ Grade level: _____

Course subject area or type of student group (e.g., club):_____

Circle Type:

☐ Proactive Circle or Community-building**:** _____

☐ Responsive Circle or Reactive: _____

☐ Restorative Conference _____ _

☐ Instructional content present: _____ ___

☐ Other:_____ _____

Circle Format (*RP-Observe* Safety Dimension)

☐ Students are sitting or standing in a circle.

☐ Obstacles and barriers, such as desks, are removed from the inside of the circle to promote connection.

☐ Centerpiece is in place.

☐ Talking piece is present.

☐ Circle agreements are established.

Opening and Closing Ceremonies:

☐ Opening ceremony occurs.

☐ Closing ceremony occurs.

Notes (e.g., student demeanor, additional observations):

_____

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Circle/Conference Dimensions	Rating 1-7
Safety (Circle Agreements) - Agreements are stated, reviewed, or seem understood); Fairness and consistency (circle keeper displays fair treatment); Response to broken agreements (agreements are effectively re-established)	
Rationale:	
Belonging (Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness) - Acceptance (circle keeper is compassionate and attempts to understand); Positive rapport (friendly tone); Empathy (verbal or non-verbal empathetic responses)	
Rationale:	
Belonging (Student-Student Respect and Responsiveness) - Acceptance (students understand and show compassion, they have attentive body language); Positive rapport (students listen to one another); Empathy (verbal or non-verbal empathetic responses)	
Rationale:	
Belonging (Relevancy) - Meaningful circle content (topics connected to students' meaningful life events); Personal opinions (students encouraged to discuss their personal perspectives)	
Rationale:	
Voice (Student Ownership) - Student ownership of the process (student-driven or student-led); Circle keeper use of power (keeper participates and responds to group needs with flexibility); Authentic choice (students have a 'voice' in circle topics and process)	
Rationale:	
Voice (Risk Taking) - Appropriate personal disclosure (Students share personal experiences and perspectives in a deep and meaningful way; students take appropriate "risks" in sharing emotional material)	
Rationale:	
Voice (Problem Solving) – **(only code if appropriate)** Problem solving steps (Problems are clearly identified and solutions authentically considered); Collaborative efforts (a true collaborative effort amongst students with minimal prompting from the circle keeper)	
Rationale:	

Circle/Conference Dimensions	Rating 1-7
Opportunities for Learning - Social and emotional skill-building (Opportunities for students to demonstrate self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making); Critical Thinking Skills (Opportunities to practice critical and creative thinking abilities); Adult Modeling Social and Emotional Competence	
Please indicate which of the five SEL skills demonstrated in the circle: ❏ **Self-Awareness** - Students ability to accurately recognize their own emotions/thoughts and how those thoughts and emotions influence behavior. ❏ **Self-Management** - Students' ability to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. ❏ **Social Awareness** - Students' ability for perspective taking and empathy with others of diverse cultures and backgrounds in their family, school, and community. ❏ **Relationship Skills** - Students' ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. ❏ **Responsible decision-making** - Students' ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions. *Rationale:*	
Student Circle Commitment - Student focus/engagement (positive attitude, participation and buy-in); Enthusiasm (as shown in body language, content of sharing, focused attention, and tone of voice)	
Rationale:	

Practice Plan 10.04.22
RYS Focus: respect- being an active listener
Soccer Focus: Communication on the field

Relational Time:
- Ask Georgia how her family is doing/ her sickness
- Ask Betsy how she is doing after last practice
- Ask about Q1 for school

Awareness Circle:
- Listen intently to a teammate for 30 seconds about their day, don't think about what you are going to say
- Then go around the circle tell the team a quick synopsis of what your teammate said

Practice Plan:
1. Fusion 11
2. Rotation through circuits:
   Cone drill:
- Third player dictates color cone players want to pass through, end up at
   Shooting drill
- Open, turn, man on, shoot
- Players must listen and follow instructions
   - Open means open up
   - Turn means quick turn to other direction
   - Man on means pass it back
   - Shoot means quick turn and shoot
   Target Game
- Teammate provide instruction on when, what foot, and where to shoot.
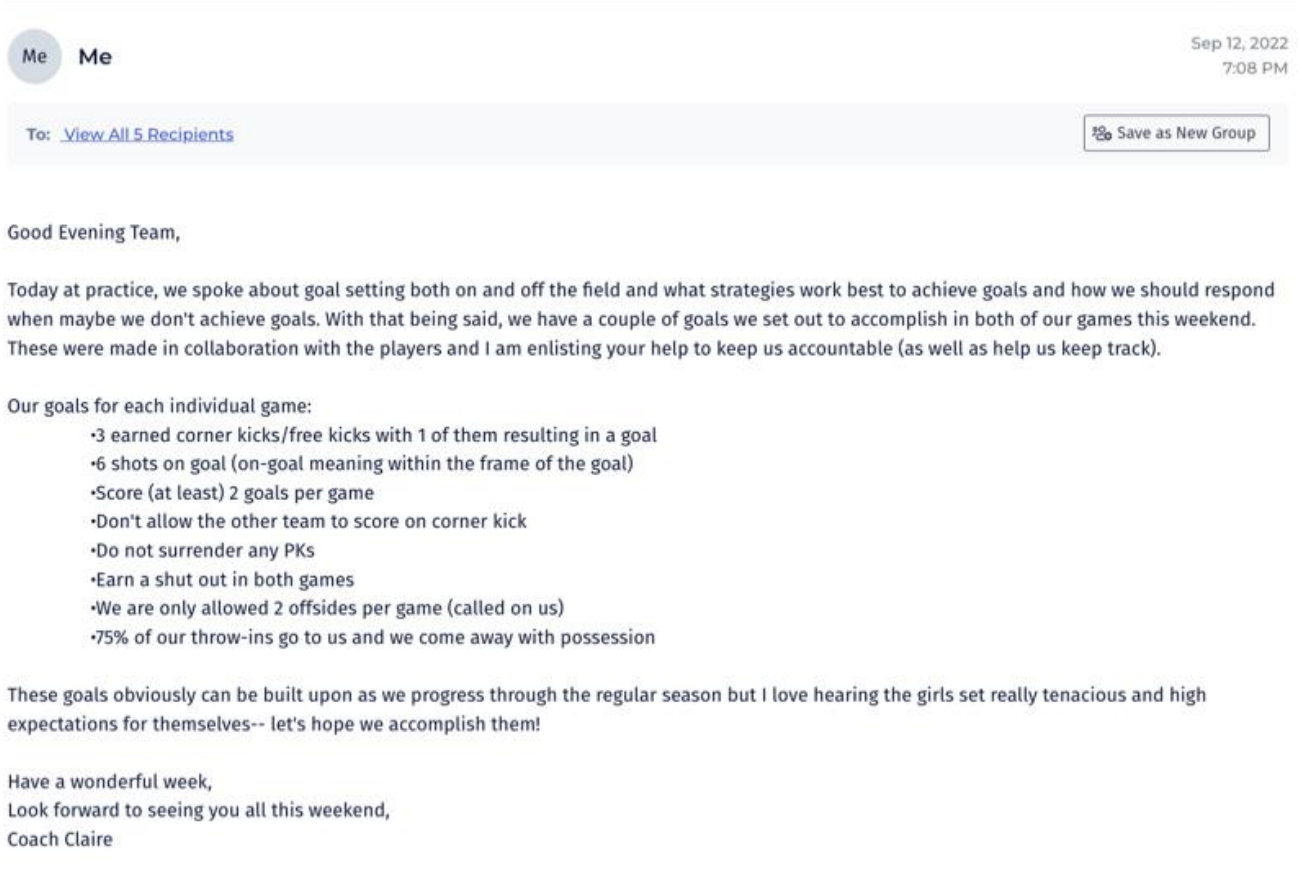- Goal is to listen enough and accurately go where the teammate instructs
3. Numbers game (7v7)
- I say a number and that number of players run and tag the post then play with the ball in the middle
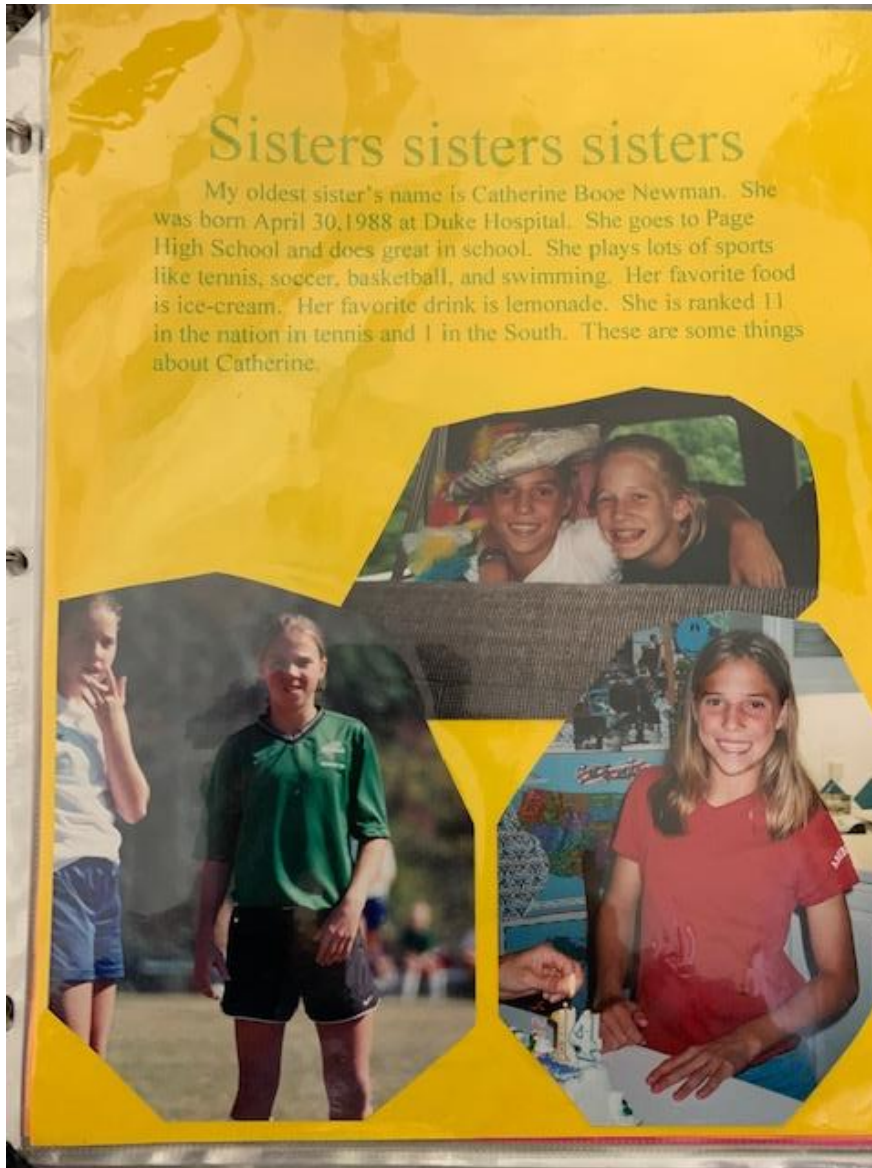- Must listen to what I say, communicate amongst each other
Closing Circle:
- Two clap shout out
- When is it super important to listen?
- How does it feel to be listened to?
- OR how does it feel to not be listened to and you felt like someone else was thinking what they wanted to say next

APPENDIX J: EXAMPLE EMAIL SENT TO PARENTS

Me **Me**

Sep 12, 2022
7:08 PM

To: View All 5 Recipients

Save as New Group

Good Evening Team,

Today at practice, we spoke about goal setting both on and off the field and what strategies work best to achieve goals and how we should respond when maybe we don't achieve goals. With that being said, we have a couple of goals we set out to accomplish in both of our games this weekend. These were made in collaboration with the players and I am enlisting your help to keep us accountable (as well as help us keep track).

Our goals for each individual game:
- •3 earned corner kicks/free kicks with 1 of them resulting in a goal
- •6 shots on goal (on-goal meaning within the frame of the goal)
- •Score (at least) 2 goals per game
- •Don't allow the other team to score on corner kick
- •Do not surrender any PKs
- •Earn a shut out in both games
- •We are only allowed 2 offsides per game (called on us)
- •75% of our throw-ins go to us and we come away with possession

These goals obviously can be built upon as we progress through the regular season but I love hearing the girls set really tenacious and high expectations for themselves-- let's hope we accomplish them!

Have a wonderful week,
Look forward to seeing you all this weekend,
Coach Claire

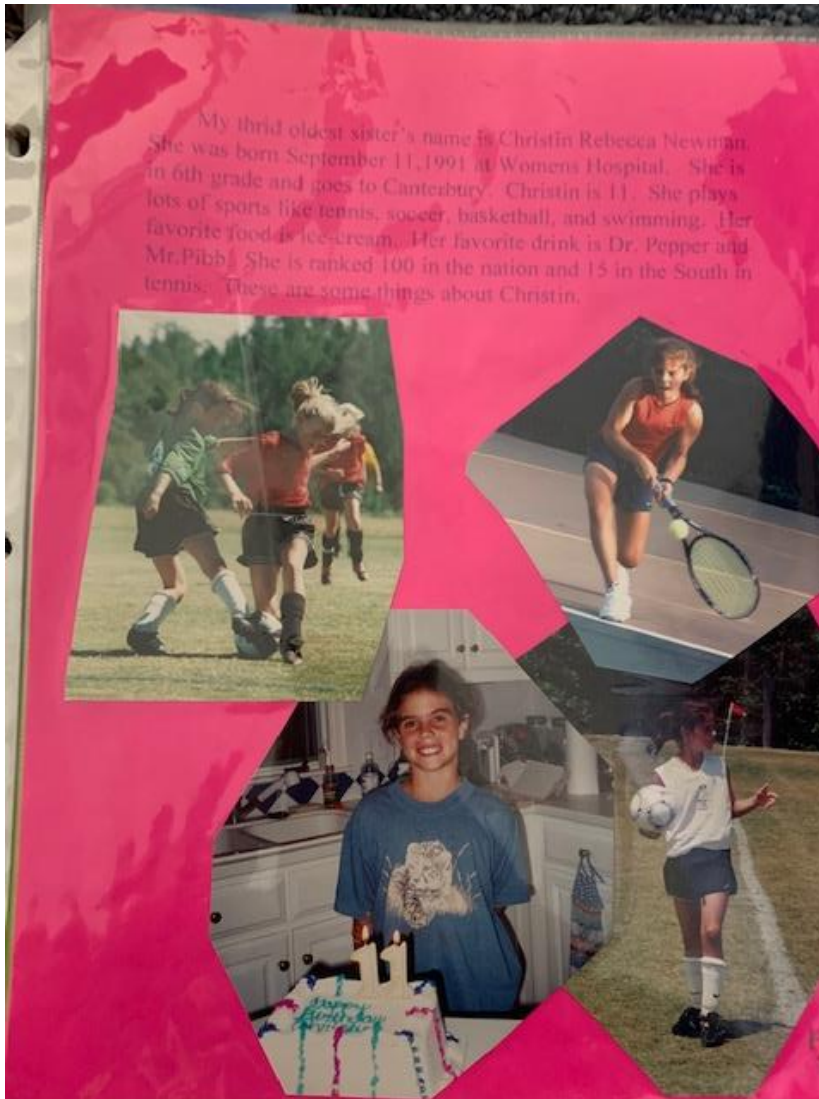**Figure 4. Picture of a page from my 2nd grade autobiography about Catherine**

Note: Lists the sport she plays and her rankings in tennis

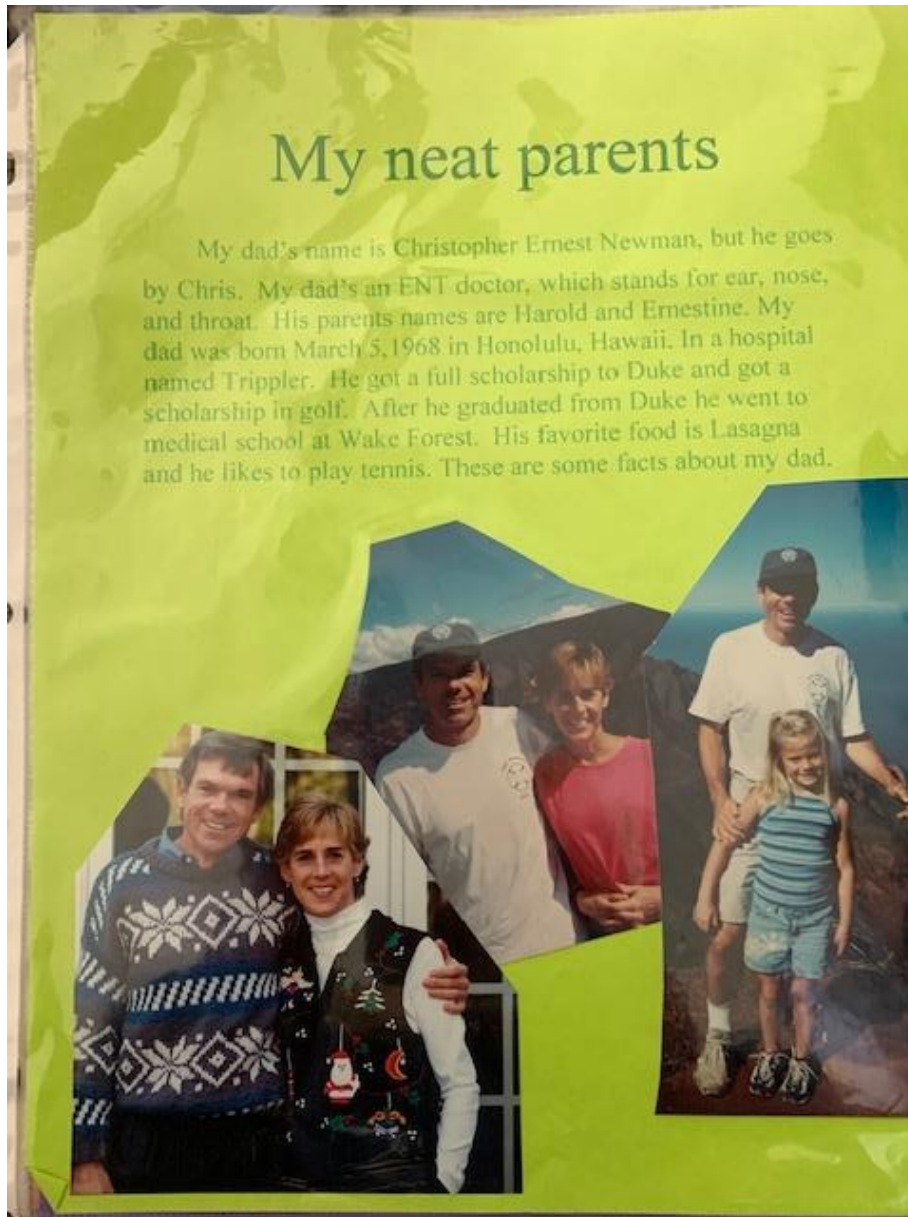**Figure 5. Picture of a page from my 2nd grade autobiography about my sister Caroline**
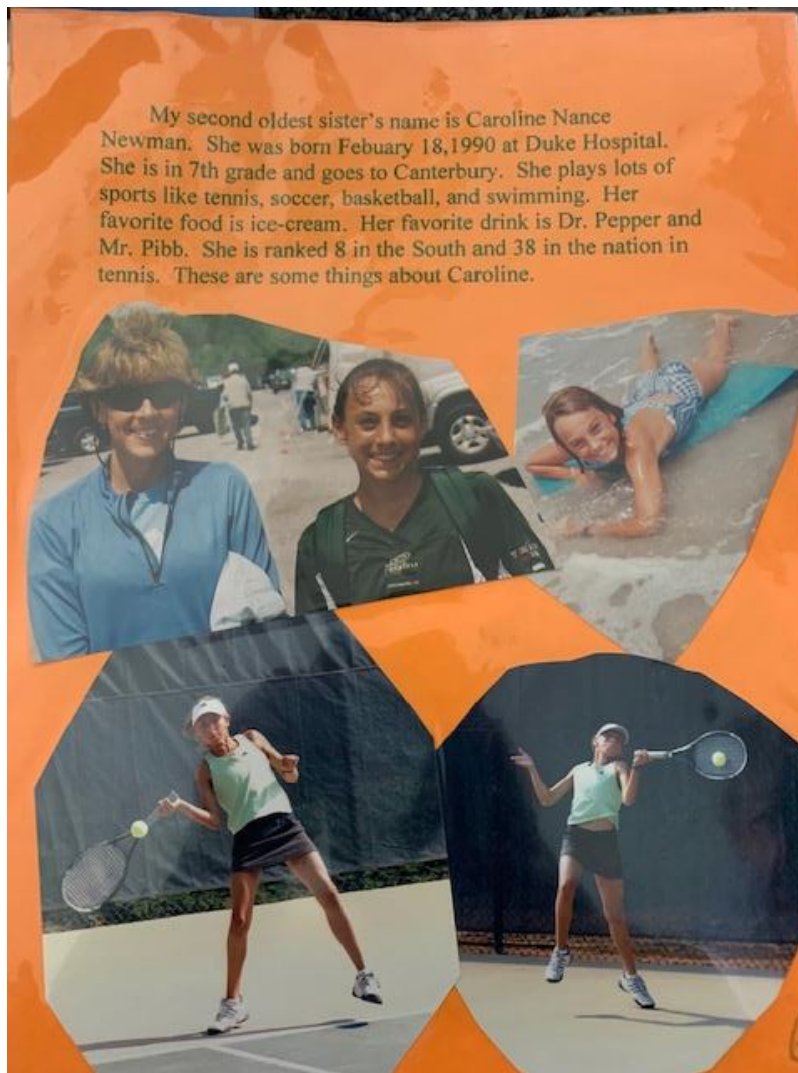
Note: Lists the sport she plays and her ranks in tennis.

Figure 6. Picture of a page from my 2nd grade autobiography about my sister Christin

Note: Lists the sport she played and her rankings in tennis

Figure 7. Picture of a page from my 2nd grade autobiography about my Dad

Note: Mentions his athletic scholarship to Duke and he likes tennis

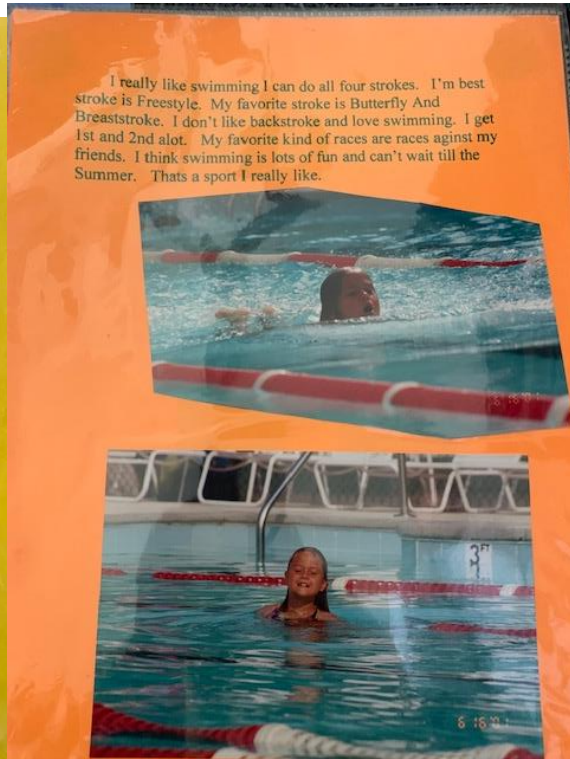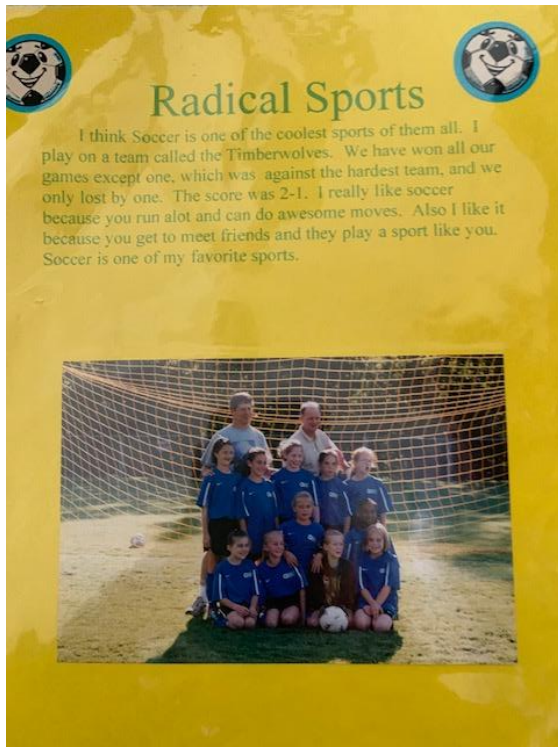**Figure 8. Pictures from my 2nd autobiography about sports**
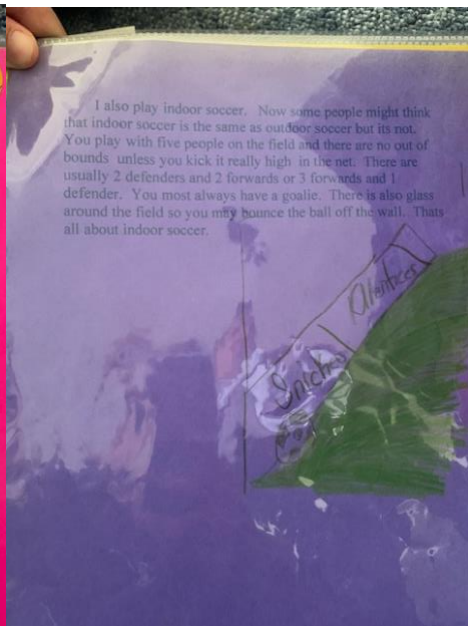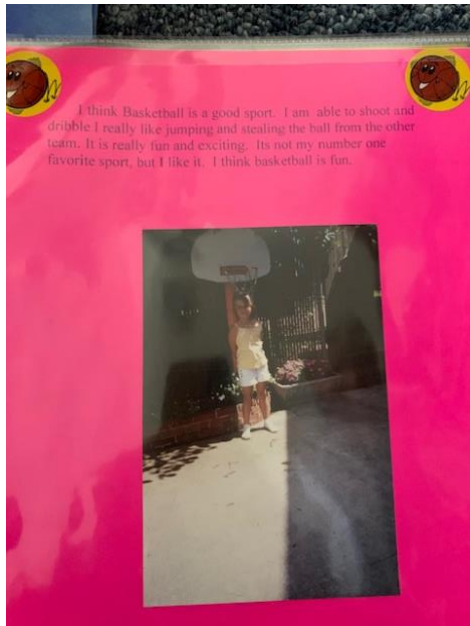
Figure 9. Pictures from my 2nd grade autobiography about something special being trophies from competition.